



# SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

December 1980



by Alfonso M. D'Apuzzo

It was the best Christmas party that Joe Ennis had ever attended. It was his first Christmas overseas, and the only one at which he hadn't been the recipient of an armful of presents. But still he was happy. Just to watch those little English war orphans having a good time put a lump in his throat.

When Bob Thompson, his tail gunner, had mentioned acting as "father" to one of the kids at Christmas time Joe laughed it off. But then, a few days later, he was all for it. He really didn't know why he had changed his mind, but as he watched the kids frolicking with Santa Claus and eating their first ice cream, he was glad he had. Joe couldn't wait to return to the hut and write a detailed description of the evening's festivities. He knew that his mother would get a great kick out of what he had done. He had to tell of the prompt and cute answer that his little protegee gave him when he happened to ask her why she was so restless. Fortunately the Red Cross girl was on hand to take care of the situation.

Joe's interest in the little girl didn't end with the kids' being put on the GI trucks which were to take them home. He got little Gwen's address from the Red Cross girl who had arranged the party. Often, he made the five mile trip to her grandmother's home, taking along with him candy and chewing gum saved from his PX rations. Joe let the boys think that his trips were to see an older female friend.

Gwen's poor grandmother surely appreciated the visits. She asked Joe for his home

address and a few weeks later Joe's mother had written to tell Joe that she received a letter from "Granny". Not only had "Granny" said a lot of nice things about him but also said Joe would find his reward in Heaven. He had never given it a thought, but with the missions getting rougher daily, he decided it was a good idea.

A few days before Easter, Joe picked up a large package at the Squadron mail room. He carried it back to the hut, and as he prepared to open the package, his buddies milled around to be in good reaching position when Joe passed out the delicacies. After all, what else could be in such a large package from home?

Joe soon found out. Unsuspecting of the contents, he tore the twine off the package, and in an instant wished that he had never gone anywhere near the mail room that afternoon. For there, lying undeniably in

the box, was the biggest doll Joe had ever seen. The doll, his mother explained in an accompanying note, "would be a nice Easter gift for Gwen."

The aftermath was brutal. It wasn't long before the whole Squadron knew about it, and although some of the boys could have cleared up the situation they declined lest they dispose of a good source of much needed laughs. Joe, knew that nobody really thought that he was a doll fancier, but still the constant heckling began to get on his nerves.

He had just about given up hope of the boys' forgetting about the incident when he thought of what Gwen's grandmother said in that letter. Sure, thought Joe, that reward in Heaven demands more than just being nice to a kid that never had anything . . .



Hate to bring the subject up again but by the time you receive this issue of the *JOURNAL* you will have undoubtedly received Evelyn's dues statement. It will help us a lot if you send Evelyn your dues check as soon as possible.

Our policy of waiving dues for those who cannot afford them is still in force. Financial strain on a limited budget can happen to anyone and we do not want to lose any member as a result of this. Simply drop a note to Evelyn explaining your situation and you will not receive a dues notice. All communications are strictly confidential between thee and she.

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## President's Message

America is experiencing a rebirth of pride in its heritage and history. The dampening of loyalty to our Country and its founding ideals, so prevalent in the 1960s and early 70s, has been supplanted by a renewed belief in America and an honoring of its great eras. Our generation produced one such era — one of the Nation's "finest hours", as we united in the 1930s and 1940s, as few other peoples have ever done, to battle the world-wide threat of economic ruin, and then the threat of world-wide destruction and slavery under radical foreign rulers. Then, having done these jobs successfully, we went our separate ways to raise our children, secure our jobs, and carry on our life work.

Our generation is now nearing the completion of this second phase of their lives, and in ever-increasing numbers are searching for means and opportunities to revive the memories and the friendships of that proud era.

Our Second Air Division Association gives all those who once served with the Division these opportunities, as no other organization does. Our Association promotes reuniting of the once close knit "family" of the Second Air Division, and provides the mature organization to help and to serve this function. It dignifies those ideals our generation believed in and fought for — the ideals of loyalty, sacrifice, and service to Country that made us the "Proud Generation". And it honors and remembers those who gave their lives supporting our Nation and those ideals, through the Memorial Library — a Memorial which will forever dignify their contribution to the World.

Over and over, as new members join, we hear "I wish I had known that this Association existed — I would have joined long ago!". This tells me that you and I have a job to do: we must spread the word about our Second Air Division Association. We must let those associated with the 2nd Division in World War II know who and what we are, and give them the opportunity to join again with us. How can we do this? For instance, dig out those old, dusty Orders and look for names. It's surprising how many persons can be found even after 35+ years — given the name, the old serial number, maybe the old home town, etc. Each of these is a lead in itself to pursue with a search by letters, phone calls to the information operator, etc. Often, even if the person has left the area, a relative is still there and can be contacted to give guidance. If you need help, contact your Group Vice-President. (His address is printed on page 2 of every Association Journal). He has a wealth of information on how to follow through using basic information: There is the USAF Personnel Locator Center; there are other Association members; he has many avenues of approach, and he is very capable and very eager to help. Another way: perhaps your memory will be jogged by recalling from old photos, notes, or long-ago conversations with former World War II comrades, their aspirations to live or work in a particular manner or area after the War — which will start you on a track to a successful contact. If each of us concentrates on finding *just one*, we will have done a worthwhile service to our people. Let us commit ourselves this year to a slogan: EACH ONE REACH ONE. Good luck!

DAVE PATTERSON

## ONE MORE TIME

In the September issue, I made what I thought was a "parting shot" at the last of .50 caliber plaques. Shortly after mailing it off to Bill Robertie for publication in the Journal, I received another box of 100 shells "on consignment". Prior to this, I had decided that after finishing the 5 units that I had left, that would be "it". Well, as it turned out, I had twice as many requests as I had materials to do them with. I then opened the last box. These were of 1944 vintage made in the Frankford Arsenal and in excellent condition. Unfortunately, the price was up by 33%. It appears that I can turn out about another 15 units.

In October, 1979, I was able to negotiate what I considered a rock bottom price on the 30 units I planned to make. As the volume of requests increased past the original 30, I was able to extend it an additional 40 units without any increase in cost. The last 5 units cost \$2.04 more to produce. The end result is that although I can make more, they will now cost \$27.00 each. There's very little point in making these (at zero labor cost) if I can't make a \$3.00 profit for the 2ADA treasury. So, if there's anyone out there still interested in the .50 caliber plaque, this is "it".

Bill, I've enclosed a check for \$23.00 made out to the treasury which I hope you will send to Dean Moyer in your next communication with him. If I'm not mistaken, the total profit to the Association is now \$226.00. It has been my pleasure to have produced a product that was beneficial to both members and the organization.

E. A. "RICK" ROKICKI  
458th Bomb Group  
Vice-President

## NEWS OF THE 445th

by Frank DiMola (445th)

This has been an interesting first quarter acting as Group Vice President for the 445th and I'm really involved with many members of this Association.

I met John Edwards of Niskayuna, N.Y. at the Cambridge reunion and all he wanted to know was "Where is the rest of the crew I flew with? Where do they live? Can you find them for me?" Always willing to please, and always at your command, I did a bit of research and was able to locate D.C. Patton from North Carolina. He gave me the addresses of four other members: Charles Kenning, Roy Dabney, William Gould and Jack Klein. Still missing are John L. DePaula, Edward F. Paszek and John S. Siczarski. Hang in there John. We never quit.

Over the past several months the membership in the 445th has increased by a large number. One of the new members, Ralph McCool was able to make contact with his old friend Steve Posner and the two ex 703 boys had a phone reunion. It was their first conversation in 37 years!

A more exciting reunion was engineered by Buddy Cross of Amarillo, Texas. Buddy found four members of his crew and they planned a crew reunion in Amarillo. He appeared before the City Commission of Amarillo on August 26th and accepted "Honorary Citizenship" certificates on behalf of his crew — number 76 — from Mayor Jerry Hodge. I'll quote a few lines from Buddy's letter as he tells it best.

"On Sunday we went to the Squire Dinner Theater and after dinner a professional photographer came over to our table and told me they would recognize our group that evening. They presented us last by reading a report about our missions (the Gotha Raid etc.), and then they had us stand as they called our names and our present home towns. As we stood they began playing the Air Force Song. The entire audience gave us a standing ovation for about five minutes. You talk about emotion! The tears could not be held back by us or our wives."

What more could be said. I am just thrilled by typing this event and reporting it to you.

Another holiday season is upon us and we are at the point now where we enjoy our grandchildren and happy family get-togethers. It is really great. My wife Elizabeth and I would like to wish holiday greetings to all members of the 2nd ADA and the rest of the human race. *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to All.*

Another touch of irony. I am writing this exactly 35 years to the day, May 8, 1979, after our second trip to Brunswick. As I write, the clearest recollection I have is how few of those who went down on the two trips to Brunswick, survived to become POWs. This I guess is further testimony that the pilots and FW190s of Goering's Yellow Noses were the best Germany had. I don't believe that statement will be contested by anyone from the 453rd.



### A VETERAN AIRMAN DEFINED

*Too scared to protest  
Too proud to admit it  
Too dumb to quit*

by Al Soltau (453rd)

I have never had the urge or felt a need to participate until I received the June 1979 Newsletter and read Delmar Wangsvick's story. "We were the Target."

My reason for participating now is that I too went to Brunswick that day. I saw the same fight from a different angle. Del Wangsvick's story placed him in the nose turret of the first aircraft in the formation. I was the tail gunner in the last ship in that formation.

I was tail gunner on Lt. Richard C. Holman's Crew 16. We were also part of the original 453 BG, 732 BS, Cadre.



I never learned who Dick made mad but it appeared we drew the purple heart slot in the formation more often than would be considered normal. On this mission, again, there was "Pug" (No. 42-52147) stuck on the very end as though it was someone's afterthought. I don't recall now how many missions I flew before I found out there was someone else in the war besides me and the Germans. The sky was always clear behind the tail of the last aircraft.

On this particular mission however, this was not the case and I believe luck played a bigger part in getting us home from Brunswick than anything we did personally. Omitted from Del Wangsvick's story was the fact that some replacement crews were with us that day. I don't recall how many, if I ever knew. Col. Miller seldom took this up with staff sgt. At any rate, the new crews were placed in the middle of the formation with the Veterans (Veterans i.e. — too scared to protest, too proud to admit it, too dumb to quit) flying the perimeter.

We were almost to the target when we heard the alarm that the yellow noses were up. The alarm was the usual military word exchange over the intercom I assume was used in most aircraft. "Christ! is that flak" — "H--- no! Its fighters" — "Are you sure its fighters" — "H--- yes! I'm sure its

fighters" — "Where?" — "Everywhere!" After this exchange you could usually expect to hear Dick Holman's calming voice, a pitch or two above normal, "Get the h--- off the G--- D--- horn and why in the h--- doesn't that SOB close it up." We always worried just a little about Dick Holman's language in this type situation since the rest of us were praying to all the known deities trying very hard not to miss any.

Almost immediately after this word exchange, although I had still not seen any enemy aircraft, a double row of 20MM were coming from the front of the formation and exploding directly above the tail turret. These were followed by the beautifully ugly underside of a FW190 almost clipping the upper edge of the vertical stabilizers. Fortunately for us his aim was off and he had missed us. Unfortunately, so was mine as he appeared healthy as he flew out of range. He did however, succeed in disrupting the formation as almost immediately a B-24 settled in behind us. He hardly settled in when he was hit and disappeared. It seemed as though before each pass by the FW190's, a B-24 would move behind us, get hit and go down. The only one I had time to recognize was Lt. Joe Dejarnett who slid in behind, a little low and to the right. He did not quite make it in to tight formation when he too was hit. Although I saw no flame there must have been fire as the aircraft appeared to crumble in midair. I saw no chutes and had no opportunity to look for any later.

Although the FW's hit us again after the target, it did not appear they did so with the same eagerness as before. I'm sure there are other crews who would contest this statement. At any rate we were among the battered remains that made it home that day.

Ironically, exactly one month later, May 8, 1944, we returned to Brunswick, again the last ship in the formation. This time we were not so lucky, we stayed in Brunswick.

I'm sure some of the names of Crew #16 will be familiar to Del Wangsvick and others. Lt. Charles Rudloff, flying as a replacement co-pilot, Lt. Ed Farrell, navigator, Lt. Melvin Finkle, bombardier, T-Sgt. Vern Cummings, T-Sgt. Charles Farmer and S-Sgt. Don Sliff all died that day. Lt. Ray Keith, flying as pilot, S-Sgt. Harley Jarvis, flying as replacement ball gunner, and the writer were wounded. The radio operator, S-Sgt. Dave Finkle, who managed to get out unhurt, landed near Sgt. Jarvis. Before he was captured he had milked a German cow and was busy milk bathing the badly burned Jarvis when the Germans found them. Jarvis was later sent home by the Germans.

# 8-BALL NEWS

by Pete Henry (44th)

This being the December issue, let me be among the first to wish you all Season's Greetings. That reminds me of the winter of '44 when Al Jones, my Bombardier, and I were working on a Christmas card for my crew to send home to our families. As many of you know, I've had a few of my photos in the *Journal* and I was dabbling in photography back in those days too. Jonesey was also, and still is, a picture-bug and the two of us took pictures of the crew and developed and printed them in a bomb-shelter outside of our Quonset hut in the 66th Squadron. If I can find a copy, I'll send it to Bill Robertie with this column and maybe he'll print it.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this column, September Journal, I mentioned that "Will" Lundy is transcribing the 44th Bomb Group history from microfilm compiled by Captain Russell O. Lohn, Statistical Officer, 14th C.B.W. Frame #1106 provides a report on the 27 original crews of the 44th B.G., which may be of interest to some of you.



Crew Position	Completed Tour	MIA KIA	Relieved/ Injury	Incomplete Transfer	Killed A/C Accident	Interned Now	Not Completed Still in Grp	Total Each Position
Pilots	8	9	0	5	1	4	0	27
Co-Pilots	6	17	0	2	0	2	0	27
Navigators	7	11	2	0	1	5	1	27
Bombardiers	5	14	1	0	1	5	1	27
Engineers	10	14	0	0	0	3	0	27
Asst. Engrs.	7	11	2	3	0	4	0	27
Radio Operators	6	15	0	2	0	4	0	27
Asst. Radio Operators	3	14	3	2	1	4	0	27
Gunners	8	15	1	1	0	2	0	27
Total Personnel	60	120	9	15	4	33	2	243

As you can see very clearly, only 25% of the total personnel completed their tour and almost 50% were MIA or KIA. Those of us who were fortunate to return safely should give thanks again to whatever Supreme Being we believe flew with us on our missions.

## NOTES FROM THE 392nd

by James F. Thomas (491st)

Upon becoming V.P., I fired off letters to a number of members who, for one reason or another, hadn't paid their 1980 dues. In August I flew to San Francisco and drove to Alamo where I attended a shake-down meeting with President Dave Patterson and other Vice Presidents to shape our program for the coming year. September 6th we flew to Barksdale AFB to meet with people in charge of restoring a B-24, a B-17 and other WWII aircraft, and bringing into being an 8th Air Force Air Museum. As you know, Barksdale is the HDQ of the 8th Air Force.

Have called and met with several Ass'n members. Was in touch with Robert Davis, Costa Mesa, Calif. He promises to check his POW Ass'n Roster to see if he can come up with some 2nd Division members. He was a 392nd member shot down in combat.

Visited with R.J. Powers of Escondido, Calif., this weekend. He is searching for new members in the San Diego area.

Don Whitford is policing the Jacksonville, Fla. area. Have letters out to all other members of our crew in various cities of U.S. to give an effort in spreading the word of our Ass'n.

Not complaining, but in closing, I'd like to point out that your Group Vice Presidents can't cover the whole U.S.A. In order to increase the 392nd membership, and the 2nd Division Ass'n. membership in general, it will take some cooperation on behalf of all members who are interested. I urge every member to give some effort toward looking up an old comrade in arms and make him aware of our Association.

Perhaps in the next issue I will tell you a combat tale, but for now I'm looking for correspondence and help from my associates.

**HELP!!!**

## ABOUT THE MEMORIAL

It is gratifying to report that we are sending off our second batch of checks received as "Special Contributions" following the appearance of our solicitation for such funds in the September Issue of the *Journal*. We are grateful to the ten individuals who have made such donations.

These "Special Contributions" have been dedicated to crew members who fell during the War, to friends who have passed away since, and there was one in honor of a relative's birthday.

Indeed, so far there have been two in memory of Leon Klinghoffer (389th & 458th) who was recently the victim of violent crime in New York.

Just as a reminder, please make out any such checks to "2nd Air Division Association", and mail them to me in Dallas with instructions.

Again we give our thanks to all of you who have supported the Memorial.

JORDAN R. UTTAL

# THE 445th GROUP'S MISSION TO KASSEL

## Worst Single Group Loss in 8th AF History

by Frank J. Bertram  
(Navigator, 445th Bomb Group)

September 27, 1944, began like many other days at our base at Tibenham, England. At daybreak, the morning showed the usual signs of possible rain. Our 445th Bomb Group mustered and sent out a mission — the Group's 166th. Our members were still basking in the glory of having led the 2nd Air Division (as well as the entire 8th AF) in bombing accuracy for three months straight (as per recently publicized official statistics by 8th AF Command).

But in a few hours we were to learn that this day was to be not just another day; it became the darkest day in the history of our Group, and it turned out to be the most disastrous raid for a single group in 8th Air Force history — the greatest loss of ships ever suffered by any one group in any one mission.

The assigned target was Kassel, Germany. Thirty-seven of our ships set out for the target — only 7 got back.

On that day, I was Lead Navigator in the lead plane for the 702nd Squadron, flying a PFF ship in the high right squadron. We were a radar pathfinder crew flying as back up to the Group's Lead and Deputy Lead. Another squadron was flying high, right above us. As the so-called "Dead reckoning Navigator", my job was to composite my figuring along with the "Mickey" figures (from the Radar Navigator), and the pilotage observations (from the Pilotage Navigator), to provide a running double-check of our exact position. As the third navigator in the ship, my station was a seat just behind the Pilot (Capt. R. R. Miner), facing to the rear of the plane. A small window was to my right, allowing me direct observations of the mission's progress.

As we approached the IP that day, the ground was almost completely obscured by a low deck of clouds — ruling out pilotage navigation, and thus visual bombing. We were well back in the bomber stream — most of the 2nd Division B-24s had slots assigned ahead of the 445th that day. Fighter cover escort was above, to the sides, and below — P-51s, P-47s, and P-38s — giving us a nice feeling of comfort and security. (As Maynard Jones, 703rd Squadron Navigator, remembers it, up to this point it appeared "a rather routine mission — and because we had seen few enemy fighters on the past few missions, we had become somewhat relaxed about them".)

Shortly after turning at the IP, the Group leader veered off course to the left, seemingly away from the primary target. (We could see the Groups ahead of us to the right dropping their bombs as they crossed over that part of the sky which their radar indicated was the prime target, Kassel.) I immediately informed Capt. Miner, who passed the word to the leader. Shortly thereafter he was advised that we were to "keep it together" and stay with our lead squadron. (Frank Thomas, of the 453rd

Group, whose group was directly behind the 445th, recently stated that, as he remembered it, the groups encountered exceedingly strong headwinds as they approached the target area (much worse than forecast) and he surmised that this prompted the 445th to make the diversion in order to take advantage of a better wind condition during the target bomb run.)

At any rate, as we were going on our merry way (heading for Gottingen, 30 miles northeast of Kassel), we could look back and see the other groups going straight in. Having veered out of the bomber stream, we had now lost our fighter protection.

And next, without further changes in course, our Group was dropping its bombs. Later inspection showed that the drop was on Gottingen, with the bombs landing about a half mile short of that town. Next, our Group executed the prescribed standard turns called for after a drop — one left turn, followed by three right turns — to bring us to a heading back toward England. At this point we were pretty well scattered over the sky due to the turns, and were not yet back into the tight formation that the 445th prided itself in maintaining.

NOW came the payoff. Someone called off a dogfight to the rear of our Group — then very quickly some one else said "here comes our fighter protection." At this moment I looked out the side window and saw little puffs of black about the size of basketballs. My instant reaction was "what kind of flak is this? So damn small and so unbelievably accurate at our level — the Jerry ground gunners are amazing! I did not put two and two together until I saw our radial engine "fighter protection" come up, peel off, and those P-47s turned into FW-190s with all guns going full blast. The Germans had made excellent use of cover and apparently had reached our Group, ready to attack, completely undetected. More than 100 German fighters pounced upon our Group, flying about ten abreast, and raining destruction upon all our ships practically at once. Needless to say, all Hell broke loose, as every gunner apparently made the proper identification at the same time. Our gunners did what they could, and many managed to inflict losses on their attackers, but by then many of our ships were blowing up and roaring earthward in flames. American fighters finally appeared, but too late to save our Group, although they managed to destroy several luftwaffe fighters, and finally drove the attackers off.

Our ship was hit, and hit bad. Why our plane didn't blow up is still a mystery; we took a severe shellacking with shells going through the ship, explosions, fire, direct hits on vital parts, etc. One killed, several injured on board.

Eventually I, and the remaining crew survivors, managed to bail out (through the nose wheel compartment, as the bomb bay doors were stuck in the close position). As I floated down, the sky looked like a para-

troop invasion, with chutes all over the place.

This for me, and for most of the other survivors, was the last information we had concerning the mission that day; those of us who were lucky enough to survive the parachuting and subsequent encounters with the enemy on the ground, ended up in Stalag Luft I to sit out the rest of the War.

As a sequel to my story, I quote from "The History of the 445th Bomb Group" written by our Group Adjutant, Rudolph Birsic:

"The entire battle took less than five minutes, and we lost 25 crews and ships at the scene of the tragedy. In addition two ships crashed-landed in France, two at Manston, England, and a fifth cracked up in the vicinity of our base.

As for the German losses, our gunners were officially credited with the destruction of 23 fighters, with an additional 5 probably destroyed. Of course this represented only the toll exacted by and credited to the returning and surviving crews. It was known for certain that other losses were also inflicted on the Germans by other crewmen who did not return to our Base to report their hits.

Administratively also the blow was a serious one. The grieved Squadron supply personnel worked long, weary hours to assemble quickly the personal effects of the men. Replacement crews had to be arranged for, since the Group fighting strength had been decimated. At first it was planned to immediately transfer in that same day 28 crews from various Groups in the Division. Frantic steps were taken by Group Headquarters and the four Squadrons to be ready for the men. But by nightfall this plan was abandoned, and the decision was made to divert all new crews coming into the Division to our Group to bring it up to full strength as quickly as possible. While this was a slower process, it proved to be the logical step. In addition, it was a tremendous task to assemble personnel records, make out various personnel, operational, and intelligence reports, and to do quickly the countless things required by existing regulations in the case of casualties. Such a catastrophe affected the Group in countless ways.

The following day our Group put up a gallant formation of ten ships, whose target was again Kassel. All the ships returned safely after scoring for the Group another excellent bombing record."

PS notes from the author:

Thanks and credits to Rudy Birsic for use of much of his material from his "History of the 445th Bomb Group" to "fill in the gaps".

Maynard L. Jones, now M.D., 10 South Oak Park, Colfax, Iowa 50054, a contributor to this article, is in hopes that some one from his crew, or anyone who knew him in those WW II days, will read this, and correspond with him.

Likewise, if any of you out there who read this article have any further recollections of this mission, the author would like to hear from you as to any additional data to make the story more complete.

# CREW 13 JOINS "CATERPILLAR CLUB" OVER GERMANY

by Frank DiMola (445th)

The six graying men gathered in a hotel room high above the fantasies of Florida's Disney World to relive the realities of their unscheduled visit to Nazi Germany. It was Feb. 20, 1979, thirty-five years after they had parachuted into captivity from a burning bomber over the heartland of Hitler's Third Reich.

The six were part of the nine-man crew that manned their B-24 Liberator on its last mission to open "Big Week" for the 8th Air Force as Crew 13 of the 700th Squadron, 445th Bomb Group, Second Division.

An aircraft assembly plant on the edge of Brunswick was the target on that fateful day and Major Jimmy Stewart led the group formation. Crew 13 flew high left position in the stack formation.

There was trouble going in across Germany. Both guns in the nose turret jammed, and the intercom worked only sporadically. But coming up on the target the objective was clearly visible, and so was fighter opposition that appeared at flight level just before the bomb run.



## CREW 13 IN ENGLAND

Front row, l. to r., J.W. VanBever, engineer; Burl Porter, ball gunner; Aarland Harbert, waist gunner; Joe Gillespie, waist gunner; Nick Binagia, tail gunner; and Joseph Sester, radio operator. Back row, l. to r., J.F. Eden, navigator; Marlin Kirkorian, bombardier; Fred McKay, co-pilot; and A.L. Owen, pilot.

Flak was heavy over the target but the bomb release was effective and good results were observed as the aircraft plant felt the blows of the 500-pounders.

But the enemy flak took its toll. Just after "bombs away" there was a heavy blow and the Crew 13 Lib shuddered under the impact of a burst that tore gaping holes in wings, tore open the main bomb bay gas tank and rendered one engine useless.

Staggered by the heavy blow, the plane veered away from the formation as the two pilots fought to regain control and retain altitude and speed. It was a hopeless task and the turning formation quickly left them alone.

The German fighters, on a wide sweep of the formidable bomber formation, spotted

the crippled plane and chose it as their target. The lead fighter bore straight in, firing burst after burst at the nose.

The Bombardier-gunner got off only a short burst before the guns jammed again, but the plucky gunner cranked the turret furiously by hand to track the attacking fighter and give the appearance of defense, forcing the F-W to veer aside. But the turret had taken a direct hit and was useless for further defense.

It was only the first of many attacks as the fighters joined to kill the crippled plane, left far behind by the homebound formation. The limping bomber and the fighters joined in furious battle. Every operable gun on the Lib was firing constantly to fight off the attackers, who pressed in close for the kill.

Enemy fire struck the top turret, shattering the plexiglass dome, sending fragments into the skull of the top gunner. Concerted fire almost severed the tail turret from the plane.

Flares on the flight deck were ignited by the enemy fire, oxygen tanks in the waist section were ablaze, and with gasoline pouring from the ruptured gas tank, the plane was a flying bomb awaiting ignition.

Nine enemy fighters were shot down or damaged in the fierce encounters, but it was a hopeless fight. Precious fuel was pouring like a fountain from the ruptured gas tank.

The pilot pressed the bail-out signal and the crew began evacuating the doomed plane. Moments after the last man pulled the rip cord, the plane pulled up into a bank to the left — and exploded into a million burning fragments.

That was the beginning of the odyssey that led the nine men to prisoner-of-war camps all over Germany. Picked up at varying points over the countryside, they began the shuttle through the Nazi POW system.

The four officers were processed through the infamous Dulag Luft interrogation camp, before being sent to the Red Cross center in Frankfurt. There they were joined by many of their fellow fliers from the 445th Group, who were shot down four days later, in a disastrous Feb. 24 raid.

The downed officers were shipped by boxcar to Stalag Luft I near Barth, Germany, on the Baltic Sea 100 miles north of Berlin. Other crew members were imprisoned at various EM camps in occupied Poland and other sites.

Luft I, midway between the advancing British and Russian forces, was destined to be one of the last camps to be freed, 15 months later.

The months dragged by, filled with boredom and frustration, punctuated by ceaseless efforts to escape and elaborate planning for tunnels and other escape attempts.

Food was meager, mostly supplied from erratic deliveries of Red Cross, food parcels. Relief from the boredom came in "baiting the Goons", and ingenious efforts at crafts and entertainment. News from the front came via a secret radio hidden from the captors, that was able to pick up BBC newscasts.

The depressing routine was broken one morning by a low-level strafing run by RAF Mosquitoes who "beat up" the nearby airfield and shot down an interceptor sent up to meet them.

The scarcity of food became a major problem in the waning months of the conflicts, when the Air Force so effectively broke up the German transportation system. Dependent on the Red Cross food parcels from home, the rations were very, very slim for weeks during the final thrust of the ground forces.

Liberation finally came. The first friendly face was in an American Jeep, bearing a U.S. scout team. But the camp was denied the joy of U.S. liberation, for the area was in the Russian zone.

There followed a diplomatic foul-up that lasted for several days before the 8th Air Force finally arrived with plywood-floored B-17's to fly the nearly 10,000 American airmen out of Barth to freedom.

Returning home by devious routes in troop ships, the crew was destined not to meet again until 25 years later, when they met at Port Arthur, Texas, home of Nick Binagia, the plucky tail-gunner who had fired until the turret was almost separated from the plane by enemy gun-fire.

Six of the nine made it to the gathering. There was Al Owen, the pilot who arranged for the get-together. M.G. Kirkorian, the bombardier, was there. And there was J.W. Van Bever, the engineer; waist gunner A.S. Harbert; radioman Joseph Sester; and Binagia, the tail gunner.

Co-pilot Fred McKay was on an AF alert and failed to get there. Gunner Joseph



## 25th ANNIVERSARY IN 1969

Left to right, Nick Binagia, tail gunner; J.W. VanBever, engineer; Aarland Harbert, waist gunner; M.G. Kirkorian, bombardier; A.L. Owen, pilot; and Joseph Sester, radioman.

Gillespie was snowed in and the navigator, J.F. Eden had moved and did not learn of the meeting.

Five years later the crew came together again on the anniversary date, Feb. 20, 1974 in New Orleans. Five crew members made the event, Owen, Kirkorian, Van Bever, Binagia and Sester.

Now on the 35th anniversary, there were six again, and a seventh arrived the next day. Answering muster were Owen, McKay, Eden, Kirkorian, Sester, Van Bever and finally Harbert.

The years fell away as the old friends, crewmates from a day long past, flung their arms about each other and renewed their associations.

At each of the reunions there were new revelations of the events that had flung them into the midst of an enemy nation.

"The last time I saw Van Bever his head was a bloody mess. I didn't think he would live through it," Owen said. Van Bever explained that the shrapnel had shattered his top gun turret and the splinters cut his scalp, soaking his knit helmet cap with blood.

McKay said, "All four officers went to the same camp, but we had no idea how the rest of the crew came out, or where they were. Then one day, nearly a year later, two of the gunners, Harbert and Binagia were marched in from a camp in Poland."

Both men had been imprisoned in an EM camp in Prussia and were marched out ahead of the advancing Russians. They told of many hardships and Nazi cruelties on the forced march.

Two of the crew, the navigator and bombardier, had landed near the same small town, to be greeted with unfriendly sneers like the terms "terror flyer" and "air gangster" and generous portions of saliva, before they learned a sobering fact. Another aircrew had kicked out a malfunctioning bomb that had scored a direct hit on the town's one and only beer garden. It was a shamble and the citizens were irate.

The two captured airmen agreed to maintain a "low profile" until the military authorities could take over and remove them from the threat of a lynching by the distraught villagers.

Owen, last of the crew to leave the crippled plane, descended in an area of high trees that had dumped his chute and dropped him on his back, injuring several vertebra with a crippling blow that was permanent injury.

Others of the crew were scattered across the snow-covered landscape and it was to be many years before they were to meet again and hear the old familiar, "Give me an intercom check. Report".

There are plans for future reunions, when the years can be rolled back and mutual adventures shared — like the day Crew 13 joined the Caterpillar Club and the Barbed Wire Club on the same day.

## 458th COMMENTS

by George A. Reynolds (458th)

To set the record straight and pick up an omission from the last Journal — the late Laurence C. Gram was also Intelligence Officer for the 458th in addition to being historian of the 96th CW. Very sorry to hear of the sudden death of John McNaney just prior to the Cambridge reunion. John gave considerable aid, assistance and encouragement in the original unit history. This info came by way of Tony North (FOTE) who reported an enjoyable visit to "the colonies," and mildly suggested that we could possibly make it as an independent some day.

A recent and interesting conversation with Douglas Dahm from Atlanta. He had just contacted his co-pilot, Vernon Jeffries, in Calif. after 35 years MIA (missing in America). They were crew associates of Bob Armbruster. Speaking of MIA, Dick Gibson has been trying to locate one Robert H. Weisburg from the Boston area — anyone willing? I know Dick would be grateful for any help in his behalf. Several sessions by phone with George Ferrell in Huntsville, Ala. turned up enjoyable topics. One, the ex-flight eng. had a passion for Scot's dress back when, it seems, and he even furnished us quite a photo which we're prevailing on Robertie's generosity to publish if he can tone it down sufficiently. George flew a tour during those early missions with the Group when they had fighters ND flak to contend with — but "Wolves Lair" brought them through the thickest of it.



S/Sgt. George A. Ferrell, 458th BG, circa 1944 somewhere in Scotland. Sorry, men, he didn't explain about the scivvies either.

I've had further correspondence with Steve Birdsall on his new nose art book, and there were quite a number of birds

flying with the 458th that had been assigned to other Groups previously — more than I would have expected. If anyone can provide serials for any of these aircraft, Steve and I both will be appreciative: Lily Marlene, You Can't Take It With You, My Bunnie II, Larrupin Linda, Ten Gun Dottie, Yokum Boy, Patchie, The Bird and Envy of 'em All. Even a partial number will help.

San Antonio in '81 is very appealing for me, it would be a first visit back since basic training in '48. I'm sure many pilots are looking forward to visiting Randolph and Kelly again. No one could ever forget the great sound of hundreds of AT-6 radials early in the morning. They also have a B-24 on static at Lackland AFB (pay attention, Fred Slocum) brought there in the late 50s. It has 7AF markings, I think, and was saved from Kingman's smelter at the last moment.

Miscellanea — pleasant note in the reunion minutes, 458th and 446th Groups leading in signing new members. Some for the 458th are: L/C Lester Heath, Robert J. Wood, Robert A. Henn, Samuel D. Scorze, William H. Seaman, Birto R. Brumby, Walter C. Dietzgen, Dr. Mackenzie Lunan, Robert G. Schmidt, Col. Maurice E. Speer and William D. Casem. A note of thanks to "Wally" Wallace in this regard. Rokicki mentioned that Wally sent in a list of good prospects. Great show, Rick, keep up the pace and we'll make #1 yet. How about it, troops? We need your help on this too!

As of late Oct., I have only 25 copies of the unit history reprint remaining. Members interested in obtaining a copy should contact me right away. This is *definitely* last call. Trivia: The Group history has been sent to all but six states so far plus nine foreign countries — England leading far and away, of course.

Received an enjoyable and helpful letter recently from my favorite 458th navigator, Denver's Bill Edkins. He remembered a quote by a Robert Sellers of the Federal Aviation Administration in an article, and wondered whether it was the same one he had known in England. This is the first clue on the whereabouts of a former radar officer who saved the day for the Group using experimental instrument approaches once after a very trying and tough mission. Any other info will be appreciated.

Again, a sincere thanks to all who have contributed so much to the success of the reprint. Obviously, such an undertaking is time, trouble, frustration and some other terms I can't remember offhand. But there are just as many on the other side of the ledger, and doubtlessly, they outweigh the former many times over. Too, I hope your favorite football team's big number was in the W column this fall, and certainly my best wishes to everyone for the holiday season and all the new years ahead.

# BAIL-OUT BUGABOO

A TANKED-UP B-24!

by Leo S. Bielinski  
(44th BG, 506th Sqdn.)

The 2000 plane bomber formations of WWII were an awesome sight. To those who witnessed this facet of aerial history, the muffled rumble of 8000 engines, as the bomber stream swarmed for Germany, is still vivid. There seemed to be an understandable reciprocity in bombing operations: "Some of your factories and people will be gone; some of your planes and fliers will be destroyed." Flak was one of the destroyers of fliers. We remember "Pistol Pete", an ack-ack battery devastatingly accurate, which always greeted us as we crossed at the Zuider Zee and we joked at the number of iron crosses held by this emplacement. There was the "scare crow" flak over Berlin, with red, orange and yellow bursts to give the psychological effect of many planes hit and on fire.

Before every mission we were given the repetitious admonition: "If you bail out over Germany, avoid civilians. Seek out somebody in uniform." And we would almost cringe as our imagination conjured a scene of being strung up with our shroud lines, or being impaled at the end of an old German farmer's pitch fork, the center tine piercing the heart.

Fortunately, we never once encountered a bail out condition in combat, in spite of several instances of heavy flak damage. But I recall a serious bail out situation on a non-combat mission while testing a napalm bomb bay tank bomb off the coast of England in the spring of 1945.

It was a rare combination of sunshine and a day off. We were biking into the English country side for an afternoon of picture taking and pubbing when the squadron orderly flagged me down. "Sir, Captain Wynes says briefing for you at 1300. Only you, not your crew."

"Gentlemen," the briefing officer cleared his throat. "You will not discuss this briefing, or the mission with anyone. Today you will test a new type weapon which is a bomb bay tank filled with napalm. If successful, this bomb could help tremendously in mopping up the Germans. Two bomb bay tanks have been hung from the bomb shackles and they are to be released like an ordinary bomb. Our purpose today is to evaluate this weapon and to study the ballistics. I'm sure you've noticed the beautiful, spring-like day, with only scattered low clouds. This is perfect for the

visual requirements of the mission. General Johnson will fly alongside to observe. Fly out over the Wash, the bombs will be released at 16,000 feet. Your navigator has the position of the drop zone."

In the spring of 1945, the German Army was breaking up, but isolated, entrenched pockets of resistance were left behind. When ordinary bombs could not pierce the fortifications, a proposal was made to napalm these hold outs with B-24 bomb bay tanks. The jellied gasoline, named after naphthenic and palmitic acids used in its manufacture, would weaken the structures with its intense heat and burn or asphyxiate the defenders. Eighth Air Force liked the idea and it came back down the chain of command to the 44th, to the 506th, to the crew. The pilot was Captain James Clements of Austin, Texas and I flew as Co-Pilot. In spite of the seeming importance of the mission, I was miffed. First, an ideal day for relaxation was out. Secondly, the flight appeared boring.

The B-24 bomb bay tank had a bulging, slightly flexible shape, roughly 2½ by 4 by 6 feet with a capacity of 391 gallons and was used for extended range. Two of these self-sealing, rubbery compositioned fuel cells were carried in the forward bomb bay and were separated by a one foot wide cat walk and the vertical bomb racks. The cat walk ran alongside the bottom fuselage, through the bomb bays, and connected the front and rear compartments.

We climbed outward, heading toward the Wash, a bay off East Central England, about 25 miles long and 15 miles wide. The English countryside was viewable for once. Peaceful. The only evidence of a war was the pockmarked earth around airfields from German bombs.

Captain Clements trimmed the B-24 and turned on the C-1 auto pilot. When the rudder engaging switch was thrown on, there was a sharp skid to the left. This maneuver repeated, regardless of adjustments made. When the elevators were engaged, the bomber's nose flipped downward. The auto pilot was out, but this was no problem, because the pilot could fly the plane on the bomb run. Accuracy was not a prime requirement. General Johnson acknowledged the malfunction.

IP. Bomb bay doors open. The hissing, whistle sound from air rushing past the opening in the bomber's belly was justification for crews affectionately calling the B-24 the "Whistling —house". "Five, four, three, two, one. Bombs away!" A barely perceptible shudder. General Johnson came right on: "Bombs did not release. Bombs visible as if partial release. Make 180, have bombardier drop again." The bombardier toggled again. No luck. Another 180. This time the pilot pulled the bomb salvo release. Still no go. The bombs were stuck. A routine problem now became serious. We were advised to check the bombs. If the

tanks were leaking napalm we would have to bail out. But without an autopilot, where would the plane crash — on some innocent English village?

The engineer checked the bomb bay. No apparent ruptured tanks or leakage. The bombs were free of the shackles, but the tanks had expanded and wedged against the fuselage and bomb racks. A basic law of physics: Decrease pressure, increase volume. Descend to 6000 feet. Increased pressure may shrink the tanks. Try gentle pull ups, rocking and skids. No success. Nudge with the bomb bay doors? vetoed. The tanks were hanging down about a foot below the bomb bay which negated a landing. If there were a fire or an explosion could we get to the front escape hatch to bail out? Another factor; we carried minimum fuel.

After 30 minutes at 6000 feet, the engineer crawled out on the cat walk and used the bomb bay door safety rod to extricate one tank, then the other. The relief was short lived. The napalm had flowed out the filler caps and covered both sides of the fuselage. All electrical equipment was turned off. We touched down, shut everything off, turned off the runway and made a ludicrous scene as we scrambled away from the fire trap.

But some ideas are difficult to purge. The fighters used napalm in tip tanks to bomb. Since we could not use bomb bay tanks with napalm, why not load the bomb bays with wing tip tanks to bomb with napalm?

My Form 5 shows that on April 14, 1945, we bombed the Royan Estuary, a German hold out north of Boreaux. The next day we returned with bomb bays full of tip tanks, napalm filled. But the tip tanks floated and tumbled as they were released, narrowly missing the planes in the second elements. The formations scattered to hell and gone. At debriefing, Intelligence learned all about the feasibility of dropping tip tanks from B-24s.

We never tried napalm again. Three weeks later, the war ended.



# OUR NUMBER

## NEVER CAME UP...

(BUT IT SURE KEPT TRYING!)



by Ed Hohman (491st)

Replacement combat crew number 4566 met on a troop train headed for Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado, in the spring of 1944. I was the radio operator, and I recall meeting the co-pilot, bombardier, engineer, and most of the gunners, as the train made its way to the base.

As we approached the field, a column of smoke was rising high into the blue skies of a sunny day in May. No, it wasn't smoke from a cook-out the commanding officer had planned for new arrivals that day. . . A training plane had crashed! Needless to say, we got the immediate impression that the business of getting ready for combat was a SERIOUS one!

Our first impression was right. Two other crashes at Peterson Field that summer brought this fact even closer. We watched a B-24 stall out on take-off one day . . . dropping like a rock to the ground! Onlookers shouted (fruitlessly, of course), for the pilot to drop the nose, but the plane was no longer "flying."

Some, (if not all) of the crew of the ill-fated plane were from our barracks! While they all escaped, I don't think any of them went on to combat. I seem to recall one fellow in particular who had a lot of difficulty after the accident. If he DID fly again, he shouldn't have!

We came a bit closer to disaster on

another occasion. After we completed an afternoon training mission, another crew took the same plane up and never returned. They died in a crash when they plowed into Pike's Peak!

After completing our training at Peterson Field, we were given a new plane for the flight overseas to England. On a night take-off, gasoline flared up off the wings. It was so bright inside, on the flight deck, you could have read a newspaper. (And you all know that you can't reduce power on take-off!)

We were on our way. The flight across the Atlantic was uneventful . . . (unless you'd want to consider that the navigator came up to me at the radio position when we were at a point of no-return over the ocean, and said: "Sure wish I knew where we were!") My eyes must have popped out of my head! HE didn't know where we were!? Well, we survived, (probably as planned). We "homed-in" on a signal out of Stornoway, Scotland, and arrived safe and sound(?) in the British Isles.

Once we got into the mainstream of overseas activity, we were exposed to even more nerve-shattering experiences. Replacing crews who had been lost when an entire GROUP was devastated by losses so great that it was disbanded, (the 492nd) we arrived at Metfield, England, a day or so after the bomb dump blew up! After mov-

ing to North Pickenham, we flew only seven missions before suffering the loss of our Pilot, Lt. Evan L. McClung, over Karlsruhe, Germany.

Later on, the plane we would have normally been assigned to fly was shot down when our group lost about a dozen planes from the base in one day! "Lady Luck" was with us again . . . Our squadron was "stood down" that day!

I was with our engineer, Byron Jones on a local flight that almost ended in tragedy. Reported earlier in this Journal, we were part of a non-combat trip to a repair depot in Manchester, England, when navigational errors brought the ground within a few feet of the plane unexpectedly! It was more frightening to me than many of the missions over the flak-filled skies of Germany.

Another combat mission found us returning alone with engine trouble, thinking we were crossing the Channel on our way back to England. We were unknowingly heading up the North Sea, (low on gas), and would have had serious problems if a P-47 hadn't come along to radio our pilot and advise him to change course!

Our Bombardier, (then Lt. Calvin Shahbaz) remained behind when the enlisted members of the crew were sent back to the states. On a later mission, he was forced to bail out over Russian held territory.

I'm sure many of you survived equally hazardous missions and close calls. I only report these things to once again bring to mind the problems, risks, fears and frustrations that were a part of that "maximum effort" we all were a part of so many years ago.

Those of us who made it back alive and in one piece should thank God every day! (I've been doing just that for quite some time now!)

## A GLIDER IT WAS NOT!



by Herbert Rudh (445th BG)

Prior to my 12th Mission, I was flying Deputy Lead Bombardier. This Crew was lost over the North Sea training Replacement Crews. The only other Crew Member from that Crew was Frederick T. Warren (Bombardier) whom I have not been able to contact.

On my 12th Mission, I was flying with a new Crew-Lt. Keith L. Frost was Pilot. November 10, 1944 was a normal foggy day — we got the early rise signal — got dressed — jumped on our bicycles and off to the Mess Hall for some powdered eggs — down to Operations — over to the Briefing Room — and to our B-24 for take-off.

Our Group formed O.K. and we were off to our Bombing Target — Hanau Air Field, Germany. We arrived at our target O.K. and dropped our bombs (40-100 No.). Just after we swung off our target we got some flak and two of our engines sputtered, however everything seemed to level out and return to normal — so we joined the formation and headed back for Timbenham AB, England.

When we got to the English Coast it was very foggy, so we dropped to a low level of about 1000 ft. and headed back on course to Tibenham. We were about 4 miles out from the runway at 1000 ft. when all four engines cut-out. The Alarm Bell rang, however there wasn't enough time or altitude

left to bail out. Next came the sudden jolt of the crash. I was sitting in the rear waste section (above the Bomb Bay) at the time of the crash. It sounded like 1000 tin cans at time of impact.

I do not remember anything more until I awoke outside on the ground, that was around 4:30 P.M. Next time I came to I was on the operating table at Station Hospital at 07:30 P.M. My left leg was severely injured and I remained for treatment in the Station Hospital for 6 weeks.

The Surgeons and Hospital are to be highly commended for their services. I got out of the Hospital just before Christmas and had Christmas dinner at the Red Cross Club in Norwich.

January 1945 I returned to the good old U.S.A.

All I can say is how thankful I am for all the fellows I had the privilege of flying with — plus our fine Ground Maintenance Crews who kept us flying.

Possibly I'll get a chance to meet some of the fellows at the Reunion this Summer.



The candle lighting ceremony. A candle for each campaign the 2nd AD participated in and one for those who didn't make it back.



It was in the hotel lobby that one met old friends and made new ones. Joan Patterson, wife of Prez Dave holds forth.



Got a question? Ask the Boss.



Ever try squeezing 600 people on a 14x14 dance floor? Horrendous!



The food at the outdoor barbeque on the first night was exceptional, and plentiful.



There were open bars at two of the events and business was always brisk.



Now who could resist a smiling reception - reservation desk such as this. From right to left — Rick Rokicki, Jackie Hanify, Lillian Cohen, Mary Henry, Joan Patterson, Hathy Veynar and two ladies provided by the Chamber of Commerce. Leave it to Rick to corner the lovely ladies market.



Only two were able to get into their old uniforms in the uniform contest and Jim Martin (right) lost. Winner was Paul Harwood — I think!

## More Reunions

by  
Bob Cole



Barkev Hovsepian is proud of it necessarily in that order.



Dean Moyer our Treasurer hands off our Board of Governors for check for all the donations made past year.

# Union Photos

by  
Coleman



Dean Moyer and Jackie Hanify get a good laugh at a photo of themselves. Jackie was a WAAC at Headquarters.



The crowd at the outdoor barbeque was exceptional also. This was held on the garage roof adjoining the hotel.



d of pipe, pin and cap — not



Group VPs and Officers gather at a luncheon to discuss ideas on making the 2nd ADA a better Association.



The final night banquet. We really packed them in.



Tom Eaton spells out the course the Governors will take to make the Memorial Room even more effective.



Dean Moyer and Rick Rokicki help hold up welcoming sign. Or was it the other way around.



hands Tom Eaton, Chairman  
s for the Memorial Room, a  
s made by our members this



Some members of the 93rd had a table of their own for the outdoor barbeque. VP Charlie Weiss is standing and that smiling face at his elbow is longtime member Floyd Mabec.



New Prez Dave Patterson (445th) spells out the goals of the Association at final night banquet as lovely wife Joan (extreme left) looks on. That's Joan Bennis (former keeper of the Memorial Room) listening intently as Pete Henry fixes name tag.

## MISSING — ONE EACH PILOT

by Albert E. Jones (44th BG)

I think the one element that made for a good crew during our combat experience was the leadership generated by the Pilot. Of course the first thing he had to demonstrate was the ability to fly the plane. Pete Henry did this early in our relationship.

The next element was to instill a loyalty among the crew members, not only to the Pilot but among each other. Attention to detail mixed with a somewhat relaxed code of military ethics was a blend which seemed to fit the personalities and character of our crew. When not flying we always felt free to express our opinions, talk out differences and associate on a friendship basis.

Enlisted men and officers alike worked together to 'appropriate' coal from the sacred British coal pile. We went on pass together, enjoyed our hobbies together and in general became very good friends. Our loyalty to one another might be demonstrated by this story involving Pete Henry our past President.

One morning a knock on the door about 7 AM woke me up and a Sergeant from operations informed me we were wanted down on the flight line at 0800 to check out our plane which had been repaired of battle damage we had received a couple of days earlier.

All officers, the flight engineer and the radio man were expected to fly and check out their equipment. Rubbing my eyes I turned on the lights to find to my dismay that one H. C. "Pete" Henry was not in his sack, nor was one Navigator Ira John Lee.

About this time Albert Winter our Co-Pilot opened his eyes and I informed him of the problem. Undaunted he suggested we report as usual and just sign Pete and Lee in. I said, O.K., I think I can handle the Co-Pilot duties, do a little navigating and check out the bomb sight if he could fill the first pilot's seat. I also suggested we check with Mac and Ward, our radio man and flight engineer, to see if they would go. No problem. They were up and ready in 10 minutes or so.

After a quick stop at the mess hall the four of us headed for the flight line. Al

signed us all in, six of us, and we went out to old K+ parked across the field. When the four of us climbed aboard without Pete and Lee the crew chief looked kind of funny but didn't say anything. Since I had always stood behind the pilots I had memorized the check list. Here was my big chance as I climbed into the Co-pilots seat.

After getting the engines started we waved off the crew chief and taxied into takeoff position. With one last look toward operations and each other, we asked for and received permission to take off. Down the runway and off into the wild blue. No sweat. After giving our assigned altitude, I left the cockpit and went up into the nose to navigate and test out the bombsight.

We got to the wash, dropped some practice bombs, did some camera bombing, ran the plane thru some stall maneuvers and checked out our radio equipment before finally heading back to the 44th. I guess we were gone about four or five hours.

Arriving back over Shipdham with me again in the Co-pilot's seat, I called the tower for landing instructions. We were told to stay in a holding pattern until further instructions. I looked at Al and he at me and he said, "They caught us." After about fifteen minutes of circling we again asked for permission to land. Once again we were told to remain in the pattern. Screwing up our courage we asked why? The answer came back that they had a B-24 off the runway and stuck and we could land once it was pulled out.

With a sigh of relief we settled back until the final "OK, the runway is clear" came through. Down we came, taxied back to our parking space and climbed out. Just about the time we got thru congratulating ourselves that we had pulled it off, up drove the Squadron Commander with Pete Henry and Ira Lee occupying the back seat. Nary a word was said except, "Don't ever do that again." They had been watching us circle the field for all that time and thought we were afraid to land.

*(ed: To err is human. To forgive devine. But to get caught? Unforgivable!)*

Washington's Farewell Address, The Monroe Doctrine, The Gettysburg Address and The Selection of Eisenhower as Supreme Commander. In all there are 28 of these cherished mementos of American History and Traditions.

This collection of Americana was donated to our Memorial Library by the Exchange Club, Garland, Texas chapter, of which Geoff is President. This is exclusively an Exchange Club project and is unrivalled as a source of inspiration and encouragement thru which students may come to know and cherish the ideals of the United States of America. Many such gifts have been made to schools throughout the country, but the collection presented to the Norwich Library is the first to be made outside our shores. No finer location, or a

## SAN ANTONIO IN 1981!!

Joan and I had a most pleasant visit to San Antonio, Texas in early October. Thanks to the diligent work of Evelyn Cohen, in accompaniment with her sister Lillian, and Joyce and Jordan Uttal, the 1981 Second Air Division Reunion is now scheduled for San Antonio October 1-4. The choice of this beautiful, historic city, and of the La Mansion del Norte hotel, you will find tops.

We also enjoyed a nice "social hour" visit while there with Clint Wallace (458th), Louis & Margaret Aguila (491st), Jack & Mabel Albright (489-389th), John & Camille Becker (489th), Jim & Pat Dailey (453rd), Ralph & Anne Giesecke (467th), Charles & Marie Lewis, Bob & Audrey Moore (466th), and Don Shanklin (466th).

On our trip we also visited Dallas, and wish to give special thanks to the 466th Group contingent who graciously extended luncheon hospitality: Our fine Group Vice-President, J.M. ("Pappy") Daniels, and his wife, Roberta; and L.M. "Tommy" & Wanda Thompson, Gerald & Sammy Merket, and Rod Darelus, with Pat Miller.

Our last stop, "enroute" home to California, was at St. Louis, where Don & Mimi Olds (Chairman, 453rd) and Earl & June Zimmerman (Vice President, 389th) joined us for a work session on the Association needs.

The basic purpose of our trip was to meet with a cross-section of Association members, discuss the organization, and receive input concerning ways to have the Association better serve the members: we feel that the trip was very fruitful in this respect. We plan to continue meeting with various members and other interested groups as the year progresses, to spread the word about the Second Air Division Association, and to obtain guidance on bettering the organization for all concerned. (PS: As with this October trip, at no expense to the Association!!)

Joan and I extend to each of you warm wishes for the Holiday Season, and for a good New Year.

DAVE PATTERSON

## THE FREEDOM SHRINE

One of the highlights of the 1980 Convention banquet was the presentation by Geoff Gregory (467th B.G.) to Tom Eaton of a commemorative plaque representing one of the most important additions yet made to the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library since its opening in 1963.

This plaque represents a collection of photo facsimiles of many of the most historic American documents ranging from the Mayflower Compact to the World War 2 Instruments of Surrender of the Germans and the Japanese. The collection includes such priceless parts of our heritage as: The Declaration of Independence, Washington's copy of the Constitution,

more fitting one could have been selected than the 2nd Air Division Memorial in Norwich.

The Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust and the officials of the Library have commissioned a most appropriate framing and panelling project so that these historic documents will be handsomely displayed and at the same time easily available for either casual inspection or close study by the visitors to the American Room.

On behalf of the 2nd Air Division Association and the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust we extend our heartfelt thanks to the Exchange Club of Garland, Texas for this valuable gift and to Geoff Gregory for presenting the idea and seeing it thru to its successful conclusion.

JORDAN R. UTTAL

# EASTER SUNDAY MISSION

(A "HARE" RAISING  
STORY!)

by Glenn R. Matson (458th)

The 458th Bomb Group had completed eighteen missions on 9 April 1944. Crew 56 flew twelve of them, and led the group in most missions flown.

On 9 April 1944, Easter Sunday, they were called upon at the last moment to fly the Tutow mission to an airfield in Germany. They barely had time to be briefed.

While over Denmark, FW 190 fighters attacked Bomb Totin Mama. The fighters knocked out the number three engine and it had to be feathered. Number two was also hit and leaking oil, but kept running. The intercom was put out of commission, so they could not communicate with one another.

After the first fighter attack, other than material damage to the plane, the crew was unharmed. They pressed on for Tutow, but did not make it to the German coast before number two engine began to lose power and smoke badly. To prevent it from bursting into flames, it too was feathered.

With a full load of bombs, intercom out, two engines feathered and dropping behind the rest of the formation, it was decided to drop the bombs in the Baltic Sea and abort.

They called for fighter support, but it was unavailable. Now all alone, they were easy prey for German fighters.



With no other choice, the brave crew and faithful B-24 began the return trip to England, a long flight across Germany and the North Sea. Bomb Totin Mama flew on for about an hour and a half, things were looking bad, and getting worse.

Lt. Raiter sent the radio operator, SSgt. James A. Goins back to the waist to tell them they were not going to make it back to England, and to get ready to bail out. Lt. Raiter went down to the nose to ask the navigator, Lt. Harry Stawarski their exact position and to tell him and nose gunner SSgt. Allen R. Kluck to bail out on his prearranged signal.

Everyone knew they would jump within the next few minutes, and with parachutes on and the hatches open, they were ready.

Just about this time however, a German fighter came in from the tail and blasted away at them. The nose gunner and the tail gunner removed their chutes and returned to their turrets. SSgt. Dorris Hulon Cornette was the first one to spot the fighter, someone made short order of him and shot it down. Two more fighters pounced them and hit a fuel tank, almost instantly the whole inside of the aircraft was on fire and the right wing was aflame. SSgt. Harry S. Roughly, the tail gunner, was hit by a direct burst of gun fire and killed instantly. Lt. Richard Koch, the bombardier, who was in the waist ordered everyone out. Gunners SSgt. Cornette, TSgt. William P. Howard and SSgt. Angelo J. Pucci all jumped immediately.

Lt. Raiter had stayed with the plane to keep it flying in a straight ahead shallow dive, thus giving everyone who was still alive a chance to get out.

The fighters kept up their attack, knowing they had this one for sure. SSgt. Kluck's guns jammed on the first pass, but he got them working again. The others feared that he had been wounded and could not get out of the turret, but he fought off repeated attacks and refused to quit fighting. Lt. Stawarski and SSgt. Kluck were both eventually killed by gun fire from the German fighter.

Lt. Arthur L. Goodin the co-pilot then jumped, with Lt. Raiter to follow. At the moment Lt. Goodin jumped, the aircraft exploded. The crew thought, of course, Lt. Raiter had been killed in the explosion. Having already put on his chute, he had been blown clear, and came down a considerable distance from the rest.

Those that had jumped at first were captured immediately by German soldiers. Lt. Raiter evaded capture for 17 days before being captured. The rest of the crew was astounded and happy to see him when he was brought into the prison camp.

An incident occurred that might easily have cost them their lives. Crew 56 had painted a replica of Daisy Mae carrying a bomb, on the nose of their plane. Like a lot of the nose art, she had a low cut dress. When the plane crashed and the German populace saw this woman's figure on the plane, they thought it signified that this particular plane had been designated a bomber to bomb and kill women and children. A large number of women and old men came running with stones and clubs to kill them, but fortunately Lt. Koch could speak German fluently. He talked to the German soldiers who were guarding them

## 491st NOTES

by Mike Fagen (491st)

Since becoming VP for the 491st, I'd been unable to locate any roster of 491st personnel who had been in England, except for the names in the 2nd ADA roster. Since then, through various sources, mainly names from old orders sent to me, I have accumulated 1200 names, including the 247 I copied from the Roll of Honor while in Norwich during the 1979 reunion. I have made an alphabetical roster and included the squadron, position in the organization or on the crew, and the last known city of residence. As most of the orders sent me are of flight orders and replacement crews, the roster is very weak in the names of support personnel.

In addition to the roster, I made another listing of those whose addresses I've been able to obtain, and on this list which I recently reproduced, there are 270 names and addresses. So any 491st people desiring the roster and or the list of addresses, please send me a card or letter.

In the future, annually probably, I will reproduce supplements to the roster and address list with the necessary corrections and additions. Recently I ordered from the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center three rolls of film. From these rolls of 16mm microfilm, I should, hopefully, obtain additional names, and some historical data. In the meantime, to answer a letter I have recently received, I need information on B-24H 42-50313, known as "Wabash Cannon Ball" which had made a forced landing in St. Laurent Surmer, France, the summer of 1944. Needed are the date, mission, reason for the emergency landing, name and rank of the crew members, and how they returned to Metfield.

and explained that there was nothing to the idea that this plane was anything but an ordinary bomber.

Crew 56 had been shot down on the outskirts of a small town called Wintermoor, approximately twelve miles north of Soltau, Germany.

The 458th Bomb Group had sent up nineteen B-24's, twelve of them bombed the target, three aborted and four were listed as MIA (Missing In Action). Another aircraft "Jayhawker", 41-28667-F from the 458th landed in Sweden and was interned.

Although results of the mission were considered excellent, few hits were made on the airfield and no hits on the hangars. It is a wonder they did any damage at all. Weather conditions were very poor in the target area, and the formation became disorganized because of this and very heavy flak.

This was Easter Sunday, 9 April 1944 some place over northern Germany.



# TEA TIME...

(SOMEHOW IT JUST WASN'T OUR BAG!)

by Earl Zimmerman (389th)

## Arco Dei Fileni

After leaving formation, due to malfunctioning engines, our navigator managed to find North Africa, from Crete that is, albeit 200 miles from Benina main.

Upon landing at a British fighter base we were advised that we would have to depart post haste as they could not accommodate us. There were no quarters or rations available. The 'base' consisted of a short strip scrapped out of the desert, 3 Hurricane fighters, a windsock, one tent, two cases of bully beef and some dehydrated brussel sprouts.

Our pilot, Lt. Harold L. James, took up a collection from the crew, which amounted to 3 Pounds Egyptian, 300 Francs, 13 Dollars American and 2 Pounds 3 shillings, coin of the realm. The tail gunner, Sgt. John P. Morris, and myself were sent out into the wilderness to get help. Shades of Moses. We eventually hitched a ride with a convoy of trucks heading toward Bengasi.



Did you ever stop by for a cup of tea with a contingent of the British 8th Army Desert Rats? A sight to behold. At tea time, seemed like every two hours, the convoy screeched to a halt. Each truck carried a 5 gallon tin, half filled with sand, swinging from the tail gate. About 1/2 gallon of petrol was poured into the tin and lighted and it wasn't long until the tea was ready to pour.

After riding on top of a truck all day in the hot sun, your face is sunburned, your

## NOTICE

1981 Convention  
San Antonio  
Oct. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

More details in March Issue.

lips are cracked and you are handed a mug of tea which consists of part 80 octane petrol, sand, hot colored water and a little sugar. They named it right, Typhoo. No wonder the Krauts retreated from Alexandria, no way they would be subjected to that fare if captured.

After a few days of torturous travel we sighted a strange looking monument rising out of the desert as we approached. The Desert Rats referred to it as the Marble Arch. When we arrived, the convoy stopped for another cup and we explored the arch. The area around the arch was littered with the spoils of war, burnt out tanks and trucks etc., and the arch itself was pockmarked with sharpnel. A stairway led to the top where it was possible to see many miles across the desert. There were thousands of names inscribed in the walls of the arch, mainly, English, German and Italian. I managed to find a clear spot and inscribed my name, unit and date.

We left the convoy at that point as it was near a real honest to goodness RAF fighter base. I went to the radio shack and sent a message to our base advising of the position of our plane and after a good nights rest and some good food, we hit the road again and hitched another ride towards Bengasi.

We were met with open arms by our crew, they beat us back, and we were given a feast in the mess tent. A nice warm drink of powdered lemonade, sliced spam with dyhydrated potatoes, canned succotash and canned fruit cocktail, which had been rejected by the Wogs. It was good to be back.

That night I crawled into my mattress cover, after shaking out all of the scorpions, layed down on my cot, covered myself with two GI blankets, tucked the mosquito under the mattress cover and shivered all night.

After a nights sleep, I brushed my teeth with powdered eggs, saves time you know, and checked the bulletin board. Amazing, some clown has scheduled Lt. James' skeleton crew to practice low level formation flying that day. Little do I realize that in a few days I will be sitting in a posh restaurant in civilian clothes eating dondurma and pasta (ice cream and cake). No more sand, scorpions, freezing nights, powdered everything and dehydrated nothing. Only one complaint, the galloping GIs, but I'll take it.

Back to the Arco Dei Fileni. In preparation for the article I needed a photo, so I wrote to the Libyan Embassy but received

## SIX SETS OF INITIALS

by Jack Butler (44th)

Let me tell you about 6 men of the 44th B.G. All I know about them is that on 6 separate occasions, prior to May 1944, each of them took off into the wild blue yonder. They were headed east into the rising sun over Germany. They never returned. I never met them and never knew them, yet I can never forget them. Let me tell you why I can never forget them.

All of us members of the 2nd A.D. have a lot in common. We are survivors. Would you be reading this otherwise? Most of us have memories of friends, drinking buddies, guys in the next chair at briefings, etc., who did not make it. It is sad to say that my memory of some of my close friends who did not make it has faded.

Why then do I have such a vivid recollection of these six whom I did not know?

Well, in May 1944, when I arrived at the 44th B.G. as a replacement navigator, I was assigned to an empty sack, in a 4 man room, in a permanent building, with inside plumbing. There were two double deck bunk beds. The vacant bed was a lower bunk. I thought this was great, but a little strange that the upstairs guys hadn't claimed it. They hadn't claimed it because they knew that there were 6 sets of initials burned into the rails below the upper bunk. Each set of initials had marks, burned by cigarettes, which counted completed missions. As I recall, the completed missions ranged from 3 to 14. I distirctly remember one set of markers showed the last completed mission as 12.

From May until December of 1944, the last thing I saw, before I went to sleep, were those initials burned into the bedrail above me. Not until recently did I realize those initials were also burned into my memory.

Is it possible that those six got together and put in a good word for #7? All I know is that I made it OK, but there were several occasions when I, and my various crews, needed and had incredibly good luck at the right time.

no response. Next was the American Embassy in Bengasi. They replied, but could not find a photo and advised that Colonel Kadafi had the arch razed and only the base was recognizable. After many months the Italian Military Attache provided a photo and an extract from a Facist publication concerning the arch, in Italian yet. To make a long history short, the arch was built on the border of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by Benito Mussolini in 1935. If my translation is correct, I had a short course one day at a Pizza Hut, the arch was built to commemorate the retreat, or, advance of Italian troops during the era. Would be happy if someone could translate the document for me, it's about six pages long.

## TWO WHEELS PLUS TWO WHEELS = DISASTER

by Jack C. Adamson (392nd)

I have noticed some requests in the Journal for stories about the good old times in the E.T.O. and I happened to remember one that might be enjoyable, especially for all the bicycle riders.

One afternoon, after leaving the Officers Club, I hopped on my bike and headed for the 576th squadron living area. If my memory serves me correctly, this route took me directly past the bus stop on the corner of the street a short distance from the club. As I neared the area I recognized a friend of mine waiting, with numerous other personnel, for the local to Wendling. I yelled to him to pick up a certain item for me at one of the local shops and while engrossed in this running conversation, I turned right at the corner onto my street, but inadvertently crossed from the left lane to the right lane. The next thing I knew, I was ass over tin cup, up in the air, down on the ground, entangled in my bike, someone else's bike, someone else's arms and legs.

Slowly I opened one eye and the first thing I saw were railroad tracks; not the kind that trains run on, but the kind on an

officer's tunic. Being a lowly 2nd Lt., I realized a hasty retreat from this combat engagement was my only salvation. I asked him if he was injured and the reply I received was a cross between the roar of a B-24 taking off and a 50 caliber machinegun running wild. Needless to say, I picked up the bike and took off amid roars of laughter from the bystanders.

The next day, I found my victim to be one Capt. Charles Neff, Flight Commander, 576th squadron. You might say I avoided said Capt. like the plague for the rest of my stay at the 392nd B.G.

Many years passed after being discharged from the service and the incident was all but forgotten. But in 1969, my wife and I joined the American Express Club Continental, an organization sponsoring vacation travel overseas to different areas of Europe. One of the features of this club was a monthly newsletter with information about trips, pictures of different tours and pictures plus biographies of the local club officers. Well, believe it or not, there was a picture of a Charles Neff, a very familiar visage even after 25 years, with a history of lifetime

service in the Air Corps. I knew it had to be him, but, by God, he didn't outrank me now. I decided to confront him in his own lair. One afternoon following lunch, I stopped at his office and spoke to his secretary. I informed her of my plan so she announced me as someone he had run into a long while ago. As I entered his office I could not see even the slightest hint of recognition on his face. We shook hands and then I asked,

"Were you in the 8th Air Force?"

"Yes."

"Were you with the 392nd B.G.?"

"Yes."

"Also the 576th squadron?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember having a bike accident?"

Well a big smile came over his face and we both started to laugh. Appropriately, ten minutes later we were able to control ourselves enough to reminisce about our past lives in the E.T.O. It was a wonderful reunion and Chuck and I had lunch numerous times after that meeting. Unfortunately, the Club Continental was not a money-making branch for American Express Co. so they discontinued the operation. With that, Chuck and his family moved to Florida and that was the last I heard from the son-of-a-gun.

I did not see his name in our 1977 roster, but I am hoping to find him in the new issue. If not, and anyone knows of his whereabouts, please let me know. I'll guarantee you I'll sign him to a lifetime subscription for the 2nd Air Div. Assoc.

## SPECIAL HOMECOMING FOR THE PILOT

Courtesy Florida Times-Union • Jacksonville Journal



(Beth Campbell/Staff)

Gen. Jimmy Doolittle had a special homecoming in Jacksonville, Fla. recently. The famous pilot, who 58 years ago made a historic 24-hour transcontinental flight from Jacksonville Beach to San Diego, Calif., was honored at a reception and dinner at the Ponte Vedra Club. Among the special guests was Mrs. J.W. Burton. Her husband was in the Air Corps with Doolittle and helped him prepare for the flight. She had watched Doolittle take off from Pablo Beach in 1922 and last night the two shared their memories. Doolittle was honored again with ceremonies dedicating a marker in a little park at 425 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville, Fla.

## Only Two Were Lost

"Only two of ours were lost",  
You read at your breakfast table.  
But I cannot forget those two,  
My heart is not yet able.

Two empty bunks in our hut tonight.  
I wonder who'll take their place.  
Hard to forget Bill's humor  
And Ted's quick, easy grace.

So many times they've flown my wing  
And joined me for a beer.  
This morning all three of us ate at mess  
Tonight they are not here.

Two pilots (. . . four gunners . . . a bombardier)  
The paper neglects to say  
Went down in flames near the target  
To save the "American Way."

"ONLY two were lost," the papers say,  
And "We blasted an enemy rocket."  
But the grief and loss were a hellish cost  
To pay from our squadron's pocket.

BY CAPT. AL SITZER

# Letters

Dear Mrs. Cohen:

Your advertisement about the reunion of various Bomb Groups of the 8th Air Force appeared in The Los Angeles Times in California.

My ex-husband Robert E. Simmons, was a member of the 714 Bomb Squadron - 448th Bomb Group (H). He passed away November, 1972 and I wondered whether this information could be passed along to other members who knew him.

We came to California from Boston in 1959 and this has been home for at least 20 years. If any of his friends wish more information they can write to me at the address below and I will be happy to answer.

Sheila I. Simmons  
6655 Woodley Avenue NO. 12  
Van Nuys, California 91406

Dear Evelyn:

When I arrived at the beautiful Hyatt and registered, I received my first reunion I.D. Members seeing me as a first reunion visitor introduced themselves and were helpful in many ways.

Also the five ladies at the registration desk were exceptionally helpful in keeping me advised of all activities and checking lists to see if any of my crew members arrived.

I thought I would be a stranger because of my first attendance, but thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Al Dallmeyer, Mr. & Mrs. Ray Jones and Mr. & Mrs. Will Adler and Walter Edgeworth, my first reunion will always be remembered as most enjoyable. They made sure I had a place at their breakfast and dinner table and made sure I made the boat trip which was truly great.

I sincerely thank them for their kind consideration and hope to see them in future reunions.

It goes without saying Evelyn that you did a superb arrangement in this 33rd reunion as you have in the past.

I also wish to thank Don Olds for his patience in answering many questions and introducing me to other members. Also having a great mini with lots of 453rd literature available as well as many photos.

Tony Corbo (732nd)

Dear Bill:

I was lucky to find out about Second Air Division Assn. I belong to the D.A.V. - lifetime member - and think I found something about this Assn. in one of their magazines.

I wrote you a letter almost a year ago. In the first *Journal* I received from you Dec. 1979, on page 16, Tamer J. Ellis and I were together in the 389th, also the 491st. I have pictures of us. In one picture there is Nine Air Craft Armorers 911. I have my hand on Tamer's shoulder. I would appreciate it if you would print my letter. Please send me a Roster and two Blazer Patches. I enclose check. I was in the 389th H.B. Group, then 491st H.B. Group. Not 492 you first sent the right Groups, then 389th and 492. The right Groups are 389th, 567 Bomb Sqdn., as a Armorer 911. Then I was in 491st Group as a M.P. I really enjoy reading and belonging to a wonderful Group like the Second Air Div. Assn.

Lendon Souder

## WANTED P-51 Propeller for our Steeple Morden MEMORIAL

If you have any sources, information or contacts please call the writer collect, immediately, area code 215-369-1766.

Please, this is serious — see if you can help us. Thank you.

Gordon H. Hunsberger, Sec.  
355th F.G. Assn.  
75 Congo Road, Box 71  
Gilbertsville, PA 19525

Dear Evelyn:

This letter is long past due, but first want to thank you for the efficient manner you acted on returning our money for the San Diego reunion. Just 14 days before we were to leave, we found out George had to go into the hospital for radiation treatment for cancer. It was a terrible shock to us, as he was looking forward to our trip. He passed away on January 21, 1979 at 58 years old. Then in March of 1979 my mother broke her back and I was gone for several months taking care of her.

I want you to know George admired the way you handle the reunions, so efficient and organized, and he thought very highly of you. We fully enjoyed the 4 reunions we attended — Colorado Springs, our first one; then Wilmington, N.C.; Valley Forge, Pa. and Lake Geneva, W. They are a wonderful group of people.

Will enclose dues for another year.

LaVerne Metcalf

Dear Bill:

Just received my June Newsletter and I see you've come out with a new roster. I want one for sure as all my old ones burned.

Our house caught fire Thursday, June 19th on my 60th birthday, and burned to the ground. We were totally wiped out, just barely got out with just our night clothes on.

We are going to build back so we won't be at the reunion. We had planned on coming in our car and travel trailer, but I guess we'll have to pass this one up. Maybe see you next year. Give our regards to our friends at the reunion.

Lowell Minich

Dear Evelyn:

As I am a new member I would like to obtain your advice on some research. I am writing a history of my former squadron the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron. On March 13, 1945 just North of Seething one of our P-47s was involved in a midair collision with a B-24H from the 448th Bomb Group - 714 Bomb Squadron. The B-24H was serial number 42-50359. I would like to obtain a picture of this B-24H for use in the history. Does the 2nd AD have a photograph file that might contain a picture of this aircraft? If not, could you suggest how I might obtain a copy?

James F. Aicardi

Dear Bill:

Please send me a copy of the 2d Air Division Roster so graciously handled by Odell Dodson.

Maybe we ought to make those pictured in the June 80 issue from the Mutual Savings Life Insurance Co. honorary members of our outfit.

Col. Dwight Covell

Hi Beautiful:

Nice to hear from you and it will be nice for you to hear from me. As I have stated, I am the oldest member of the 389th and I should keep in touch.

Last year, 1979, I took the whole month of July off; just to rest and travel a bit. Went to Alaska, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Delta Jct. and the Yukon. On the way back stopped at Seattle and visited Dennis Kelley, a member of the 389th who is now Director of Services Administration for Alaska Air Lines. I think he'll join if you write him. Name is: Dennis R. Kelley, Director Services Adm., c/o Alaska Airlines, P.O. Box 68900, Seattle, Washington 98188. Tell him "Pop" Harris told you to write him. He'll be elated — or something.

Just came back from a mini-vacation to Milwaukee, Wisc. where I celebrated my 79th birthday. My lovely daughter "Paula" lives there. Also visited Buffalo, N.Y., Niagara Falls, etc. Our son lives there. He is associated with N.Y. State Univ. at Buffalo.

I hope to keep on belonging and from time to time keep the Assn. in touch with what goes on around here.

Enclosed is my check for \$7.00.

Lloyd B. Harris ("Pop" to the 389th)

Dear Evelyn:

Sorry we didn't get to the Reunion, we had too many irons in the fire at that time — that's why I am writing this letter.

I found some old pictures from the service and I am sending them to you to put in the *Journal* — I've written on back of each picture — one fellow I remember but have forgotten his name. Also in the background in one picture is "C-Charlie the Old Veteran" — the plane that Thaddeus C. Poprawa (389th) wrote about in the "News Letter" dated Dec. 1978 — he wanted to know what happened to "Old Veteran" — it was shot down while flying supplies to Europe at the "Battle of The Bulge". I used to work on this airship, but fortunately wasn't on it when it was shot down. The plane "Veteran" is in the back of the men in one picture — hope its not been too long for answering "Poprawa," but just found the pictures enclosed — I had some copies made and I'm keeping the originals myself — You don't need send any of these back — put in album or whatever you wish to do with them. I thought perhaps you might put them in the "Journal" and maybe someone might recognize the one man Reuben can't think of his name — also some others will probably like to see these old pictures. I sure enjoy getting letters and the *Journal* — I sit down and read clear through soon as I get a *Journal*.

Reuben S. Hollenback  
R. 1, Box 132  
Amboy, Indiana 46911



Plane "Old Veteran". Mike Homick, Pfc.; Cecil Beck (Crew Chief). Plane went down in Battle of Bulge in Europe.



Dear Bill:

I am sending some cuttings and copy of the unveiling of a Plaque to the Memory of Glenn Miller that I have had done. Glenn played in the Gardens on Aug. 17, 1946. He also played in Norwich at Dukes Palace (was American Red Cross), Lido now Norwood Rooms, and a lot of the 2nd Air Division bases. His band gave so much happiness to millions of service men away from home and his music is very popular over here. I would be

very grateful for any photos of Glenn Miller or his Band, and the Gardens where the plaque is, is 200 yards approximately, from the American Room. Please tell your members to oblige. Yours faithfully.

Sidney Cullington  
42 Sun Lane  
Millers Lane  
Norwich, NR3 3NF, England

Dear Bill:

Needless to say, we thoroughly enjoyed the September issue of the *Journal*. The photos you printed are great.

By the way, Polly heard from a cousin of hers from Fresno. She said her boss was in the 2AD and he showed her our pictures in the *Journal*. I'll have to get his name. He couldn't make the reunion.

I heard from Pappy Daniels and he promises a rain-free barbecue in Texas next year.

I also heard from another 466er last week. A first timer at the reunion and your old football friend from Stow, Philip Manson. He had left his business card at my office while I was out.

Barkev A. Hovsepian (466th)

Dear Evelyn:

I first became aware of the 2nd Air Division Assn. when I received your *Journal* a few weeks ago. I am pleased to enclose my check for \$15.00 for two years dues.

I was a pilot with the 448th group from July 1944 to June 1945 and served on detached service with the 93rd group in October and November of 1944 to check out on GH bombing.

We have lived in north central Montana the entire 35 years since release from actual duty. I remained active in the Air Force Reserve for several years and recently became eligible to draw some retirement.

Keep up the good work.

Wilbur C. Bryson

Dear Evelyn:

Hello! Enclosed please find my check for \$7.50 and request to become an associate member of the Second Air Division Association - 463rd B.G. Since the reunion in Cambridge, I have found myself becoming more involved in the projects of the 453rd — thanks to my father and Mike Benarcik — and would like to formally be part of it all.

The 453rd is a great group and although I was "a bit young for the last war" as a customs agent in England said, I have become attached to our fantastic friends and find myself caught up in this living history. (For years World War II was only something that happened in junior history class and T.V. Specials.) I would hope we could find more young members to perpetuate the association and what it represents.

Take care till next year and thank you.

Ginger Stokes

Dear Evelyn:

As a participant in the 33rd Annual Reunion in Cambridge, Mass., I thoroughly enjoyed myself. During the reunion I was reunited with seven members of the combat crew with which I served during the war. With results like that I have decided to join the Association. You will find a check for my dues enclosed.

Hopefully our crew will be 100% at the next reunion in Texas.

I was particularly impressed with the type of people who were present. They were a credit to the organization.

Donald Faford

Ms. Cohen:

I am not now a member but this check should do it for "80" or "81" - don't know which. I would be interested in a copy of the 446th History if they become available. Some time ago I sent a list of our crew members to Mr. McCarthy. Seven of us have corresponded for some years. We can't find our tail gunner or our waist gunner. Marshall Berlin lived in the Chicago area and Keith Legg in Boomer, W. Virginia. Collectively we recently started an honest hunt for Marshall. I think we can locate him as I have a contact with the telephone company in that area. If I can supply any information, please let me know.

Frank Jones (446 - 705th)

Dear Evelyn:

I just realized that my dues are not paid, and I hasten to enclose a check for \$15.00. Please credit \$7.00 to my dues and the remainder to the Memorial Library.

I continue to cherish my membership in the Association, and hope that before long I can attend one of the conventions.

All the work you have done and continue to do on our behalf is sincerely appreciated.

John C. Mott (446th BG)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

In the 8th Air Force *Journal* Vol. 19, No. 3, Sept. 1980, page 15 at top, the picture of the B-24 with half its stabilizer missing is being flown by Lt. Novik of the 392 BG. One chute didn't open but the rest got out. Novik tried to bring her home, but it got into an inverted flat spin and broke up. He got out OK.

This airplane was ours. Lt. Bill Barnes, pilot, I was co-pilot. We were on pass in London at time Novik used it. The vertical stabilizer has a black bar with a P in the center of it.

John W. Arnold

Dear Evelyn:

I regret to inform you of the recent death of my father, Albert R. Gere, Jr., late of the 44th Bomb Group. He was a very proud member of the 2nd Air Division Association, and it is appropriate that I enclose the attached check to the Memorial Trust Fund.

I'm sorry he never got to a convention. We planned on it, especially the 1978 Norwich trip, but my mother died at that time and plans were changed. He always read your *Journal* from cover to cover, and enjoyed it immensely.

As a proud Associate Member of the Association, I commend membership to those "many sons and daughters, plus nieces and nephews" mentioned on page 1 of the September *Journal*. I'm a bit prejudiced, but I think the entire free world owes a great debt of gratitude to those men and women who served in the Division and in other similar organizations during WWII. These men and women know the misery, the terror, and the price of war, and an association to remember them and their deeds and their ideals is the least we can do for them. History has already borne out their valor and their contributions, but we must daily carry out their ideals.

I am very proud of my father, crew chief on "Ruthless." I am very proud of your Division. I am very proud of my Association. Future conventions should commit to even greater awareness on the part of my generation. I hope that I may be part of a few of them.

Evelyn, thanks for all you've done.

A. Raymond Gere III

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my application for membership and a check for the dues.

I landed at Newport, Wales May 30, 1942 with the 15th Bomb Sqdn. (L) and we were stationed at Grafton Underwood. (The first unit to arrive in England). Our A-20's joined with the British on the July 4, 1942 raid on Abbeyville in France for the very first raid by the 8th A.F.

When the invasion of Africa was planned I was transferred to 2nd A.D. Hqs. at Norwich. (The base on the outskirts of Norwich on the road to Great Yarmouth.)

Early in 1944, I joined the 389th at Hethel. About July, I drew the original "Delectable Doris" which was later copied for the memorial.

That B-24 is now at the Chino Airport about 15 miles from here but the picture was removed to make the movie about Joe Kennedy.

I have been trying for 35 years to find a colored photo of the original "Doris" and would be forever grateful if one of the members could help me obtain one.

Harry H. Darrah



Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my dues check. Please apply the balance to the Memorial Library fund. My wife and I have been to the Memorial Library on two different occasions. I am grateful that our fallen comrades have been remembered in such a lasting manner.

We were in Liberal, Kansas in Sept. '79 for the Liberal Army Air Base reunion. This affair was sponsored by the Liberal Chamber of Commerce and they produced a never to be forgotten event. A combat ready (well, almost) B-24J flew in for the reunion. When she came in on the final approach many moist eyes were in evidence. It was a privilege to renew our acquaintance after many years.

Enclosed is a picture I took from a B-26 of the B-24 as she departed Liberal.

Allen D. Cassady (448th BG)



Dear Evelyn:

Several months ago a letter was sent to me by Pete Henry, but unfortunately that letter was received at my home at a time when I was away, out of the country, on an extended trip. The letter was put away and I did not come across it until just very recently.

I am interested in becoming a member of your association and I do enclose my check in payment of the annual dues. I am sorry to have missed the past reunion which was held in Cambridge, Mass., July 4th, weekend, I hope it went well. However, let's look forward to next year and probably I shall be able to make that trip. I have revisited Norwich, and Old Buckingham, England, on a few trips since having been stationed there with the 453rd and 389th Bomb Groups. I was even lucky enough to have found our briefing hut, and an original blackboard during one such visit. The hut is now on a farm and the owner maintains a visitor's book which he asks everyone to sign and which he keeps. That book must have some very interesting signatures.

On one of the inserts Pete asked for the current address of Mahlon Dempewolf, my former pilot. Unfortunately 'Demp' has just died, a loss to his crew-members and family.

I do enclose with my check the membership application fully completed. Thank you for including me on your mailing list.

Wallace Magaziner

Dear Evelyn:

Why do you insist on using your army serial number for your address? I wish you would move back to the Plaza Towers because it did not take a full ten minutes to type out. That one was a cinch.

I am enclosing \$100.00. Please take out my dues, \$12.50 for a bottle of cheap cognac for the editor (former member of the old 68th) and send the rest to the library fund. The reason I write "cheap cognac" is because he certainly did not get used to the good stuff when he did all that navigation on the streets of Norwich in a jeep back there in 1944. His initials are W. G. R.

John E. Kirby (44th BG)

(ed note: Many thanks for the gift John and I want to let you know that it was used for two fifths — a fifth of the good stuff and the fifth amendment. Actually it wasn't a jeep. It was a pony cart pulled by a very small pony just as inebriated as the two characters racing it through the streets of Norwich. Never did find out who those two characters were.)

Dear Evelyn:

Please find enclosed \$6.00 for two 2AD Blazer Patches. I am proud to have been a member of the division.

Looks like "John Brown" has risen again as he oft did in the 787th in the days of yore. I guess that's what it takes though to get members of the 466th and of course the 787th. He probably doesn't remember a teletype operator turned gunner and assigned to Crew 505 (Capt. Hoover, P; Lt. Suto, CP, "The Lemon") as a replacement gunner. He should remember "No Ball" Herman Lourbrich too. Wrote to Hoover once, got no answer, guess he is to old now to write, ha. I'm looking for a Wilfred G. O'Brien who was a 2AD member also. Can anyone help me?

Edmund A. Turcotte

Dear Evelyn:

I would like to thank you again for being so helpful and so generous with your time and patience in my behalf at the reunion in Cambridge.

This was the first reunion that any of my family ever attended. Both my wife and daughter enjoyed it, and my wife is looking forward to attending the one next year in San Antonio, Texas.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$50.00 which I would like for you to apply to my dues and the balance to the Norwich Memorial Fund (or Memorial Trust).

James B. T. Russell

Dear Rick (Rokicki):

I received the plaque in fine shape. It's even better than the picture you sent to me. I still can't see how you made up this plaque, did all the engraving, mailed it and could turn in a profit for the Second Air Division. We do a lot of engraving at our store and this makes me appreciate all the more what you have done. Thanks again.

Bob Armbruster (458th)

(ed note: He does it with a combination of ingenuity and mirrors.)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Enclosed is my membership application together with my check to cover. Michael Fagen was responsible for the contact.

I do not correspond with any other members or former 8th Air Force personnel.

I do have strike photos, crew pictures, names, etc.

On Page 206 of Roger Freeman's book "The Mighty 8th", a B-24 is shown in the snow. I crashed in that area. It is almost an exact duplicate of my own photograph of the wreck.

Harold W. Fritzier (491st BG)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Thank you for sending Dick Butler's address — I wrote him a few days ago so do not yet have an answer, assuming he is the Dick Butler that I trained with and came overseas with in Jan. '43 with the 506th Sqd. of the 44th BG. I believe I was shot down before the 2nd AD was formed because there were only two B-24 groups (44th and 93rd) in England during my stay, later the 389th and 392nd joined in the summer of '43. I note that most of all that is written about the people, crews, etc. refer to those after the 1st year of operation of the B-24 groups in England. Guess few of the original crews were still around after the 1st year of operations which began in the fall of '42.

Tom Hobson

Dear Bill:

Once again, the latest *Journal* is excellent and has provided some very fine reading and information on some of the Groups.

The 'Letters' column is always interesting and this time proved to be no exception especially the letter on page 18 from John McClellan where he mentions his pilot Lt. Laurens. I had just received a few B-24 photos showing nose art on the airplanes, but in most cases the groups were not known, so I dropped a line to my friends Tony North and Martin Bowman to see if they had any ideas. One of the ships was named "Nana" and I remembered that the pilot's name painted under the cockpit was "Rut" Laurens so I dug it out for McClellan! How was that for timing? I can now happily put the photo into my 389th file, but if John McClellan or anyone else from that airplane should want a print I would be happy to get it copied for them. By the way, for the record, two other names on the aircraft were 'Rogers' in the bombardier's position and "Gluck" Gardner, by the radioman's window.

Harry Holmes

Dear Pete (Henry):

I do not recall your name but I am sure your face will be familiar. I was originally assigned to a Service Group attached to the 44th BG stationed in Fort Meyers, Fla. I remained attached to the 44th in England and then joined the Cadre for the 14th Combat Wing commanded by General Leon Johnson.

It was with great interest and pride that I read the reprint from the Stars and Stripes about Leon Johnson and the Ploesti Raid. The article was flattering to the General but inaccurate in some details. It once again proved that Public Relations is sometimes much greater than the capabilities.

During the General's command of the 14th Combat Wing, I had the pleasant duty of being his Sergeant-Major, and retained the position after the command was taken by Colonel Frederick W. Dent. The incident relating to Bill Douglas was one of many that I witnessed as to the type of person the General is, (I hope he is still alive.)

A few years ago the General was being televised in Philadelphia, the General returned my call after he was off the air. Unfortunately there was a plane waiting to take him back to Washington. I never heard so many recollections in the ten minutes that we spoke on the phone, his memory was exceptional.

The *Journal* has brought me many pleasant hours and, of course, many that were sad as I did lose many friends that I had made during my association with the 44th and 14th.

Keep up the good work, and am enclosing a check to be used wherever required. Thanks.

Ray Richman

Dear Bill

Recently I received a letter from Harold E. Jansen, The Netherlands, inquiring into details of the crash of B-24J, 44-10500, in Germany on 26 Sep 44, a 491st plane. He also asked about the crew. Mr. Jansen stated he is a member of "Airwar Bulletin 1939-1945". He stated he would appreciate the names and addresses of any of the crew so he could write them regarding this mission. I do not have the numbers of any of the 491st planes. Perhaps you can insert an article in a coming issue of the *Journal*, or you might know where I can find out about it. I have not answered this letter yet.

Mike Fagen (491st)  
1155 Spruce Ave.  
Atwater, Calif. 95301

Dear Paul (Lanning):

Thank you very much for the interesting material you sent to me and especially for your indicating a desire to join the 2nd Air Division Association. I am forwarding a copy of this letter to Ms. Evelyn Cohen, Membership Vice President of the 2nd Air Division Association, requesting that she forward you an application blank.

It was not exactly clear to me in your letter how you got my name and address but I presume that somehow you secured a copy of the last issue of the *Journal* which carried an article about my helping on the Roster. You said you forwarded your copy to Jimmy Stewart and requested another.

The editor of the *Journal* is Mr. William Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938. It is possible he will have an extra copy of the June issue. It is published quarterly and a copy is mailed to each member of the Association.

The summary of your 31 missions was especially interesting to me since they were all flown after I had been shot down on September 11, 1944. I had to chuckle when I read the summary of, I believe, your fifth mission to the effect "Joe damn near shot a 51-Foisy (pilot) got nervous and told nose gunner to shoot 51."

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I recently received from Col. Charles Stark who was the Senior Allied Officer at the Dulag Luft P.O.W. Transit Camp concerning Jimmy Stewart which I think will be of interest to you since he is a friend of yours. I was in a German army hospital not far from the Dulag Luft Transit Camp. I was lucky and had a German who befriended me and he got Col. Stark to bring me some shoes, Red Cross parcels, etc. He is retired now and lives in Mexico and I was fortunate enough to be able to visit him there last year. Incidentally, Jimmy Stewart is a member of the Association and receives the *Journal* every quarter.

I wouldn't think my picture would fit in very well amongst all of the famous people you know and have pictures of. However, I do have a German friend who will most likely be Chancellor one day. About the only thing that could prevent it is a divorce a couple of years ago at which time he was the Secretary General of the C.D.U., the Conservative Party of Germany. I and another student and the President of Davidson College in North Carolina brought him to this country for one year. His name and address is as follows and you can tell him I told you to write:

Professor Dr. Kurt H. Biedenkopf  
Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages  
Postfach 11 43  
4000 Dusseldorf 1

I made a copy of your mission summary and a couple of the other items and am returning the originals to you.

Thank you again for writing to me and I hope you will enjoy your association with the 2ADA as much as I have.

Odell F. Dobson



Dear Bill:

Here is the gang at the luncheon on May 31. It was a good one and the next will be better. Dave Patterson called and said he is going to see if the first trip for the '81 Reunion could be done at the same time. Local members at this luncheon could help a lot. Hope you can make it. There was 30 at the luncheon, but some could not stay for the picture.

Clinton E. Wallace (458th)

Dear Bill:

Hope everything is fine with you after the 2nd AD Reunion; wish I could have been there. Tony North was telling me all about it and he seemed to have a very good time. I believe the next one is in Texas(?) so I'll try and make that one.

You must think that every time I write to you I ask a favor; well this time is no exception! Believe it or not I've been asked to do another book on the B-24 Liberator by a London publisher this time. They are the same people I tried to interest in "The B-24 Liberator, 1939-45" but it was turned down. Afterwards, the publishers kicked themselves because during a visit to a publisher in New York he (my publisher) was asked why he hadn't brought a book out on the B-24 and was promptly shown my book as a good example of what was wanted! As it turns out the board of directors of the New York publishers are mostly ex-Liberator crewmen!!!

I would be most grateful Bill if you could run a little ad in the next Newsletter appealing for stories and photos of the Libeartors for this book. I would also like to hear from previous correspondents whose material was or was not used in "Fields" and the "B-24". Any color material especially welcome. All material kindly sent will be handled carefully and returned after use etc, etc. Would also appreciate any ideas you and the membership might have on what they would like to see in the book. After two on the subject I'm getting a little short on ideas. Anyone with stories of the Ploesti mission, Trucking, supply dropping, Hamm raid, Carpetbaggers etc, etc, would be most welcome.

Martin W. Bowman  
131 Aylsham Road  
Norwich, NR3 2AD, England

Dear Evelyn:

NEVER will we be able to express the joy we experienced at our first Second Air Division Annual Reunion! Plans now are to attend every year from now on.

We need to report a change of address — the new one being:

Eldridge D. Howard  
2000 Old Minden Road #28  
Bossier City, LA 71111

Hate to think of missing even one of the journals. See you at the 34th reunion in San Antonio!

E. D. Howard (Ltc ret)

Dear Mr. Robertie:

I attended the business meeting at Cambridge and found it to be most interesting.

I had many questions concerning the Audio Visual Aids project presented by Mr. Tom Eaton. I did not raise any as it seemed to be an announcement without the time for inquiries. However, I was in Norwich and was able to meet with Mr. Eaton on August 18, 1980. His response to my questions and our discussion provided an understanding and appreciation for the project. I feel confident that the entire membership would benefit if Mr. Eaton would be invited to either speak at the next reunion or submit an explanation for publication in the *Journal*. An informed group would demonstrate a higher level of enthusiasm, participation and support.

I also visited our library and was delighted to see the increased number of books available. As I looked at the main wall it became apparent that although the white wall above the book shelves added to the design of the room, it represented unutilized space. Other members felt the same. Perhaps a mural could be considered for the entire area depicting the very essence of the Memorial. It would enhance the beauty of the room and augment the Audio Visual Aids project that is being developed.

Margaret Calderalo (Assoc. - 466)

Dear Bill:

Please send me a Roster and here is the \$2.50 anyway. I thought the first idea was the best. However, I missed the article about the roster in the March issue. I have a habit of speed reading everything and I certainly missed that one.

I relived every minute of Wangsvick's story (June - 80). Walt Cullen was in the same barrack as I at Ole Buc. I was an old veteran by the time Cullen got there and I managed to get a spot for my bunk next to the coke burning heater. Cullen on occasion would come up with the shorts between payday. I seemed to always have a good sum of cash on hand and being an easy mark, I would always lend him any amount that he needed. One time I had loaned him a goodly sum and on payday he came to my bunk and paid back what he owed me. He threw the rest of his money into the open heater. We just sat there and watched it burn up. I just couldn't believe what I was seeing. As I recall, that was the very last time, Cullen borrowed anything from me.

James H. (Ham) Jackson (453rd)

# THE PX PAGE

## 2nd AD BLAZER PATCHES



Evelyn Cohen informs me that she still has a large supply of 2nd AD Blazer patches on hand so if you missed ordering one that last time around DO IT NOW.

I wish we could show you this in the original colors but printing costs forbid this. Just take my word for it that they are beautiful and make a brilliant display at reunion where everyone seems to have one.

Cost is \$3.00 and send your check or money order to:  
Evelyn Cohen  
Apt. 06410 Delair Landing  
9300 State St.  
Philadelphie, PA 19114

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*IN PREPARATION* — Volume 2.

The 14th C.B.W. (44th B.G., 392nd B.G., 491st B.G., & 492nd B.G.).

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458th  
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