



SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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As We View It

by J. Fred Thomas (Executive V.P.)

Since returning from Norwich, along with tending the affairs of the 392nd, we have spent considerable time becoming versed in the office of the Exec. V.P. We have met with Evelyn Cohen and Pete Henry, went to Dallas and met with Jordan Uttal, Gerry Merket, et al, and we have met with, phoned and/or written Charlie Freudenthal, Dave Patterson, Bill Robertie, Dean Moyer, Rick Rokicki, George Epper-son, and Bill Clarey. In general, we like what we see. However, there are several things we would comment upon.

All Vice Presidents have received a very informative letter from Charles Freudenthal in which he discussed the state of the Association's programs. We certainly concur and underscore the need for having a backup person for every officer in the Association. The sudden loss of Joanne Affronte brought the need for such a program into sharper focus. If you didn't know Joanne, she was one of our most enthusiastic supporters. You who were at Norwich will remember her as the lady in her WAC uniform who presented Evelyn Cohen with the clock at our reunion banquet. Those who attended our So. California mini-reunion last February will remember her as the lady at our head table who spoke about our Association. We will truly miss her, and it was our privilege to represent the Association, with Betty and Harold Prouse (392nd), at the memorial services held for Joanne.

We are pleased that our mini-reunion program is making progress. Mini-reunions are planned for the areas of Greater Philadelphia, Baltimore-Washington, Dallas, and we here in So. California plan one for January 28. It is our hope that these mini-reunions will cause our Association to mean more to many of our members.

Our Association has a situation that we would like to have drastically improved with the help of all hands, that is the dearth of Fighter Wing members, both flight and ground people. It is our opinion

we will never be a complete Division Association without a good representative number of Fighter Wing members. We strongly urge every V.P. and every member to help George Epperson rectify this situation. We keep hearing that Fighter Group people are "loners", but we don't buy that; they came from the same training programs the rest of us did. We would like to contact all Associations in which our 65th Wing people are active and invite those from our Second Air Division Groups to join with us in our overall program. We assure them we don't want to splinter their organizations, but we would dearly like to have several hundred Fighter Group members who would attend our conventions, have their mini-reunions at the same time we Bomb Group members have ours, and to take an active part in Association affairs.

Now, we address what we see as a potential and growing problem. While we are strong supporters of active Groups with reunions and mini-reunions, we would ask our Vice Presidents, especially those who double in brass for other organizations, to think Division. While our primary duties are to represent our own Groups, we should plan our Group programs on how they will mesh with the Division program. Just as our Groups and Wings formed in unison to bomb as a Division, so should our Groups cooperate and operate as a Division in our Association. With a new splinter group forming every so often, we ask our Vice Presidents to make the Second Air Division Association their first love. We don't expect to stop formation of new organizations, and generally we wish them well, in fact, we belong to other organizations, but we hope and expect our Vice Presidents will do all possible to coordinate the dates of those group's activities with those dates when our Division Association has programs scheduled so that our members aren't splintered and our Association program isn't diluted. We hope to cooperate with all dedicated organizations, but our first duty is to make our Association the most attractive of all so that our members will prefer to remain loyal to our aims and programs.

93rd Bombardment Group (H)

WW II, Hardwick, Norfolk, England

Mission incidents, crew pictures, mission completion lists, diaries, Form-5 data and other memorabilia sought for inclusion in a Group History. Former members please contact Carlos and Nadine M. Vasquez, 6341 Samoa Way, Carmichael, California 95608 (Phone: 916-944-0192). Note: Major Vasquez, USAF, Retired, is a 2nd AD Association member and served as a pilot in the 330th Bombardment Squadron (H) from August 1944 to February 1945.

445th Reporting

by Frank DiMola (445th)

One cold Sunday afternoon I read an article in the New York Times about a 75th birthday celebration to be held in Indiana, Pa. honoring Jim Stewart. It was planned for May 19-20, 1983—just one week before our departure for our 37th Reunion, Norwich, England. I started to make plans for attending the affair by making phone calls to people residing in the area and contacting the Chamber of Commerce of Indiana, Pa. A group of us got together and made arrangements to celebrate this event.

Elizabeth and I drove from New Jersey to Philadelphia to pick up Evelyn Cohen and proceeded to the Wakefield Farms, owned and operated by Lucille and Milton Stokes (453rd). The next morning we were picked up by Michael Benarcik (453rd) and off we went. Milton may have been lost while flying over England, but this time as our navigator, he did an excellent job. The dinner party was held Friday night, May 19th and we met some more 2nd Air Division members—Helen and Andy Low, a very close friend of Jim, Dorothy and John Nortavage and Dean Moyer and his wife. Almost every one in attendance either talked or danced with Jim. It was a picturesque site to see both of them blowing out the birthday candles on a huge cake which was also surrounded by "Harvey".

The following day, Saturday, May 20th, as we entered our breakfast room, I spotted a group of people chatting and one of them had a 2nd AD envelope in his pocket. I introduced myself and we picked up another 12 men and women who had also come to join the parade to be held in town. Andy Low met one of his navigators, A. Edward Wilen (453rd). What a small world.

Some 25,000 people were on hand at the County Courthouse for the dedication of a nine foot bronze statue. At noon there was a prearranged call from President Reagan, a close friend, phoning from Washington. A moment later, two Air Force jets roared into view, sweeping loud and low over Philadelphia Street, making four passes in tribute to Brig. Gen. Stewart, USAF (Ret.).

Later that afternoon, we had a small gathering with the members of the 2nd AD along with Jim and Gloria Stewart. It was beautiful to have partaken in this celebration in a typical American hometown—Indiana, Pa.

Now about the Reunion—Bill Robertie will not give me enough space in the *Journal*. It was just a warm remembering, heart-filled event. Just too descriptive for words. I received many letters from members of our Group that attended. I am quoting from Mary Kennedy Bernard, "I think that the glider flight over the Tibenham Air Base is a scene which few children

have ever see as their father's eyes had seen it 40 years ago—from the air—from the take off and to thank God for the home coming... I was pretty emotional up there."

From Don Myers "I enjoyed the Reunion and hope to see you and Elizabeth again in Palm Springs in '84. I certainly appreciate what you are doing for the 445th and especially want to thank the Planning Committee."

From Val and Richard Boucher, "We did enjoy the trip down to Tibenham very much. The Norfolk Gliding Club did a good job entertaining. That little chap in the wheel chair was so enthusiastic. 'Twas the least I could do but get my promised air mail letter off to him."

Val Boucher went to see her brother and family in Yorkshire, England. She was also a member of the ATS who might have been the culprits of the ack-ack fire. They did not recognize the Libs from our FOE.

From Chuck, "I must say it was quite a thrill to get back to the Norwich area and see the old base. It brought back memories 38-39 years old." It was a great sight to see Bob Springer, all six foot four of him, trying to get into those small gliders—but he did.

Many comments were made about the thrill they all got when Jim got up to conduct the Glenn Miller Band. Goose pimples and tears, I am sure.

Our old Air Base is now occupied by the Norfolk Gliding Club, presided over by Eric Ratcliff of Norwich. They would like to keep this operation going, but are meeting some problems about having the entire operation moved to another location. Our Director of the Air Base Tour, Kenneth Fox, Norwich, would like to hear from us with letters directed to the Town Hall, Norwich.

I would like to add to my report that my wife, Elizabeth was one of the two women that ventured thru the air—engine-less. Wanda and Buddy Cross made the balance of our trip in England as we toured Scotland and the London area.

I would like to thank all of you for accepting me again as your Group Vice President. I also want to appoint Buddy Cross, Amarillo, Texas as my Assistant VP of the Group.

The Memorial Fund Drive was a great financial success—We donated \$750.00 for the Memorial Library plaques. It was agreed that we set up a \$1000.00 endowment in the name of the 445th Bomb Group—within the Trust—for the purpose of buying books each year with the interest. Such books purchased will contain a bookplate indicating that the books were donated by the Group in memory of the 445th BG casualties. The balance of \$195.00 will be used to purchase books in our name. The Association and the Trust are indebted to the 445th for being among the first to participate in the endowment plan with the excess funds.

My objective for 1984 is a tree planting ceremony to be held at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. We are planning to have a section set aside for us so the Groups from the 2nd Combat Wing, 389th, 445th and the 453rd can honor our Groups in the same area. We left our mark in Norwich and at the fields in England. We need to leave a mark here in the States, because not everyone will be going to Norwich. Any one wishing to donate, kindly submit your check addressed to me.

On the Memorial Plaque—What we are planning, along with Milton Stokes and Don Olds, 453rd; Fred Thomas, 389th; and our 445th Group, is to place our Memorial bronze plaque and plant the trees along the Commemorative Walk at the U.S. Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson in Dayton, Ohio. The cost and maintenance of this project is \$1200 to \$1500. By the time you read this article, you should have a letter from me requesting your contribution. This article was to have been published in the September issue, but things went wrong somewhere. (Ed: *They sure did!!*)

We are arriving at the end of another successful year of the 2nd Air Division Association—broke the 5000 mark for membership; another glorious reunion in Norwich, England; many mini-reunions held in various parts of the contry. One mini-reunion that I was involved in was held in Philadelphia, Pa. on November 5, 1983. The Dinner Chairperson was H. C. "Pete" Henry, 44th BG and the Committee included Milt Stokes (453rd), Evelyn Cohen (Hdq.) and myself.

At this writing (October 5, 1983), we have received reservations for 155 people. More details as to the outcome of this affair will be published in the March '84 issue.

I received a wonderful letter from Eric Ratcliff, President of the Glider Club, Norwich. He sent a photo of the Tibenham airfield as it looks today. Any requests for a copy, I'll have some made up. Eric also told me that since our last visit, he has escorted quite a few more visitors around the base.

As most of you may know, our 37th reunion will be held at Palm Springs, California, October 1984. More information will be published in the following issues.

Once again—Elizabeth and I extend seasons greetings to all—A very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR to all.

FOLDED WINGS

Jack R. Bowker — 389th

Dan S. Blumenthal — 489th

About the Memorial

by Jordan R. Uttal

The article written for the September issue on or about 15 July stated that two Groups fell slightly short of the \$750.00 per Group goal for the Individual Memorial Project. I hasten to advise you now, that very shortly after writing that to meet Bill's deadline, both Groups not only caught up, but exceeded their goals, *just as all the other Groups did*. Congratulations to both of these units, and to all the Groups for making this project a success.

At the Board of Governors meeting in Norwich on 31 May, a good deal of attention was devoted to developing the image of our Memorial as a source of education, and as evidence of the American desire for world peace. It is the feeling of the Board that funds in Britain, to supplement those which we hope to be able to continue to contribute, will be easier to come by if these aspects are emphasized.

We of the Association embarked on the first steps in this direction prior to the start of the convention. The first step was the 2AD Living History Cassette program about which Hathy Veynar wrote in last December's *Journal*. We and our friends at the Library, and the University of East Anglia were delighted with the 40 or more cassettes that we presented to them, and we, and they, want more, many more, hundreds more. Those that have been delivered so far are being edited, some of them transcribed, and they are being offered for listening in the Memorial Room.

It is felt that students, and older people of all ages will be most interested in your reports of the history you helped make during your stay in East Anglia. As Hathy announced at the Convention business meeting on 28 May, the project is an ongoing one, and I repeat her request here that each of you take the time to make a recording, and send it to her. You were a part of that history, whatever your job, whatever your rank, and your prompt action along these lines will be appreciated. If you are bashful, or do not have a recorder, write it, and send it to her (with one buck for a cassette), and either she or her husband will tell your story.

The next step also took place before the start of the Convention, when five of us gave talks at two schools in Norwich on the subject, "The Americans in Wartime Norfolk by those who were there." In mentioning this in the minutes of the business meeting, the name of one of the participants was inadvertently left out. In addition to Dave Patterson and Charlie Cooper of the 445th, and J. D. Long of the 392nd, Gordon Bishop also made a valuable contribution to the story on behalf of the 446th. The audiences were groups of boys and girls in the 10-12 year range.

University of East Anglia T.V. Department televised both hour long presentations, and these will be edited down, and in all probability we will receive a copy. This past summer, as you may have read in Colin Sleath's letter in the *Letters* section of the September *Journal*, the University of Maine sent over a team to Norwich to work with the U. of E.A. on

school talks for children in Norfolk, and this probably will have appeared on New England T.V. stations this October or November. We hope, if it did appear, many of you "down easters" caught it.

If any of you are planning a trip to Norwich in the future, and you would be willing to undertake a school talk, why not write me with the details, and if there is enough time, I will try to work out the details with the University.

Mr. David Cleveland at the Audio Visual Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich, Norfolk NR47TJ, England will appreciate receiving any WW II motion picture film that you may have. He is interested in film of any kind, combat, social, or whatever, and promises to copy them, and return the originals to senders.

Finally a few words on the subject of Individual Endowments which you saw mentioned in the September issue. The idea is still in development stage, and when the Board of Governors has completed discussing the mechanics of how the funds will be handled, a more definite presentation will be made to the membership. This

idea was born just before the Convention. It involves a contribution (to the Association) of a minimum of \$1000.00, which will be conveyed to the Trust, in the name of the donor to be kept within the Capital Fund as a separate entity, and each year, the interest or income from each individual endowment will be used to buy books (or anything the donor stipulates) in the name of the donor, dedicated to the memory of anyone the donor specifies.

The concept was approved, in principle by the Executive Committee of the Association and then by the Board of Governors, but details still have to be worked out. To date we have received six endowments, two from Groups (who exceeded their \$750.00 target by more than \$1000 -- 445th and 44th), and four from individuals. More details will follow as I receive them from England and I hope to be able to write up the program for the March issue. If in the meantime any of you have any questions, please to write or phone.

Once again, on behalf of the Association, and Trust, I sincerely thank you for your generosity, understanding, and support.

Market Garden Memorial

Ted Parker (491st)

On September 18, 1944 the Second Air Division dropped supplies to the American and British airborne troops who had made their landings the previous day. This hazardous low level mission was flown with great success by the courageous aircrews of Second Air Division as their part in "Operation Market Garden."

To commemorate this invasion and liberation of Holland the American 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions along with the Dutch are building a museum. Through the efforts of my good friend, Father Gerard Thuring, a well known historian, is supplying the photos and other memorabilia to be permanently displayed there.



Over the Netherlands—Supplies are dropped from the air to paratroopers fighting in Holland.

This project is being financed by both private and public donations. Whereas we are to have an honored space dedicated to our participation in "Operation Market Garden", we should contribute some funds. Will you give something to help finance this costly project? Tax deductible contributions can be made payable to The 82nd Airborne Division Historical Institute Inc., Box 1882, Boston, MA 02205. For further information, etc. write me, Ted Parker, 491st BG, 297 Proctor Avenue, Revere, MA 02151.

The museum is to be dedicated on September 17, 1984 with elaborate ceremonies on the 40th anniversary of "Operation Market Garden."

392nd Bomb Group Report

by J. Fred Thomas (392nd BG)

Oct. 7—It seems a little early to be saying Merry Christmas and all those greetings we hear toward years end, but in order to get the *Journal* out to you before the Christmas rush, Bill has asked us to submit our reports by October 10. We do wish you the best of holidays and all good things for 1984!

Since this is the last issue of the *Journal* for 1983, we feel it is a good time to make a report on the state of affairs pertaining to the 392nd. Rick Rokicki sent us an up-to-date roster last week, and as of September 19 we had 330 members. We have a sense of pride in the progress made the past year, and we thank those who have helped us, both people of other Groups as well as our 392nd members. We recently mailed another 150 letters to men who served with our Group and we hope the next new members list will show another increase. We haven't found all our people by any means, so we continue to need your help in finding every member possible. We have had a flurry of new members the past few months.

Just as we have urged our members of longer standing, we invite our new members to feel an important part of our Association, to take part in our activities, and get the enjoyment of the camaraderie to be had by being reunited with friends with whom they served while with the 392nd. We have members from nearly every state, a number in Britain, and we even have one, Pete O'Neill, in Hong Kong. So, wherever you are, you are never far from friends with whom you have a lot in common. And that's just the 392nd; when you include all the thousands of members of the other Groups of the Division and the folks with similar backgrounds who are on the fringe of our Association, you have more friends than you can imagine.

As an example of friends on the fringe, when we were in Britain in June, we went back to Nutts Corner, the old airbase

outside Belfast where we landed the B-24 in May 1944. We were directed to contact a gentleman, Mr. Ernie Cromie, who had us out to their home for tea and gave us a lot of information about Nutts Corner. He invites any Americans who go back to the area to contact him. His address: 27 Woodview Crescent, Lisburn, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT28 1LF. Mr. Cromie is now a social member of our Association and looks forward to mail.

As we have said to all hands in our letters, you are invited and urged to write something for the *Journal*. While we like a good combat story, we have been short of stories by most other people who made it possible for us to get in the air and get shot up, shot down, and scared witless. It would have been a sad effort had you not awakened us, fed us, briefed us, loaded our bombs, maintained our planes, and all the other things that had to be done to man a combat outfit. Too, we have an idea that you guys back at the base had just as many adventures as we flyers did, and it's time you told us about them. Should you think you can't write, just send the story.

It's just a year until our national convention and reunion at Palm Springs, and it's none too early to start planning to attend the occasion. We know it isn't likely that everyone can attend, but we expect most everyone. We have a lot to talk about. We have been pretty vocal in our efforts to get our reunion held here on the West Coast, so it behooves all of us out here to make sure we are there and are ready to make the folks from the rest of the country glad they came. We know of three Squadron CO's among our members, and we will expect them. Everyone remembers his old CO if he doesn't remember anyone else. Then there is Joe Bush, our Exec. Officer; we hope he makes it. I'm sure a lot of our troops remember him. You guys have me where I have a lot of committee meetings to attend which is no big loss to you, but we need a lot of you old hands to keep the

ball rolling and to make the newcomers feel welcome.

At our mini-reunion we have to have an election, too. We didn't have one at Norwich as we felt we needed input from more than the small group we had over there. As you know, I was made Exec. V.P. of the Association, and while it isn't etched in stone that I will be asked to hold another office, it could be we will be given other duties, and if that should be the case, we will need a good assistant even if you should choose to ask us to continue as your V.P. Bob Powers of Escondido, CA is helping us now. In fact, Bob has said he would like the job of V.P. should we give it up. Bob was a member of our crew at Wendling and we are sure he would give the job his best shot. We can't just hand him the job; we need the feeling of the whole group. It's your Group, so give the matter your consideration and prepare to express your desires at Palm Springs.

We will say a few words to anyone who is considered for the V.P. job; to do the job justice, it takes a lot of time, enthusiasm, dedication and the willingness to write a lot of letters, not only to your own members and prospective members, but one has a lot of correspondence with people from a lot of directions otherwise. And, it is almost mandatory that one types or has someone whom he can depend on to type his work. The pay isn't much, but one derives a lot of satisfaction for his time spent and you get to know many more members from other Groups.

We remind you it is dues paying time again. So, please, send your check to Evelyn, if you haven't already. We have worked hard to get our membership where it is and we don't want to lose a single one of you. Remember, it is our policy that should any member have financial difficulty and feel he can't really afford his dues, he only has to write Evelyn a note and advise her. You will always be a Second Air Division person, and that's the best kind. Write to us with your views and suggestions. Again, happy holidays!

Metfield Musings!

by Carl I. Alexanderson (491st)

I hope all you 'Ringmasters' are on the same frequency because I have a hot candidate for Group Historian—Tom Rogers! He doesn't know it yet but one of these days I'm going to hit him with it. He has many facts and much trivia filed away.

For instance—he says "Nichols" was the name of the proprietor of the "Blue Lion" when we were there. Can anyone dispute him? Tom goes on to say that the 853rd site was just beyond the 854th, nearer the railroad tracks and had an MP at the entrance. I don't remember the MP box much less the railroad.

Tom wonders if the George Hotel is still in Swaffham? I don't know as I didn't get there this trip. Maybe Dave Mintner can answer that one. I hear it was good for at least three scotches. He also suggests some of the buildings we couldn't identify may have been from the period when missiles were based there.

On second thought Tom's not so sharp as he freely admits. He can't remember where the base hospital was, also the PX and the theater. He remembers Tractor Annie though and asks if she is running the turkey farm on the base. I doubt it. She would be on in years by now.

I have had many inquiries as to crew members and buddies. It is difficult to answer this type of question as it requires

a great deal of research. I'm not a very good detective, however I want those of you who have written to me to know that one way or another I shall respond.

Frank Lewis, R/O on Ray Trapps' crew, informed me that they are planning a reunion in Atlanta for 1984. He would like some things of interest. His address is 900 Greenwood Dr., Dublin, Ga. 31021.

I received correspondence from Morris Jones, Dave Mautner, Royce Colby, Ed Nelson and our good friend, Mike Fagin.

I am forwarding a letter which I received from Mike to Bill Robertie to be included in this column. It was written by Russ Tickner and must, by all means, be some sort of a record.

(ed: Refer to letter section).

453rd BG News

by Don Olds (453rd BG)

After devoting the entire last issue to the 453rd BG Memorial Room at Old Buckenham, we won't dwell on it long this time. However, I wanted to let everyone know that a picture postcard of the Parish Hall showing our room addition has been prepared and sent, or will soon be sent, to everyone who made a donation to the successful completion of the Memorial. Several of the donors are not members of the 2nd ADA, and without the *Journal* they have no way of knowing if the project was ever completed.



The photograph was sent to me with the request it be printed in the *Journal*. It was taken outside the 453rd Memorial Room on Dedication Day. Our addition can be seen where the roof drops slightly. In the photo, (l to r), are Don Olds, BG (Ret.) James Stewart and MG (Ret.) Andy Low. What is a three striper doing with all that brass?

I have very few copies of the 453rd BG History that has been reprinted. They have a paper cover and spiral plastic binding. We'll have to ask \$4.00 for them to cover printing, binding and mailing. If you want one let me know.

Some new members in 1980 are R. W. Barnhart, Richard Brown, Frank Parker, George Chipman, Harold Donovan, James Wampler, Ora Adams, Phillip Cristian, Harold Pace, Jack Armstrong, H.C. Giambruno, Ralph Blouch, John Burke, Orlando Russo, Frank Kumor, John Dolan, William Garrett, Aurele Veilleux, Morgan Hartman. We learned this past July that a massive

heart attack claimed the life of Ulma Perry. Ulma was co-pilot on the original Crew 57 of the 734th Sq. Charles Ward was the pilot and they flew most of their missions in *Male Call*. Ulma attended the reunion in Nashville and enjoyed himself. Our condolences to his widow, Clemmie, and the Perry family.

Also, Stanley Kelly, another of the original pilots of the 734th Sq., has passed away. Our sympathy to the Kelly family.

I'm going to start working on you early to come out to Palm Springs in October '84 for our reunion. We should have another good turnout and I'm certain you'll enjoy yourself. See some old friends and meet some new ones. Hopefully you people in the southern California area will be out in force. At least try and come out on the evening of our 453rd BG banquet.

The *Journal* editor would appreciate receiving stories and articles from non-flying personnel for publishing. Hopefully some of our ground personnel will write stories about some of the all night 'bombing up', refueling, etc. It's easier than you think.

Anyone out there familiar with a B-45 that was used by Gen. Ira C. Eaker for his personal aircraft when he was commander of 8th AF Bomber Command early in the war? The Oklahoma Wing of the Confederate AF has restored one and wants it to be as close to the configuration of the Eaker aircraft as possible. They have a color photo showing it in standard camouflage paint and bright yellow under the wings with lettering, US ARMY. Did it have a name? Where was it based? Significance of the V painted on the tail? If you have any info contact Herb Bradley, 2240 NW 56th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73112.

Beautiful Gull Lake, (in the summer), at Brainerd, MN was the setting for a get-together for some ex-453rd folks in July. Attending were the Bob Johnsons, George Rundblands, Bob Coggeshalls, Ed Bebenroths, Dave Cowens, Jack Nortridges and Elden Rhodes. They sent a photo which I'm sending to the *Journal* editor to print if it isn't too dark. (Ed: It was too dark).

Although it is only September as I write this, and seems a little early to be thinking Christmas, this is for the December issue. So, Mimi and I want to wish you all a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year and we hope to see many of you in Palm Springs next October.

NOTICE

The 2nd ADA Film Library is now under the care and direction of Howard C. (Pete) Henry. A complete listing of films available appears elsewhere in these pages. If you are having a mini-reunion or gathering write to Pete for available films. 164B Portland Lane, Rossmoor, Jamesburg, N.J. 03381.

Missives From The 492 BG

by Bill Clarey (492nd BG)

From the standpoint of interest, a feeling of being welcome, general comradeship and having one of the best visits ever; that is my description of the 36th 2nd ADA convention in England in 1983.

The people in Norwich, Norfolk and Suffolk went out of their way to see that we enjoyed ourselves to the utmost.

We visited Rackheath and Watton Bases this time as we had not been there before. While at Rackheath, we took part in the dedication of a new marker, a part of which depicted a B24. The marker was of carved wood, beautifully done.

One little fellow, named Graham, was tape recording our experiences as a school project. I told him that the Norwich Library had about forty cassettes that members of the 2nd ADA had made and would be available for his use. A Short-Snorter dollar bill was started for him in hopes it would be of interest in years to come.

After the convention, Charles Hayes-Halliday and I visited Goreslton, England, where I was put ashore after being picked up out of the North Sea by the boat that Charles was on. While there, a gentleman pointed out a grave marker at Ashby Dell, Suffolk, where a B17 and two P47's crashed on May 7, 1944 and April 8, 1945. Visiting the weathered marker, we noted these names:

1st Lt. Ralph W. Wright
Lt. Richard Curran
Lt. Russell P. Judd
Lt. Jack W. Raper
Lt. Carl A. Herrmann
F/O Louis S. Davis

The new tail markings addition to our Memorial Room in the Norwich Library is superb and adds very much to the value of the Memorial. Thanks for a job well done to those people responsible for the addition. Incidentally, the 492BG is still a little short on its contribution to the tail marking fund in spite of what you may have read.

What a thrill it was to have Jimmy Stewart and his wife, Gloria, at the convention. Jimmy is still a very good band leader. The 492 people want to thank Jimmy and Gloria for attending.

The candle lighting ceremony was very impressive, as they all are, and it is a most important part of our getting together!

The ceremony at Cambridge Cemetery was most benefitting to our fallen comrades. I just wish it was closer to home in order to be able to visit it more often.

Those not in attendance were thought of and sorely missed. So — Hope to see you in Palm Springs in '84.

Thanks again East Anglia for the wonderful time.

8 BALL-YHOO

by Pete Henry (44th BG)

My September 8-Ball column included a letter from Jordan Uttal thanking the 44th BG for our \$1000 endowment. In August, I received a letter from Colin Sleath, Deputy Divisional Librarian for the Norwich Central Library, also thanking us for the donation and advising that they have selected the following book as our contribution for 1983: *The Right Place At The Right Time* by Robert MacNeil.

The dedicatory label placed in the book reads as follows: "Presented to the Norfolk County Library by the members of the 44th Bomb Group 2nd Air Division, USAAF, in memory of all members of the Group who fell in action 1942-1945."

I also received a letter from Nick Walter in July, on behalf of the Governors of the Memorial Trust thanking us for the donation. Nick is Clerk for the Trust.

One of our new members is Col. (Ret.) E. H. Hammer, Jr. from Tustin, CA. The Col. was a Pathfinder lead crew pilot in the 448th BG and later worked as Assistant Operations Officer for the 44th BG at Shipdham. After WWII, he flew as a pilot for TWA for 2 years and then returned to the U.S. Air Force as a Major. He was a pilot and Wing Intelligence Officer and Operations Officer at Rapid City AFB from 1947 to 1951 during which time he qualified as a 6-Jet B-47 pilot. The base at Rapid City was renamed Ellsworth AFB after B. G. Ellsworth who died in the crash of a B-36. Col. Hammer continued in the Air Force as a pilot, Staff Officer, and Commander until his retirement in 1969 as a full Colonel, after 29 years of service.

Since 1969, he has worked for the Ford Motor Co. in California as an automotive test engineer and was Administrative Assistant to the City Manager of Santa Ana, CA for 3½ years. He has been fully retired since 1976 when his wife died.

From the Society Page: Col. (Ret.) Charles E. Hughes and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Marilyn Fritz Snyder were married Thursday, 21 July 83, in San Jose, CA. Charlie (he let's me call him that now!) was my 66 Sqdn. C.O. in 1944-45. Congratulations and Best Wishes to Charlie and Fritzie. We look forward to seeing both of you at the 2ADA reunion in Palm Springs, October 1984.

Joe Warth wrote in mid-Sept. to advise that the 44th BG/BW/SMW Memorial program to erect a small plaque mounted on a stone cairn in the Shipdham Churchyard was accomplished Sept. 3, 1983. Gary Rowell, Shipdham resident whom I met May 30, also wrote to me about the ceremony and sent copies of two newspapers covering the dedication and parade. Gary said there were about 65 of our 44th BG members in attendance (about 50% were 2ADA members) and Joe said that better than 550 people were in the parade and over 600 attended the church services. Many of the Shipdham families had 44th couples as guests in their homes and a lot of new friendships were made. Congratulations to Joe Warth for a job well done.

I have sold all my copies of the original order for 21 of "Forty-Fourth Liberators Over Europe" reprint. Anyone looking for a copy send \$22.50 to C.W. Lundy, 3295 N. 'H' St., San Bernardino, CA 92405.

I received a letter from Mrs. Eleanor J. Riordan of San Mateo, CA, who was formerly married to 1st. Lt. Thomas E. Bartmess (missing in action over Kiel, Germany, 14 May 43 and, later, officially reported KIA). Lt. Bartmess was the Navigator of *Little Beaver* in the 67th Sqdn. and Mrs. Riordan advises that Col. William R. Cameron was the original Co-Pilot of *Little Beaver*. She says that she lost contact with Col. Cameron and Capt. William T. Austin many years ago, but is seeking information from anyone about what happened in England while Lt. Bartmess was there. I will write to her and give her Col. Cameron's address, but I do not have one for Capt. Austin. If anyone has information about Capt. Austin or anything to do with Lt. Bartmess' tour of duty in England, I'll be happy to forward the details to Mrs. Riordan.

This column will be more brief than usual so that Bill Robertie can add an item about General Leon Johnson and a new commemorative stamp. If he prints the article someplace else in the *Journal*, it still means that the 44th BG will have more than their share of newsprint. Until next time, keep those cards and letters coming. I'm just about out of material. **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

1984 REUNION
Palm Springs
1984
Oct. 4-7

389th Bomb Group Memorabilia

by Bud Koorndyk

How many of you can recollect the winter months of 1942-43-44-45, when we were told to get our Christmas greetings out to our loved ones at home early?

As I begin our news items for the December *Journal*, we have been reminded by Bill Robertie that this epistle must be in his hands by the 10th of October, so I find my wife June and myself wishing you all a very happy holiday season. May God keep you all in his keeping throughout the year of 1984. May all your days be filled with peace and contentment and your lives be showered with many blessings.

At the time of this writing, I'm sure all of the troops have enjoyed the September *Journal* with all its descriptions of our reunion in England. As we were warned by Bill Robertie, he had to edit some of our reporting because of space limitations. This is true of 389th news and the story that we all shared in England. Earl Zimmerman

has consented to formulate this into story form and it should be printed in our December *Journal*.

Then to Bob Nicely, our Group Historian, a word of apology. Somewhere along the line his name had been changed to Bill Nicley. So sorry Bob.

Bob is preparing a pictorial history of the 389th Bomb Group, so please get your old photos in to him. He will be taking these albums to our future reunions. His address is: Bob Nicely, 6219 N. Mitchell, Phoenix, Arizona 85033

Our membership drive has bogged down somewhat lately and if it weren't for our old faithful, Roy Jonasson, sending me names and addresses of personnel from the 389th of past years, I would be functioning in this capacity by myself.

Remember, gentlemen, I can only perform my job successfully as your Group V.P., if I can get the support of the entire

body. So please continue to help build up our membership by feeding me names and addresses. I have prepared a packet that I mail out to every name and address submitted to me. If we are to attain our goal of 50 to 75 new members by October of 1984, we must work at it as a team effort.

We need human interest stories of our Bomb Group during the war years. We would especially like some stories from the ground crew level. Ground crew personnel has wanted more recognition, with which I fully agree, but we get few human interest stories from them for our *Journal*.

The 389th now has a good complement of ground people, thanks to the work of Roy Jonasson, so let's get some stories in to Bill and me and we'll see that it gets into story form if this would help.

Plans for our get together in Palm Springs in October of 1984 should be in the final stages and can be found elsewhere in this December Issue. Let's make it the largest and best turnout we've had.

First Time Around

(Following is an account of his first mission, written by Sgt. Henry "Slim" Bethke of the 489th Group, on November 5th, 1944. Charlie Freudenthal)

Here is the story of my first mission over Germany. It was a rough one—especially for our first. Even the old crews said it was one of the roughest they had ever flown.

Our part starts on the night of Nov. 3, 1944, the anniversary of my enlistment in the Air Corps. At 6 p.m. we were told we'd be on the next day's mission. We went to bed about nine so we would get some rest; we didn't know what time we'd be awakened. But at 4 a.m., Nov. 4th we were awakened to go to breakfast and then to briefing. At briefing we learned about our target, flak, and possibilities of fighters we were likely to encounter. The flak was supposed to be very intense over this area. It was even more than intense, but that's getting ahead of my story.

From Intelligence reports, we could expect in the neighborhood of two hundred enemy fighters. Our target was to be a synthetic oil plant just on the outskirts of Hanover—a very important target. Our escort was to be some six Groups of fighters; five Groups of P51s, and the other a Group of P47s. From this you can see what trouble we expected. We left briefing and went to pick up our flying equipment—heated suits, flak suits, Mae Wests, parachutes, harnesses, etc. We got out to the ship around 6 and started checking guns, ammunition, oxygen, bomb load, the ship's condition and everything in general. Each man had his job to do, and did it.

About 7:30, the pilot, co-pilot, and navigator came from briefing. The engines were then warmed up and we were ready to go. At 8:15 we began to roll down the runway... Pitts and Gardner were at the controls, pilot and co-pilot respectively. Stevenson was our navigator, and a very good one as you'll see later. Penke, the bombardier, was in the nose turret; Schmidt, the engineer, was in the Martin upper; Pavlovich on the radio set. Shumpert, who later saved my life, was at the right waist gun, and yours truly at the left. Yelton manned the twin fifties in the tail turret, and a new crew member was added to work our radar jamming equipment.

We left the field and headed for our point of assembly. There were planes all over the sky and you wondered how on earth they'd ever find their places in formation. All three Divisions of the 8th Air Force were going on the raid to one target or another in Germany. The 1st Division had a target northeast of ours and the 3rd, plus part of ours, was to hit the Ruhr Valley. From approximately 8:30 to 8:45 a.m. we were assembling over the North Sea in the vicinity of Yarmouth. It certainly was a sight to remember, seeing

those planes find their positions in formation. It was then that we found a leak in the oxygen system. We stopped it, but were down to 200 lbs. of oxygen per man.

The Group was formed and on course at 10 a.m. We flew over the North Sea to the coast of Belgium, up the coast to somewhere near Heligoland, where we saw our first flak. It was about two or three miles to our left and didn't bother us. We had been climbing since we left England and were now at 23,000 feet. The temperature was minus 25, and the ground was hidden by thick clouds some 10,000 feet below us.

Our first escort planes met us just as we hit the German coast. They certainly looked good to us. These P51s really are beautiful. They went all the way over the target and back with us. We didn't seem to have a care in the world as we went cruising along up there in formation... We kept scanning the sky for some of those 200 fighters that were supposed to be up there waiting for us. About 14:20 I started throwing chaff and didn't have much time to look around. Was this the time for the fighters to strike? The time went slowly—10 minutes, 9, 8—open the bomb bay doors, 7, 6, 5—the chaff going out, watch for fighters; 4, 3, the lead squadron bombs were falling, 2—the lead squadron had turned into a wall of flak! Ships were being tossed all over the sky. Suddenly, without warning we were on one wing tip, then the other, and from what we heard later almost upside down. If the pilot and co-pilot hadn't been on their toes, I wouldn't be here to write this, nor would any of the others on the crew. God was with us, but we didn't realize just how much He looked after us 'til later on the return trip.

In our mad gyrations in those brief seconds, I was thrown against the top of the plane, then fell flat on my back on the floor. My oxygen line disconnected and I was too numb to fasten it. By this time the plane was under control and we were out of the flak area. Shumpert was right on the ball. He slipped my connections together and turned on the emergency oxygen supply. His hose connection came apart, so he left me for a second to fix his, but was right back to help me. If he hadn't been on his toes, I would have been up the creek.

Well, we had dropped our bombs and were on our way home! It didn't seem possible, yet there we were. Where were those fighters? Not that we wanted them, but their not showing up scared us in a way. We had just made our second turn after "Bombs Away" when all of a sudden, Wham!—the number one engine cowl was blown to bits. At first I thought it was the prop. Pitts quickly feathered the engine and there we were over Germany with three engines. Slowly, but surely, we lost our position in the formation. We weren't the only one with an engine out. By this time the P47s were there as added cover.

We reached the English coast, and were

sweating out the time, as we kept dropping farther behind the other planes. Forty minutes to go to the Channel, then 20, then there was the channel ahead. We were almost home—only 100 miles or so and we would be on our own field. I felt like singing "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer," when all of a sudden #3 engine started throwing oil. One hundred or so miles to go over water and suddenly #3 quit!

We started losing altitude fast with only two engines running. Pitts told us to start throwing things out, and believe me, we did! Everything we could get out the hatch. In the meantime, the navigator plotted our position and gave it to Pavlovich, who had contacted Air-Sea Rescue. It looked like some of our practice ditching would come in handy. All this time, guns, ammunition, flak suits, oxygen bottles, etc., were going out the back hatch. We were working like beavers, and each of us was praying silently. Pitts didn't hear any inter-phone talk, so he called us up to see if we hadn't bailed out. Ol' Stevenson's plot was right on the ball and brought us in only 10 degrees off course. We were safe; well, over land anyway. Now it was up to the pilot to set us down safely with only two engines.

We told the tower we were coming in on two engines and they didn't believe us. Pavlovich was firing red flares to warn other planes of our emergency landing... It was up to Pitts. We had confidence in him, but we were still sweating. First toward one side of the runway, then straight toward it. Shumpert, Penke and Yelton were at places near the half-deck. I stood near the left waist window. There were crash wagons and ambulances waiting. We levelled off and the wheels hit; we'd made it!

When we stopped rolling, there were ten very humble men in that ship. God had been with us, and we knew it... We found out later that there was only a pint of oil in #4 engine; another few minutes and we'd have lost that one too. If that had happened on final, none of us would be here tonight. That was our first mission... and today, Sunday, we gave our thanks to God.



BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP
by
Vere A. McCarty



Marie and I just returned from a month in Europe to find that Editor Bill Robertie had advanced the deadline for the December *Journal*. So here goes, jet-lag and all!

Some of you have sent photographs, diaries, orders and other material. I took a packet of these items with me and delivered them to Harold Jansen at The Hague. He made copies and returned the originals to me when I stopped at Amsterdam enroute home. Harold hopes to be able to meet with John Archer (Bungay) soon and to establish a format for their 446th Bomb Group history. A chronological diary of all the missions, interspersed with activities around the airbase, is one possibility. More diaries are needed, along with personal recollections and photographs. Statistics are not a problem as they are a matter of record, but personal experiences, both in combat and at Flixton, are urgently requested.

Although the 1983 Norwich reunion is now history, the memory of it lingers on for those who attended. Bill Davenport furnished a photograph of the Bungay delegation, posing on the runway of the former Station 125, Flixton.



From left to right (Standing): Dale Story, George Gigstad, Rudy Huddleston, John Green, Howard Edmunds, Jim Shannon, Jim Longstreth, Bill Davenport, Rod Jackson, Bob Moore, Henry Kingsbery, Carl Gjelhaug, John White, Tom Grant, and Jim Forrest. (Kneeling): Frank Foster, Herb Gordon, Jim Payne, Audrey Risley, Al Witowski, and Gordon Bishop.

Bill and Jean Davenport videotaped the ceremonies at Bungay and the visit to the Flixton airbase, hoping to show it at the Palm Springs reunion next fall. However, there is a disappointing and as yet, unresolved complication.

I am pleased to report that members of the 446th Bomb Group exceeded our goal, not only to provide a memorial plaque at Bungay, but to provide our share toward the Individual Group Memorial at the Second Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich. The \$110 in excess funds have been released to the Memorial Trust with

which to purchase books for the library in the name of the 446th Bomb Group.

In replying to my inquiry about John White's airplane, he recalls what many of us felt about our own airplane — John was navigator on the Mentecki crew, 706th Squadron. He says: "Your inquiry concerning our crew arrived today. In deference to custom and accuracy I would call it the Mentecki crew, rather than the Home-breaker crew since we were only one of several who chose to be photographed in front of the art work on that ship. Actually, our airplane was one of the later metallic jobs, unadorned by any artwork including even a name, except for the radio communications handle, MANAGE-p-PETER.

"Even so it is with some reverence that I spell that name out. I look up from this writing for a glance at a replica of it on my desk, complete in every detail except for the RT squadron designation which shall be left to a more skilled hand than mine. She took us to Magdeburg and back three times, to Halle twice, the supply drop at Wesel — 35 trips in all, Berlin included. I can't liken her to a mother, but perhaps to a mother hen. Didn't we all feel a bit

'chicken' when we gathered under her wings to go?

"Some ships were more distinguished because of inspiring names, like *Classy Chassy* and *Shoo Shoo Baby* or by dedicatory names like *Ronnie* and *Freckle Face*, but the drab handle MANAGE-p-PETER, for an otherwise undistinguished and unadorned ship, conjurs up an inspiring feeling which I doubt St. Peters, with Michelangelo's adornments would match."

Well said, John. I'll leave you until next time, hoping then that our editor will give me a bit more time to prepare. *CHEERS!*

From Waist Gun to Computer

Rick & Ceil Rokicki (458th BG VP)

Supposedly every G.I. goes thru a stage whereby he volunteers for some duty he probably should have thought twice about. I did it once in 1943 and found myself behind a waist gun in a B-24 (with absolutely no training as to how to use that weapon) and I did it again in the Executive meeting in Philadelphia earlier this year. Now, you would think that such volunteering once every 40 years, couldn't possibly be that bad... or could it?

Ceil and I spent the middle weekend of July with Bill and Hazel Robertie. It was nice visiting your old "stompin' grounds" in Massachusetts. At that time, we lived about 5 miles from the Roberties, but of course, didn't know of them nor the Second Air Division Association. Worked out of Boston's Logan International Airport from 1958-1964.

We drove up this time since I knew we would have a trunk and back seat jammed full of Apple II computer, the various components, bits and pieces of software, paper, labels, manuals, etc. on our return trip. I thought about the few hours of training Bill and Hazel were able to give us and I felt that I would get some real "on the job training" when we started working the machine the following weekend. It took 23 calls to Ipswich, Mass. to get it all sorted out, but we met the deadline of August 8 and had some 5,000 mailing labels, 4 pages of single spaced sheets of roster additions and changes, and a new roster print out that took just about every spare hour we had. We both felt that that was the toughest part and everything else would be easier in future operations.

Now, please don't write and ask for a total new roster or your Bomb Group roster print out. We just cannot handle such requests at this time. However your BG VPs will have the latest print out of his respective Group and if you desire a copy, get in touch with him. Remember that he will have to Xerox the sheets of your Group (that could run from 25 to 40 pages), and pass the printing charge back to you. That charge could be at least 10¢ per sheet, so I would advise you to get in touch with him first to determine actual costs.

As you know, the Apple II, or almost any home computer, takes time. Ceil and I will do what we can to furnish the Association's needs first and then do some time studies on various functions to see if we can be of further assistance to the Group V.P.s. I feel sure that as we become more familiar with the programming functions of this Apple, we shall be come more efficient and more effective to our membership's needs.

What Happened To The 856th

by George Greiff (492nd Det 25th)

I was very much interested in Igor P. Petrenko's letter in the January *Journal* about his difficulty in locating records of the 856th BS. I completed my European service as a member of the 856th, which was, of course, part of the 492nd BG. While I can shed some light on what happened to the 856th, I expect I also may add a bit of confusion to the situation. The point is, of course, that the 492nd was broken up in August 1944, and its four squadrons dispersed to various bases and missions.

Although there were the usual official denials, a major reason for break-up of the 492nd was the group's heavy losses. In the less than three months during which the 492nd flew daylight bombing raids, from its first mission on May 11, 1944, until its final mission on Aug. 7, the 492nd lost 51 aircraft to enemy fire and six more to other operational hazards. These were the heaviest losses suffered by any B24 group in a three-month period during the entire history of the Eighth Air Force.

There has been a good deal of speculation about the reasons for these tremendous losses. There was the usual story about the 492nd being singled out for Luftwaffe revenge because of treacherous 492nd crewmen who lowered the landing gear of their B24 to signal surrender, then shot down a German fighter escorting them in. There is no more evidence to support this story than there was when the same story was told about other hard-hit bomber groups. A more valid reason for the 492nd's heavy casualties, perhaps, was the fact that it was the first B24 group to fly unpainted silver aircraft and, as a result, was easy to spot and recognize.

What appears certain is that the heavy losses were not the fault of the 492nd's crews or commanding officers. The group's worst day came on June 20 during the nine-hour round trip to bomb the synthetic oil plant at Politz, when 14 of the 492nd's B24s were shot down and five others were

forced to land in Sweden. When the Luftwaffe's fighters struck, the Second Air Division was flying a strung-out formation over the Baltic Sea, and the 14th wing, leading the division, was running six minutes late. A foul-up had reduced fighter protection to a single Mustang group, and the 492nd, the wing's trailing low group, was both vulnerable and a natural target.

The precise disposition of 492nd personnel was a bit complicated. Looking through my own service records, and also through reading of books like Roger Freeman's *The Mighty Eighth*, Martin Bowman's *Fields of Little America* and Allan Blue's *The Fortunes of War*, I've found the picture is pretty much like this:

On Aug. 5, 1944, the 492nd BG was transferred from North Pickenham to Harrington to conduct special operations instead of bombing missions. This, however, was largely a paper operation; the 492nd personnel moved to Harrington were mainly headquarters personnel. The air and ground crews for the group came chiefly from the old 801st Carpetbaggers Group, already at Harrington.

The 492nd's original four squadrons, the 856th, 857th, 858th and 859th, were transferred from North Pickenham to separate stations, but individual crews in each of the squadrons were in some cases sent to still other bases. The 856th was moved to Cheddington, where the air crews were assigned to the 36th BS, engaged in radio counter-measure work, and the 406th, a night leaflet squadron. All 492nd BG crews with fewer than 15 missions in August were moved into the 859th BS, building the squadron's strength to 29 crews. The 859th was transferred to Rackheath. It became part of the 788th BS of the 467th BG.

To complicate matters a bit more, Col. Eugene H. Snively, the 492nd's CO, took a contingent of five lead crews to Shipdham, where Col. Snively became

CO of the 44th.

My own crew flew to Britain in a B24 during the summer of 1944, and we were assigned to the 859th BS of the 492nd BG just as the group was being broken up. We were not sent to Rackheath, however, with the majority of 859th BS crews, but were sent instead to Watton, where we were placed on detached service with the 652nd BS of the 25th BG, flying weather reconnaissance missions in B24s and B17s. Some of us were given special training and flew weather and photo reconnaissance missions in British Mosquitos.

We remained on detached service with the 25th, but we remained officially a part of the 859th BS of the 492nd BG until late in September of 1944 when, for some reason that I never quite understood, our crew was transferred to the 856th BS, still within the 492nd BG. There was no other change in our assignment. We remained on detached service with the 652nd squadron at Watton, still flying reconnaissance. This was our status until I completed my tour with 45 missions in March of 1945 and was returned to the United States.

I found it interesting that Mr. Petrenko, also in the 856th, was stationed until August 1945 at still another airfield, Northampton, near Kettering, where he flew special operations with the OSS to Norway and Denmark. It appears likely that this unit was an outgrowth of the 492nd Carpetbagger group set up at Harrington in August 1944. The 856th BS designation was revived late in 1944 at Harrington, and the Carpetbagger 856th flew black B24s, like those flown by Mr. Petrenko, on cloak-and-dagger missions to Norway and Denmark late as Mar. 1945.

This, of course, does not solve the problem of why Mr. Petrenko's unit was stationed at Northampton instead of Harrington. Perhaps it was another one of the orphan units, like our small group at Watton, scattered throughout the Second Air Division when the old 492nd was broken up. It would have taken a pretty advanced computer to have kept track of all of us—and there were no computers during World War II.

THE BOOK NOOK

Fields of Little America

by Roger Freeman

By Martin Bowman. A well written, highly photographic history of the Liberator Squadrons of the U.S. 8th Air Force's Second Air Division (the "B-24 Division"). This work contains a large selection of previously unpublished photos including aerial views of all Second Air Division bases. Coverage includes: Ploesti, the Kiel raids on U-boat pens, D-Day, the Ardennes Offensive, bombing accuracy tables, etc. Excellent photos of aircraft, airfields, nose art, aircrews, and bombing raids. 120 pgs., 172 vintage photos, 8½" x 11", hardbound.

Retail Price \$16.95

Our price including postage and handling \$15.00. Send check or money order to William G. Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, MA 01938.

The B-24 Liberator At War

By Roger Freeman

None other than Roger Freeman himself provides this first time, in-depth look at the incomparable Liberator. With emphasis on the plane's individuality and unique qualities, Freeman concentrates on historical high points and previously unpublicized service exploits. Included are emphasis on the type's versatility and use in theatres around the world, personal accounts from new members, vintage action photos, new information which helps provide perspective in the "Lib" versus "Fort" debate, comparisons with the B-17, etc. 8½" x 11", hardbound, 128 pages, 200 photos.

Retail Price \$16.95

Our price including postage and handling \$15.00. Send check or money order to William G. Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, MA 01938.

"We Ought To Do This More Often" (from the song of the same name)

by Archie A. MacIntyre (492nd BG)

Over the Labor Day weekend, thru the efforts of A. M. Mohny and the writer and with the help of many members, a mini-reunion of the Second Air Division Association was held in Lansing, Michigan.

This is the second get-together of our members in the Michigan area in less than four months. The pilot model for the Labor Day Convention was an informal gathering held at the Clare Hotel in Clare, Michigan on the evening of April 29, 1983. Based on the good time and camaraderie established during the Clare meeting—the main question was asked and answered in one clear voice, "When and where is the next get-together?" After passing the hat for stamp money, a date of Sept. 3, 1983 was set and the location of Lansing was established.

In less than four months the entire mini-reunion package was completed. Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge was selected as our headquarters and Long's Convention Center supplied our banquet hall and outstanding dinners. From our membership, Mrs. Margret Ays Host, American Red Cross and Mr. Robert Foose, historian

author, offered their services as speakers at our banquet.

Saturday afternoon were devoted to registration, lots of talking, refreshments and combat films. The film *Target For Today*, was shown as well as films from Foose's private files. One of Robert's films was a documentary from the German Air Forces. It depicted air to air combat in its grimest reality.

Mrs. Host was with the 466 BG during its operational days in England. In her talk, she reminded us of the activities of the Red Cross that made life a little more bearable under trying times. She also recalled many memories that were happy and sad. (A review of the article ARC-466 BG by Mary Carroll Leeds in 2nd AD *Journal* Jan. '83 is a good guideline to some of the topics covered by Mrs. Host). Thank you Margret, your kind thoughts are appreciated.

Robert Foose reviewed the air attacks against the German oil industries during the summer 44 to the end of the war. He reminded us of the high cost in lives in these missions as well as the fact that this campaign brought Hitler's war machine

to a complete halt. Foose's book on the oil campaign will be published soon and would make an important contribution to your library.

The mini-reunion was a success beyond our wildest dreams. The good times flowed so fast that it wasn't until I was loading my travel bags in my car Sunday morning that I realized the show was over. But the afterglow remains.

Special recognition is extended to Miss Tracy Mohny for all her help in making this get-together a success. Tracy's talent on the snare drums was very effective during the Flag and Memorial Ceremonies.

Over eighty-five members and wives attended our reunion. They came from all of Michigan's sister states. The member farthest from home was Bill Clarey. Bill flew in from California.

During our happy hour before the banquet, a gentleman dropped in to inquire about our reunion and the Second Air Division Association. He was amazed to learn that such an organization existed. He informed us that he had been with the 306th Bomb Group, 1st Division as a gunner on B-17s. We tried to persuade him to stay as our guest, but he declined. His name was passed on to the 8th Historical Society for membership.

Will we do it again. Yes—details later.

448 Profiles

by George Dupont (448th)

Christmas 1944 was for most of us a lonely miserable time. It was the second Xmas away from family and friends and here we were, "Stuck in a mud hole" where, "only the barrage balloons kept the island from sinking." The weather was "Hitler's secret weapon." The damp, bone chilling cold, penetrated all clothing and the Nissen Huts were certainly not designed for habitation, let alone insulated. We would gather around the stove to keep "it" warm. The black slate masquerading as coal, certainly would not burn, much less give off heat. We had long since chopped down and burned all fence posts, blackout doors, and when no one was looking, a foot locker or two.

Our bed mattresses (ha!) were three straw filled cloth envelopes about two feet square and "at least one half inch thick." Mine I sewed together with steel wire after they had separated during the night and let the cold chill creep along my spine.

On this day, however, something happened to change the focus of our attention. We were notified that we were going to have guests. If we would go to Post Hdq., young school children (evacuated from the bombardment of London, many orphaned by the war) would be arriving and since we were "stood down" (no combat mission scheduled), we could escort them freely about our base.

We learned shortly that they had been well schooled and taught to be so polite it seemed they only knew how to say "No thank you" when their eyes sparkled a "Yes please. Thank you." We gave them a tour of our barracks and indeed the whole base including a crawl through our real live B24 Liberators.

The crowning point of the day was taking them to our mess hall for a real old fashioned genuine Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. When I asked my young companions if they would like an orange (which they had never ever tasted), they hung their heads and gave a standard, but half hearted, "No thank you" with tears of anticipation in their eyes. A big grin broke out when we "forced them to take a couple home in their pockets"—in case you change your mind.

It was well after dark when 712th Squadron Commander Major Robert Campbell returned from dropping off his young charges at their village and it seems one of them must have "needed" his officers cap, for it was missing.

The joy and love these young people brought to our lives in one day, we could never repay. We were reminded that this was the reason we were here, to insure their freedom, their right to a decent world.

We are reminded daily of the three hundred fifty men of the 448th who bought that Freedom and Right. One was Major Robert Campbell, buried in Margreten, Holland in one of many American cemeteries scattered throughout the world.

Old Airfield

by W. Scott, Ex-630 Squadron

*I lie here still beside the hill,
abandoned long to nature's will.
My buildings down my people gone
My only sounds, the wild bird's song.*

*But my mighty birds will rise no more,
No more I hear the merlins roar,
And never now my bosom feels
The pounding of their giant wheels.*

*From the ageless hill their voices cast
Thunderous echoes of the past,
And still in lonely reverie
Their great dark wings sweep down to me.*

*Laughter sorrow hope nad pain
I shall never know these things again,
Emotions that I came to know
Of strange, young men so long ago.*

*Who knows as evening shadows meet
Are they with me still a phantom fleet,
And do my ghosts still stride unseen,
Across my face, so wide and green.*

*And in the future, should structures tall
Bury me beyond recall,
I shall still remember them,
My metal birds, and long-dead men.*

*Now weeds grow high, obscure the sky
Oh remember me, when you pass by,
For beneath this tangled, leafy screen
I was your home, your friend "Silksheen."*

The 448th Speaks

by Leroy J. Engdahl (448th)

Since the last *Journal*, 405 letters have been mailed to previous members of the 448th, stating that we had a few main projects we were working on as a Group. Our main object is to regain their membership in the 2nd ADA. Following that, we are seeking donations of a granite memorial on our old air base at Seething. Of less importance, I am putting together a Roster of paid membership of the Group.

Thanks to the following people who helped me with the duplication and mailing expenses, I was able to get them out rather promptly: M/M Al Bishop, M/M George DuPont, M/M Aubrey Cates, M/M Robert Harper, M/M Milton Nichols, M/M Charles McBride and Col. and Mrs. Downey Thomas. Thank you all very much.

From these letters about 50 were returned for 'insufficient address'. I was able to reduce this number by 36 by getting better addresses through the various telephone operators. I also received letters from the following ladies informing me that their husbands had passed on, some as long as five years ago. Many of these letters had donations with a note stating, 'I know my husband would have wanted to contribute to the wonderful project' and wishing us success with it. I answered every one of these letters and in behalf of the 448th Bomb Group, expressed our sympathy. However, if any of you were close to these deceased members you may wish to write their wives a letter of condolence. Following are their names:

John Fluke, 909 Logan, Altoona, Pa. 16602
Ben Isgrig, Jr., 6403 Foursche Dam Pike,
Little Rock, Ark. 72206

Poop From Group

by Phillip G. Day (467th)

The reunion of the 467th Bomb Group, held October 7-8-9, 1983 in Dayton, Ohio was deemed by the 156 veterans who attended, accompanied by 130 family members and friends, a complete success.

Beginning with the non-official gathering on Oct. 6 for cocktails and cold buffet, through the official reunion closing at noon on Sunday, Oct. 9, all who attended the reunion deemed it to be a total and complete success. For nearly 50 of the veterans, this was their first reunion. For over 30, this was their first contact of any kind with the Group since their discharge.

Officially the reunion began on Friday evening with a cocktail party with open bar and hot and cold hors d'oeuvres with 270 attending. No count was made at the buffet breakfast on Saturday morning, but at noon, at a restaurant near the Air Force Museum, 255 attended for a light luncheon.

Following lunch, all assembled at the dedication site of the Group Memorial in

Lloyd H. Haddock, 302 West Gramercy,
San Antonio, TX 78212
Fred Angel, 605 Meadowlane, Aberdeen,
Miss. 39730
Jesse R. Kain, 3515 Sharpe Ave., Memphis,
Tenn. 38111
Stewart F. Chase, 10313 Stamy Rd.,
Whittier, CA 90603
Col. Isabel Gonzales, 10741 La Donna Dr.,
Garden Grove, CA 92640
Charles Flukinger, Hempstead, TX.
Wm. C. Maxwell, 1700 Brooks Lane,
Oniedo, FL. 32765
Dr. Nelson C. Bates, 159 Aigler Blvd.,
Belleville, Ohio 44811
William Beall, 9624 Meadowdale Dr.,
Baton Route, LA 70811
Meyers Wahnee, 906 S.W. 4th St.,
Anadarka, OK 73005

We salute our former comrades and offer our deepest sympathy to their wives and loved ones. If any of the 448th members know of any of our members passing on, please let me know as we certainly want to acknowledge it through the *Journal*. Now I have a few questions.

During WWII do you remember driving down the streets and throughout the countryside and seeing a small United States Flag displayed in the windows? Those were families who had a son or daughter serving their country in the service. Do you also remember seeing in some of those same houses a 'Gold Star' displayed? These were the homes that had lost a son or daughter in the war. There were 'Gold Star' mothers clubs throughout the country made up of mothers who had lost a son, or daughter in the service of our country.

Well I hope I got your attention for a moment because sometimes I think we are prone to forget how precious the life we enjoy is, and the freedoms we enjoy are because thousands gave their lives that we might enjoy these things.

the Memorial Area of the AF Museum. It was my pleasure and honor to serve as Chaplain for this service. Following the posting of the flags of the United States and the United States Air Force by an Air Force Color Guard, a reading of a psalm, an Old Testament lesson and a New Testament lesson, preceded a well received, short address by Colonel Albert J. Shower, USAF (Ret.), Commanding Officer of the Group from October 1943 to July 1945.

The Memorial Plaque was unveiled and dedicated to those of the Group who died in training and in 212 combat missions flown from Rackheath and to all who were assigned or attached to the Group from Sept. 1943 through June 1945. Simultaneously with this service, a duplicate of the Memorial was dedicated at Rackheath Village, Norfolk, England. The Reverend Martain Benians, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Rackheath, was officiant, assisted by Mr. David Hastings and Mr. Brian Tagg, Chairman of the Rackheath Parish Council.

The Group is most pleased with these duplicate memorials and especially with

Is it too much to ask for a small donation for a Memorial to be built at our old base site in England to remember those 350 who were killed? I don't think any of you would say your life hasn't been appreciated and that you really would like to do your part.

George DuPont, through some of his English friends, has found out that to erect the 3 ft. x 4 ft. x 8 inch thick Memorial will cost about \$2,000. This includes the 4 ft. x 5 ft. concrete pad to mount the monument on and the cost of installation.

Of the 405 letters we mailed to former members, we have received 36 donations to date, plus 9 from active members making 45 donations to date, for a total of \$1,117 and donations have ranged between \$5.00 and \$100.00. We ask that all of you be as generous as you can and remember that this is tax deductible.

A special bank account has been set up at First City National Bank of Beaumont, TX in the name of the 448th Bomb Group, 2nd Air Division—Acct. # 04732979. Make check out to this account and mark on check "For 448th Memorial". This will be your tax receipt. For any amount that exceeds our requirement, we are hoping to erect a similar, but smaller monument, in the churchyard at Seething. Approval is being sought for this should we be able to fund it. The timetable we are seeking is completion and dedication on June 6th, 1984, the 40th anniversary of "D" Day.

Please get your contributions in right away so that we can issue an order for the stonemason to get on with our project. Again, at this time the final wording has not been decided as we hope to do this in Houston at the 8th AF reunion.

the enthusiasm with which the Memorial was received and accepted at Rackheath and the high place of honor given it at the base of the Rackheath village sign, which was dedicated during the reunion visit in May.

Saturday evening we had cocktails and our reunion banquet with 285 in attendance. At the business meeting of the Group, James Coffey was elected VP, to serve with the 2nd AD Association and Floyd Kingsley was elected Deputy. I will remain on as Group Scribe, Editor, or whatever. The Group also voted to make a donation of \$4000 in the newly established trust method with the consensus that we will add to this trust in the future.

There should also be a jump in membership. Nearly all of the 150 June *Journals* were taken and all of the 2 ADA information brochures with membership applications were taken. Each of us renewed old friendships, made many new ones, ate well, drank a bit, listened to and danced to the jukebox records of that time, looked at the tables of memorabilia displayed, and enjoyed ourselves.

Hethel Highlights

by Earl Zimmerman (389th)

Official records of the 389th reveal that "On Oct. 3rd, 1943, Captain Fowble, 564th Squadron, crashed near Marrakech, French Morocco. Fourteen of the fifteen men aboard were killed."

One of the men lost in the crash was S/Sgt. James A. Adovasio, who accompanied the 389th on their second journey to North Africa as an Asst. Crew Chief.



Mrs. J. M. Adovasio

About the time the 389th was heading back to Hethel from Massacault, an aircraft worker on the production line at the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corp. at Forth Worth, taped a dollar bill on the fuselage of a new B-24. As the plane passed down the line, workers taped bills and coins

on the fuselage. When the plane rolled off the line, \$2928.41 was plastered it.

The donors decided to donate the money to a Liberator combat squadron. In due time, Major Dale Sisson of the 564th Squadron, 389th Bomb Group, accepted the award from Major General James P. Hodges, at Hethel during July 1944.

What does a thirsty bunch of G.I.s do with \$2928.41. Assembled on the flight line, a show of hands indicated that they were all for the biggest beer bust in the Eighth Air Force.

The Pathfinders could not dispose of that much arf and arf so it was decided to buy war bonds with the remainder and give them to the widow of S/Sgt. Adovasio.

Major Howard R. Hinchman, Squadron Commander of the 564th, wrote to Mrs. Lena Adovasio and explained how the money was received and advised her that the bonds were being forwarded to her to be held in trust for her son's education. James Michael Adovasio was eight months old and had never seen his father.

When James Michael graduated from high school, Robert Seagle, ex-crew chief, M/Sgt., of the 564th, received a phone call from Mrs. Adovasio. She asked if Bob and his wife would meet James Michael at the train station and put him up for a week until University of Arizona dorms opened.

Dr. J. M. Adovasio, graduated from the University of Arizona, with a B.A. in Anthropology, Magna cum Laude, 1965. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology at

the University of Utah, June of 1970. He is presently a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburg.

It is said, that, 'If you cast your bread upon the waters, it shall be returned manyfold'. The members of the 564th Bomb Squadron and Consolidated Aircraft Corp., can be very proud of Mrs. Lee Adovasio and her son Dr. J. M. Adovasio.



Dr. J. M. Adovasio

For those of you who knew and worked with S/Sgt. James A. Adovasio, you might like to write to Mrs. Adovasio at 3131 Firnley Ave., Youngstown, Ohio 44511. Dr. J.M.'s address: 304 Woodbridge Drive, Pittsburg, Pa. 15237.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get them to attend our next reunion in Palm Springs, Calif. next year. We will work on that.

Tea Time the Hard Way

by Seth L. Lobdell (44th BG)

To recount the story of our crash, it appears from the book that we were on a mission with Gustavsburg as the primary and Mainz as secondary, but most of the bombs were dropped on Mainz. I don't recollect whether we were hit before the target, but it is probable. Evidently we were hit by flak in the oil system of the #3 engine because I didn't have time to even think feather before all the oil pressure was gone with no chance to feather the prop. The prop started winding up, we didn't know if it would fly off or not, but finally it froze in a flat position causing a lot of drag. We turned back and headed home.

I don't remember getting rid of the bombs and when. A couple of 51's escorted us back part way. Richardson used the "G" box to navigate us back toward the straits. We decided to take the long way home with less water.

As we neared Halesworth we used the radio compass for navigation. The weather in the vicinity of the base was scattered to broken clouds with bases about 500 foot so visibility was poor. We did locate the field, although from that altitude it was difficult, and started the down wind leg.

Just after this the other engine on the

right side started giving a lot of trouble and we had to pull back on that throttle. What with the drag created by the #3 engine being out and not feathered it took all the left rudder we had and some aileron rolled in just to keep straight and no level to it. Obviously with no altitude and airspeed less than 100, we were going down, it was just a matter of when.

I called on the interphone to the guys in the back that we were going to crash. Later they told me they never heard, but when we started cutting through the tree tops they knew, and dropped to the deck and grabbed hold of one another. In the meantime, up front everyone got braced on the back of the armor plate behind our seats.

Ed and I saw a big brick barn directly ahead and with no chance of getting over it, just pushed it in. You can see the result in the enclosed pictures. As soon as we ground to a halt one of the fellows pulled the escape hatch release and we tried to get out.

Williams, the nose gunner, found his harness was caught under the armor plate. I got him out of the harness, but discovered he had blood all over himself. An ammunition can had come loose from the top turret

and hit Richardson, the bombardier, cutting his forehead. The blood had dripped over the gunner and pandemonium reigned for a few moments as we were getting out.

We were hardly on the ground before Mrs. Knight, the lady from the farm house we had nearly flown into, ran over and wanted to know if we would like some tea.

Richardson went to her house and was bandaged. Moments later a bobby came up on a bicycle. Sahagian borrowed his bike and went to a phone booth and called the base. As dusk was approaching the Flight Surgeon came in the ambulance. On the way back we were well fortified with Gugenheim. Needless to say we were happy to be alive and all went to see Charlie Chaplin the following day.

The only one on the crew over 21 at the time was Starratt, who was 36. Rhomberg didn't fly with us as we flew with no navigator. Richardson did the navigation if needed.

I saw Sahagian several years ago in N.Y., he lived in Old Westbury, L.I. only a mile or so from my sister-in-law in Westbury.

Richardson lived in Fontana, Calif. the last time I heard from him.

Robert Williams died of a heart condition nearly 20 years ago and lived in North Carolina. The others I haven't heard from.

Frank Gaines lived in Downey, Calif. up to about 10 years ago.

THE PX PAGE



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Napalm!

by James G. Coffey (467th)

It was April 14th, 1945, before dawn. We were assembled in the briefing room of the 467th Bombardment Group at Rackheath, England. We were waiting to learn our mission for the day. With German armies in retreat, our target was to be one of the remaining points of Nazi resistance.

The briefing officers arrived. Finally, after preliminary remarks, the curtain was pulled to show the target for the day: Pointe de Grave, France. Pointe de Grave is at the confluence of the Gironde estuary and the Atlantic Ocean, about 65 miles northwest of Bordeaux. The Germans were holed up in massive underground submarine pens. The plan for the day was to assemble over Belgium, then fly southwest to the target. We were to soften up the Nazi defenders; waiting Free French forces would then move in. There would be no flak en route to the target, but flak was expected from the target.

The Armament officer explained that we would be using a new kind of bomb, containing Napalm, a jellied gasoline. Although the deep, reinforced concrete pens were virtually impervious to blast damage, the *occupants* were vulnerable through the pen's ventilation system. On detonation, the Napalm would burn with such intense heat that the oxygen would be sucked out of the pens and their defenders asphyxiated if not burned to death. The Armament Officer told us all this with a malevolent gleam in his eye.

We were warned that some of the bombs might be defective: under certain conditions, the phosphorous grenade (intended to detonate the bomb) might pop out. The resulting hole would permit the napalm to escape into the plane. If this happened, the armament expert continued, we must plug the bomb immediately. Thereafter, we must keep use of electrical switches to an absolute minimum: the slightest spark would explode the plane.

Because the mission was a long one—about 1,400 miles—we were given an emergency field about 60 miles west of Paris where we could refuel, if necessary.

Impressed and apprehensive about the new bomb, we checked out our flying gear and went to our assigned plane on the hardstand. In the approaching dawn, the Armorers were still loading the 600 pound bombs, eight to a plane. They worked carefully and treated the bombs with respect.



As usual, we had picked up extra flak suits for protection from flak bursts from below. Our Engineer, Andy DeBiasse, carpeted the flight deck; in the waist, Gunners Bill Smith and Bill Hayes covered their firing areas.

We took off, uneventfully, at the usual

The English Connection

by Tony North

There are living in and around Norwich a small but active group of 2nd Air Division enthusiasts and historians. We have no formal organization as such, but most of us are known to one another and are in contact from time to time to swap information, photos, etc. on our favorite Bomb Groups. Some of us have been associate members of the 2nd A.D.A. for many years, our interest dating back to war-time days when we were boys and used to visit the bases near our homes, the original "Any gum, chum" kids. Some were not even born when the 2nd A.D. was in residence but their interest is no less, because the 2nd A.D. has become part of local history.

Most of us have special friends amongst the American members with whom we correspond and we like to meet and chat with 2nd A.D. men who return to Norfolk to visit their old haunts. It has become increasingly apparent that more and more are doing just this, usually as part of a longer tour of U.K. and Europe.

To make their visit more enjoyable and interesting we would invite anyone who is planning a trip back to Norfolk to contact any of the members listed below who would be most willing to assist with hotel bookings, visits to airfields, tours of Norwich, etc. We each have our own special areas of knowledge and interest, of course, but any one of us would act as the first point of contact. So don't hesitate, we are willing to help and would be pleased to meet you.

Tony North,
62, Turner Road,
Norwich,
Norfolk. NR2 4HB
Phone Norwich 614041

Chris Gotts,
6, Gravelfield Close,
Valley drive,
Norwich,
Norfolk NR1 4NH
Phone Norwich 33745

John Archer,
29, Station Road,
Earsham,
Bungay,
Phoen Bungay 2089

John Page,
6, Meadow Way,
Poringland,
Norwich,
Norfolk NR14 7LZ
Phone Framingham Earl 3170

30 second interval, and climbed in loose formation, headed across the North Sea toward Belgium. As I reported to Squadron the next day, we were proceeding to buncher C-17 (Liege)... About 40 miles from the buncher, the fuse in one of the bombs burst loose, causing the Napalm to be sprayed throughout the bomb bay. The bomb bay was almost completely covered by the substance, and the flight deck and waist were filled with fumes and some spray.

Just seconds after the bomb burst, Engineer DeBiasse plugged the leak (with his brand new white World War I style scarf, a gift received from his Mother the day before, plus anything else he could find to stuff in the opening). Andy yelled for pliers. When asked what for, he almost screamed "Goddamit, give me pliers!" Radioman Don Faford was quick to deliver. The phosphorous grenade, still attached to the arming wire, fell through the bomb doors and banged repeatedly against the catwalk. DeBiasse managed to cut the arming wire and the phosphorous grenade fell clear.

I immediately turned off the generators, batteries, radios, and electrical equipment. This meant we could not change any of the electrical switches; we could not change the pitch of the propellers, use our radio, the auto-pilot, or intercom. We could use the hydraulically operated bomb bay doors. We made a 180 degree turn, heading for the Channel in order to jettison if necessary. We found our Group assembling at 21,000 feet, flying at about 160 mph. I tried to join the Group but could not safely slow down below 165 mph. I pulled out and

asked our Navigator, Al Muller for a heading to the target.

We followed the rivers to the estuary and the target was in sight. Co-pilot Harmon J. Small, Jr. and I took turns flying.

We tried to form with a B-17 Group, but with our higher-than-normal B-24 speed and the B-17's normal slower-than-B-24 speed, we couldn't do it. We intercepted the 44th Bomb Group. With flaps lowered, I slipped into a "slot" below the plane flying the slot position on their low squadron, to the astonishment of the tail gunner just above our nose.

We bombed in formation with them. The Germans were unable to put up any defense. We continued in formation with the 44th, north toward England. The plane was thoroughly aired out by now, so we felt confident in using the intercom and all the other electrically-operated gear.

The 467th tower instructed us to fly well beyond the northern coast of Norfolk over the North Sea before turning back to our base at Rackheath. We flew across Norfolk at about 50 to 60 feet above ground through yellowish sunlit haze, with Navigator Muller providing course corrections I asked for and received clearance for a straight-in landing. Our Engineer reported 20 minutes fuel left.

Later I learned that on the April 15th mission to Pointe de Grave, the 467th was "the first Group in 2nd AD history to achieve the perfect bomb score of 100% accuracy within 1000 feet of the assigned MPI for all squadrons." I'm sorry we weren't part of it.

U.S. Post Office Pays Tribute to Medal of Honor Winners General Leon Johnson, Recipient

by Pete Henry (44th BG)



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PAYS TRIBUTE
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MEDAL OF HONOR

JULY 1, 1983

General Leon W. Johnson, (then Colonel), United States Army Air Corps, 8th Air Force, Ploesti Raid, Rumania, 1 August 1943.

For conspicuous gallantry in action and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 1 August 1943. Colonel Johnson, as commanding officer of a heavy bombardment group, led the formation of the aircraft of his organization constituting the fourth element of the mass low-level bombing attack of the 8th United States Air Force against the vitally important enemy target of the Ploesti oil refineries. While proceeding to the target on this 2,400-mile flight, his element became separated from the leading elements of the mass formation in maintaining the formation of the unit while avoiding dangerous cumulous cloud conditions encountered over mountainous territory. Though temporarily lost, he reestablished contact with the third element and continued on the mission with this reduced force to the prearranged point of attack, where it was discovered that the target assigned to Colonel Johnson's group had been attacked and damaged by a preceding element.

As any of you philatelists know, a 1983 commemorative stamp honoring the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor, and all those who have been awarded the medal, was issued June 7, 1983 by the U.S. Postal Service at the Pentagon.

At the request of the Postmaster General, William F. Bolger, the Northern Virginia Management Sectional Center presented engraved albums to eight Northern Virginia residents who have received the Medal of Honor. Included in this select group was our own General Leon W. Johnson who was accompanied to the ceremonies by his daughter Mrs. Sarah Abbott.

General Johnson received the Medal of Honor for his participation the Ploesti raid 1 August 43. Following is the citation that accompanied the award:

Though having lost the element of surprise upon which the safety and success of such a daring form of mission in heavy bombardment aircraft so strongly depended, Colonel Johnson elected to carry out his planned low-level attack despite the thoroughly alerted defenses, the destructive antiaircraft fire, enemy fighter airplanes, the imminent danger of exploding delayed action bombs from the previous element, of oil fires and explosions, and of intense smoke obscuring the target. By his gallant courage, brilliant leadership, and superior flying skill, Colonel Johnson so led his formation as to destroy totally the important refining plants and installations which were the object of his mission.

Colonel Johnson's personal contribution to the success of this historic raid, and the conspicuous gallantry in action, and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty demonstrated by him on this occasion constitute such deeds of valor and distinguished service as have during our Nation's history formed the finest traditions of our Armed Forces.



General Johnson & daughter,
Mrs. Sarah Abbott

Film Library

H.C. 'Pete' Henry
164 B Portland Lane
Jamesburg, N.J. 08831

Target For Today—Part I

1600' — B&W — Sound — 45 min.
Shows men of the VIII Bomber Command preparing for a mission; examining potential targets, weather maps, etc. It moves to Operations room where General gives weather forecast and selects the targets.

Target For Today—Part II

1500' — B&W — Sound — 45 min.
Crews are seen loading planes and taking off. Crews on oxygen at enemy coastline. Flak and fighters appear.

Narrator describes I.P., bombs away. B-26s take off.

The Mission

800' — B&W — Silent — 25 min.
Prepared and edited by late Lt. Col. Ursel P. Harvell while he was Photo Officer for 44th BG.

Mission flown by the 44th BG covers loading of bombs, take-off and forming into Group formation. Vapor trails over Germany, flak, bombs away, heading home and landing at base.

Men Who Flew the Liberators

1100' — Color — Sound — 30 min.
Film begins with a USAF Sergeant reminiscing about WWII. Roger Freeman and Col. Godwin, C.O. of Mildenhall add comments throughout the film. A Sergeant from Horsham St. Faith is interviewed as is Daisy Elmer, a pub owner.

Shows men on leave in London. Rocky Griffith's one wheel landing.

1973 2ADA Reunion Colorado Springs

400' — Color — Silent — 10 min.
Pictures of 2ADA members. Earl Zimmerman and wife at hotel. Hathy, Milt and Carone Veynar. Dean Moyer on bus. Air Force Academy, Parade. Cocktail party. Jordan Uttal, General Leon Johnson, Bill Robertie, Joe Warth and Goodman Griffin.

2ADA—8th USAFF—Memorial

250' — B&W — Silent — 8 min.
Crowds going into Church of St. Peter Mancroft, inside church, dedication of standards and Roll of Honor book.

Leaving church and proceeding to Library.

Inside Memorial Room, Norwich Library.

Letters



Dear Ms. Cohen:

We were among the six hundred who recently attended the Air Force reunion in Norwich and we want to extend our thanks for a trip well planned. Our accommodations at the Post House were comfortable and we found everyone warm and friendly.

The meals were more than ample and we especially appreciated the "hot" plates to keep the food warm while we ate. Many times when such a large group is served the food becomes cold and thus unappetizing.

We enjoyed all the meetings, dedication and programs, etc., also the "special surprise" at the final dinner. So, once again, thank you.
Grace & Frank Vadas

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I had hoped to have the pleasure of meeting you in Norwich, but time seemed to go so quickly at the Convention that it was all over before I realized that I had not made myself known to you, or indeed, met several others whom I had every good intention of seeing.

It was my first attendance, as an Associate Member, at a 2nd Air Division Convention and let me say straightaway that I look forward with great pleasure to attending future ones. It is a pity that they are not held more often in England, but my wife and I will, perhaps, combine a holiday in the States with joining again the many new and marvelous friends we made in Norwich at one of the Conventions in your country. Bonds of friendship such as were made in May are not easily broken. It was a real pleasure to return to Norfolk and to reminisce on experiences during the war years with those brave men who left our skies daily for a hostile environment while I was having Latin and French irregular verbs beaten into me.

I am not sure when subscriptions fall due and cannot remember the amount, but an enclosing an International Money Order for \$10 towards my dues for 1984. If I have under-paid, please let me know.

Tom Brittan

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Dear Bill:

Hawkins and Powers Aviation, located at Greybull, Woming still operates a few PB4Y-2, Navy variants of the B-24 Liberator. These aircraft are employed as aerial bombers, equipped with fire retardants to combat forest fires in the west.

A friend of mine, Cory Barrett, of Dallas, Tex., took these photographs in the Spring of '82 with Hawkins and Powers permission.



Since very few B-24s of any type are in existence, I felt 2nd AD members would delight in these aircrafts very existence; and furthermore they are working "Liberators" protecting our nation's forests.

Hugh McLaren

Dear Bill:

Stow Park Farm stands within the bounds of the former airfield located on the hill at Flixton. The brothers Aubry and Roy Skinner have worked the land behind the 'Shooting In' butts before and since the 'Bungay Buckeroos' were on the scene.

It was during the normal ploughing of their land that they unearthed a piece of memorabilia from WW II. It was a dogtag bearing the serial number and name of an American airman who was stationed at Flixton during hostilities. The tag read—Frank J. Jacobs, 36152257 T4243B. Elizabeth Jacobs, RFD 3, Vassar, Mich.

The tag was forwarded to Frank's brother by Garner A. Pennock, who was also stationed at Flixton for a short period with the 329th B Sqd. in 1942-43. He has kept up correspondence with the Flixton farmers since that time. Pennock tracked down the Jacobs family after doing a little detective work in Vassar.

Although Frank died from a heart attack 17 years ago, the receipt of the dogtag served to make the members of the Jacobs family both surprised and happy.

John W. Archer

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Dear Evelyn:

I would like to take a moment of your time to express our thanks for a memorable and exciting trip to Norwich. I can appreciate the time and effort you expended in making the program run so smoothly. It was an event to treasure. We do thank you.

I was somewhat disappointed that no one was there from the 579th Sq. of the 392nd Group. During the period of Dec. 43-Apr. 44, you may recall that my brother was in that Sq. and was shot down on April 24, 1944. The crew was killed in action.

I understand that I can join the 2nd Air Division as an Associate Member. I would like to get on the mailing list and try again at Palm Springs to find someone from the 579th.

Please advise if my request is proper and the cost of annual dues.

John E. Hall
405 Town & Country Dr.
Huntsville, AL 35806

Dear Bill:

Replying to your letter of Sept. 26th. Sorry, but I was a member of the 15th Air Force, 449th BG, 719 Squadron stationed in Grottaglie, Italy, was a Flight Engineer-Gunner, completed 21 sorties—34 missions.

The model displayed at my restaurant of a B-24 was a challenge to build as authentic as the one we flew in WW 2. I built it mostly for my grandsons. It is a flying model, but I will not fly it as it cost about \$2,000 to build and took about 18 months (in spare time) to put it all together. Instead, I have it on display and operate the control surfaces (flaps, gears, bomb bay, etc.) mainly for the children to see. The kit was re-designed to a B-24J with nose and tail turret moveable 180°—the top turret 360°—and ball turret lowers when landing gears retract—the children really enjoy this. It has been quite a conversational piece and over the years it has been displayed. I have met quite a few people associated with the Liberator. Our outfit is having their first reunion after 40 years, in Tucson, Arizona, and am looking forward to it.

Enclosed is a brochure of what we can offer in our banquet room. If you are interested, please keep in touch with us as we can give you a very nice and memorable time.

Richard Greco
Big Beaver Restaurant
Rt 18
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

(Ed: Sounds like a fantastic model of the old beast. Members in your area should check this out. The menu is mouth watering.)

Dear Friends:

Please accept our very grateful thanks for the magnificent donation of \$20,000 to the Capital Fund of this Trust, the check for which was handed to me by Jordan Uttal at the Banquet in Norwich on the 30th of May.

Your continuing and generous support for the Memorial which you hold most dear, and for which we are the Trustees, is a great encouragement to us as we try each year to maintain and extend the work of the Trust.

Thanks to your support the quality of the 2nd Air Div. Memorial has been enhanced and we in England will do all we can to keep it that way.

To that end we are approaching other Charitable Foundations in Norwich to seek additional funds to complement those you have raised, so that we can move forward together. Our target is a Capital Fund of £250,000 to be reached over a period of years.

Working in this way helps us to feel at one with you as year by year the Memorial Trust grows in strength.

We did enjoy the Convention, meeting again so many old friends and strengthening the bonds that unite us all.

On a personal note, all the Governors thank you for the dinner given for them after the Convention by your Executive Committee and, in particular, the individual tokens of appreciation which each governor received.

Then, too, on behalf of my wife, as well as for Hester King and Jean Hastings, thank you one and all for the beautiful glass bowl each received.

We look forward to Palm Springs in Oct. 1984 when we hope to be well represented.

Our thanks and best wishes to you all.
Tom Eaton
Chairman of the Governors

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Dear Pete:

Thought you might be interested in the enclosed snapshot of Charles Mercer's crew of the 67th B.S. We recently had a mini-reunion and five crew members and their wives showed up. We rented a large house on the beach at Nags Head, N.C. and spent a delightful week from August 28 thru Sept. 3, 1983.



Left to right: William Church, Co-Pilot; Charles Mercer, Pilot; William Rand, Engineer; Jesse Burton, Waist Gunner; Sid Kipnes, Radio Operator.

It was a glorious week of bathing, swimming, fishing and sightseeing, as well as re-telling of old flying experiences.

Nags Head was a perfect setting for our reunion. It is adjacent to Kitty Hawk, where aviation began. We visited the Wright Brothers Museum and old workshop. We laughed at the crude equipment that was used then, just like the present day flyers laughed at the equipment we used in our time.

It was a glorious week and we look forward to our next reunion. We hope to have the other members of our crew with us.

Hope to see you at the 2nd ADA reunion dinner on Nov. 5, 1983 at the Adams Mark Hotel. I hope to be there with my wife, Wally Zee, our tail gunner will be there. He lives in Philadelphia.

Sid Kipnes

Hi Evelyn:

My first request since I've been a member of the 2nd Air Force Division, B-24s, is for a copy of the songs "Roll Me Over in the Clover" and "Here's to the Fuhors Face".

A couple of us oldtimers cannot seem to remember the complete songs. (446th and 389 Bombardment Group).

We would appreciate seeing the *Journal*.

Peter Paul Barszczewski

P.S.: Hello Chuck Yant.

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Dear Bill:

Since many of the men of the 2nd Air Division will be journeying back to England next year and be looking for their old air bases, thought you might pass along some info on the home turf of the 392nd at Wendling.

In October of '81, I made a trip to Wendling. Surprisingly, one and a half of the two runways are still there. But alas, it's only because they were saved to be used by the most ungainly flyers under the sun. Imagine, an airfield from which eagles once soared, now the home of turkeys!! Yes, Mathew's Turkey Farm now occupies our former home. Mr. Mathews kept one runway intact as a foundation for two rows of turkey sheds. I drove an English Ford down between the two rows at high speed, but just like a turkey, I couldn't lift it one inch off the runway. Fortunately it was a Sunday and all the turkeys were cooped up with nobody around.



Left: John Samsell, Visitor. Right: Ron Arrowsmith, Fyfield, England, Former Member of RAF.

A very small portion of the second runway is also still there, but is gradually giving way to the farmer's plow.

There concrete chunks and pieces for rock collectors. As far as I could see in all directions, no original buildings remain. Fred Thomas tells me that in 1979 the officers club was still there.

It should be noted by those who go looking for the field that it is not an outstanding feature of the local landscape. Although it may loom large in our memory, many of the local inhabitants, are not aware of its location. It took several inquiries before I found an oldtimer, who insisted upon shaking the hand of an American flyer. He called our attention to and directed us to a memorial dedicated to the 392nd at the edge of the old airfield. I understand that this memorial was featured in a past issue of the *Journal*.

When we visited London, my wife was most impressed by our old hangout at the Governor house and its main ballroom which was once a messhall. Her only comment was "You fought the war from here?" P.S. There are no bars on the mezzanine.

I must confess that my visit to England in 1981 was much more enjoyable than the one in 1944. I was so happy to leave that island after thirty missions, that I even managed to forget most of the pleasant moments. Seeing the old airfield though, convinced me that there was such a place and there was such a time and that I was there.

The boys in the 392nd will remember that happy code word when Cologne was the target... Almagordo.

John Samsell

Dear Sir:

In the last copy of the *Journal*, I read Alexanderson's letter about "Ringmasters," the history of the 491st Bomb Group. Enclosed is my address and cash.

I was a bombardier on Lt. Bill Evans' crew. We were with the Group from the start. Our plane was "Lucky Buck." The crew was not so lucky. We were on the very first mission of the Group and we were hit before we reached the target. When Evans asked for a heading home he got one that took us over Paris. With one engine running, we bailed out north of Paris.

Lt. Evans, Sgt. Reedy, Sgt. Blair and I were never captured. After 75 days with the underground we were rescued by General Patton's forces. Lt. Blue, navigator, and one gunner whose name I forget, were killed and the other four crew members were taken prisoners.

Since I spent so little time in England, I enjoy reading the *Journal* and look forward to Ringmasters. We were returned to the States so we flew 1/2 mission.

Russell Tickner
2112 Tickner
Conroe, Texas 77301

Dear Carl:

The mission that Tickner went on was 2 June 1944 to Beaumont-sur-Oise. The gunner, Raymond G. Lemay, was the first KIA in the 491st. Those who were POW's were the co-pilot, Norman Krasnow; radio, Milton J. Brush, Jr.; gunners, George E. Countryman and Edward J. Friel. Their plane, Lucky Buck, B-24J 42-110158, was hit on a mission to Germany 21 July and the crew managed to nurse the plane to France before having to bail out.

Mike Fagen

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Dear Evelyn:

Thank you ... what an inadequate phrase ... for your part in organizing the most memorable trip of our lives, and above all, for convincing us to go. We took all of your advice, which turned out to be right on the money, especially wear a warm coat, and then put a little icing on the cake by going up to Scotland before returning home.

The indescribable memories of this trip will last a lifetime. For me, at least, to return with Don to Shipdham and see through his eyes that most important part of his life was the true highlight.

Again, thank you.

Don & Vinnie Jenkins

Dear Bill:

Joining the Association and reading the *Journal* has brought back many good and bad memories. Keep up the good work.

Enclosed is a picture taken after we received the Air Medal. We were Crew 10, 93rd BS.



The crew members are from left to right. Back Row: Lt. S.M. Kuk (deceased), Bombardier; Lt. F.J. Kelly, Navigator; Capt. L.C. Spencer, Pilot; Lt. H.A. Pofi, Jr., Co-Pilot. Front Row: S/Sgt. D.V. Nadeau, Engineer, Top Gunner; S/Sgt. M.J. Donahue, Radio Operator; S/Sgt. D. Moore, Waist Gunner; 93rd Bomb Group, 409 Bomb Squadron.

Bombardier, Lt. S.M. Kuk, passed away Jan. 28, 1983. Was a member of our Association.

Hugo A. Pofi, Jr.

Dear Bill:

In the *Journal* June 1983 Letters column, there was a letter to Evelyn, sent in by a Harold Weeks of the 467th BG regarding the Dec. 29th, 44 take-off—and the casualties



involved. How well I remember that day! I was on foot, trying to cut across the airfield (Rackheath) to get to Hangar #2. The fog was so bad, I had to creep across the field and couldn't believe a mission was scheduled—it was later cancelled!

As I approached Hangar #2, there was a series of explosions coming from the north end of the base, where two of our bombers had crashed. Even at that distance, the blast was strong enough to make the hangar doors rattle. I never learned the details of that morning of Dec. 29th mission until it was mentioned by Alan Healy in the 467 BG Unit History.

Bill, I had the good luck of meeting Capt. Glenn Miller, when we were both stationed at the "Army Air Force Technical Training Command" in Southern Pines, N.C. (just west of Ft. Bragg) in 1943.

I'm sending you a reprint of the original photo taken in 1943. You can put it in your "Nostalgia File" or whatever!

Walt Laughlin

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Hi Evelyn:

Sorry we couldn't make the reunion at Norwich with the 2nd Air Division this year. I had another by-pass operation after we came home from Nashville last year, and my old legs aren't as good as they were. I am sending you my check for \$10.00 dues as usual. Let me know when and where the next reunion is planned, we really have enjoyed them.

Also could you get any information about M/Sgt. Earl Veeder who was a tail gunner in the 389th. He came to England during the last few months of the war.

Howard Streight
3401 W. Pecare #189
McAllen, Tex. 78501

Dear Evelyn:

Sorry I have been so long in sending my dues. Enclosed is my check as I do want to be in good standing.

It is always great to receive the *Journal* which I received today. I am one of the people who has thought about returning to England and East Anglia 100,000 times at least in the nearly forty years and have not made the effort. Time will be running out on me so surely in 1984 my wife and I will make it and plan to stay three weeks or more. It is so interesting to read of the Reunions, but I do not remember any of the fellows mentioned within its pages. I arrived at Shipdham on 3/23 with 23 others from the 506th Sq. as we were turned back as not really fit for overseas duty, then they changed that and we stayed at Fort Hamilton at Brooklyn a week then returned to the freighter "Jean" for a 16 day trip to the UK landing in Liverpool. We are said to have lost 13 ships over and I saw nearly every one go down and we were told to "stand by for torpedo". I had battle post right under the smokestack. We had only two Canadian Corvettes protecting us until we neared the Irish coast. Our engines were silent a day or so before the subs hit and the convoy went over the hill, but we were back with them the next morning. The Lord protected us and I had a calmness never before known. Prayer is a wonderful help and I felt the same way March 17, 1978 when I had the four artery by-pass in Memphis. The week March 16-20, 1943 was one to remember. The main 506th Group went over on the "Chantilly" the week before and had a miserable time for the boat was so old and run down.

I was at Shipdham 3/23/43 to about 3/11/44 when we were sent to North Pickingham, down to Cheddington and in early 1945 to Harrington and flew home 7/7/45 via Iceland and Labrador. I have exchanged Christmas cards, visits and via telephone to 24 men from the various stations. Our communications at 44th Group had some RAF men and I have corresponded with Peter Broadley at Kingston-Upon-Thames ever since, and two of our children have seen the Broadleys. Pete and I talked on phone from London until he retired from his work.

This year we are looking forward to our daughter, husband and Betsy to come home from Bogota, Colombia where they have been Support Staff to Wycliffe Bible Translators and our Presbyterian Mission Board. They are due home in April and we have seen them only twice in five years.

"Wartime Day At Shipdham" is just the article I have been waiting for and Eric Smith gave a good account. We had a good 506th Sq. and I first joined them in Pueblo and then to Wendover and back to Pueblo. General Johnson was in our office several times and that Ploesti Raid was one to remember. (I am told and read about).

I brought back many post cards and memories of the 2nd Air Division. I did not attempt to get a camera as I was not a good picture taker anyway. I have many shots from other fellows from our group who were kind enough to give duplicates. We played tennis at Hingham on the court of Lord Ironsides and rode our bikes to Watton, Cranworth, Dereham, Swaffham, Hingham and to a cinema.

I was on KP from sea level on the "Jean" to 10,200 feet on the Rio Grande R. R. train crossing the Tennessee Pass. I was on guard duty also several times. A day or so after the rough crossing to Britain we were put on KP for five days. I guess to get our minds on other things.

We had the thirty days furlough to return to the Sq. at Sioux Falls, S.D. My wife and I were married during the furlough on 8/10/45 and during our honeymoon the Japs sur-

rendered and having 110 points, I was discharged at Camp Shelby, Miss. on Aug. 22nd. I was gone from Water Valley three years and came back to the bank here where I worked until Feb. 29, 1980. I enjoy my retirement very much and have many hobbies and take trips every few weeks but have only gone from Richmond, Va. to Santa Fe, NM

I do need a Roster when they are available and do you have any 8th AF decals for cars. I would like a 2nd ADA decal and enclose a stamped envelope.

James Barron Caulfield

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Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my dues payment, along with a ten dollar donation to our Memorial Library.

I also want to thank you for forwarding my address to Harold McMahon in Parma, Ohio. Harold was the radio operator on our crew. He picked up something I wrote in the *Journal* and noticed my name and followed up from there. We had not been in contact for 38 years. He wrote me and since then we have been corresponding. I cannot describe in words what a thrill it was to be in touch with him. I imagine this same experience must prevail from time to time with other members of our organization.

Bob Mantel

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Dear Bill:

I can't tell you how pleased I was to learn that you plan to use my article on the 856th as an article rather than a letter to the editor.

As you suggested, I'm enclosing a photo. It was probably taken during October 1944. The six men, all officers, were part of the crews of weather reconnaissance B24s and B17s. We all were assigned at the time to the 856th BS of the 492nd BG, on detached service with the 652nd BS of the 25th BG at Watton.



That's me second from right and bareheaded. I also recognize two other pilots in the photo: Byron Pollitt, on the far left, who came from Atlanta and now lives in Laguna Niguel, California; and Richard Malek, bareheaded and third from left, who was my first pilot and came from Nebraska. Although Malek and I usually flew a B24 on weather reconnaissance, the plane in the background is a B17. The three unidentified officers were co-pilots, navigators or meteorology observers.

I don't know what your deadline is for the September issue, Bill, but it occurred to me that, if we use the story as an article, perhaps we ought to insert a couple of paragraphs explaining why the 492nd was broken up. There are a lot of members of the Association who aren't that familiar with the 492nd.

I'm enclosing a three-paragraph insert, which, as indicated, should follow the first paragraph of the original story. I've also enclosed a copy of the original story in which I've indicated a small change in the second paragraph to help transition from the insert to the original second paragraph.

If you don't have room for a three-graph insert, or if it would be difficult to get three more paragraphs set at this late date, it appears to me that the first paragraph of the insert is all we would have to use. It pretty well tells why the group was dispersed.

Whatever decision you make is fine with me, Bill. The *Journal* is your magazine and you do a first-rate job with it.

If you can, please return the photo. Thanks for your letter. I enjoyed it and I hope that some day soon we can meet and raise a glass together.

George R. Greiff

Mayhem on Parade



The war is on!



The U.S. mail gets through.



The Yellow Rose of Taxes—
Internal Revenue Service.

Sunday, May 29 was a day of rest or for doing whatever you wanted to do. After all the festivities of the previous days during the reunion, most took it as a day of rest and remained around their hotels.

Those of us who stayed at the Nelson were particularly lucky in that the hotel sits on the banks of the river Wensum which is the site of the annual Norwich Raft Race. What is a raft race? Glad you asked.

Each year the participants build their own rafts to be used in the race and this year the accent was on American feats and foibles in honor of us being in Norwich during this event. We couldn't restrain a cheer or two as the rafts, in all their art and glory, headed upriver towards the starting line in a very orderly and parade-like fashion.

What came back down river was something quite different. Each raft, and many along the banks, had their own weapons and everybody who had a weapon delighted in using it. The most common were: a plastic bag filled with flour and water which they used as a hand grenade, and a fire hose used as you would use a 105mm cannon.

It was raft against raft and raft against those along the banks of the river. This caught us a bit by surprise as nobody had warned us exactly what this race was all about and what would take place. As soon as the first flour grenade hit, we knew and took appropriate action. We ran like hell!

In spite of being hosed, bombed and splattered we all thoroughly enjoyed this little bit of British Mayhem. Who won? Lacking firepower we were all too busy ducking and running to find out.



The astronauts make it up and back.



The Mayflower leaving from Boston, England.



American Beef burgers taste better cooked on British gas.

and a
Happy New Year!
1984