



# NEWS LETTER

Vol. 15 No. 4

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

December 1977

## CONVENTION — 1978

As one reaches the apogee of the San Diego - Coronado bridge and looks straight ahead toward the Pacific Ocean, a structure resembling a castle dominates the view of the shoreline. The building gives the appearance of having grown there rather than having been constructed.



As if this were not enough the Greater San Diego area boasts a well-nigh overwhelming combination of natural beauty and entertainment attractions.

Romantic Old Mexico is just freeway minutes south with Jai-alai, bullfights and the fascinating curio shops of colorful Tijuana.

Across the bay in sunny San Diego, world famous San Diego Zoo and Balboa Park offer unique exhibits and striking scenic delights.

Mission Bay Aquatic Park is a ranking mecca for small boats and sailing craft. Sightseeing points of interest include Cabrillo National Monument ... charming La Jolla with intriguing shops ... San Diego harbor excursions etc. The list of things to see and do is endless.

In case we might be accused of forgetting the avid golfers Coronado itself boasts one of the finest courses along the West Coast. In fact we are exploring the possibility of conducting a 2nd Air Division Golf tournament at this site.

In addition Hank Tevelin advises that the California Parlor Car Tours are great and he recommends them for those who are looking for something like this in order to have a minimum of seven days in California to take advantage of those super saving fares.



### FLYING TO THE REUNION IN CALIFORNIA NEXT YEAR?

There are very few things left in the world today to which we can refer to as being 'constant'. One such 'constant' is the travel service provided to the Association and individual members by Hank and Edie Tevelin. Of course Hank has to provide this superior service because he flew with the 466th and if his service was otherwise we would have his scalp!

Hank and Edie advise that those people who will be flying into San Diego for the reunion this coming July from principle cities in the Eastern part of the U.S., in many cases some type of Super Saver Airfare may be available.

If you will contact their office after the first of the year and tell them your city of departure, dates, etc. they will be happy to respond on an individual basis with whatever information is available at that time.

Currently, reservations must be made and paid for at least 30 days prior to departure and the stay must be a minimum of 7 days. These airfares represent an approximate 35-40% savings over the normal coach fares and certainly should be considered by those who can meet the simple requirements set by the airlines. The address is Tevelin Travel Agency, 308 Bustleton Pike, Feasterville, Pa. 19047. Phones: 215-677-5775 and 215-355-4050.

Don't be afraid to use Hank and Edie for other travel requirements as they provide a complete service.

## Second Air Division Association Eighth Air Force

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4915 Bristow Drive, Annandale, Va. 22003

\*\*\*\*\*

American Representative, Board of Governors;  
Memorial Trust.....JORDAN UTTAL  
7824 Meadow Park Drive, Apt. 101  
Dallas, Texas 75230

\*\*\*\*\*

### GROUP VICE PRESIDENTS

Headquarters.....WARREN L. BURMAN  
34225 Pettibone Ave., Solon, Ohio 44139  
44th BG.....CHARLES J. WARTH  
5709 Walkerton Dr., Cincinnati, Ohio 45238  
93rd BG.....R. J. RHOADES  
3053 3 1st Ave., Columbus, Neb. 68601  
389th BG.....EARL L. ZIMMERMAN  
8922 Haverstick Rd., Indianapolis, Ind. 46240  
392nd BG.....JAMES W. BLANCO  
326 Beck Rd., Lindenhurst, Ill. 60046  
445th BG.....DAVID G. PATTERSON  
28 Squire Ct., Alamo, California 94507  
446th.....CLARENCE H. HOOKS  
7819 Clearwater Road, Hixson, Tennessee 37343  
448th BG.....JOSEPH T. MICHALCZYK  
241 West St., Ludlow, Mass. 01056  
458th BG.....CLINTON E. WALLACE  
Box 508, Brutus, Michigan 49716  
466th BG.....J. M. DANIELS  
1306 W. Woodard, Denison, Texas 75020  
467th BG.....RAYMOND A. BETCHER  
366 Reitman Ct., Rochester, Mich. 48063  
489th BG.....COL. CHARLES H. FREUDENTHAL (Ret.)  
8421 Berea Dr., Vienna, Va. 22180  
491st BG.....THEODORE PARKER  
297 Proctor Ave., Revere, Mass. 02151  
492nd BG.....SEBASTIAN H. CORRIERE  
4939 No. 89th St., Milwaukee, Wis. 53225

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### GROUP CHAIRMAN

453rd BG.....DONALD J. OLDS  
1403 Highland, Rolla, Mo. 65401

\*\*\*\*\*

Association Photographer.....ROBERT T. COLEMAN  
210 W. Lawrence, Royal Oak, Mich. 48073

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## MEET YOUR VICE PRESIDENT E. A. (Rick) Rokicki

For quite a few weeks now I have been pressuring our Executive Vice President, Rick Rokicki, to sit down and 'pen' a few words about himself so that the members will know more about him. Now Rick is a busy man with United Air Lines and is constantly hopping around the country solving one problem or another for his employer. We really didn't know how busy until he sent us this drawing showing how he looks during one of his busier days.

O.K. Rick, you convinced us. We'll settle for those nice articles you write for us every so often. But do watch that hernia!



## THE CRUSADERS

by Robert Vickers (392nd BG)

Flying "spare" position for our fine new VP, Jim Blanco, to assist on this dateline, your old ex VP agreed to get back on the air again for a few 392nd tid-bits. So here goes!

First item: PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE PLANS NOW FOR OUR NEXT BIG 'MINI' REUNION HOSTED BY THE 2nd ADA AT DEL CORONADO, SAN DIEGO, CA. THIS COMING JULY.

Jim Blanco has advised that Group plans for this one will be the best ever. Let's make our turn-out equally so.

Many appreciative thanks to you loyal 392nd-ers and families who turned out for Lake Geneva this year — some fifty six — one of the largest of any Lib outfit there. J.D. Long, our ex-578th Ops Officer and now our honored President of the 2nd ADA, had excellent pictures made of the LG Group. Amazing how everyone *hasn't* gone along with Father Time in looks!

New items of possible interest: A supplemental roster of former 392nd-ers 'found' since 1 Jan. '77 will be on the

way to you by Jan. '78. I have over 500 names now and have encouraged each one to join up with us in the 2nd ADA. Need to keep searching — please send names to me.

Our book "The Liberators From Wendling" is being received very well (see review elsewhere in this NL by our outstanding editor and supporter, Bill Robertie). I talked with Roger Freeman recently and he intends to write another 8th AF documentary, "Liberators At War". According to Roger our history will serve as an excellent reference in his work. He would like any additional info ANYONE might have on the 392nds high mission Lib — SHORT SNORTER — which flew a record 128 missions without an abort. Please send to me if you have anything. I'll be glad to forward it.

Myron K advised he'll be at Del Coronado along with other California troops this July — with turbos in high blower! Come on now, you Crusaders, let's get the family vote out for San Diego, and in the meantime from Jim and all of us, have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. My warmest from the Sun-Belt country — Bob Vickers.

## NOTICE

Please accept our apologies for not having a new Roster in your hands by now as we had promised, but the task of correcting our membership cards due to errors committed over the past couple of years has proved a formidable one.

We now expect to be able to mail the Roster right after the first of the year when the Christmas mail will have been taken care of by the Post Office. Knowing the Post Office you will have a better chance of receiving your copy of the Roster if it isn't mailed during the holiday season. Experience!

Enclosed with this newsletter are your dues statement and membership card. You will assist us greatly in paying our bills if you send your dues check to Evelyn as soon as possible. We wish you a happy holiday season — one and all.



## NEWS OF THE 44th EIGHTBALLS

by Joe Warth

"Whoops"! Received a letter from John Kirby out in Colorado the other day about the amount of money that the 44th donated to the Memorial Trust Fund at the Reunion at Lake Geneva. Seems that we posted the wrong figures. It should be \$850.00 donated. When the winners of the 2nd ADA Whiskey Raffle were drawn, John won one of the large jugs of liquid refreshment which he then auctioned off, thereby raising another \$50.00 dollars to be added to the fund. Thanks John for all of your most welcome contributions. Now the goal for the 44th in 1978 will be to beat 1977. Would any of the other Groups like to try to beat us next year? We will welcome the competition. Let's all of the Eightballs join together next year and see just how much we can raise. Remember, your help and ideas are needed — so IF YOU think of a good way to raise MONEY for the Memorial Trust Fund

let me know. I will tell the other Eightballers about it.

☆☆☆☆

We have added fifteen more members to the rolls of the 44th in the 2nd ADA since the first of June this year. Glad to have all you new members with us, but don't stay at home. Attend the reunions and let us meet you. Also needed at this time are more addresses. I have run out of ex-members to contact. Send me the names and addresses of your old buddies and we will make every effort to get them back in the 44th. Only with your help can we continue to grow.

The orders for the "Eightball Patches" are piling up and I will send them to you just as soon as I receive them from the patch maker. Thanks for waiting. About half of the shipment that's due in is already sold, so don't wait if you want one or two of them. Send your order to me — Joe Warth,

5709 Walkerton Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238. . . Cost \$2.50 each.

It's time to start planning for next summer so why not attend the Reunion in San Diego as a starter? then drive around Southern California for a few days seeing the glory of the West. Visit with your old friends and make some new ones too. This will be the last Stateside Reunion until 1980 because in 1979 we return to Shipdham and Norwich. How many of you Eightballer's would like to spend a day once again in Shipdham? Stroll around the base, visit a Pub or two and have lunch or dinner in the Shipdham area where you can show your family where you spent your time during the War. Maybe a visit to the "Samson and Hercules" can be arranged.

The "SHIPDHAM PUB" will be open for business in San Diego, so be there to see what you have been missing these past years. New signs are being made and we may even have some English Beer this year. Have a Merry Christmas and see you in 1978.

## WAR IS, AND WAS, HELL

by Don Baumler (445th BG)

September 27, 1944, began like many other days in England. The morning showed signs of probably rainfall, and we put up a mission. In a few hours we were to learn that it was not just another day: it was the most tragic day in the history of our Group, and it was probably the most disastrous raid for a single Group in Air Force History.

The assigned target was Kassel, and 37 of our ships set out for the target. It was a completely undercast mission, and after reaching the I.P. the Group turned and presumably headed for the target. Actually we were headed for Gottingen, which was approximately thirty miles northeast of Kassel, and dropped our bombs about half a mile short of Gottingen.

We then turned off the target as prescribed, but being out of the bomber stream, we were on our own. About ten minutes of routine flying followed, and suddenly, with very little notice from the gunners — the Germans had made excellent use of cover and apparently had reached the Group's altitude in good time — more than 100 German fighters pounced upon our group, flying about ten abreast and raining destruction upon our ships practically at once.

Our gunners did what they could, and managed to inflict heavy losses on our attackers. But by then many of our ships were roaring earthward in flames, and it seemed to be raining parachutes.

American fighters finally appeared on the scene, too late to save our Group although they managed to destroy several Luftwaffe fighters.

The entire battle took less than five minutes, and we lost 25 crews and ships at the scene of the tragedy. In addition two ships crash-landed in France, two at Manston, England, and a fifth cracked up in the vicinity of our base. The total casualty list showed one killed, 13 injured and 236 missing in action. Of those missing in action, many were eventually officially listed as killed in action and a high percentage managed to survive the crash or parachuted to safety, finally returning home after their liberation from captivity by advancing Allied ground forces.

By the time the group had departed from England, official change of status of the 236 men indicated 45 officers and 63 enlisted men were Prisoners of War, and 13 in all had been declared dead. The Group never learned officially the fate of the other men.

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

Many of the survivors captured in the vicinity of the area in which most of the Group planes crashed were detailed by the Germans to gather up the

bodies of their friends or remove the remains from the burned wreckage. Needless to say those men will never forget the horror of that scene.

Back at Tibenham the magnitude of the disaster which had befallen us was horrifying. The many empty seats in the Mess Halls gave ample evidence that war is hell.

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

From: History of the 445th B.G. by Rudolph Birsic.)

## PHOTOGRAPH OF A PHOTOGRAPHER



Last year Bob Coleman burst upon the scene and offered to become our official photographer at any and all reunions. The results of his work which appeared in

the September issue were outstanding. As is usual with photographers they never have their own picture taken.

Al and Emma Franklin put on a Sherlock Holmes act, tracked down Bob and caught him in the act of making a camera adjustment just prior to immortalizing another group of revelers. Giving a knowledgeable assist to Bob is lovable Joe Arbaugh — minus rog!

# I REMEMBER: A Most Disastrous Mission

by

Col. Myron H. Keilman (392nd B.G.)

Col. Robert Berger (392nd BG)

collaborated by

Col. Vernon Baumgart (392nd BG)

Mr. Donald Clover (392nd BG)

"Tacked" on to the rear of our remaining ten airplane formation, I still had to determine a destination — England or Switzerland. I called the flight engineer down from the top turret to read the fuel remaining in our tanks and made an estimate of our three engines' rate of fuel consumption and distance to England, and spun the E-6B computer. Remember it? You can rest assured I gave the risk factor of leaving the formation and striking out alone to Switzerland plenty of weight in my calculations. I concluded that we could reach the White Cliffs of Dover; then we would worry about a place to land — or bail out.

Colonel Baumgart now tells me: "While the discussion of our fuel reserve was going on, the whole crew was breathlessly pulling for the decision to continue to England. This was our 25th and last mission and getting back to England was for our crew the same, at that moment, as getting back to the U.S. We were little interested in going to Switzerland."

We were getting along really well. The three engines were roaring faithfully; no instruments were in the "red"; our wounded navigator had been given a shot of morphine and wasn't bleeding badly; the gasoline-soaked gunners were okay, but extremely cold; and we were "hanging in there." It was nice to be among a few remaining friends and not a lone "tail-end Charlie"; however, our peace didn't last long.

As we were passing Strasbourg, the waist gunner called out: "Fighters on our tail!" He identified them as twin engine JU-88s. We sat there waiting for them to press an attack, but they just sat back there out of the range of our guns. In a minute or so the gunner called: "They're firing!" Baumgart immediately pressed a rudder and skidded the airplane to the left for evasive action. Sure enough, off our right wing appeared a whole cluster of white puffs of smoke — exploding time-fused shells of some kind, probably 30 millimeters. The gunner called again and the airplane was skidded to the right. Immediately there appeared another cluster of white puffs off our left wing tip. This exercise continued for a few more minutes, ending finally when the Jerries apparently ran out of ammunition — and we evaded being hit.

Crossing France, some P-47s picked us up and escorted us across the remaining enemy territory. What a great relief it was to start our let-down over the English Channel, but the whole land mass was cloud covered. The concern of fuel remaining and a destination was again paramount. Another reading of the fuel gauges indicated that we could make it back to Wendling, and for fuel conservation we throttled back and let the formation proceed without us.

Approaching our base at Wendling, I remember how nice it was when we called 2nd Air Division on emergency frequency for a vector to Wendling. The response was loud and clear, and shortly we could see the big yellow flares breaking through the undercast at the end of our runway. Our hydraulic system having been drained of fluid from the fighter attack, our landing gear had to be cranked down manually. Captain Baumgart made a smooth landing, and with only one application of brakes available, he eased the airplane on to the soft March sod to slow it

(Part 3)

down. Coming to rest without further incident, El Lobo and crew were a "sorry sight." The bomb bay doors even had to be pulled open from the outside. If the three of us on the flight deck would have had to bail out in a hurry, we would have been trapped in the bomb bay. How about that?

Nine hours after take off, our safe landing was as welcomed an event as any event in my life.

Fourteen airplanes failed to return to England. One or two made it to safety in Switzerland. Some of the 140 missing crewmen managed to bail out of their disabled or burning airplanes like the crew of the Jungle Princess. Some became prisoners of war or were interned in Switzerland. Most of them, I am sure, are numbered with the 6,032 airmen enshrined in the 2nd Air Division's Roll of Honor.

The consoling after-thoughts of the 392nd's most disastrous mission are that several of the Second Air Divisions B-24 bombardment groups made devastating hits on the primary objective, and Friedrickshafen was never re-scheduled as a target!

## "Our Living Memorial"

Dear Earl (Zimmerman) and 2nd AD:

My sincere congratulations to all of you for another successful year for the best Air Division in the world. Everybody has done a great job.

I wish I could have been with you to say it in person, but my wife's health, and the lack of reliable help at home, prevents my attending. May I say 'hello' and best wishes for a great reunion where the truth about who really won the war was undoubtedly told.

I remember General George Patton's tanks went through the hole in the German lines made by you people, and then you went back to bombing Berlin.

Reich Marshall Herman Goering told General Spatz that he knew the jig was up when he saw our American fighters knocking down German fighters over Berlin. He knew that American bombers with fighter escort could bomb Germany out of the war. You all did it so tell it because "you wuzz there!"

I'm certain we all have great pride when we think of, and support, our living Memorial in the Norwich Library. The memory of our 6,032 comrades who did not return has succeeded in binding us together with personal remembrances that speak so clear in the personal letters quoted in our Newsletter. This is proof that we will never forget.

I am glad to pledge a contribution of \$500.00 towards our \$50,000 goal for the Capital Fund. I wish I could have been there to hand it across the table to the treasurer in person. We are in the position of aggressively having left the IP on our run to a target of \$50,000, AND WE WILL MAKE IT!

I read quote from one of our Newsletters that "this would handle the next 'Generation' of needs for the 2nd AD Memorial then our sons and daughters would take over.

This is a fine idea and I urge everyone to think about it. Talk to the younger people. It would be a great idea to copy the 'SAR' and 'DAR' who have succeeded so well. Then when we meet those 6,032, plus some others who have joined them since WW II, we will all have something good to talk about, and be proud of having kept faith with those recorded names contained in the "Book of Memories" resting in our Memorial Room.

Thanks for listening and I hope you all enjoyed yourselves at the reunion. Until we meet again in person and in spirit — bless the 2nd AD.

Affectionately always,  
W. E. Kepner  
Your OLD C.G. 2nd AD



# 458th MEMORIAL DISPLAY AT NORWICH AIRPORT

by Rick Rokicki (458th)

The idea of establishing a permanent memorial to the 458th Bomb Group at the Norwich Airport was originally discussed at the 1975 reunion in Norwich, England. Two years later, the Memorial was a fact. Much work by George Reynolds, Tony North, Mike Bailey, Chris Gotts and his uncle, John Collins, plus monetary support by members of the 458th, made it all happen.



(l to r) Mike Bailey, Ronald Courtney (airport manager), Rick Rokicki

The memorial display takes in an area approximately 12' by 5' and is mounted on a corridor wall in the Norwich Airport Passenger Terminal. It consists of a large camouflaged painting of the B-24 "Paddlefoot" by Mike Bailey, well known Norwich artist who donated the work. Mike also researched the 4 squadron badges and, very accurately, did them as well. Both paintings are protected by non-glare glass and are framed. Chris Gotts and his uncle, John Collins, were responsible for the fine work. Here again, the labor and skill were donated, the material costs were paid by the members of the 458th.



(l to r) Tony North, Mike Bailey, Harold Johnston, Rick Rokicki

To the left of the paintings is another framed case showing a dozen 8x10 photos of the Group aircraft in various views. These were selected by Tony North and George Reynolds. George purchased the photos from the Dept. of the Air Force in Arlington, Va. Completing this tribute to the Bomb Group is a brushed aluminum plaque that reads:

*Dedicated in Memory of the  
458th Bombardment Group (H) USAAF  
Horsham St. Faith.  
January 1944 - June 1945*

Tony North was the contact man who had a few hurdles to overcome and was successful in getting permission thru the necessary agencies. That in itself was quite an achievement. To our British friends who helped in this memorial, we of the 458th, owe a debt of gratitude to them. Truly, they were an extension of "hands across the sea".

The Eastern Evening News covered the event at the Norwich Airport. Quoting their coverage, it appeared as follows:

"Norwich Airport now has a permanent reminder of the days when Liberators of the United States Army Air Force used it as a base for raids on Germany.

"The reminder is in the form of a display, handed over today (Saturday, August 27th, 1977), to the manager of the airport, Mr. Ronald Courtney, (center).

"From January 1944 to June 1945,

the airfield then Horsham St. Faith, was the home of the 458th Bombardment Group. In the Group at the time was Flight Engineer Rick Rokicki (right). Mr. Rokicki, who is vice-president of the Second Air Division Association, handed the display — a commemorative plaque, photographs, and a painting by local artist Mike Bailey (left) — to Mr. Courtney, himself a retired Group Captain, R.A.F.

"The display, which is mounted in the terminal building, also includes badges of the four squadrons which made up the 458th Group.

"Mr. Tony North, an associate member of the association, who was also at the ceremony, explained that the money for the display came from former members of the Group."

☆☆☆☆☆

A personal gift of a B-24 tie-tac complete with vertical red-white-red striped rudder plus a replica "tail feather" as worn by 458th members at the last reunion in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, was given to Mr. Courtney. He was quite pleased with it and holds it in his left hand.

## "LIBERATORS FROM WENDLING"

by Col. Robert E. Vickers, Jr.

Liberators from Wendling is a comprehensive history of the 392nd Bomb Group covering its combat achievements as well as the day by day activities of the Group.

Having just finished reading my copy I can truthfully say that it is one of the most comprehensive histories of a single Group ever published. It only lacks one item of statistical information — how many rivets there were in each aircraft!

In its first printing the book has received high praise from many who know the difference between a 'good' history and a 'so-so' history.

From Roger A. Freeman, author of "The Mighty Eighth" and other WW II histories: "You have done a tremendous job and I can tell that very many hours of hard work have been put into assembling all the material. I enjoyed reading it and it will also prove an invaluable reference book."

From Chris Gotts: "You certainly have done a fine job in producing such a magnificent record of achievements of the 392nd B.G. I am quite sure that copies of this book will be sought by aviation historians for many years to come."

I can only echo the above and say that it will provide many hours of enjoyable reading for all who purchase a copy. The cost is \$16.95 and orders should be sent to Robert E. Vickers, Jr., 6424 Torreon Dr., N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109.

THE  
LIBERATORS



FROM  
WENDLING

ROBERT E. VICKERS, JR.

William G. Robertie

## RAF AIR SEA RESCUE - WE LOVED THEM

Dear Bill:

I believe my name may connect with you through correspondence with Al Blanco and Bob Shaffer who have both, along with numerous other past and present U.S.A.F. members helped me in my search for 2nd Lt. Elmer W. Clarey.

Both Al and Bob have left no stone unturned in trying to find Elmer Clarey who was a pilot and one of the crews I helped to rescue from the North Sea after he and the crew of ship 44-40154 G+ bailed out, on May 29th, 1944, on their return from a bombing raid on Politz.

Although my search has lasted for many years and indeed still continues I still have no trace of Elmer Clarey or any other member of that crew and my one ambition is and has been to return to Elmer the Graduation Wings he so kindly sent to me in June 1944 from an APO number 558. I am sure they must mean so much to him. He served with the 492nd BG 859th Squadron and I am enclosing a copy of his letter sent to me with the Wings in '44. I have safeguarded and treasured these Wings over the years and apart from periodic cleaning by my daughter they are kept in my deed box at the bank, still in the box posted to me in 1944 bearing King George VI postage stamps.

I was on a great many successful rescue missions during my service with the R.A.F. Air Sea Rescue and of course many of these were American crews particularly of B-24s.



I well remember picking up one American crew in late 1943 off the Dutch Coast, in the middle of the German mine-fields. We passed many mines floating in the heavy waves that had broken free from their moorings (very nerve racking). When we finally found the crew they were all confined to one dingy as the second craft had failed to

inflate. As there was not enough room in one dingy for all the crew members, three of them were in the sea, clinging to the outside of the craft. The remainder of the crew including the injured were lying on top of each other.

As there was quite a heavy swell, I went into the sea (wearing my Mae-West) and after securing a line to the dingy guided one 'bod' to our launch. After we were hauled aboard the HSL he lay flat out on the deck and said to me 'Man, am I glad to see you. I'm sure ————'.

After we had helped the crew from their water-logged flying suits we gave them 'Utility trousers' civilian war-time clothing which we carried for this purpose. The crew being very tall found that the trousers only covered two thirds of their legs. One man turned to me and said 'Hell, I must look like Al Capone, but, when we make Terra Firma this sure calls for one big ———— up. The only sad part was that once on Terra Firma we never had the good fortune to see them again. They went their way and we ours, so, I never did get that drink!

Whoever he was and wheresoever he may be, I don't think he will ever forget that occasion, nor will I.

I often cast my mind back over the years and wonder what those 'bods' have been doing throughout the years since the war ended.

Now to get to my original reason for writing this letter to you, Bob Shaffer wrote to me last week stating that he had made enquiries and had been informed that I am eligible to become a member of the 2nd A.D. Association having been in-

volved in the rescue missions of American crew-men from the 2nd Air Division, and that he is willing to sponsor my application.

If I am able to join it will make my year. I am already a proud member of the Liberator Club.

I am enclosing \$7.00 on Bob Shaffer's instructions in payment for a year's subscription.

If I am accepted as a member I shall start planning to bring my wife and daughter over in July '78 to the re-union in San Diego, who knows I may have the good fortune to meet Elmer Clarey or another survivor from the ship.

Anyway you can be sure if I am there the Wings will be with me just in case I meet him.

It would also be a double celebration for my family as my daughter is 21 years old in 1978 and as she attended school in Carmel, California in her junior years she would be delighted to return.

I am enclosing a copy of the letter I received from Elmer Clarey and also two photographs one of myself and one of an R.A.F. HSL on a crash mission, heading for the North Sea in 1942/3.

Hoping for a favourable reply from you, kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

Charles W. Hayes-Halliday  
ex R.A.F. (1941/46)

P.S.

May I request that any reply be sent to my office address as follows as at this time I am in the throes of moving house:

Halliday Frost Developments Ltd.,  
566, Woodborough Road, Mapperley,  
Nottingham, England.

**NECKLACE**

**PAPERWEIGHT**

**TIE TAC**



Leroy J. Engdahl, 1785 Wexford Drive, Vidor, TX 77662 is offering the above items to members of the 2nd Air Division and part of the profits will be donated to the Memorial Trust Fund. Having one of each I can truthfully say that they are unique and attractive. The Tie Tac sells for \$5.00, the Necklace for \$5.00 and the Paper Weight for \$11.00. The Paper Weight makes a beautiful shelf piece particularly when the sun strikes it. Please order direct from Leroy at the above address.



## LOW LEVEL TO CUIJK - GROESBECK

by C.H. Freudenthal (489th)

Operation MARKET, which was started on September 17th, 1944, was designed to put Allied airborne troops across Holland's waterways in the Arnhem-Zuider Zee area. It was the first low-level operation for the American air forces since Ploesti, and some 850 B17s and 250 B24s were committed by 8th Air Force. The 489th, leading the 2d Air Division on D+1, furnished 35 aircraft, loaded with food, ammunition and general supplies.

Captain Ed Wall of the 845th led the 489th, and had Group Co. Colonel Napier, the Division Command Pilot with him. The 844th was led by A. J. Gaczi and crew, and the 847th by Harry Carls. Take-off was delayed because of bad weather, and according to the mission report, they were "met by a hail of small arms fire as they swept in almost on the deck."



Sept. 18th, 1944 - airdrop to Cuijk-Groesbeck.

On the first run, the lead section was unable to identify the drop area because their principal check point, a railroad bridge, had been destroyed by the Germans. They made a second run, still under heavy fire from the ground, but the following groups were in the target area by this time, and they were forced to circle until they could make a clear run. Finally, on this third attempt, the 489th put their supplies on target and headed for home.

Two aircraft were lost to ground fire, six other crew members were wounded, and fifteen aircraft suffered Class A battle damage in the mission. Captain Robert White and crew, in #94786, were listed MIA. White's crew included Donald WEaldie (CP), William Dalton (N), Ralph Hoover (B), Donald Brian (E), Adam Gawlick (RO), and Gunners Glenn Gommels, Frank Ruiz and Samuel Miller. Lovelace crew members were Evan Allen (CP), John Weidemann (N), Donald Brumbaugh (B), Edwin Anderson (E), Owen Neuling (RO), and Ralph Wofford, Basil Johnson, and Clifford Coombs, gunners.

General Brereton, commanding the First Allied Airborne Army, expressed appreciation for the air support, noting that the "splendid support" was re-

## LOST & FOUND DEPARTMENT 562nd Air Force Band

Didn't know we had one did you. Well we did and the band was stationed at Ketteringham Hall to provide music for every important occasion, and some not so important occasions.

Just recently, via one of Pete Henry's "Letter to the Editor", we were able to make contact with Earl D. Brown who was the First Sgt. & Assistant Bandleader. Earl played trumpet although he confesses that his lip is not quite as flexible as it used to be.

### NOTICE

The Newsletter is still looking for WW II memorabilia: Photos (identifiable), Stars and Stripes, YANK what have you. All material will be copied and returned or, if requested, filed here for use in a future Newsletter and eventual repose in our Memorial Room in the Norwich Central Library or other State-side Museums.

Dig into those old trunks and whatever you feel you can part with send to me, William G. Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938. **DON'T LET THAT VALUABLE MATERIAL GET LOST.**

sponsible for the successful completion of troop carrier missions. "Bomber re-supply beautifully executed. Many thanks to all ranks for outstanding aid."

☆☆☆☆

**NOTE FROM DICK WAGNER:** "My records don't show what plane we flew to Munster on Oct. 25th, but we had pretty well settled with "Pin Up Girl" by then. We flew "Satan's Sister" two or three times, and we got her first flak holes at Cologne. As a footnote to history, I recall the ground crew chief was named Nat Satin. He had a goatee and mustache and looked just like the Devil himself — hence the name of the plane... I notice Vince Muti is among our members. Ask him if he remembers the mid-air collision of Cithander and Aiken's crews on the bomb run to Mainz on Oct. 19th. Some B17s crossed in front of us, and we hit their prop wash. Lithander's plane fluttered up and came down on top of Aiken's. Lithander's wing broke off, and Aiken's plane was cut in half just back of the bomb bay... we were all socked in so close for the bomb run we just missed getting tangled up too."

*Ed. note: 489th lost 3 aircraft on that mission. Three to five chutes were seen after the collision. Anyone have more details?*

One thing Earl is attempting to do is to locate as many former members of the 562nd Air Force Band as he can so that they will have their own unit within the Association. We want to assist him as much as we can so we are asking all members to contact Earl if they know the current address of any of the former band members. For this purpose we are listing the names of all the former band members and the instrument they played. Write to Earl at 405 S. Temple Blvd., Temple, Pa. 19560 if you have any information you think he can use.

**562nd Air Force Band  
Second Air Division - 8th Air Force  
AAF Station #147  
Kettering Hall, England**

Gaylord W. Nicholas - Bandleader  
Earl D. Brown - First Sgt. & Assistant Bandleader - Trumpet  
Carl F. Baum - Arranger - Saxophone and Clarinet  
Robert S. Boardman - Supply Sgt. - Trombone  
Joseph A. Hruby - Barracks Chief - Trumpet  
William M. LeFever, Jr. - Saxophone and Clarinet  
Frederick G. Randall - Trumpet  
Wilburn D. Wallace - Horn and Paino  
Harrison D. Smith - Base Horn and Fiddle  
Lawrence A. Stanton - Saxophone and Clarinet  
Joseph Herde - Saxophone and Clarinet  
John M. Held - Clarinet and Piano  
Theodore Z. Sokolowski - Trumpet  
Stanford W. Sedberry - Horn (Deceased)  
Donald L. Larson - Payroll Clerk - Trombone  
Henry W. Counts - Saxophone and Clarinet  
Thomas A. Armstrong - Bass Horn and Fiddle  
Seymour Heiss - Drums  
Thomas Bowman - Baritone and Trombone  
Wallace Smith - Drums  
William Shelton - Trombone  
John Schiffler - Horn and Guitar (Deceased)  
Paul W. Meuller - Flute and Piccolo  
John A. Arena - Saxophone and Clarinet  
Edwin Sojka - Saxophone and Clarinet  
Mortimer Glosser - Saxophone and Trombone  
Henry Cohen - Clarinet  
Ray Triscari - Trumpet  
Joseph N. Hartley - Trumpet

# Close Contact with the Enemy — Too Close!!!

by Carl E. Epting, Jr. (467th)

After two weeks crossing the North Atlantic on a very slow boat, sixteen B-24 crews disembarked at Gourock, Scotland, and after about thirty days of orientation, navigational training and the routine physical examinations several of the crews, including mine, were assigned to the 467th Bomb Group at Rackheath.

My crew was assigned to the 790th Sq. under the command of Major Fred Holdridge. We were replacement crews fresh out of training at Muroc (later Edwards) AFB. What a change from the hot dry desert of California to the damp cold broads of Norfolk. As I recall, most of us were quite unhappy and adjustment was not easy.

We began our indoctrination with the pilots doing one thing, navigators and bombardiers another and the enlisted crew doing what was related to their crew function. We flew practice missions, went to ground school and overall wondered when it would all end so we could get that first mission under our belts. None of us were that anxious, but it was what we were sent over to do.

After what seemed like an eternity, I flew my first mission on August 9, 1944 flying as co-pilot with an experienced crew. The mission was nothing spectacular, rather screwed up as I recall, but we made it to the target and back to base without serious problems.

So, with that initiation we were off on our own flying as a crew, trying to get our tour of 35 missions and hoping for an early end to the war.



Back Row (l to r): Larson, Bowmer, Gregory & Epting.  
Front Row (l to r): Fudge, Schmidbauer, Antefomaso, Bailey, Myers, & Powell

Our missions were more or less like

most other crews, some routine, others hazardous and a few rather hair-raising. I will say that during my tour from August of 1944 until February of 1945 the German Air Force caused us the least concern and the anti-aircraft batteries the most. In retrospect, I am quite sure that the insistence upon tight formation flying was a strong factor in the small number of fighter attacks the 467th experienced during this period.

As we progressed through our tour, building up experience and confidence both in ourselves and the aircraft, it was inevitable that we would develop favorites. In the case of my crew (and others I am sure) we always looked forward to missions we would fly in "Witchcraft". Long before she established her record for the most missions without aborting we recognized her ground crew under the direction of Sgt. Joe Ramirez as a dedicated bunch who took their work seriously, and the results showed. This airplane always functioned as she was designed to do and it was comfortable to be on her flight deck when we were deep in enemy territory and facing four hours of total dependability on those four Pratt-Whitney engines. On the six or more missions that we flew in this aircraft she never let us down.

There was another plane we flew, more or less regularly, which we also felt comfortable with. It was a B24H whose serial number ended in 962. Unfortunately, I do not remember the name of her crew chief and she never did get a nick-name. This airplane was delivered to the group in the Fall of 1944, as I recall, and assigned to the 790th Sq. We shared her with other crews, but secretly felt she was ours and developed a real admiration for her. This late in the war the olive drab color had been omitted and she was gleaming new aluminum with the squadron and group markings and her numbers on the nose just aft of the turret — 962 — in bold black.

We flew her on a number of missions and she performed like a true lady. She took off with a full fuel and bomb load with normal manifold pressures and never used more than the standard amount of runway. After the first mission we all knew she had what it took to be a winner. I even think we thought she might compete with the "Witch", but the fortunes of war shattered this dream. This brings me to the purpose of this article which, if published, will thrill me beyond words since I have never attempted to write before. I've thought about it, but just never got around to doing anything about it.

Well, in due course our tour of missions moved past the middle and we felt that we had it made and it would be all downhill from then on. On December 31, 1944, we briefed for a mission to Engers, Germany. The target I don't remember, but the mission was to be a long one. The take-off and form-up was normal and the groups proceeded to the target as briefed. Bombs away occurred pretty much on time, ack-ack was heavy as predicted, but we avoided serious damage and all ships in the group turned off the target and headed home.

Almost immediately, the navigator informed me that we were experiencing a strong head wind and that our ground speed was only about 80 knots. Our engineer checked the fuel and figured we would most likely not have enough to reach the English coast and certainly not enough to return to base. We leaned the mixture as much as we dared and loosened up the formation just a tad in an effort to conserve.

One hour later our fuel consumption was re-checked and we decided that it would be necessary to request permission to land on the continent to re-fuel rather than take a chance on losing the airplane in the channel or somewhere else short of Rackheath.

After checking the charts and communicating our problem to our group leader, we were granted permission to leave the group and land at Brussels for fuel. It was still daylight and we planned to land, refuel and be back in the air in an hour.

Our navigator brought us in right over the field, we landed and were directed to taxi to the fuel pumps. There were others in our same predicament plus planes based here so it was dark before we completed re-fueling. The field was not lighted so we were directed to a parking area and instructed to report to the billeting officer for overnight quarters and operations for take-off instructions for the following morning.

Subsequently we were assigned quarters in town and taken by truck to a small hotel. After supper we all hit the sack, except one or two of the young sports on the crew who went out to see the town. I never did get that story in full. Remember now, this was New Years eve 1945. Where were you on that night?

The next morning we were up and around fairly early, anxious to get out to the airfield, in the air and back to base. About eight o'clock after a truck ride back to the field we stopped by operations, in an old school building, for our orders. We were just about



ready to ride out to our airplane when we heard shooting and then an explosion. Well, what followed in the next hour was some German air action in support of the battle of the bulge. A last ditch effort to get the war turned around. In this effort at this one field alone dozens of American planes and unknown thousands of gallons of fuel were lost.

Not too many bombs were dropped — it was mostly a strafing attack — but it was effective. It was certainly the closest exposure I had to the actual shooting war. Dropping bombs on an unseen target from twenty odd thousand feet can not be classed as close contact with the enemy. On this particular morning, as I looked out of the window, I could see the German pilots in the cockpits of their FW190s and ME 109s — and believe you me that was close contact.

When it was over and most of the smoke settled we rode out to the hardstand where we had parked our favorite 962 — and all that was left was the nose turret, both wingtips and the tail assembly which fell free from the fire. The rest of the plane had been totally consumed — aided to a large extent by the full tanks which we had topped off the previous afternoon. What a disaster. The war had suddenly taken on some very personal aspects and we all felt that our missions up to now were largely just our patriotic contribution to help save the world for democracy. From this point on our missions would have a purpose. The sad thing was that none of us had a camera to record this tragedy and to document that this thing actually happened.

The truck carried us back to operations and after spending another night we scrounged a ride back to England in a B-17 (the ultimate humiliation) and caught a supply truck back to Racheath.

After we got ourselves off the MIA list and signing the loss certificate on the airplane the crew was given a two day pass — which I must say was well deserved.

Our crew finished up the last eleven missions in about two months and were partially split up by being re-assigned stateside in a variety of jobs.

During the remainder of the war I lost contact with the crew, but later re-located most of them and exchange Christmas cards with them until this day. We talk about a reunion, but maybe its just as well that we retain those memories as they were and not re-live or re-create them. If you read this gang just remember one thing — "I wouldn't take a million dollars for the experience, but I wouldn't give you two cents for another one just like it".

## NEWS OF THE 453rd BG

As told by  
Col. George Matecko USAF

On 7 April 45, the 453rd BG would fly its 255th combat mission in Europe. The target was in the Lunenburg area, 45 miles southeast of Hamburg, Germany. The group received the standard intelligence, operations and weather briefings. The route would be generally over the North Sea with landfall at Ijmuiden, Netherlands, remaining south of Bremen and on to Luneburg. Weather would be favorable with low scattered clouds with tops at 3,500 feet. Flak would be light enroute and increase in intensity near Bremen and the target area.

The war was nearing an end but the Luftwaffe was still able to put up hundreds of fighters into the air. A day or so earlier, a FW-190 was reported to have rammed into a non-453rd Squadron lead aircraft then caromed into the deputy lead — all three aircraft going down. Apprehension filled the briefing room. Is the Luftwaffe, in its last ditch stand, resorting to Kamikaze tactics? Lt. Col. Jerry Davidson, the 734th SQ CO, opined that the FW-190 pilot had either been killed or unconscious when the collision occurred. (This proved correct, post WW II debriefing of German air leadership reflected that the Luftwaffe did not conduct Kamikaze attacks.)



MATECKO CREW 25 Jan 45

Back (l to r): Matecko, P.; de la Garza, CP; Arcudi, N; Turovitz, B.  
Front (l to r): Klien, TT; Lee, RO; Giblin, WG; Enderton, WG; Adler, NG; Manderson, TG.

The group formed over the "Old Buck" buncher and proceeded on course. "Willie", at Ijmuiden fired 8 rounds of 88mm AAA at the group ahead, downing a B-24. From then until southwest of Bremen the mission went pretty much as briefed. Then came the alert that bandits were in the area. Sgt. Harry Lee, the radio operator, would normally move to a waist gun position

to allow Sgt. Durwood Enderton to disperse chaff. Today's weather was such that chaff would not be dispersed. Instead Sgt. Lee positioned himself between the pilot Lt. George Matecko and the co-pilot to assist in spotting German aircraft. Sgt. Red Giblin manned the other waist position and Sgt. Lewis Manderson the tail. Sgt. Ralph Klien manned the top turret and Sgt. Willard Adler the nose turret. Intermitent firing of the waist guns and the tail position took place, Sgt. Klien also began firing his two 50's. Sgt. Adler was firing toward the one o'clock position at a ME-109. The copilot Lt. Jesus de la Garza, cautioned the gunners to be certain of the identity of the aircraft before firing so as not to mistake our P-51 escort aircraft as ME-109's. Lt. Bruno Arcudi, the navigator commenced looking for enemy aircraft for Sgt. Adler.

At the time Lt. de la Garza was cautioning the gunners, an ME-262 jet climbed between the 453rd BG and the group ahead. I called to Sgt. Adler to swing his guns to the 11 o'clock position and as he swung his turret, a second ME-262 pulled up about 150' ahead of us. Sgt. Adler fired into the ME-262 getting hits through the cockpit, left wing and left engine. Sgt. Lee advised Sgt. Adler and the other crew members that Adler had scored hits on the ME-262. Sgt. Klien observed the ME-262 to continue its climb, now trailing smoke, upwards another 1,000 to 1,500' then fell off into a vertical dive. It was last seen burning, in a dive going straight down into a cloud at 3,500'. Both my crew and other crew members surmised that the ME-262 could not have pulled out of the dive at that altitude.

The claim submitted for the kill of the ME-262 by Sgt. Adler was for the first ME-262 shot down by the 453rd. Unfortunately, I don't know if Sgt. Adler was given credit for the kill; as, upon leaving the 453rd a fortnight later, I was given a copy of the listing of the missions we had flown with a note, "Verified, except for the fighter claim," signed Capt. Maldawer.

☆☆☆☆

One of our members stationed at Randolph Field, Texas in June of 1942 was pulling details while waiting for his air cadet class 43-B to begin when he volunteered to assist in the School of Aviation Medicine. The volunteers were put through various situations including experiments in pressurized cabins, simulated altitudes to cut down oxygen etc. If anyone out there participated in similar tests please get in touch with W. D. Faulkner, P.O. Drawer 1171, Pecos, Texas 79772.

# Don't Get Around Much Anymore

by Robert J. Levin (392nd BG)

There's little connection between a popular fox trot and nine men's lives, but our crew of "Puss 'N Boots" will be only too glad to trace the simile for you.

After three briefings that failed to materialize, "Puss 'N Boots" pilot, Willis K. Prater with myself as Co-Pilot, gave the throttle to 30 tons of Liberator and a short ton of unseasoned crewmen. This was our first mission and we were going to Heilbronn — sprawling marshalling yards far into southern Germany. Oldtimers called it a "Cook's tour of the Rhineland" and warned us to nurse the gas and spare the horses.

All went well on the long climb over the channel until the formation turned sharply towards the enemy coast preparatory to making the crossing over southern France. The waist gunners, James Healy and Stanley Kegler, were first to notice it — a steady bubbling of oil that was blown over the engine, coating the tail a syrupy black. We were notified immediately and we promised the crew that we would watch all instruments carefully.

Five minutes of flying were punctuated by the tail gunner, Daniel Deshantz, telling us that the oil had covered the tail and was even dripping off the back.

Oil pressure — first sign of engine failure — had dropped 10 points. "Puss 'N Boots" responded sluggishly to her controls, Lester J. Lawrence, engineer, boosted power on the remaining three engines — at a terrific cost of gas — in order to prevent the plane from straggling out of formation over enemy territory.

Trouble really came in bunches with "Bombs away."

After crossing the Rhine, the gas gauges showed barely enough for two hours flying. Upon attempting to notify the lead plane of our decision to drop out of formation and land for refueling in France, the radio transmitter was found to be inoperative. Our Navigator, William Oilcher, was asked to get a fix so that the plane could be flown to the nearest field. He reported that his position finder was not working — attributing that mishap to the same gremlin that had fouled the radio — and directed us to let down slowly on our present course until we broke through the cloud layer.

While we nursed the plane through thousands of feet of snowstorm Oilcher was consulting his area maps for ground elevation figures and making an attempt to repair his equipment.

During this interval, the flight compass, unknown to us, had frozen on a wrong heading and we were going back into Germany — easy prey for alert flak gunners. There we were — in the middle of a snowstorm, couldn't see the ground, couldn't get a course to steer, low on gas and didn't know how long we had been flying over Germany just waiting for the Jerries to lob up some firecrackers.

By the time the Navigator had noticed the course change he was forced to tell us "I'm not sure of my position." His radio equipment did not work, we had been off course for an unknown time and no ground checkpoints could be seen through the snow. He steered us by another compass through an 'about face' over the interphone while we descended. Everyone on the crew wasn't ashamed to admit that they felt for their parachutes.

Engineer Lawrence, fearful of alarming the rest of the crew, came up to the flight deck to inform us that the gas supply would last another 40 minutes — if the gauges were correct. The Navigator advised us to keep above 500 feet in order to clear high hills in the area. At 700 feet we broke through the storm a bare 200 feet above a bluff which was on the course.



Left to right standing: James Healey, Waist Gunner; Willis Prater, Pilot; Bob Levin, Co-Pilot; Bill Pilcher, Navigator; Lester Lawrence  
Front Row: Do not remember by name. Daniel Deshantz, Louis Venuti, Chester Kilian, cannot recall 4th name.

In the descent the cockpit windows had frosted and flying had to be done from side windows with the aid of the nose gunner, Louis Venuti, who was warned to guide the pilots around all obstructions. Picture four men flying a plane: Navigator calling out directions, nose gunner calling out altitude and

## 3rd SAD JUMPS GUN

A contingent of 3rd SAD members picked this year to head back to England for a nostalgic tour of their old base plus favorite watering holes in and around Norwich.



Led by Wiley Noble the party visited Norwich, Watton and Griston where they were stationed. Wiley has informed us that everybody had such a good time most of them, plus others, will be making the trip again when the Association returns in 1979.

pilots on the controls with our heads out the window praying for a field to appear. With gas levels dropping right along and no large town for reference we alerted the crew for a crash landing. "Puss 'N Boots" would be flown on the last cupful of gasoline and then set down in the flattest field possible.

The radio operator, Chester Kilian, asked us to make another attempt to pick up a homing station with our radio compass and follow it to a landing field, but code signals would fade before identification could be made and checked with the Navigator. Heavy static was sandwiched between faint station signals.

In desperation we turned the plane towards the only station indicated on the compass which, oddly enough, was transmitting music and not code. With each reverberation of the engines the melody of a popular song came in clearer and clearer. Quickly quarter-backing, guided by the 'fix' taken on the musical notes, we descended below the storm's level.

Call it luck or attribute it to Providence, but like a fairybook ending or a Hollywood climax the most beautiful city imaginable could be seen through the fringe of the storm — Rheims. Along with the city went an airfield complete with hangars, runways and somebody shooting flares. A heaven on earth.

No time was wasted in landing. When the brakes were locked the engineer informed us that we had 15 minutes worth of gas sloshing in the tanks.

We were down safe, but none too steady. Like the song "Don't Get Around Much Anymore", which had loreled us to safety, we would stay where we were for the night.



## REVISIT OF WAR - TIME CRASH SURVIVOR

(from Eastern Daily Press)

Two American bombers took off for a raid on Germany in dense fog at Wendling in 1944.

They never got there. Minutes later, still flying "blind" in poor visibility, their wingtips touched in mid-air over Coltishall and both planes — B-24 Liberators — plunged earthwards.

Only two men from each aircraft survived. One of the four was co-pilot Harold Hurstcroft from Iowa.

He was back in England this week for the first time since the war and did not miss the chance to revisit his old airfield at Wendling, and the site of his crash.

Talking yesterday to an "EDP" reporter, 55-year-old Mr. Hurstcroft said his squadron of Liberators had taken off using instruments because the fog was so thick.

"We thought it would clear once we got off the ground, but it did not — we were still flying blind at 12,000 feet.

"We and the other plane were searching for our lead aircraft, when we found each other and flew close side by side. Then there was a thump, and I looked out to see part of our wing and one engine missing — our wingtips had hit."



Mr. Harold Hurstcroft, ex-Liberator co-pilot, who recalls the dramatic events of a wartime crash in Norfolk.

The order to bail out was given as both planes fell out of the sky. "I was lucky to survive," said Mr. Hurstcroft.

He remembered parachuting down into a field a mile from Coltishall. "My immediate reaction was to try and get to my plane and see if I could help any of my crew, but two local farmers persuaded me there was nothing I could do.

"They took me into their farmhouse and gave me some tea, but I could hardly hold the cup and saucer I was shaking so much."

Mr. Hurstcroft has been back to Wendling "to take photos of the weeds growing up through the runways, which are now lined with turkeys instead of bombers."

He has also been back to the site of his crash at Coltishall with air enthusiast Chris Gotts from Norwich, who gave him a 50 calibre machinegun shell case recovered from his plane — the only item found since the debris was cleared.

Yesterday Mr. Hurstcroft was bound for the American war cemetery at Cambridge to see the grave of his bombardier, Texan Edward Macyera, who was killed in the crash.

Mr. Hurstcroft is now in the real estate business, and lives in Middletown, Iowa.

## News of the 445th Bomb Group

by David Patterson (445th)

At this, our Group's first newsletter entry (for some years), we have some good things to report.

We now have some 79 plus members representing our Group in the 2nd AD Assn. and the number is growing (albeit slowly). With a potential of an estimated over 2000 ex-445th personnel to draw from, out opportunities for building our Group's membership substantially offer a great, and realizable, challenge. 445th members: HELP!!

At the Lake Geneva reunion/convention, our Group was enthusiastically represented by a few, but spirited members. Those whose names come to mind, Bruce Helmer and Richard Littlefield, had been members of other groups also, so split their time and allegiances. Because of the smallness of our Group's numbers, one of our brother Groups, the 458th, in a spirit of true fraternal friendship, "adopted" my wife and I for many of the activities: THANKS, 458th!!!



The 445th was there.

Next year the reunion will be held at the beautiful Hotel Coronado, on the beach at San Diego, California. We anticipate a great 445th turnout, with our own share of mini-parties, get-togethers, "there we was" sessions, etc.!! There still is a Tibenham!! We can report from a recent years' visit to our old Air Base, that the runways are still there (one has been lengthened and is used occasionally for sports and glider flying), and most of the hardstands and taxiways, although somewhat weedy, are mostly intact. (It seems that in past years there have been valiant attempts to dig up the concrete to restore and reclaim the land for farm land; however, to the locals' consternation, the results where attempted were (1) an astronomical task to break up, dislodge, and lift the very thick, tough concrete, and, even worse (2) resulting huge, ton-heavy mountains of concrete debris, — useless, immobile, ugly, and more space-consuming than the original form. Local opinion is that they should have, and shall hereafter, leave well enough alone!). We can also report that several of our buildings remain at the Base also, and are in intensive use still. (A close look, however, reveals that the use has changed ever so slightly: An

English farmer, Mr. Gapp, resident owner of the property, very graciously showed us through (1) our old super-secret briefing and communications building — now occupied by his contented milk cows, and (2) our mess halls and other buildings — now full of hay and farm implements!). In a true demonstration of English hospitality, Mr. Gapp also invited my wife and I to join his family for supper; unfortunately we were on a strict time budget and were forced to decline, but we were touched by this genuine display of English friendship.

In closing, we would like to appeal to 445th members for stories to print in future newsletters. Scratch your heads, fellows, and send us short accounts of life as you knew it at Tibenham (or other 445th stations along the way); the best Pubs (and parties); a hairy mission; a patchwork repair job in the shop dictated by urgency; a midnight requisition for needed parts or equipment (or beer!). We all 2nd Divn types will find pleasure in your contribution to remembrances of a way of life, far from home, which we all shared in a common cause.

Season's Greetings to All!!

# SCARLET PIMPERNELS OF THE AIR

by Sebastian Corriere (492nd BG)

I received a letter and photo's from James Heddleson that put light to a story that appeared in the November issue of Skyways Magazine and later in the Reader's Digest, under the heading "Scarlet Pimpernels of the Air". In part of the article it was told how the French village of St. Cyr de Valorges put up a plain granite memorial — "In memory of five American airmen found dead under their aircraft, shot down in flames at this place April 28, 1944, whose mission was the parachuting of arms to our secret army for the liberation of France and the restoration of our ideal." That simple monument, the article further said, to the five unknown warriors of the Anglo-American special air squadrons will stand in history as a symbol of the gratitude of the free peoples of Europe for their help.



For the many who never got to the village of St. Cyr de Valorges there are now five names inscribed on the monument. The first name was the pilot, 1st Lt. George Ambrose. His plane "The Worry Bird" was on its 5th mission that fateful night of April 27, 1944. His crew was 2nd Lt. Robert Redhair - Co-pilot, the second name on the monument. 2nd Lt. Art Pope - Navigator, the third name on the granite stone. 2nd Lt. Pete Roca - Bombardier and Flight Engineer. S/Sgt. Charles Wilson completed the five names.

Of the remaining crew members J. Monier, George Henderson and James J. Heddleson, more can be told. Jim Heddleson says that Monier was on his first mission that night. The plane was extremely low when Monier fell through the "Joe Hole" while pushing out a package and chute. It was believed he rode the chute down. The French later said Monier was hurt very bad and they had no choice but to turn him over to the Germans. He did return home after the war but at this time his whereabouts is unknown.

Of George Henderson and Jim Heddleson? They survived the crash and hid out for two days. They contacted townspeople through some school children they met and were given shelter. They finally ended up in the home of a Mr. Boyer. In spite of the food shortage Mme. Boyer made something extra when it was known that it was also Jim Heddleson's 21st birthday.



Jim after 20 years.

Because of the language problem it was decided that the two airmen would be "deaf and dumb mutes". This handicap did not stop the two from participating in several night time raids with the Resistance. The friendships made during the almost two months stay with the Resistance, have lasted through the years. George Henderson died in 1949 or 1950 in California. As for the last survivor, his friends asked him to return to France for the 20th anniversary of the erection of the monument. He returned to be made an "Honorary Citizen" of the city of Tarrare. It was an emotional time for Jim, standing in front of the monument. Had it not been for going towards the tail of the plane to get some object, he would not have been ejected into the brush when the plane crashed. He could have been the sixth name on the wing shaped monument.

Jim and his wife now live in Louisville, Ohio. He recently joined the 492nd membership in the Second Air Division Association and is hoping to see someone from Harrington, there.

# THE B-24 WAS VERSATILE & TOUGH

In all too many instances the B-24 showed an independence of spirit which sometimes got out of hand. When that happened brute strength plus tremendous flying skill was the only answer.

In December 1944 while forming for a mission over the channel, Lt. Harold S. Mulhollen found himself on a collision course with another B-24.



To avoid the inevitable Mulhollen banked steeply to the left. As the forward 'mush' still carried him toward a collision with the other B-24 he tipped up into a vertical bank, whereupon his plane flipped over on its back.

Trying to split-S out Mulhollen pulled up in a 'power-on' stall and the B-24 fell into a spin to the left at 9500 feet. From then on it took four strong arms to subdue the 30 tons of airplane.

Pilot and Co-Pilot, Lt. Russell P. Fleming, managed to push the controls forward and bring the 24 out of the spin into an 80 degree dive.



Mulhollen's plane in the 80 degree dive taken from another plane in the formation.

They braced their feet against the instrument panel and finally pulled out of the dive at 3500 feet.

Damage to the aircraft? Outer wing panels buckled up about 8 feet from each tip. Trailing edge of elevators bent down 1½ inches in the center and lower fabric torn loose. Skin on the vertical fins wrinkled and rivets feathered. Damage to Crew? None — other than a slight case of the shakes!



# LETTERS

Dear Miss Cohen:

Today, 9 June, I received the 2nd Air Division Association News Letter for the month of June. Tonight while reading "A Dogs Life" by George A. Reynolds shown on page 5, I was struck by the first sentence of his paragraph No. 3 . . . "approaching the objective, a lead B-24 of the 755th, #60864 was hit, dropped out of the formation and slid earthward into a broken cloud deck far below. No chutes blossomed."

The 755th Bomb Squadron, 458th Bomb Group, 96th Bomb Wing aircraft was ours — the Jolly Roger No. 864 for Baker. Our officer crew (5) was composed of William Klusmeyer the pilot, Fred Wright the copilot, Ernest Sands the bombardier, Millard C. Miller the D.R. navigator riding the Emerson nose turret, and I was the original lead crew navigator. We started out the mission as the deputy lead, but the lead ship went down from formation with aircraft problems as we were departing the English coast, so we moved into lead.

We were hit by 3- 88 M.M. flak bursts over the target of Cologne. The first hit in front of the Emerson nose turret and wounded Lt. Miller, the 2nd tore out the right side of the ship below the right wing root, the 3rd hit the ball turret and drove it almost out the top of the ship and the 4th shell exploded beyond our tail turret.

The plane made a slow descending turn to the right (we had part of our control cables shot away), and the crew began to bail out after the bomb-bay fire started. Sgt. Pohler, our crew chief, dragged Lt. Miller from the forward compartment after I had extracted him from the Emerson nose, and into the rear of the aircraft where he was thrown out the bomb strike camera hatch opening after securing the 25 foot static line clip to his "D" ring. The chutes were strung out over several miles as the crew bailed out the back except for Lt. Sands and I who bailed out of the forward nose wheel door after much difficulty in getting it to open. The pilot, co-pilot and I landed near a farm house and were almost instantly taken prisoner. We were in Boppard, Germany. I heard later on that one or two of the enlisted men managed to evade, but were later captured. I ran into Lt. Miller during the early phase of our captivity when we were being moved about. We were held in a fire station and turned over to the 28th Wehrmacht Division who in turn gave us eventually to the German Luftwaffe as flyer prisoners were the domain of the Luftwaffe. Eventually we were taken to Frankfurt, to Dulag Luft, to Stalag Luft III in Sagan, Poland, months later to Spremburg, Germany, to Nuremberg and finally to Moosburg, Germany just outside of Munich in Bavaria. Patton's armored divisions liberated us on 29 April 1945 and then to Ingolstadt to be flown to Rhiems, France then by ship from Le Havre to Camp Shanks, New York, and then by train to Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Georgia. A months P.O.W. leave then back to Active Duty at Miami Beach Army Air Station, and from there to my new assignment as Ass't. Post Engineer at Ellington Army Air Field in Houston, Texas. I have never heard from any of the crew in the last 25 or so years. Lt. Sands was in the funeral directing business in Minot, North Dakota the last I heard from him. Lt. Miller lived and was living in Tellico Plains, Tennessee when I last heard from him.

That's about the story of it.

Robert L. Ferrell, Col. ret.

P.S. Two shrapnel wounds for me out of this incident.

Hi Pete (Henry):

Saw a notice in the St. Pete Times that a reunion of members of the 2nd Air Division of the 8th Air Force stationed in England during World War II is being planned. Your name was listed in the article. I was a radio operator on Lead Crew 61L, 467th Bomb Group, 790th Squadron of the 8th Air Force in England, stationed at both Rackheath and Attlebridge. I am not positive, but I believe we were in the 2nd Air Division. Although I may not be able to attend the reunion I would appreciate any comments and literature regarding the reunion and the old outfit.

Thanks

Martin L. Altenburg (467th)

Dear Evelyn:

You can add two for "Norwich '79". As soon as we arrived home from Lake Geneva, my wife started two accounts. One was for San Diego in '78 and the other was for Norwich in '79.

Thanks again for the beautiful setting and a grand re-union in Wisc.

Arthur J. Egan  
392nd B.G.

Dear Hank (Tevelin)

My contact, and long time friend at the del Coronado Hotel, is their Vice President, Mr. Hal Carlsen, and I have already communicated with Hal concerning the excellent nature and success of the 2nd Air Division Association. This is not an off-handed compliment, Hank. As you well know, there are many service reunion organizations which literally abuse a hotel, and the 2nd Air Division certainly does not fit in that class. We found all participants to be genuinely concerned about our property, and it is by all means a "class" organization.

A.J. Alonso  
Director of Sales  
Playboy Resort & Country Club  
at Lake Geneva

Dear Evelyn:

As always, I enjoyed reading the latest issue of the News Letter. My 1978 dues enclosed.

Please enter my vote for having the '79 reunion in Norwich. In fact it's the best place for me to attend a meeting since I was there during the summers of 1976 and 1977 and plan to spend some time in Britain — and Norwich — every summer henceforth.

In August I had a nice visit in Norwich with Martin Bowman whose first book about the B-24's of WW II will be published soon. Also dropped over to the Memorial Room at the library and paid my annual visit. I'm looking forward to another visit next summer and hope to see you there at the meeting in '79.

Don C. Baldwin  
453rd Bomb Group

Dear Evelyn:

I wonder if someone in the association could supply me with some information?

We were in England a short while ago and were able to locate Old Buck and Hethel but we could not find "Combe House". It was used as a "flack shack" during 44 and 45. If someone could give me its location I would be most appreciative. We intend to return to England in the near future.

Enclosed please find a contribution to the memorial trust.

Thank you,  
Mahlon F. Dempewolf (453-389)

Dear Evelyn:

Had a fine time at the convention. Thanks for all your work and planning. I doubt anyone can please everyone so don't try, and don't worry about the "odd balls" who continually find fault.

Thanks again,

Al & Peggy Jones (44th)  
(ed. So who's worrying?)

Dear Evelyn:

Wanted to send a few words of appreciation. You and your co-workers did a wonderful job on the reunion at Lake Geneva in July — our first time in attendance and we enjoyed it no end.

I was a ball turret gunner on a 24 with the 392nd Group. We are making plans for next year and I'm sure it will be a memorable occasion. I hope more of my crew members can make it and I'm doing my best to get their membership.

Thanks again for a job well done.

Earl & Del Hall

Pete (Henry):

I am interested and request more details concerning the proposed reunion of Second Air Division personnel at the Coronado Hotel next year. I served with the 458th Bomb Group, 754th Bomb Squadron — Crew, "K".

Sounds like a great idea and I greatly anticipate more information from you.

Cordially,

Samuel B. Milligan (458th)

Dear Evelyn:

I would like to become a member of the 2nd Air Division Association. I was an air mechanic and crew chief in the original 506th Squadron of the 44th Bomb Group.

Would like to hear from, or locate, former members.

Thanks,  
Fred Laue

Dear Evelyn:

Re: Norwich 1979. Mary and I are planning to go.

As a personal note Lake Geneva was our "first" and I knew from personal experience what is involved in feeding, hotel rooms, planning etc. a meeting of this magnitude. The fact that "ours" went so very well is, of course, a real personal compliment to you.

Thanks so much,  
William E. Smith

Dear Miss Cohen:

I was surprised and glad when my wife read the notice in our local newspaper about the 2nd division. (Enclosed is the notice from The Reading Eagle & Times, Reading, Pa.)

I have never forgotten my tour of duty as Aerial Engineer on Capt. Maurice L. Blass's crew who by the way I consider the best pilot in the 389th. We were lead crew for about a year from 43 to 44 and even had Jimmie Stewart fly as our Command pilot one time.

After leaving the Air Force I went from one Boxcar to another and now I am a retired Tractor Trailer Driver.

I am very glad and proud to become a member in the Second Air Division Association and will be looking forward to the next Newsletter. Enclosed is my check for dues.

Thanks Again,  
Albert Hein

Dear Evelyn:

I was very pleased to receive the Newsletter and also to hear about the Association. Enclosed is my dues check for \$7.00.

My Group was the 467th and we flew out of Rackheath which was near Norwich. I was in the original Group that went from Wendover Utah to England. I flew 33 missions as a tail gunner and our plane was "The Belle of the East".

This is about all for now and I hope to meet you in California next July.

Thanks again,  
Morton R. Schecter

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of 12th July and for arranging to put a note about possible duty on non-book material in the September Newsletter.

I hope that the reunion at Lake Geneva was a great success — judging by those which I have attended in Norwich it was bound to be! I was on holiday when the party from Ipswich visited Norwich and the Memorial Library but by all accounts the visit went off very well. They were greeted by Mr. Eaton and Mr. Viles and presented books, some slides of Ipswich and the flag of the State of Massachusetts. We were very pleased to receive a group from your home town and I hope and think that they enjoyed themselves.

We have reason to be especially grateful to you all this year in view of your magnificent fund-raising efforts. It is so important to increase the capital sum invested and ensure the future of the Memorial Library as a live collection. Thank you too for all the hard work and planning which falls on the shoulders of only a few and is much appreciated this end.

With kind regards,

Joan Benns

Principal Asst. Librarian

Dear Clarence (Hooks)

Recently I met Dick Bastien, formerly of the 448th and the 492nd Bomb Group, and he sent me some info on the 2nd Air Division Association. I met Dick at an air show and we had some fun comparing our past life in the 8th AF and the 2nd Division.

I was a Co-Pilot on a B-24 in the 706th Sqdn. Our first mission was on June 25th, 1944 and the last one on December 12th same year. I would like to see a roster of those belonging to the organization — may get reacquainted with old friends now nearly forgotten.

Enclosed is \$7.00 to cover cost of membership in the Association.

Thank you,

Donald Paumen, 446th

Dear Bill:

Several names in your beautifully edited Newsletter stirred memories. I'm eagerly awaiting July's convention to see if I'm the only one whose bomb load has shifted aft.

Our San Diego area is fantastic! Greatest Zoo in the world, a wild animal park (sounds like a replacement training unit!), seaworld beaches, mountains, desert, race tracks, golf, golf, golf, Surfing, sailing, deep sea fishing, hang gliding, riding, camping and, si, Tijuana.

Also, many of our '24s were built — and did originate — here in San Diego. Old Consolidated is now Convair and big in Missile and Space work. Our open space Museum in mid-city (1400 acres) has planes that make me feel proudly ancient.

Gastronomically speaking we have everything from Escargots to Tacos, and so many watering holes that even I haven't found them all. C'mon out!

Enthusiastically,

Clyde J. Dillon

(ed. I think the Chamber of Commerce is looking for you Clyde. If we tried to cover all you have mentioned I'm afraid the boys in the white coats would be looking for us!)

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed please find a donation to help in the operation of the 2nd AD Association. Not paying dues due to having a lifetime membership makes me feel guilty. A separate check is enclosed for the 2nd AD Memorial. This is in memory of our baby son who passed away during WW II.

Regards,

Fred J. Vacek

(ed. That's mighty generous of you Fred.)

Dear Bill:

This picture might interest you for the Newsletter. I caught this 36½ lb. lake trout a week before the reunion this summer in the North West Territory.

See you in California next year.

Lloyd A. Haug  
467th BG

(ed. When it comes to fishing Lloyd we always get the story but never the photo. You might call this 'Proof Positive'. Considering the price of fish these days I hope you realize your holding a 'fortune' in your hands!)



Mr. W. C. Robertie:

Due to some rather pleasant experiences with the English lads of F.O.T.E. I undertook a task about 1 year ago. An ad appeared seeking information "Dell" of Idaho with a return address in England. Upon answering and advising what was needed I received an answer from the parties daughter in Australia. (See enclosures). Due to some personal happenings with the heartache of searching for people I have maintained an interest in this — but have been of little or no help!

Is it possible that a roster of the 458th and 467th B.G. could contain information on a "Dell" of Idaho? I'm not certain if the name is first, last or other. To save time and shorten any possible results is it possible for you to correspond with

Mrs. Seymour  
2/28 Broad Arrow Road  
Narwee 2209  
NSW, Australia  
Sincerely  
Leroy E. Adams

As a crew member of a 1st Div. B-17 with the 401 B.G. I heard much of the 2nd Divs' B-24s. Since that time the F.O.T.E. and British people have done much to change these old WW II myths — Best wishes and continued success in your 2nd Div. endeavors.

Dear Evelyn:

Here's a check for two years dues and contribution to the Memorial Library.

Tried very hard to get to Lake Geneva, but last minute military commitments cancelled me out.

Dorris and I plan to see you in San Diego next year and also are planning a trip to England in '79 as we will be retiring then after 40 continuous years.

You are doing a great job and we are really proud of your superb efforts.

Fondly

Ralph S. Saunders  
Major Gen., USAF Commander

Dear Evelyn:

Sorry for being late with dues so for punishment I will also pay for 1978 now and add something for the Memorial Fund.

I'm also sorry I couldn't make the reunion for '77 and it doesn't look like I'll make '78, but now that one for '79 in Norwich — that one I shall make.

You and the others are doing a grand job for the 2nd Aid Division. Please keep it up.

Success and good wishes  
Bill Moore (453rd)

Dear Bill:

It was nice talking with you today. My check for \$7.00 is enclosed, I would appreciate any old Newsletters you can find and the address of Bob Vickers.

Sincerely,  
William R. Biles

Dear Hank (Tevelin):

We arrived back in Baton Rouge at noon Monday completely worn out but absolutely excited over our trip.

The entire success of this trip was the direct result of your interest and assistance. There was not one single failure of anything you had scheduled for us in advance. Bus, hotel, tours, flight — everything was perfect, and that was most remarkable. The bus picked us up for the 'Tale of Town Tour' right on schedule. The bus for the 'All Day Tour' of London was right on schedule. The bus to return us to Heathrow was right on schedule. Unbelievable!

I am absolutely positive that all eleven of us who made this trip are now really excited about going back in 1979 with the 2nd AD Association and your package. They all know of your contributions to our trip and I'm sure they will be writing to you within a reasonable time. I'll certainly push that trip in our Newsletter encouraging many 3rd SAD people to join the 2nd ADA and make the trip. When our Group of 300 hears the good reports from all eleven of us in Denver next month I'm sure there will be no need to 'sell' your 1979 trip.

Again I want to thank you for making our trip a tremendous success. All the others feel the same way. Your best! All 650 members of the 3rd SAD Association will be told what a good job Tevelin Travel Agency did for us.

Best regards,  
Wiley Noble.

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you very much indeed for the Membership Card for the Second Air Division Association which I received today, together with the copy of the Newsletter for June, 1977.

I was very touched to receive it, but really do not deserve such an honor. I was in fact flying fighters with the R.A.F. in Burma during the time that the Second Air Division were doing their stuff over Europe!

Most of your ex-458th members will probably know that Horsham St. Faith is now a small civil airport, so at least flying is still going on there. A good many of the ex-war-time buildings are still in existence and I have had the pleasure of helping some of your members to re-discover them whilst on visits here. We really look forward to meeting those who have operated from East Anglia during the War, particularly those who were based at Horsham.

If I can be of any assistance to your members please let me know, and in the meantime thank you again for the Membership.

Yours sincerely,  
R. N. H. Courtney  
Airport Manager  
Norwich Airport

Dear Bill:

I am sitting here eagerly reading the September issue of the Newsletter again for the 3rd (or is it 4th) time. I missed the big show but my interest in WW II aviation and the 8th in particular increases every year.

I recently received copies of both the 392nd and 448th unit histories which I learned of through your Newsletter. I just want to say a 'thank you' for such a fine publication, and also a public 'thank you' to the men of the various Groups who are today taking the time and effort to put together histories of their respective Groups.

I am hoping the 489th and the 491st will follow with Histories of their units and I also recall sometime back of a proposed history of the 466th BG. Well just thought I would write in to share my comments with you and to say 'thanks' again for a great Newsletter and some pretty terrific unit histories.

Thank you much,  
Jim Young  
(ed. Glad you like the way things are going Jim. We try!)



Dear Joe (Michalczyk):

The donation which you kindly sent in July has been used for the following book for the American Memorial Library:

Roger A. Freeman - B-17 Fortress at war

You will recall that Roger Freeman has written another very fine book *The Mighty Eighth* and although I know that your Group flew Liberators, I thought that this book on the Fortress would also be useful. I hope that you approve of my choice.

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas B. Dann visited the Memorial Room on Monday and I think that they were pleased with what they saw. Mr. Dann told me that he had been in correspondence with you (he formerly served with the 448th) but that you hadn't actually met. We had quite a long talk and I thought him a very pleasant man. I feel sure that you will be glad to hear that he managed to get to Norwich — let's hope that after all your enthusiastic work in recruiting, he will become a keen member of the Association.

I do hope that you are keeping well and have a good winter without your usual dose of Massachusetts snow!

With kind regards and many thanks once more for your generous donation.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Benns

Principal Assistant Librarian

Dear Evelyn:

I am writing in response to a note in the September 2AD Assn. Newsletter concerning Project Norwich 79. Please reserve two slots for my wife and me as we are very interested in making this reunion. Our interest has been heightened as a result of a trip that our daughter and her husband made to the East Anglia area this summer. They visited the Memorial in Norwich and were extremely impressed. They were given a royal tour of the base at Seething, where I did my time with the 448th. There is very little of the old base remaining, but they brought back some interesting photos. They were treated handsomely by Miss W. J. Benns of the Norwich Library, and by Mr. John Archer, Earsham, Bungay, who is the local 8th Air Force historian in that area. If not already considered, both deserve special recognition by the 2AD Assn. for their interest and loyalty to us.

Again, we are looking forward to Norwich 79, so please keep us advised of developments.

William H. Searles  
(448th BG)

P.S. I am retired and sort of at loose ends. Is there anything that I can do to help the organization?

(ed. Can't speak too highly of John Archer and Miss Benns as they are two wonderful people and long-time friends of the Association. No point in being at loose ends Bill. How about starting your own campaign of writing 'Letters to the Editors' such as Pete Henry is doing?)

Dear Evelyn:

I would like to signify my interest and my wives, for "Norwich 79".

I must commend Pete Henry for soliciting for new members for the 2nd A.D.A. I was successful in having a letter written by me similar to Pete Henry's, inserted in one of our local newspapers.

I belong to the following Veterans organizations, V.F.W., American Legion and the D.A.V. I was successful in having letters, identifying the 2nd A.D.A. in each of these organizations newsletters to their membership. I might add how I learned of our organization. Through an article in one of these organizations monthly magazines.

Sincerely,

Francis J. Peck (44 BG)

Dear Pete (Henry):

I am so elated over the notice in last night's paper of your effort to locate anyone who served with the 2nd Air Division during the war. I would like very much to join the Association as there were many with whom I served whose whereabouts I would like to know.

I served in the communications section in Headquarters building at Ketteringham Hall for 16 months so I believe I am qualified to belong.

In these days of 'nostalgia' ones' thoughts often drift back to those days of WW II and wonder where some of our 'buddies' and 'bridgets' are. Please let me know what else one needs to join the Association.

Sincerely,

Kathrine A. (Solomon) Smith

(ed. It's always a pleasure when we locate a former WAC because all too few of them know we exist as an Association. Hope you enjoy your membership Kathrine and anytime you want to write an article for the Newsletter feel free.)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I just learned a few days ago about the existence of the 2nd Air Div. Asso. from a business acquaintance who was, as I, a member of the 389th BG. He sent me a copy of the June, 1977 Newsletter which I have read over and over.

I am enclosing a check to cover membership dues and I hope, from time to time, I can make some donation for which you may use as you see fit.

James S. Spargo

Dear Bill:

I recently completed one of the Monogram 1/48 scale B-24J models and have tried to authenticate the markings on the 'Witchcraft', the 467th Bomb Group holder of the record for the most missions without an abort. The markings were gleaned from some pictures I had and a copy of the 467th Bomb Group history. The letters, numerals, insignia and bombs I was able to obtain as decals, but the witch I had to draw myself. Not too bad if I do say so myself.



If you think well of the idea I would like to offer the enclosed pictures for publication in an upcoming issue of the Newsletter. I think some of the old Rackheath Aggies would get a kick out of seeing the Witch. I had the pleasure of flying her on six missions and Sgt. Ramirez kept her in top condition.

It's a real pleasure for me to belong to the 2nd AD Association and I look forward to each issue of the Newsletter. Keep up the good work and call on me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours very truly,

Carl Epting

Dear Evelyn:

I've been meaning to write and thank you for the gratis membership card and tell you what a great job you all did at this year's get together at Lake Geneva. It was super. I know Bill Denton couldn't have been prouder at getting the pat on his back for the crew.

Ev I want to enclose a check for \$32.00 — \$25.00 for the Memorial Library and the other \$7.00 that would normally have been my dues that you can make available for someone who has a dues problem.

Incidentally my best wishes for the New Year ahead.

All the best,  
Ted Katz

Dear Evelyn & Bill:

Received the latest issue of the Newsletter yesterday, and as usual, read it from beginning to end without stopping. I always enjoy the letters and look for familiar names. Noted that Jack Rothschild had two pictures of the "Witch". I'd like to get in touch with him and find out which they are. I was the Navigator of the 100th mission as well as a number of other missions. I have no record of the total number that I made in her, and have had no luck in trying to reconstruct a log. I know that at least once we brought her back alone and on three engines. I can remember "Casey" Lazlo (pilot) saying that if we didn't get it back in one piece that we might as well go down with her. Showers would kill us anyway.

Lee Lowenthal doesn't have the youngest family in the 2AD, mine are 6 and 9. You may remember them playing in the pool at Wilmington. I'm sorry to say that I haven't been back to a reunion since, as something has always interfered. I don't make the next three either as we're shipping out for Saudi, Arabia next week for a two year tour with the Corps of Engineers. Wanted to let you know so that you could change my address and so that I wouldn't miss any Newsletters.

I hope that you have a wonderful time at Lake Geneva. I'm sure that you will. Wish that we could be there, but the desert calls. (We're going over there to visit our money). Have a shot for us as this is a truly dry country, try.

If any of the "Witchcraft" gang are still around, would like to hear from you.

Yours truly,

Robert M. (Bob) Stone, Jr.

USAEDME

P.O. Box 4216

APO New York 09038

Dear Evelyn:

I'm sorry Gloria and I couldn't make it to the Reunion this year, but from the September Newsletter it must have been a rousing success. Each one seems to get bigger and better.

I adjusted my bifocals quickly when I read that there's a possibility of another "mission" to Norwich. We practically have our toothbrushes packed already! The next one would have to be a real winner to top the last one in 1975. We loved every minute of it and had a ball renewing old acquaintances in Norwich, Dereham and Shipdham.

Unfortunately, I received a letter from Reginald Gamble in Dereham that his wife Edna died of a heart attack on Sunday, Oct. 2nd. That was my "home away from home" for almost two out of my three years in England. They were a wonderful couple and just opened up their home to four of us G.I.'s — all the time, no matter how inconvenient it might have been at times for them. We visited them in 1963, my daughters Kathy & Pam visited them again later, and we visited them again in 1975.

My main reason for writing you is to say, "YES", we definitely are interested in Norwich in 1979, and to also ask a question. We have close friends who visited England and Scotland last year and who are interested in Subscribing Membership in the Association. If they (husband & wife) wish to join, would their annual Dues be \$7.00 EACH — or \$7.00 per couple? Please let me know. I also believe they're interested in either some books or other contribution to the MEMORIAL LIBRARY.

In the course of all the 200th Anniversary festivities in York which (naturally) claims to be the FIRST CAPITAL of the USA, there was a new book published locally describing the events that took place in York while the Congress was here and I definitely want to put a copy in the Library.

Well, here's hoping for "Norwich '79"!

Sincerely,

Jean & Gloria Bressler

# MISSION TO MUNICH

by George A. Reynolds (458th BG)

Crew 67, 754th Sq. boarded a silver Lib, 95163-K, early 21 July 1944 for their sixth mission. Someone quipped, "No abort today, this is for the Air Medal." Tense laughter was the only response, for the target was Munich, and bad news travels fast — even for novice crews. Eight and a half hours flight time, at best, and always flak to behold was the circulated comments from those who knew.



**Crew of Royal Flush**  
Kneeling, L-R: G-Morales, G-Wright, G-Charlie Fowler, G-? and G-Charles Aillet.  
Standing, L-R: P-Bob Morfort, CP-Bob Vincent, B-John Butler, N-George Strand and AMG-Joe Kania.  
Photo taken 4 July 1944, female figure cut from washed-out RF, and reapplied to A/C in background.

Cloud cover was forecast to extend to the target, and this was about the only good word the briefer had for 23 crews on the mission. PFF was leading the raid on the Dornier aircraft works from 21,000 feet, and ragged cloud tops were up to 12,000 feet. Operations were routine en route except for a few rounds of harassment flak.

Over the IP, breaks appeared in the undercast and became more pronounced closer to the objective. Flak started increasing at bomb release, both in accuracy and intensity. A high burst rained shrapnel on 163-K, opening numerous, screaming holes in her skin. As the bomb bay doors closed, a near-miss knocked out #4 engine and severed a control cable. The ship began a pendulum yaw to the right that her pilots could not stop, and the bail out bell clattered. Another flak burst popped closer to the bomber, and #1 engine's prop started to windmill, refusing to feather. Fuel began pouring from an outboard tank. Now the bird started a pendulum swing to the left, and her crew prepared for a "nylon letdown" at the next bell. Co-pilot Charles Pool thoughtlessly flipped the autopilot on, cold, and got surprising results. The plane stabilized immediately, but the stall warning was almost as fast.

Pilot Harold Dane dropped the nose and quickly polled the crew, "Switzerland or home?" "Home," was unanimous as sporadic shrapnel continued to open holes in the aircraft.

By now the ship was down to 12,000 feet and sinking fast, but at least the dreaded bell remained silent. Everything moveable went out hatches except the crew, and finally at 9,000 feet the pilots could maintain altitude. Flak had ceased, but wind screaming through the holes created an eerie cadence for the homeward flight.

The spilled fuel lightened the gross, but created a problem — a lack of it to get home. Also, remaining fuel would not feed except from one tank, and transferring it from the other tanks was necessary. Navigator William Edkins became very busy plotting a course for the shortest distance to Horsham. Another obstacle arose. Mountain peaks between their position and the Rhine were up to 10,000 feet or above, but cloud coverage began decreasing and the river was reached without incident.

Engineer Joe Shwallon found the cable break behind plywood paneling forward of the bomb bay. Available tools were used unsuccessfully to remove the panel. A gunner, Earl Diehl, ripped the paneling away with his bare hands. Cable in the bomb hoist served to splice the broken line, but one end refused to stay put, and forced Joe to use pliers to hold the mend fast. Just when the splice was secure, the right wing dropped as the autopilot quit, and manual control was resumed. Shwallon remarked, "I thought all along the autopilot was fouled up. It shouldn't have held back there nor worked as long as it did." He and Diehl continued alternating in holding the splice and transferring fuel as 163-K labored homeward on two fans and a windmill.

Over France another straggler (466 or 467 BG) overtook 163. It had #4 feathered and its right oval was missing, but all guns were intact. Strength in numbers entered 20 minds, and the pilots began chatting on formation frequency. The other crew had been to Munich

also. After a few moments, two enemy fighters were spotted heading for the cripples. As the Me-109s dove, so did the Libs — into a cloud deck ahead. It proved to be larger than expected, and 10 minutes later 163 broke out into the clear with the other B-24 nowhere in sight. No radio calls were heard, (it was later learned they broke out just long enough for one firing pass by the 109s, which downed the plane minus her crew).

Radioman Richard "Fuller" Brush began juggling frequencies, and Pool made an urgent call on radio. Shortly three of the most beautiful P-38s in the ETO throttled back with 163 and gave it their undivided attention to the Channel. Over England the pilots decided on going home because it was near and likely they could do a better job of bringing the ship in on familiar terrain. Four P-51s had picked up where the 38s left off, and 163 touched down at Horsham whistling her loud tune. Only now did it sound anything like merry.



95163-K at the boneyard gate.

The pilots, Shwallon and Diehl received letters of commendation for their roles in bringing 163 home. She had 50 walnut to volleyball size holes and other assorted lacerations scattered over her silver skin.

Looking over their kite in wonderment after 10 hours flying time, someone picked up the quip from early morning, "From now on, let's skip the damned Air Medal jaunts!"

For two full weeks sub-depot personnel applied the works, spit and polish to 95163-K, then sent her back on the line sleek and shiny. But on 9 August her crew aborted early from the mission to Saarbrücken because of a runaway prop governor. A series of small mysteries occurred on final approach to Horsham, and the ship crash-landed. Fortunately, only minor injuries resulted for the crew, but 163-K was hardly fit for salvage. Apparently, she wanted no more of the "metal jaunts" either.

## INTERPRETATION

In the September issue it was announced that in spite of the fact that we had been able to keep the dues at \$5.00 for a number of years increasing costs of everything was forcing us to increase the dues by \$2.00 for this coming year.

This statement seemed clear to us at the time (5 plus 2 equals 7) but contrary to what we thought this has caused a lot of confusion. Be it known that the 1978 dues are \$7.00 and our apologies for any doubts we might have caused.

William G. Robertie