

NEWS LETTER

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

June 1979

AN ORDER IS AN ORDER — SOMETIMES

Brig. General William E. Kepner did not become a Brig. General simply because he knew how to fly a desk. As a career Air Force man his pre WWII feats had become legendary. He was a natural to obtain a good command, and this took place when he became Commander of the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force.

Whenever General Kepner took command of anything, he intended to do just that — command. One of his firm convictions was that a Commander of an Air Division should lead his troops into combat whenever other duties permitted. His first decision as Commander of the 2nd Air Division was that he would fly in the lead plane on every mission he could.

A man of action he wasted no time in calling Headquarters 8th Air Force and advising General Doolittle of his decision. He did not get the reception he expected. Over the telephone line came the stiff reply that under no circumstance was he to fly a B-24, peri-

od. Being the good commander that he was he fully intended to obey this order. Being the brilliant coimmander that he was there was no way they were going to keep him on the ground.

He gave several hours of thought to this problem and came up with the only logical solution. They had ordered him not to fly a B-24. Fine, but they hadn't mentioned anything about his not flying a P-51. His next act was predictable — he requisitioned a P-51 for his personal use, but without going through the formality of advising Headquarters.

From that day on, when other duties permitted, General Kepner was up in his P-51 shepherding his boys on their way to the target and greeting them as they were coming home. His chief concern was always with his boys and how badly they might have been chewed up over the target.

Only one known incident marred this practice. One day while cruising up and down the English Channel he picked up the following on his radio. "Gentile hit



the deck. They're on your tail." Don Gentile was a fighter pilot with the 4th Fighter Group and at that moment they were trading pleasantries with the Luftwaffe in the target area. Through the static on the radio the word 'Gentile' sounded like 'General', and always one to heed an order, from whatever source, General Kepner hit the firewall with his throttle and headed for the deck. It wasn't until he leveled out and looked around that he realized that particular order was meant for someone else. He went back to his cruising feeling a bit easier in mind.

He later learned that Headquarters was well aware of his activities when on one occasion General Doolittle asked him how he was enjoying his P-51. Sometimes it paid to anticipate the order and not ask the question. Good thinking General.



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SURVIVAL

by Thaddeus C. Poprawa (389th)

The Dec. and Mar. issues had articles concerning a mission that had deep personal significance to me, although I did not fly it. As told before, on this mission, 7 Apr. 45 to Duneberg, a mortally wounded ME109 smashed into the lead and deputy lead ships with both ships going down, and we lost, among others, the CO of the 389th.

What I am happy to report is that there was a survivor of this freak accident. His name is Lt. Walter Kinkel, 564 Sq 389 BG, and his story is a strange odyssey that bears retelling.

By this date, Lt. Kinkel had flown 20-23 missions. Since the 389th was leading the division that day, he was bumped to co-pilot to make room for a command pilot in the deputy lead ship. After the ramming accident, he found himself out of the plane, falling in the air. Luckily wearing a back pack he reached up and pulled the rip cord, and descended safely into a meadow near some heavy woods. He gathered up his chute, swiftly ran into the woods, and jumped beneath a pile of leaves and branches at the base of a big tree. He kept piling on more leaves so that he was safely hidden from view when the searching German soldiers arrived.

He lay beneath the leaves that afternoon and into the night when a strange thing happened. A voice began calling to him. It turned out to be a Russian POW, an escapee from a labor camp, hiding in the same woods. He had seen Lt. Kinkel descending and had waited until nightfall to contact him. They talked that night and the next day without revealing themselves to each other. They argued over which direction to proceed. The Russian wanted to go east, and Lt. Kinkel wanted to walk west. Finally, Lt. Kinkel prevailed, and they struck out westwardly. After an adventurous journey, they finally reached the British lines near the Dutch-Belgian border were they were fired upon by the British troops before reaching safety. As Lt. Kinkel related, the closest he came to being killed during the whole adventure was when the Tommies began blasting at them. (I do not know what happened later to the Russian POW, and I note that Lt. Kinkel is not listed in the 1977 2nd AD roster.)

Why does this mission hold deep personal significance for me, even though I did not fly it? Well, in July 44 after reaching phase training as a brand new navigator fresh out of San Marcos, I was assigned to the crew piloted by Jerry KINCL; the next navigator on

the list, L. E. ROBINSON, was assigned to the crew piloted by Walter KUNKEL. So you can see that one slot on the roster separated me from being in that deputy lead ship that went down after the freak ramming accident on the Duneberg raid.

The KINCL and KUNKEL crews completed phase training at March Field, went through Kilmer, crossed on the Queen Mary, and were assigned to the 564Sq 389 BG; the KINCL crew safely completed 30 missions (last one 25 Apr. 45 to Salzburg) whereas the KUNKEL crew went down on the 7 Apr. 45 raid to Duneberg.

Combat veterans, who have seen ships go down with no chutes opening and later witnessed the grim scene in the barracks as the mattresses were turned up and the personal effects packed up, probably have wondered often about the fate that allowed them to survive whereas others were chosen for an early demise.

In our 30 missions we never had to bail out; however, on three occasions I had the chest pack strapped on, ready to go. One memorable instance was when our co-pilot stalled out when trying to form-up at altitude. As the B-24 with full gas and bomb load fell off into a dive, I helped the nose gunner out of his turret, found the chute and strapped it on, and started to kick the front wheel door open; watching the altimeter wind down, I resolved to jump when it reached 6000 ft. Just before we reached that point, we could feel the "g" force on us changing as the first pilot, recovering control with the increased air speed, pulled up. We rejoined the formation and completed the mission without further incident. However, during the tense moments of that dive, while preparing to bail out, the thoughts that flashed through my mind was, "Hey, this can't be happening to me! How long will I last in the Channel in February?"

I have often conjectured that the same thought processes were occurring to the Kunkel crew as their stricken plane plunged to the earth, as they fought to grab their chutes and bail out, as they hoped for the pilot to regain control, as they waited for the plane to pull up; and then that awful moment when they realized there was no hope, and that their destiny was at hand, seconds away.

Combat veterans all have their private bogies. Seeing mention of this mission in the Newsletter rekindled memories of mine.

FOR A MOMENT... WE WERE THE TARGET!

by Delmar Wangsvick, 453rd



April 8, 1944: On this day, the 453rd Group objective was the railroad marshalling yard in Brunswick, Germany, one of the Reich's most heavily defended targets. Another Group (which neither my notes nor memory can now identify) was assigned the FW (I believe) aircraft assembly plant at Brunswick, within spitting distance of the railroad yard. Scheduled target times were simultaneous.

Takeoff at *Old Buck* and assembly over *Buncher 6* were routine. The 453rd was led by Lt. William P. ("Bill") Bates in Aircraft #201. Major Frank E. ("Smiley") Sullivan was riding the right hand seat as Command Pilot. The writer was aboard as "Command Navigator". (The "Command Navigator" on a Lead Airplane occupied the nose turret and assisted the Crew Navigator with such things as picking out visual checkpoints, computations, and making decisions. As most Navigators will remember, a Navigator's "decisions" were limited to deciding what "recommendations" to make to the Pilot and/or Command Pilot. When warranted, of course, the Command Navigator also "operated" the nose turret, utilizing its twin "50s" for their intended purpose.)



Major Frank Sullivan

On this occasion, the 453rd was assigned the lowest altitude in the Wing, where icing conditions and also the wind happened to be least favorable. The result was an inability to keep up with the rest of the Wing, a situation which continued to worsen as we entered German territory. Finally, a desperate decision was made: We would



Del Wangsvick - 1944

gain two minutes by skipping the Wing IP (Initial Point) and heading directly to the Group IP. This maneuver resulted in separating the 453rd from the rest of the Wing; this isolation made us more tempting targets for a previously unnoticed gaggle of Goering's yellow-nosed FW-190s, observing us from a higher altitude.

Immediately, the FWs began a single-file head-on attack of the 453rd. In the nose turret of "201", I focused on each one as it appeared in the distance ahead of us and fired on it with my twin 50s until it disappeared below and beyond our right wing, then swung the turret back to the left at high azimuth speed in time to line up on the next attacking FW. Other crew members said later that I got at least one of the FWs. At the time though, we were so busy — with all guns firing — and rate of closure with the FWs was so great that there was time only to think of the next attack.

During these traumatic moments excitement in the cockpit of "201" was enhanced when the release handle of Major Sullivan's parachute caught on something, whereupon his chute billowed out to fill the cockpit and cover the faces of Major Sullivan and Lt. Bates. In spite of the gravity of the situation, Lt. Bates could not suppress a spontaneous laugh. (Major Sullivan admitted later that he had never felt so strongly the urge to kill.) However, the parachute did get tucked away, we crossed the Group IP and began our Bomb Run — with Bombardier Lt. Murphy flying the airplane by remote control with the bombsight.

By this time the FWs had left us, since we were now flying thru the infamous Brunswick flak — which my notes describe as ranging from "un-

bearable" to "unbelievable".

Compounding our troubles was the fact that coordination between the other "Brunswick Group" and the 453rd had deteriorated to something less than perfect, and they were now *directly above us!* Suddenly, they began dropping their bombs on the FW plant below! Thereupon, the pilots of "201" took control of the aircraft away from the Bombardier and proceeded to engage in evasive action — "standing" on first one wing-tip and then the other. (We had been briefed to the effect that — on the Bomb Run — we were to refrain from taking evasive action to avoid enemy flak or fighters; however, this evasive action was different! it was designed to avoid contact with "friendly" bombs, in which it succeeded.)

After the "Friendly" bombs had dropped past us, control of our aircraft was given back to Lt. Murphy, the Bombardier, leaving him with a 45-second bomb run. He utilized the 45 seconds in the intended manner — by "shacking" the railroad yard.

As soon as we had left the target area and the Brunswick flak, the FWs returned to continue their assault. We had no fighter escort so far from "Home" at that stage of the war.

The 8th Air Force lost 27 B-24s that day, seven of them from the 453rd Group. This included two planes — with two of our original crews — from my (732nd) Squadron. These were the crews of Lt. James K. ("Bing") Bingaman — flying the Deputy Lead position on our right wing — and Lt. Joe DeJarnette. Lt. Wm. C. ("Bill") Joy, 732nd Squadron Bomberier and my good friend and roommate, was with Lt. Bingaman. Bill parachuted and survived the fall and the war, circumstances of which were hairy; he may some day be induced to relate them.

(This was my 5th Mission and the 28th Mission for the 453rd Bomb Group (H).

The Bill Bates referred to was an original pilot of the 732nd SQ, Crew #17. He was subsequently transferred to the 389th BG and on 7 July 44 he and most of his crew were KIA when involved in a headon collision with another B-24 during a mission to Halle, Germany.

RUSSIAN EXCURSION — WORLD WAR II STYLE

as told to David Patterson by his 445th B.G. Crew Members

PART II

The second evening we were there, the base C.O., a Russian Colonel, had a party for us. We assembled in the other of the two buildings, an old two story wooden affair which was BOQ, HQ, and all else, for this Russian AF unit occupying the field. Downstairs in the building there was a hall; one of the first doors led into a large conference/dining room. It was a bare room with a long table and chairs down the middle. A kitchen adjoined. In addition to our crew (8), there were about 15 Russian AF officers, including the Doc and Tanya. Our crew were all seated at the Colonel's end of the table. We were served a borsch-type soup, thick with vegetables, some strange fresh cooked meat, black bread and *real* butter. Empty water glasses were at each place; pitchers of water and "soda-pop" looking bottles of clear liquid were placed up and down the table. The Colonel poured his glass half full of the clear liquid, and filled up the glass with water. As everyone else did the same, we obediently followed suit. The Colonel stood up. "Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill!". All glasses were raised, and all went bottoms up. Wow! Did that burn! The "pop" was pure 100% alcohol! Now, the glasses (at the Colonel's direction) were refilled, this time to toast the same leaders, but in different order. "Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill!". Charlie had had an upset stomach from the effects of our trip, so quietly faked it and filled his glass with water only. Suddenly, there was a silence over the whole room. We looked at the Colonel, who was glaring at Charlie. An insult! Therefuses to drink with his Russian Ally!

Poor Charlie! Visions of starting an international breach in Allied relations crossed his mind! But his stomach couldn't take any more — he was already about to double up in pain. A hurried talk to Art, conveyed to the Doctor in German, and finally to the Colonel; a smile of OK, and the toast was carried out with Charlie using water! As the evening progressed, the Russians got delight and laughs at our incapability to keep up with their drinking. Toast after Toast was proposed, with all possible combinations of Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, Zukov, Eisenhower, Patton, etc. etc. etc. When Dick Nason, in desperation, tried to add more water than alcohol, he found his glass mysteriously and constantly becoming fuller and stronger with alcohol. He was seated next to the Col-

onel — finally he saw out of the corner of his eye the Colonel reach over with the "pop" bottle of 200 proof stuff and pour Dick's glass full each time he thought Dick was looking the other way!

After dinner, we staggered, while the Russians walked, outside, up the outside stairs, and into a big upstairs room. There, with the music being furnished by two or three of the group who played guitars and the like, a dancing party completed the evening. The dancing was Cossack style, men with men partners (except for the Doc, who danced with Tanya), and of course we were wheedled into joining — which created great merriment not only because we had no idea of the dance steps required, but because of the vast (vast to us, not to them!) quantities of "Vodka" we consumed. Ed Vaughan must have been in better shape than the rest of us, because he remembers them playing the "Beer barrel polka" in our honor as one of the numbers. How we ever got back to our quarters is a mystery, but we did. I suspect our "keepers", the Doc and Tanya, probably helped lead, carry or drag us to our beds!

The next few days gave us insight into several things. For one thing, despite our constant pleas to have our plight communicated to the U.S. Forces, it was obvious nothing was being done in this regard. In fact, the Russians were using the same "double-talk" methods on us that we had used on them to "explain" why they hadn't carried out our wishes — at the same time hinting broadly that we ought to join their Air Force and fly for them. To them, this made sense: in addition to the Yaks, they had several U.S.-made planes, including C-47s, and a P-39, operating in and out of the field — all with Russian markings. What more natural than U.S. flyers to fly U.S. built planes! We found that the C-47s were used as medium low level bombers. The rear (side) door was removed, a hand-swivel machine gun mounted just inside the door, and light bombs were stacked like sacks of potatoes on the floor. In addition, primitive wood racks carried a few bombs under the wings. A crude sighting device was used up front; when sighted in on a target, the "seat belt" light was flashed in the waist, indicating time for "bombs away", and a couple of men rolled the bombs out the door, and pulled wires that released the

wing bombs. "Low level" meant really low level: the machine gun was used to strafe the ground troops during the bomb run!

We learned that the P-39 was the Colonel's plane. We also discovered that in Russia when you became an *Aviation Cadet* you went right into combat as a co-pilot and got your entire training that way, — while being combat-useful. If you survived enough missions you became a first pilot. It was obvious that this resulted in less proficient flyers than we were used to in the States. I remember early morning takeoffs for combat by Yaks, TU-2s (twins somewhat like a large version of our AT-11s), and C-47s. It was start engines, taxi out, and takeoff. No warmup, no check lists. It appeared from what person-to-person contacts we had with the Russian pilots at that base that the usual "warmup before takeoff" was a few drinks of Vodka the pilots gulped down prior to boarding their planes. And landings were a reflection of this type of "training" too. That old AF quip "on that landing, your fourth bounce was your best one!" was no quip here!

Emergency facilities were minimal at this base. We saw a Yak come in to land, tail too high; he hit the brakes, and finally skidded to a halt with the nose in the dirt, tail up in the air. From an old rickety shed across the field, came the sound of someone trying to crank-start an engine. This failed, then several men pushed (by hand) out of the shed an old square-built ambulance, World War I vintage. With one man steering, and three or four pushing, they pushed this "emergency vehicle" over to the wrecked plane. They dragged the pilot out, put him in the ambulance, and again hand pushed it, this time to our hospital. Fortunately, the pilot was no worse than bruised and shaken up. We never saw any medical equipment in the "hospital" — we assumed a few bandages and lots of Vodka solved all problems.

On our 3rd day, the remnants of a U.S. bomber crew came straggling in on foot. They told us they had been hit over Berlin, and chose to proceed into Russian territory. Not far from where we were, they were attacked by Russian Yaks and shot down. Two of their crew were killed. Later, another U.S. flyer from a different crew appeared. This was a strange case that caused us to have questions and doubts, which

we kept to ourselves. He arrived in a flight suit, carrying a large B-4 type flight bag. Said he was shot down — only survivor of his crew. Then, out of his bag he took a full, nicely pressed, Class "A" uniform, complete with major's insignia, ribbons — the works. He took out a fully stocked travel kit, with shaving kit, personal care items, etc., and proceeded to spruce up and change into the fancy uniform. He looked ready for a parade. He became very uncommunicative and aloof thereafter. We often wondered how and why he travelled on a bombing mission with a large bag, and why it contained a fancy uniform rather than survival gear, etc. — but he kept his distance from us — and his secret.

On several occasions, when we became impatient with our situation, Ed Vaughan, our radio operator, went out to the ship and tried to use our radio to signal someone, anyone, of our plight and location. But in short order the batteries ran down, ending this hope of communication. Getting to the plane, by the way, was no easy task. As Bob Honeycutt, who accompanied Ed to the plane recalled, "it was guarded by this huge mongolian soldier, carrying both a rifle and a submachine gun, with a big ammo belt strapped over his heavy coat. His orders were to let *no one* near the ship — we always had to get a Russian officer to go out with us to give the OK. Even then, he would glare at us and look menacing. We moved very carefully so as to not get him upset!"

Other remembrances: The rifle cartridges with wooden bullets strewn about the grounds (it was explained that the Germans used wooden bullets

at close range to inflict hard-to-heal wounds). . . . Art Fetskos's ability to communicate using gestures and "body-English" to supplement his halting German: he even convinced some local farm ladies to wash all our clothes for us, which they did using a large wooden tub, cold water, and an old broken boat oar for stirring. . . . Trash piles of Polish money (now worthless). . . German uniforms, helmets, and fighting equipment (we all brought home souvenirs). . . Propaganda leaflets (by the Russians, dropped when the Germans occupied this field, telling the Germans to surrender, as they were doomed). . . When our supply of U.S. cigarettes ran out (which we shared with our Russian friends), the Russians in turn furnished loose, but poorer quality tobacco, and showed us how to use the leaflets as make-shift cigarette wrappers. . .

One morning, after about a week of what was now becoming more and more obviously confinement, with no intention by the Russians of releasing us, lo and behold, a C-47 with U.S. markings circled the field, landed, and taxied up. ATC, the pilot said, made a practice of touring every week or so up and down these areas, looking for downed crews. They saw our B-24, and came in for us. Little more was said; we hurriedly got our stuff together, and climbed aboard. We didn't wait to say any "goodbyes" to the Russians, because we weren't sure we'd get away, if they got wind of our intended departure. That pickup of our crew by the C-47 was what the airlines nowadays like to label as a "quick turnaround". Taxi in, board (in this case with engines still running), taxi out, and leave!

(In all fairness to the Russians, they were a front line combat unit; flying daily combat from a few miles behind the front lines; they had more pressing matters to attend to than provide us with the immediate service we desired. It may not have been their intention to forcibly detain us; they might have gotten around to our needs eventually. But we weren't about to let this opportunity go!).

The C-47 took us to Poltava, Russia, a U.S. shuttle base. There we were washed, deloused, and issued clean Class B uniforms. We were issued orders marked "Secret" directing us to proceed by best and most direct military means possible to 8th AF HQ in England.

Our return trip was interesting: it included stops at Teheran, Cairo, Lybia, Athens, Rome, Naples, Marseilles, Paris, and finally London and then our base at Tibenham. All of this courtesy of U.S. Air Transport Command. Because of ATC flight schedules, we stayed over at several of these places, sometimes for several days each, and, whenever we had time, were able to sightsee by borrowed Jeep or tour vehicle, courtesy of the USAAF. (Sightseeing in Paris, by the way, included such sights as all-night nightclubs, etc.)

Upon our return to our base at Tibenham, we first rescued our belongings (the items which hadn't mysteriously disappeared, that is!) from the MIA storage room, then got new quarters assignments, and reported for operational duty. We resumed bombing flights shortly thereafter — almost a month to the day of the Zossen raid.

A VISIT TO BELGIUM

by Robert Ripps (445th BG)

I read with great interest Mike Ciano's story "Mission To Zwichau". If my memory is correct, which I doubt, it was on another mission to Zwichau that I bought it. I believe the date was April 8th. Nothing glamorous about our plane's demise, another plane that was hit and out of control, dropped his bombs on us. They were "frags", and hit our left wing. I was the only one to survive the incident, and spent six months with the Belgian underground. All of which leads me into my reason for writing you.

While in Belgium it was necessary to stay in hiding all the time. About the only way to pass the time was to listen to the AFN and BBC on radio. As you can imagine, it got to the point where I felt that I knew all the announcers personally. While with the "underground" I was dressed in civilian clothes and furnished with forged papers. After being liberated by the advancing American Forces, I went to Paris, where the only parts of a uniform I was able to obtain was GI pants and a

shirt. I was then flown back to London and after the usual debriefing, was told to go to the Officer's PX for a reissue of uniform. Everything went fine until it came time for the insignia. They were out of all Lts. bars, so what the heck, I took a pair of Captain's bars and pinned them on. The temporary identification paper was only filled in with pencil, so I simply changed it to Captain. After all was completed I was turned loose in London with the simple instructions to report back when I was ready to return to the U.S.

I took this opportunity to go to the BBC and AFN and meet all those people that I had listened to on the radio while in

Belgium. I had the good fortune to meet announcer Charmian Sansom, an extremely beautiful member of the Canadian WAF. When she heard of my adventures with the Belgian underground, she wanted me to go on an AFN interview program and relate some of the experiences. However, it suddenly occurred to me that I could not very well go on the program as a Captain when I was only a Second Lt. Fortunately, further embarrassment was avoided by the arrival of the first V-2 rocket on London. The next day I decided I had pressed my luck enough and left to return to the USA.

At present I am extremely active in Big Band music collecting and taping, and in particular with the Glenn Miller orchestras. I tapespond regularly with a chap in England. He called me one day and asked if I would send some record albums to a friend of his, which I did. At the time his friend was busy preparing a Glenn Miller tribute for the BBC, and was doing research in the BBC library. Can you imagine his surprise when he came across the enclosed article in an old BBC Journal and recognized my name.

CHARMIAN
SANSOM



BULLETIN BOARD

NOTICE

I am finalizing a pictorial history of the 458th Bomb Group, featuring a section on the Azon Bomb Project, to be published in early fall '79. Additional photos of aircraft, nose art, crashes base facilities at Horsham are needed and solicited. Anyone willing to lend material to include, please do so at once. My deadline is approaching swiftly. All contributions will be handled with care and returned after copying.

George A. Reynolds
848 South 86th Street
Birmingham, Ala. 35206

LOST

It has been brought to our attention that we have misplaced the sites where Bunchers 34 and 36 are (were) located. If anybody knows their whereabouts, please supply this information to Roger A. Freeman, May's Barn, Dedham, Colchester, Essex, CO7 6EW, England. The poor boy is frothing at the mouth with anxiety.

YOU ASKED FOR IT—YOU GOT IT 2nd ADA BLAZER PATCH

Let the world know who you are, what you are and where you were during the big one. Send \$3.00 to Evelyn Cohen, 610 Plaza Towers, 2350 Tremont St., Philadelphia, PA. 19115. Supply limited.



IDENTIFY PLEASE

The above photograph came into our possession recently and while we can identify five of the officers in this photo we cannot identify the one slouching third from the left. The others are Lt. H. B. Hoffman, Lt. M. P. O'Malley, (?), Capt. E. J. Ekey, Lt. G. R. Reed and Lt. L. I. Gifford. Igor (our resident spy) remembers this person quite well but can't remember his name. Igor did say that our

mystery man became known as the 'scourge of London' and actually kidnapped one of their fair maidens. If anybody knows the name of our mystery man please advise the Newsletter. The idea of prosecution is eliminated due to the Statute of Limitations, but we would like to know how he engineered his escapades in London. Should make interesting reading!

489th MAILBAG — ABORTS & BOGIES

by Charlie Freudenthal (489th)

My comment in the March issue that facts may be facts, but don't tell the story, has stirred up a little action! For instance, Warren Wackford notes, with regard to Lt. Ed Clark and crew, that "The bombardier was FO Harry Vought, and he and all of the crew but one were OK and taken prisoner. One was killed in the ditching." I corresponded with Harry after the war, in 1948, and at that time he was going back in the Service as MSgt. I haven't heard from him since, but certainly most of the crew at least survived the ditching. Lt. Clark's crew and ours (Dale Coburn, pilot), shared a Quonset hut before he went down.

And Larry Schmidt dredged up some recollections about the Bean Bag missions of September 1944, along with a photo of the SHARON D, taken at Orleans on the food mission. "We returned to Middle Wallop with the remnants of the Red Berets who had gone into France before Invasion. There were ten ships and we were given a red light on take-off from Middle Wallop. I can't remember who was in charge — Bob Gast? Anyway, we took off, turned around and buzzed the field. We landed at Halesworth and caught Holly H---. We were below minimums on landing — the reason for the red light at M-W." Then on second thought — "My 'excellent' memory fails me. Bob Gast was too conservative to buzz an airfield. Did Sturges have a moustache, and about 5'10"? I do remember that when we went into the RAF Club at M-W to eat, our crew members were not allowed — hence the Mad."

Bogies at 7 o'clock low

Dick Wagner had some belated comments about the September letter. "Your September newsletter gives Dan Blumenthal's account of Sept. 30th raid. Mentions our firing at some P51s. I remember it well — went something like this: Tail Gunner - 'Three bogies at 7 o'clock low.' (We were flying #3 in bucket element of the last squadron in the last Group coming out of Germany and were kind of nervous about our rear.) Pilot Bobak - 'Can anyone identify?' Top Turret - 'I can't see 'em.' Waist Gun - 'I can't either.' Pilot to Navigator - 'Can you see them through the side bubble?' (I could see the three in echelon but being slightly below and behind, couldn't see any distinguishing features except the auxiliary gas tanks which gave the appearance of engine nacelles.)

Nav. to Pilot - 'Look like twin engine fighters, Me217s maybe.' TG - 'They're flying a pursuit curve on us,

closing from 7 o'clock low.' (Since our fighters were briefed not to point the nose at bombers, the aircraft recognition exercise became academic at this point, especially since the Germans were reportedly flying some captured P51s.)

Nav to TG - 'SHOOT!'

When the P51 pilot saw all the hardware coming his way he flipped his wing and peeled off. All three got out of there in a hurry. I often wonder what he had in mind when he flew that curve on us.

Hamm Mission

Dick also had some memories of the October 22nd mission to Hamm. He was flying #2 in the element on right side of lead squadron. "We dropped our bombs and started a turn to the right. Being on the inside of the turn, we had to rack it up pretty tight. Then, from the co-pilot: 'Leader is reversing his turn. What's going on?' A few seconds later, top turret called in 'We're under high squadron, and they still have their bombs!' I looked up through the astrodome and saw ten Libs with yawning, black, open bomb-bays. I opened the nose turret door, pulled the gunner out, and grabbed the release for the nose wheel door. I was so damn scared I was paralyzed, just watching through the astrodome, waiting for those bombs to fall.

Bobak pointed the nose straight down, and the race between us and the bombs commenced. Bo later said 'I knew we couldn't outrun 'em, but I figured I'd better do something to try to save our a---s.' Somehow the bombs fell all around us with no hits. No one knew what our speed was when we pulled out of the dive, but it was way past the red line. Other guys in the squadron said we looked like a fighter in that dive.

The high squadron strike photos showed us stage center when the camera started at bomb release."

20th Anti-Sub?

Ward Kent has provided some more about First Sgt. (Uncle Bill) Williams of the 847th. Says he was a Mess Sergeant for the 20th Anti-Sub Squadron in Gander, and later (at Mitchel Field) became topkick. From there he went on to Casper, Wyoming, and Wendover. "Uncle Bill was a great man and very fair. He had 29 years of service when I joined the 20th. One of his more enjoyable things was finding a bottle of good booze, which he was very good at . . . The last I saw of Uncle Bill was at Lincoln, Nebraska, about February or March 1945.

"Maybe someone would remember the 100th mission party at Halesworth. It lasted four days in the 847th hangar. Sgt. Williams had everybody from the 20th who was in Gander for a clean-up crew, and what a time! The 20th was the first to go into the 489th. We lived in tents at Wendover, and all went home for Xmas in 1943. Had to, as the tents burned down!"



Dishwasher, Model 1943/4. Did you ever drop your mess kit in the scalding water when you were at Wendover? Ah, memories!

Blue Bomb Special

Bud Chamberlain (846th) recalls one of these training missions that wasn't as routine as they'd come to expect. Mid-way down the take-off roll "I rolled in some up-elevator trim to ease the back pressure on the control wheel . . . but the nose wasn't about to rotate! I applied all my strength and yelled for my co-pilot (either Carl Clader or Lindy Lindenberger) to get on it with me. Thinking my control cables fouled, I chopped all throttles and accelerated as quickly as possible without blowing the tires or burning out the brakes. We stopped short of the grass, turned on to the taxi strip, and stopped to inspect the controls. All were free and easy through full travel. Weird! Figuring one good thrill deserved another, I taxied back and went through the whole thing again. This time I stayed with it too long before aborting take-off, and we tooled off into the weeds. . . To say I was mad would have been a gross understatement, but equally irate were the crew and line chiefs when they saw they had to dig the bird out of the mud. After we were towed back to the hardstand, we went over the control system again. They operated the trim tab while I watched from the outside. What do you know — the @e%#* tab was rigged backwards! The more I rolled back, the more impossible it was to raise the nose. Then we really got mad! Who screwed up? Was it sabotage? Who knows? Anyway, my preflights were always more thorough after that."

And now, on to Norwich with the tape recorder!

A VOYAGE

by Will Lundy (44th BG)

All afternoon I've been wandering all over this huge ship trying to find some place that might help me keep from completely losing control of my queezy stomach. A sailor I am not it seems, even after four days out on this Atlantic ocean and aboard one of the largest ships afloat.

Finally, up near the bow on the port side rail where I can see the ocean being lifted in a high, curving arc as this behemoth cuts through the waves, my stomach slowly begins to settle. But if unsuccessful, I'd also be in a fine position to dispose of my problem.

Now I can watch the occasional flying fish spurt up into the air and soar in the breeze across the water and splash down; admire the iridescent ocean spray as it drifts past me; and try to forget this miserable edge of nausea. So how about another subject or two?

Remember those last hectic, and at times, unbelievable hours in the USA? The next to last day at Fort Dix, three of us 44th Bomb Group G.I.'s caught a train to Philadelphia to watch the Eagles play a night football game, where I saw an old friend from California. We talked so long that it was nearly 3 AM before the three of us found our way back to the base. Our quarters were brightly lit and mass confusion. What's going on? Orders! We are shipping out in a few hours, so get going!

We quickly gathered our meager gear and 'fell out' for yet another inspection. "Get it straight this time 'cause this is the real McCoy, these items in your 'A' barracks bag, and everything else in the 'B' bag. Only these items are to go!" Inspection passed, I quickly smuggled a pair of civilian shoes and a small camera into my "A" bag.

Soon, off we went in canvas-covered G.I. trucks, each man loaded down with A and B bags, rifle and gas mask. The canvas flap across the rear of each truck was lowered so that not only couldn't we see out, no one else could see in. After what must have been hours the convoy stopped, flaps raised and the orders "Everybody and everything out!"

Where are we? How could you tell as we appeared to be in a large warehouse. Now quickly. Form a single line, follow the man ahead of you. Drop your "B" bag here and hang onto the other stuff. Off we went Indian style, for awhile carrying our remaining worldly belongings; but as fatigue set in, more or less dragging them. The Army Air Force must have considered us to be top secret agents

for they had devised a narrow walkway something akin to a maze. After what seemed miles we saw nothing and no one saw us. Finally, into a fairly large, lighted room, and rest. Somewhere along the trail we had boarded a ship — and what a ship, the Queen Mary.

My lodging will be stateroom 96, Deck "A". Wow! A stateroom on the largest luxury liner afloat. One glance into that small room told me I could drop "luxury" from the description. The two comfortable beds had been replaced by two sets of bunks, four high, floor to ceiling. Well, that's not really so bad. A little crowded, sure. But then they dropped the other shoe. This stateroom and most all others must accommodate 16 men! Eight men will occupy the room for 24 hours, and then its the other 8 men's claim for 24 hours. Sounds interesting, so where do those eight men go on their "out" hours? Why, out on deck, naturally. You mean sleep out there on deck?? Now you got it.

With so many people on board only two meals will be served daily. (Another conflict with our "luxury".) Bring your own mess gear. Lines will form starting down at the cafeteria doorway, on up the stairways to top deck, and then around the deck. The queue was unbelievably long when I finally found the end, but time I had plenty of. Slowly we worked our way, following the procession along the deck and then down the stairs. And what is that odor drifting up — unfamiliar to these nostrils and not all that appetizing, either? Mutton? Mutton! Each step downward became less and less inviting until finally the serving line. Sure enough mutton was the main course with not much else for supplement. Long years of training to eat all of what you get, got me through the meal; then clean your gear in that basin at the end of the table. The water was cold, somewhat greasy and apparently minus any soap.

One trip into that atmosphere was enough for me. Even though I grew up during the deep depression years when almost any food was welcome, I couldn't repeat that sojourn into the cafeteria. Instead I took my business to the Ship's Store where plenty of 1 lb. Hershey bars and other goodies had far more appeal to my palate. Could it be that this concentrated carbohydrate diet had something to do with my rebellious digestive system? Never.

About 24 hours after we boarded the Queen Mary, the tugs began slowly easing her out from her mooring, turned her and slowly worked her out into the shipping lane of New York harbor. After all the secrecy surrounding our boarding it seemed a bit incon-

gruous that we should announce to all the world that afternoon that many thousand servicemen were on their way somewhere. Fog horns were blasting away, aircraft circling overhead, while every person aboard crowded the decks waving to one and all. It was approaching dusk as we saluted the Statue of Liberty, slowly picked up speed, entered the open sea and turned south. South? Then we must be on our way to Africa — or was it to be South America?

Dawn brought its welcome warmth but something was amiss. The sun was on my right — we are going north! Nothing to see from horizon to horizon except water, no convoy, no protecting men-of-war, not even any air cover. We are on one lonely ship but with several thousand pair of eyes searching for periscopes. Is our navy so severely strained that they must allow such a precious prize to venture out on the Atlantic alone? But no, the word quickly passes through the anxious observers that nothing is more important than speed. No warship can match the speed of our over-loaded ship as she cruises above 30 knots and has a top of near 36. The words sounded logical and yet how do you outrun a well aimed torpedo? And now that we are headed north, then east and every point of the compass in between, just what must our destination be? Iceland, Ireland, England? With very little else to do, we found abundant things to worry about.

Rumors have it that we almost had to test our fears of evading a torpedo last night. It was my turn to sleep indoors in that warm bunk six feet above the floor. Great, a good night's sleep. Wrong. One of the submarine-avoidance procedures throughout the trip was to alter course every three to seven minutes. However, with the apparent threat of Nazi submarines picked up on the ship's sonar, speed was increased to maximum. The combination of near 38 miles per hour and frequent sharp turns made sleeping not only nigh impossible, but down right dangerous. Unlike a motorcycle or bicycle which leans into a turn, a ship rolls away from it, listing badly. In a bunk you either bang into the wall or hang onto the bed to prevent falling out depending on whether the Queen zigs or zags.

In each turn as we reached maximum list, it felt as though this was going to be our last. Surely we are not going to right ourselves this time. We are creaking and popping like an old Chinese junk, the whole ship is vibrating and shuddering from the enormous power of full speed ahead. It is going to roll on over — no, thank goodness and we can breathe again. But a few moments and

it is the same thing again except in the opposite direction. Altogether a fearful night to remember but a blessing to be able to remember without a swim.

Now my stomach has regained normalcy and nearly "bed" time. As it's the deck for me tonight, I don most every piece of clothing possible. Wool pants, shirt, jacket and overcoat and then wrap in a G.I. blanket. Would have put on more, but didn't have it. I selected an area early and as near the bulkhead as possible. Soon a thousand or more joined me, until when looking down on this mass of humanity only a narrow band of deck was visible next to the railing to permit the ship's crew to perform their tasks. By packing closely together we lessened the effect

of the cold ocean air as it zipped past.

My cold and cramped bones woke me at dawn. I was more chilled than usual due to a misty fog surrounding us. But something else had changed too, the wind was less severe and we were maintaining an even keel. Over at the port rail (this whole voyage has had a left-handed viewpoint) I soon discovered the reason for the change — *Land!* Peeking out from under the skirt of the fog was solid, green, beautiful land! A deserted pile of rock would have been most welcome, but I'd never seen such hues of green.

The Queen Mary had reduced speed and was slowly negotiating the waters between Northern Ireland and the islands and peninsulas of Scotland. As

we passed the isle of Arran the protective planes of the Royal Air Force joined us and maintained a tight virgil against any possible attack by the Germans.

As we dropped anchor in the River Clyde, I observed the prettiest scene ever. It will remain with me always. My California desert home could never compare with this. A mile or so across the water a carpet of vibrant shades of green climbed out of the bay, upwards to disappear into a misty white puff of clouds. Scattered through this carpet were small white homes as if someone had taken a handful of white stones and tossed them about. Absolutely gorgeous, unforgettable.

Now, disembarkation.

SPECIAL ROOM STIRS WWII MEMORIES

(from *Courier-Express*)

When Vincent LaRussa of the Town of Tonawanda visited his old Air Force base in England last summer, he was hoping to revive some of his World War II memories.

The memories, he found, had been kept alive in the small country town of Norwich, in Norfolk, in the form of a living memorial to the American men who had served in England.

It started in 1945, when the Second Air Force Div., then stationed in Norwich, began moving out — heading home to regroup for the invasion of Japan.

Before they left, one of the men got the idea of starting a collection for a memorial for their comrades who would never go home, those who had died in battle.

The 2nd Division collected \$80,000. That averages out to one English pound — about \$4.00 each at that time — from some 25,000 men.

The war ended shortly after when Japan, devastated by the American atomic bomb attack, surrendered to the Allies. Because it was over so quickly, the Second Division was never reunited.

"The whole idea was to reform the division somewhere in the states, but it disintegrated after the war. We never even got a chance to exchange addresses," said LaRussa.

LaRussa had let the friendships sit in the back of his mind for many years, but he always wondered what became of the men he had known in the division.

Finally, after 33 years, he and his wife traveled to England, making a special stop in Norwich.



Army buddies gather to discuss memorial in their honor in England. (l to r) Donald Bauml, Carmelo Cosentino, Roy Fischer, Vincent LaRussa.

"I looked up some English friends I had known, and when we met with them, I asked just in passing what had happened to the money we collected," LaRussa explained. "They were amazed that I didn't know."

The friends, two sisters, took the LaRussas to the memorial. It was a room in the town library filled with pictures of the men in the 2nd Division memorabilia from the heyday of the division, lists of the men who died in battle and hundreds of American books and magazines.

"I was flabbergasted. As I walked around the room, I was like a babbling idiot. A grown man, yet I was bawling like a kid," he said. "It's a living memorial."

Outside the room is a courtyard, LaRussa said. It contains a reflecting pool which is imprinted with a mosaic of the United States. The stone representing New York State is a rose quartz from the Niagara Falls gorge.

"The money had been left in a trust

fund, and a board of English and Americans had been appointed to oversee how it was used. The library was built in 1963 and that room was included from the money we had collected," he said.

He said, that while visiting the library, the librarian noticed the special interest he had in the room and approached him. She showed him a book, called *The Roll of Honor*, which contained the name, rank and serial number of the division members who had died in battle.

She also was able to give him the names of people he should contact who had formed the 2nd Division Association, which he did immediately upon returning home.

"Since then, I have been spending a fortune on phone calls," LaRussa laughed.

LaRussa was a mechanic and engineer in the 789th Bomb Squadron of the 467th Bomb Group of the Second Division.

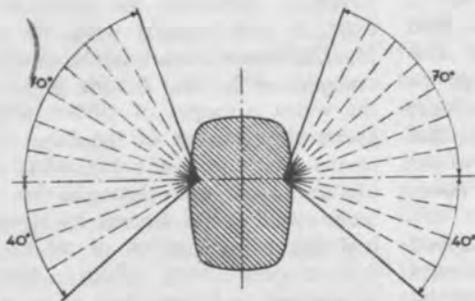
"The 467th was a unique organization. We had a plane that went out on over 200 missions without a loss of crew or an abortion of mission because of mechanical failure," he said proudly.

Since LaRussa made the discovery in Norwich, he has contacted many members of his old division.

Local friends include Donald F. Bauml, a pilot with the 445th Bomb Group, now living in Cheektowaga; Roy Fischer, a pilot with the 448th and 93 Bomb Group, now in Buffalo; Carl Cosentino, a gunner in the 392 Bomb Group, also of Cheektowaga; and Laverne Graf, a pilot in the 489th Bomb Group, of North Tonawanda.

VIERMOTORIGES KAMPFFLUGZEUG CO

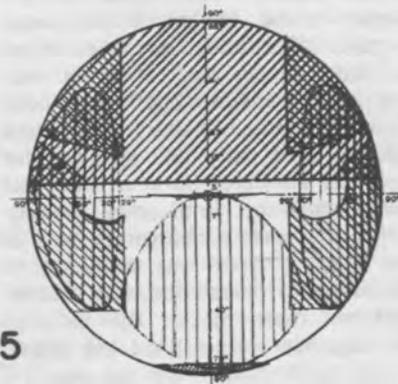
Einzelheiten der Seitenwaffen des Rumpfes



Jede Waffe hat ihren eigenen Schützen

Darstellung des Überschneides

Vorderansicht

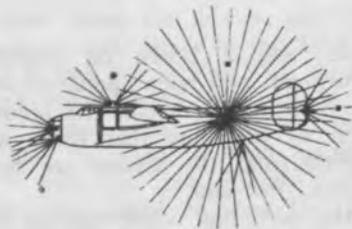


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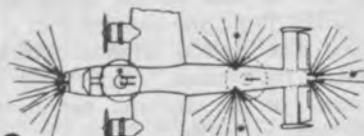
6 Darstellung der von den Bordwaffen

Alle Waffen sind Kaliber 12,7 mm. Die wi

Feuerabschnitte

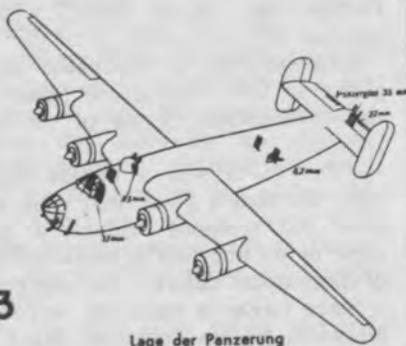


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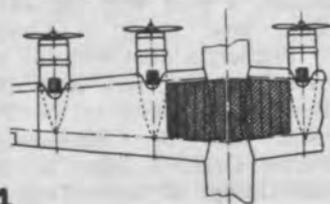
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Ansicht von oben



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Lage der Panzerung



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Lage der Behälter

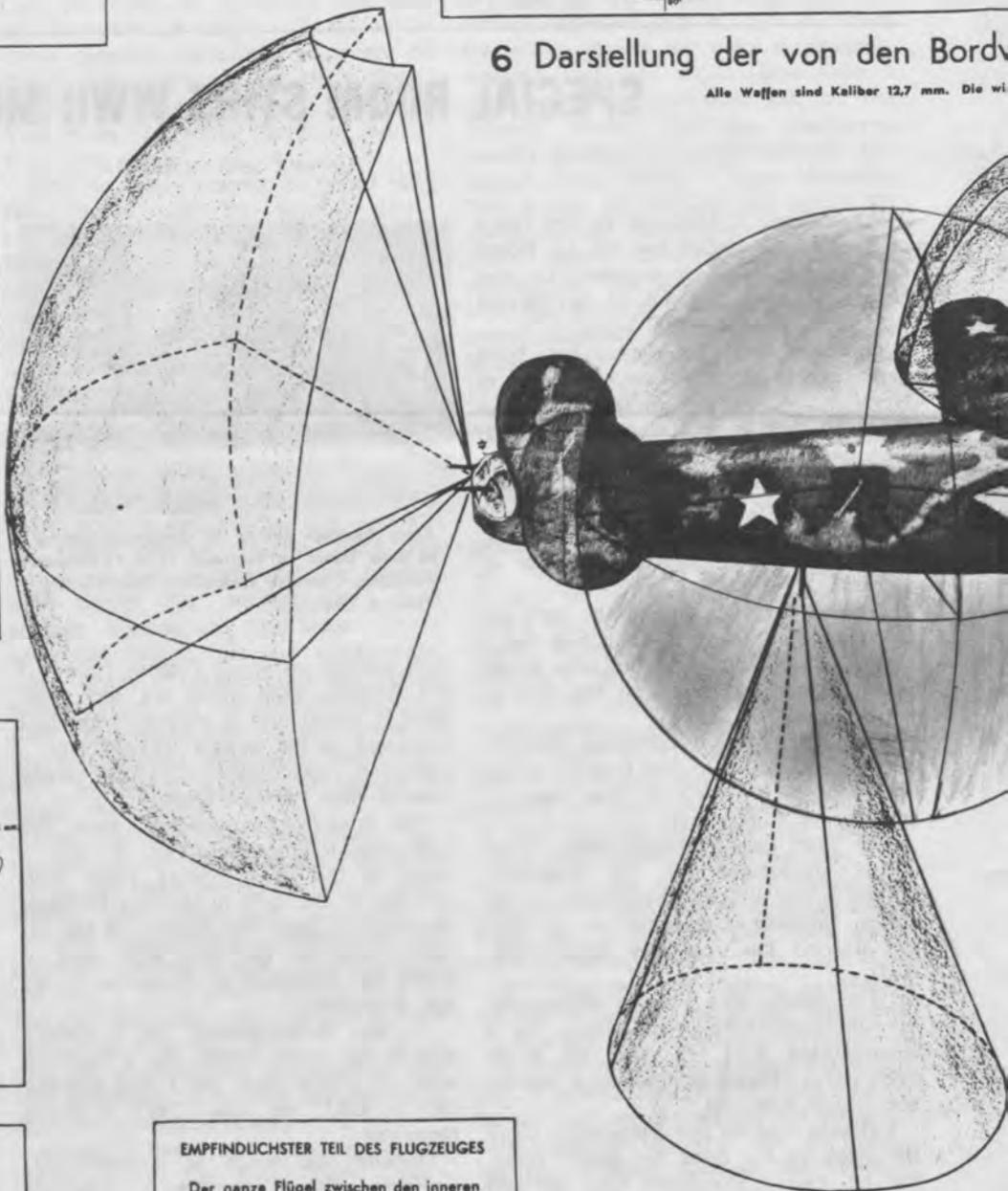
EMPFINDICHSTER TEIL DES FLUGZEUGES

Der ganze Flügel zwischen den inneren Motoren bis ca. 2/3 der Tiefe.

ÖLBEHÄLTER

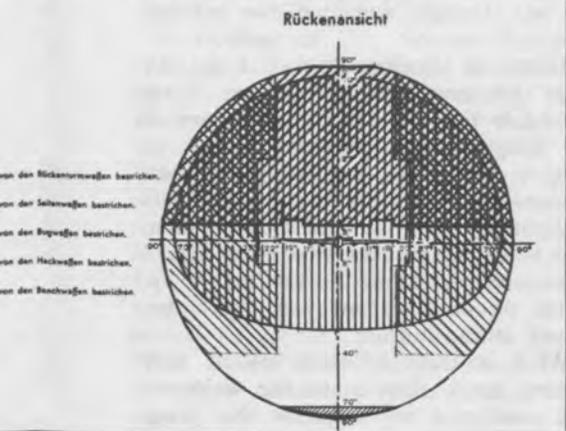
in den Gondeln hinter den Motoren

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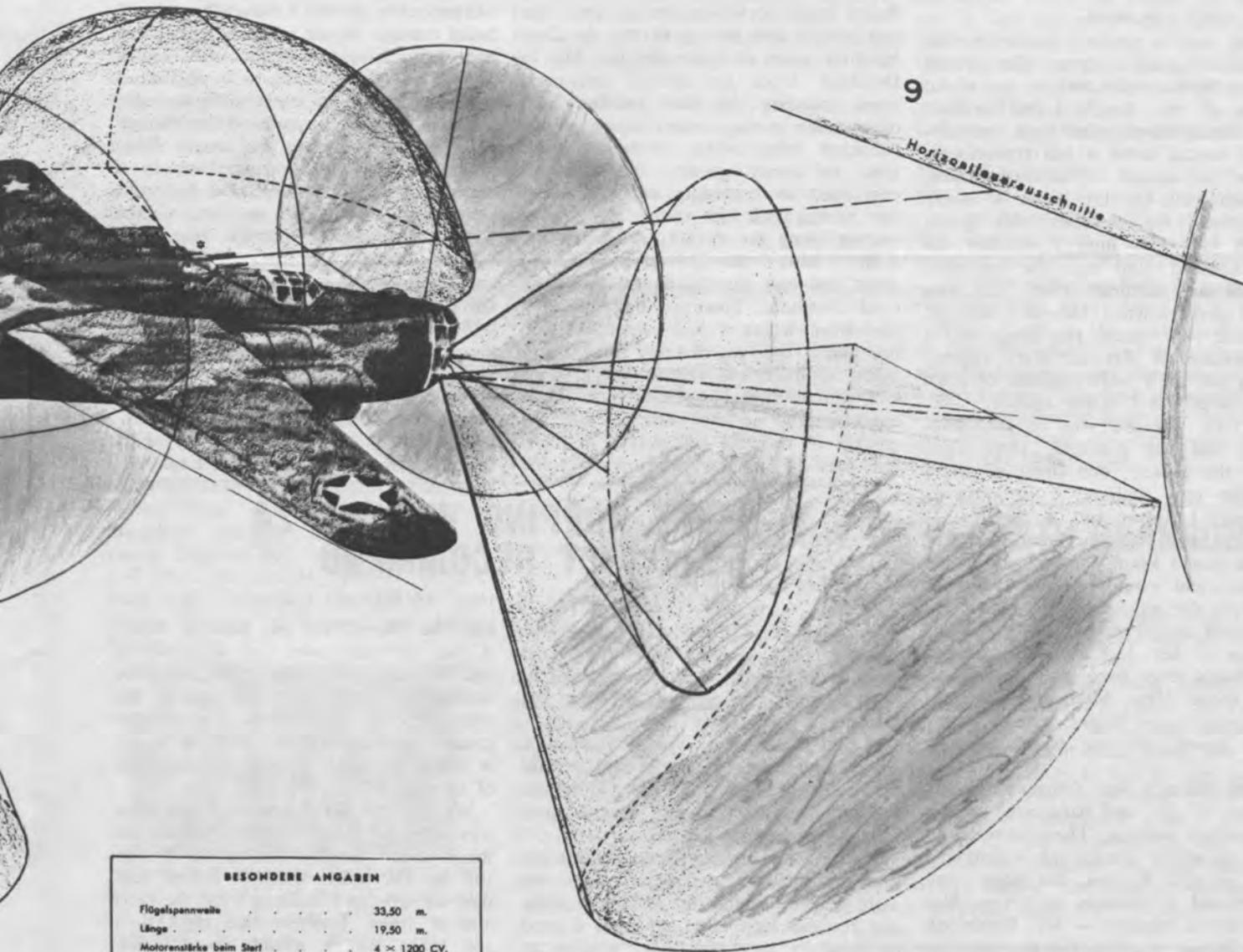
CONSOLIDATED B. 24 D. "LIBERATOR"

Übersicht der Feuerabschnitte

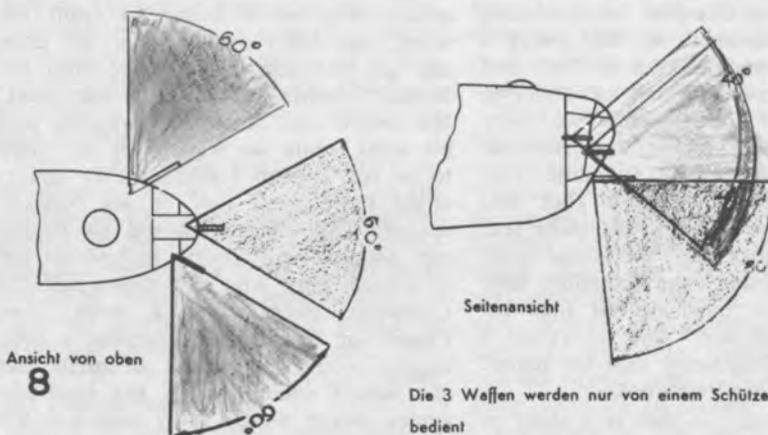


von den vorderen Waffenen besprochenen Räume

Die wirksamsten sind gekennzeichnet (*)



Einzelheiten über die Unterbringung der vorderen Waffen



BESONDERE ANGABEN	
Flügelspannweite	33,50 m.
Länge	19,50 m.
Motorenstärke beim Start	4 × 1200 CV.
Besatzung	6 + 9
Günstigste Flughöhe	5000 m.
Höchstgeschwindigkeit in vorteilhaftester Flughöhe	490 St/km.
Reisegeschwindigkeit in bester Flughöhe	340 St/km.
Gipfelhöhe	9000 m.

SALVAGED FROM ENGLAND IN 1943
 BY FRANK ASHBY - PRESENTED TO
 REED CHEEK - 1976

REFLECTIONS

by Jacob T. Elias (44 BG)

While George Hemphill and Frances, his daughter, of Glasgow were visiting me this past summer, we had many a cup of tea. I had learned in 1943 and 1944 that tea could be just as satisfying as coffee. Not the tea-bags we were used to in Pennsylvania, but brewed-in-a-teapot, full-bodied, aromatic tea. The Risebrooks at Narford Hall had taught me the proper way to make tea, so George, Frances and I enjoyed quite a few cups beside that Canadian lake where we spent most of our time together this summer. And everytime I poured the boiling water into the teapot I thought of the Risebrooks.

I had met Joyce — that is a story in itself — in Dereham. We hit it off well, so one day I was invited to visit her family. The family liked me so I was invited again and again.

Joyce was a student nurse in the hospital at King's Lynn. She would cycle to Narford Hall, which was about a mile off the King's Lynn-Dereham Road, about fifteen miles from her hospital. I would catch a bus from Dereham to Narborough, about thirty miles, and then walk the last mile. A lovely walk when the weather was good, through tall trees until I reached the Hall. Narford Hall was the ancestral home of the 'Admiral', I was told. His name I never learned, though I admired his estate very much. His home was a huge palace of fifty or sixty rooms, looking out on a wide expanse of lawn with a large pond in the middle.

My visit, though, was to the Risebrooks, not the Admiral. They lived behind the palace, one flight of stairs over the cow stables. Your nose is wrinkling, I know, but it needn't. If you knew Mrs. Monica Risebrook as I do you would know that the air inside her apartment would be completely unrelated to the air under her apartment. She would simply forbid the stable air to come in her door. No one or nothing would ever dare disobey a command from Mrs. Monica Risebrook. Her rooms were bright, cherry, cozy and a haven for me from the real world.

Young Monica was fourteen, Cedric was five or six, and Rosamund was a baby not yet walking. There were many of us homesick Yanks taken into the homes of kind Britons, but none were ever treated as lovingly as I was. Not in the Royal manner — Mr. Risebrook was a farmer working for the Admiral and had only farmer's income. All they could give me was a warm smile, a meal, a cup of tea and homemade dessert from their meager rations. But be-

lieve me, no King or Queen ever enjoyed a meal more than I enjoyed sitting at table with the Risebrooks.

Mr. Risebrook was a veteran of World War I and a victim of a gas attack. He would come in from his work, say hello to me from the door and go to wash and change into his Sunday clothes in honor of the guest. We would chat about the weather and his work while we waited for the table to be set, though I seldom ever understood more than half of his Norfolk accent. The children would sit beside me. Monica and Cedric looked on me as a great hero who shot down half the Luftwaffe every time I went over France or Germany. Rosamund's little fingers would grasp one of mine and she would smile one of her irresistible smiles. Joyce would shyly glance at me as she helped her mother, hoping I was enjoying myself.

I was enjoying myself. So much so that I hated to leave, waiting until the last minute and having to run the final hundred yards to catch the last bus to Dereham. Once we arrived early and were spending the time bidding each other adieu in the manner young people bid each other adieu. (Wouldn't it be great to do it again?). We were so engrossed in consoling each other at the parting that the sound of the bus tearing along the dark road alerted me a little late. I let her go and ran to make the last few yards to the main road. Someone, however, had moved a tree from where I had expected it to be, and I ran smack into it at thirty miles an hour and fell to the ground, half unconscious. Fortunately, Joyce quickly sized up the situation and ran quickly to flag the bus driver in time. She then helped me up, brushed some

of the dirt from my uniform and helped me into the bus, all the while unable to fully suppress some humiliating giggles. I forgive her. A great girl. Fortunately for her, though, someone else married her.

There, at the Risebrooks', I got my taste for good tea. Everytime I returned to England and Scotland, one of the things I looked forward to was the good tea available everywhere to compliment the unique scones, tarts, trifles and custards. It was with dismay, then, that when I was back two years ago, I discovered a teabag in the teapot instead of base of swirling black tea leaves at the bottom.

What is this? I asked myself with sinking heart, then asked the waitress? She confirmed my suspicion the 'progress' had reached Jolly Old England. Teabags at all the restaurants and cafes, even in the so-called good hotels. Everywhere. Tears often came to my eyes when I saw the teapot being brought to me and the telltale tag and string hanging out the side. I was tempted to go home early — if I were forced to drink tea made with teabags, I might as well have good hamburger with it. England was no longer England. But one night on my way to a concert at St. John's in Smith Square I stopped in a little cafe on Peter Street and half-heartedly ordered tea. The waitress brought the teapot to my table and set it gently before me. No tag and string in sight — must have slipped into the teapot, I thought, and lifted the lid to rectify the mistake. Angels sang, harps played, and the bright sky of heaven shone on me! It was a real pot of tea, with a layer of black, swaying tea leaves on the bottom. My heart sang. There will always be an England!

HEDGE HOPPING WITH A '24 I CAN'T RECOMMEND

by Lyndon C. Allen (44 BG)

On page 12 of the March issue there is an article by Edward J. Hohman and along with the article a picture showing Mr. Hohman inside the B-24 at the Museum.

If you look closely you will notice a space under the oxygen bottles behind the right shoulder of Mr. Hohman. Well that used to be my 'special spot' on take-offs. Now I'll explain why.

I was a tail gunner hence didn't get into my position at take off until we were well up in the air. During training and for our first eight missions I used to stand by the right waist window at take-off watching things go by in a very interesting way.

On our 8th mission we were unable to gain altitude and we were too far

into the take-off for our pilot to abort. A line of trees was fast approaching and with a super-human effort our pilot managed to slide over the tops of the trees. Then it was down close to the ground again to try and pick up speed in order to leap-frog over the next line of trees.

We did this six times until our pilot was able to gain altitude. During all these roller coaster maneuvers I was still by the waist window scared stiff that we wouldn't make it over the next line of trees. I determined right then and there that I would never watch another take-off and I didn't. From then on, through our 35 missions, I positioned myself under those oxygen bottles.

OLDS & ENDS OF 453rd BG NEWS

by Don Olds

In October of '77, Norman Raeber, 734th Squadron, Crew #46, gave me a photo of a young boy named Colin Elvin and said he had given the boy his bicycle when he left Old Buck in 1944. He wondered if the boy might still live in the Attleborough area. I forwarded the info and photo on to a friend living in Attleborough, John Lawn, and asked him to please do some detective work for us. John placed an article in the Eastern Daily Press of Norwich, England along with the photo asking, 'Where is this boy now?'

The photo appeared in a Saturday morning paper and by 10 AM that morning Colin Elvin had called the newspaper anxious to learn who was searching for him. He clearly remembered the picture being taken near hangar No. 10. He also remembered the bicycle very well, right down to the name stencilled on the mud guard and the batteries strapped to the frame which drove the many lights attached to the machine. Colin also inquired about some of his other friends whom he'd lost track of, Tom Wingard, a member of Raeber's Crew and a 2nd ADA member and Bruce Prosser. Although the name Bruce Prosser has come across my desk on a couple of other occasions, I still don't know who he flew with or worked with, nor do I have an address for him. Can anybody help out?

So, a satisfying ending to another little human interest episode that took 35 years to unfold. This past year or so has also seen John Tangorra and Joe Miele, crew chiefs from the 735th Squadron, reunited with a couple of young English lads who regularly visited their hardstands. These contacts were also established through the persistent legwork of John Lawn. Many thanks, John.



Above is a photo of the Roger Counselman Crew #15 of the 732nd Squadron. They were part of the original cadre and were one of only two or three crews that completed all their missions. Counselman transferred to the 355th Fighter Group when he finished duty with the 453rd BG. Standing back

How NOT to Install a Heating System

by Walter M. Rude (448th)

Quite a few of our flight-line troops, showing the usual American ingenuity, resourcefulness, and, I suspect, a desire for privacy, plus elimination of a long trip back and forth to work, had built themselves living quarters alongside their hardstands.

Some were quite simple, others, in my opinion, would have challenged the abilities of first-class construction engineers. In the main, the materials that went into them came from aircraft parts packaging materials, supplemented by whatever useful items that could be scrounged from wrecked aircraft, and, undoubtedly, with a wee bit of "moonlight requisitioning".

All of the shacks had some form of heating system, lights, home-made furnishings, and they even had an intercom system between shacks created from military field telephones. One hacienda, I recall, also had a small garden plot, plus a few chickens and rabbits.

Two of the building entrepreneurs, however, apparently desiring something in the way of sanitary comfort, decided to install a hot-water system. This consisted of copper tubing coiled around the Sybley stove, and from there up the wall, across the ceiling, and there it was attached to the bottom of a 55 gallon drum mounted on a wooden rack high on the wall.

In between, of course, they had a wash basin, a plastic aircraft bombardiers window, complete with faucet, attached to the wall and hooked up with the coiled tubing around the stove.

Finally, one night, all was in readiness for the system to be put into operation. The first task, of course, was

to fill the water supply drum with water, check for leaks, and proper operation and then wait for the old Sybley to bring the water to some degree of comfortable warmth.

That's when disaster struck. No one had thought to check the drum for any residue of it's previous contents. As "luck" would have it, the drum had contained gasoline, or some other highly inflammable, and explosive liquid. When the first amount of water was introduced into the drum it, naturally, forced the combustible residue down to the coiled tubing around the red-hot stove, and, "BOOM!", everything went up in flames.

Fortunately, the shack's two plumbers escaped without serious injury.

There's an anti-climax to this bit o' nonsense. When the explosion occurred, I, and all other occupants of the flight-line engineering office, rushed outside, and our first thought was that a B-24 was on fire. One was parked directly in line with the burning shack, and made a perfect silhouette and actually appeared to be the object on fire. I hollered to the clerk to call the fire department, grabbed a CO² bottle, and ran, stumbled and fell in the mud on my way to what I supposed was a burning aircraft. What I expected to accomplish with that little 25 pound extinguisher, I'll never know.

When I got to the immediate scene of the "disaster", and saw what was actually burning, and, particularly, after I had located the two uninjured tenants, I breathed a huge sigh of relieve and left the rest of the rescue effort to the fire department.

FROM THE DIARY OF KENNETH BRANSON NAVIGATOR 445th BG

... I have never told you about the English bath. In the first place it is taken in a room with no heat so you try to pick the warmest part of the day. This means the temperature can be anywhere from freezing to about 40 which isn't warm.

The water is well below body temperature. In fact, it's so cold it won't steam when it comes out of the faucet. With teeth chattering and knees knocking out of tune you brace yourself and go into the water.

In the process of washing you notice you are getting dirtier than before you

started. In the dim light you finally realize that it's not dirt, you are simply turning purple.

After an endless time (about two minutes) your bath is over. You rub as fast as you can with a towel until your skin turns a light pink. Then you jump into your clothes as fast as you can. A few hours later, after your chills have stopped, you decide it wasn't too bad and in a week or more you may again get up the courage to take another, always hoping that summer will put in a surprise visit.

row left to right are James Wuest, John Murphy, John Kosky and RogerLeft to right in front are Joe Feltern, A. S. Shirley, Lester Frank, Robert Satter

and Mike Mauser. Wuest, Murphy and Frank are now deceased. Thanks to Joe Felten, I've managed to contact all the others, except for Mauser.

HETHEL HIGHLIGHTS

Upon returning to Hethel during January 1944, after a short vacation in Turkey, I was told that my best friend, T/Sgt. Walter Taylor was killed by a direct hit over St. Nazaire. Walter and I were very close friends having gone through radio school together and we joined the 389th as original crew members. Walter was assigned to Capt. Conroy's crew and I was assigned to Lt. Jame's crew.

On February 26, 1979, I received some photos from Mrs. Tom Conroy, who was the Secretary to the Commanding General, 2nd Air Division, and subsequently married Tom Conroy. Tom was killed in a crash after the war.

I spent many hours looking over the photos, a real treasure as some of them have never been published. The series of photos below had nothing but a date to indicate the mission, 5-12-43. A check of my records revealed that the 389th went to Cognac that day, found 10/10ths cloud cover and was ordered to return with their bombs. Flying in the left seat of Conroy's plane was the original co-pilot, Lt. Mason. All on board were veterans of the Ploesti raid and were well on their way to a complete tour.

On the return leg the formation loosened up a bit as no fighters were

up and they wandered over St. Nazaire where the Krauts threw up some moderate but accurate flak through the overcast. The photos tell the rest of the story.



389th returning from Cognac on 5 Dec. 1943 — with bombs on board — Taken over St. Nazaire. Lt. Mason's plane getting direct hit.

The official records state that "one plane was lost" but to me, after all these years, I finally learn of the fate of my best friend. Two or three chutes were seen to open. Anyone out there know anyone who survived the direct hit, or the photographer.

I am very grateful to Mrs. Conroy. Her packet of photos also contained original documents of the 2nd AD and rightfully belong in the Memorial Library after we have finished with them. Look forward to more stories from her contribution.

LIB-LAFFS

BY ED HOHMAN 401st



WHO'S WHO?

by George A. Reynolds (458th BG)

Saturday, 22 April 44, began and continued as one big *snafu*, but it did add a new wrinkle to our air war. Rather than at dawn's early light, the Group got off in late afternoon for a strike on Germany's largest marshaling yard. When the 458th reached Hamm, however, their objective had already been tagged hard, and many of the bombardiers couldn't see the yards because of thick, billowing smoke. Something else of a like nature, common to Ruhr Valley targets, greeted the Yanks — accurate flak. Some crews dropped their firecrackers into the turmoil below while others turned for the secondary at Koblenz and bombed it with good results.

There were 25 birds in the formation going. One went down over Hamm and would be added to the MIA list. About 2200 hours, in pitch darkness, the returning armada approached AF123, but the ships had increased in number to

26. Ten miles south of Horsham the Libs were at 6,000 feet and began setting up a landing sequence. Suddenly two enemy aircraft started to spray the B-24s with machine gun and cannon fire. (Confusion still exists as to what they actually were. Some say ME-410s, JU-88s or ME-110s while others say one JU-88 and one ME-110. The more popular version is "night fighter-bombers of the ME-110 series." Nevertheless, they stealthily tacked onto the formation, flying along until the heavies were in that most vulnerable situation of approach procedures, then opened up).

By this time the formation had reached Horsham. The British anti-aircraft boys suspected an air raid was beginning, (other bases had been hit earlier in the day) and commenced firing.

The 752nd Sq. bore the brunt of the two-pronged attack — several Libs were hit and two shot down. One went down immediately in flames, and the other crash-landed on the field. Nine crewmen were killed and five others wounded in the short melee.

In an effort to resolve a developing major disaster, air traffic control ordered the 458th to fly northwestward for 20 minutes then turn back to the field. Since Jerry was likely monitoring the American radio frequency, he chose this opportunity to escape from the area unscathed, whatever type he might have been.

More than a few Anglo-American feathers were ruffled over the incident. Our side said, "The damned Limeys don't know friend from foe. They shoot first at everybody and maybe ask questions later." Their side said, "Those bloody Yanks were playing blindman's bluff as they led Jerry right into the eagle's nest."

But in time logic surfaced, prevailed, and blame was gradually shifted to its rightful owner — a perceptive enemy who had used darkness and confusion to his advantage in creating havoc over Horsham that lingered much longer than a very short but tragic skirmish. Score another point for the American argument. Daylight bombing, precision or otherwise, was the only way to go. Thanks to John McNaney for an assist.

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FACTS BEHIND THE EIGHTBALL

by Pete Henry (44th)

As of March 1979, there are 335 members of the 44th B.G. in the Second Air Division Association. Would you care to guess which State has the largest contingent? California — with 47 members or 14% of the total membership.

Rounding out the top 10 are Texas with 24 members; Illinois - 23; Pennsylvania - 21; New York - 18; Virginia - 14; Florida - 13; Massachusetts - 11; Iowa - 10 and Wisconsin - 8.

When I learned from Bill Robertie that the 2ADA Roster is probably a thing of the past, I made up an active file of the 44th B.G. members from the 1977 Roster plus the names of new members that Evelyn Cohen sends to the Group V.P.'s each month. For my own 'amazement', I catalogued this list by State and learned that the largest group/state either started out in California or have migrated there since 1945.

We have at least one member from each of the 50 States except Alaska, Georgia, Montana and Rhode Island. I sent a letter-to-the-editor of six Alaska newspapers and a dozen Montana newspapers but have not heard from any ex-44thers yet. When it is determined where we will hold the 1980 reunion, Georgia and Rhode Island will

"ENUFF ALREADY"

by Earl Zimmerman (389th)

"Just read the letter from Al Blue submitting a name for the completion of 30 missions in the shortest time, 62 days yet. I spent more time than that lining up for powdered eggs and spam.

I would like to start another category; instead of the firstest with the mostest, how about the latest with the leastest. I went over with the original 389th BG in June of 1943 and returned in June of 1945 and had 16 missions to my credit. Of course I had a few breaks in the action, walking across the desert after landing 200 miles from base, 6 months in Turkey, a short tour with the black libs in Scotland and a few assorted crash landings.

I remained on flight status during the 2 years. Some of you Sqdn. Commanders should be able to top that but how long did you fly the desk? And talking about rest camps, the only one I saw was after I returned in 1945, spent two weeks in Santa Monica eating like mad."

be receiving some letters to the editor.

If any of you are looking for former members of the 44th B.G., send me their names and I'll send you their addresses if I have them.

Evelyn Cohen advised me recently that we will have quite a sizeable group going to Norwich — possibly the

It is with consummate pride that I can report 'Henry's' bombardier, Al Jones was inducted into the 1978 Michigan High School Coaches' Hall of Fame on Friday, March 17, 1978. Al (Albert E. Jones) flew 31 missions with 'Henry's' crew between June '44 and April '45 and his bombing expertise was mainly responsible for the crew receiving a citation from General Johnson for the mission to Ahrweiler, Germany on 23 Dec. 44.

Al and I were like brothers during that brief 'sojourn' in Merrie Old England and have remained that way ever since. I consider him one of my greatest personal friends.

The following article, condensed, appeared in a recent Northville, Michigan newspaper:

"Al Jones, who never had a losing season in 28 years of coaching in Northville, will be one of five men inducted into the Michigan high school coaches' hall of fame in East Lansing next month.

A committee of five officers from the state coaches' association chose him from among about 30 nominees from all over Michigan at its annual selection meeting in January. Former athletic director and present basketball mentor Walt Koepke nominated Jones for the honor two years ago.

A plaque bearing his name and portrait will be placed in the state hall of fame room on the Central Michigan University campus and will stand along with some 200 other coaches who have been likewise honored over the past 21 years."

We wonder if Al's father-in-law had anything to do with Al becoming a member of the U.S. Eighth Air Force. John M. McCollough was an aerial observer in France during WWI and is one of the few remaining members of the original 168th AERO Squadron. John still attends annual reunions of his squadron and just recently had his book, "We Flew With One Wing" published by Donance & Co., Ardmore, Pa.

largest of any Group. We do not have any formal plans for a mini-reunion or pub just for the 44th B.G. but I'm sure we'll be able to work out something when we all get over there. I'm looking forward to getting together again with all of you and hope that we can find some time to discuss ways and means to make the 44th B.G. bigger and better.

LETTERS

Dear Roy (Jonnason 389th):

First let me apologize for not writing sooner and then to say how nice it was to hear from you. Yes, I remember you and of course it brings back many memories and I must say what a fine job you did with the squadron, also Capt. Murphy — no, I don't know what ever happened to him, I have never heard. I enjoyed your letter and all of the news.

I hope to attend the reunion this June in Norwich and to see many of the old buddies. I visited them last year for the first time and needless to say I thoroughly enjoyed myself even though the Library was a little overwhelming for the first time. Seeing the names of all the men who did not come back.

I was glad to hear about Bill Woods — he was a heck of a nice fellow and a good office man.

As for myself, I still raise apples and pears up here in Washington and am finally getting in some traveling, also trying to back out in doing so much. I have a little Cessna airplane that I thoroughly enjoy — when the weather is nice!!

Hope to see you this June. Am enclosing a check for dues.

Bentley Kern (564th Sqd., 389th BG)

Dear Roy & Mildred: (Jonnason 389th)

Received the 'round robin' letter yesterday and spent most of last night reading it and looking over some old pictures of some of the boys. I decided to attach some pictures of 564th men and am mailing it along to Robert L. Bunch.

Don't know when you started this letter but thought you would like to know its progress to date. Another of your GREAT ideas and I am delighted and hope it will encourage more get-togethers in the future.

I sent Jim Frankinburger an old picture since the letter had already passed him and also sent a letter to Grover Patrick with a snapshot since his name is so far down the list and encouraged both to come to Second Air Division Association convention. I sure hope the letter will continue and each will add a little of interest.

Am at work and must go, but hope to see you both real soon.

C. D. Stroup, Jr. (389th)

(ed: A round-robin letter? Now that's a new twist. Sounds like a good way for old friends to chat all year long.)

Dear Pete:

Please add my name to your list of veterans of the 2nd Bomb Division in World War II. I served in the Medical Detachment, Hq. 467th Bomb Group, at Rackheath from March of 1944 to July 1945 when the Bomb Group was returned to the continental US.

I would like to hear from other buddies who served in the 467th or some of the other units not far from Norwich. I am retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after spending nearly thirty years in Federal Service. I am now employed by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company which built and now operates the famous trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

The reunion in Norwich this May and June sounds very interesting. Tell me more about it. After all England is just over the pole from Ancho age — dozens of flights leave here weekly for Europe.

Francis W. Stokes

Dear Bill,

Many thanks for the outstanding work on the newsletter. It is most enjoyable and always eagerly anticipated.

Enclosed are a couple of pics which you might be able to use in either the newsletter or in the forthcoming book on the 2nd Air Division. Both of our aircraft were named by previous owners, unknown to us. They must have had a thing for horses.



Our crew finished its tour in the B-24H "Ohio Silver", (alias "The Horse"). 1st mission: Orleans, 23 May '44; last mission #30, Dessau, Aug. 16, 1944. Laverne Howe was the youngest of the crew at 18½. Jack McCutcheon was the oldest at about 36. Most accurate bombing: Orly (Paris) 24 May '44 and Isle de Cezembre (St. Malo) 13 Aug. '44 - Group Lead.



Top Row: (l-r) Walter S. Rash, tail turret; Morgan E. Folta, nose turret; Wm. G. Main, Jr., waist gunner; Laverne R. Howe, radio; Jack H. McCutcheon, top turret; John K. Barney, engineer. Bottom Row: Pershing J. Beechy, co-pilot; Kenton W. Morris, A/C commander; Bernard L. Delancey, bombardier; Thomas G. Owen, navigator. Aircraft: "Payday" (B-24H) 732nd Sqdn., 453rd Bomb Group. This picture was taken following our fourth mission; target Oldenburg, Germany on May 30, 1944. "Payday" was lost to enemy action while being flown by another crew several weeks later.

I enjoyed reading the note from our former radio operator, Laverne Howe, and will get a letter off to him. Also was glad to see the story by Delmar Wangsvick in the last Newsletter. He was our group navigator in the summer of '44. Finally a special thanks to Don Olds for his fine work on behalf of the 453rd.

Most sincerely,

Tommy Owen (453rd)

Dear Evelyn:

Just wanted to write you a note to let you know how much John and I enjoy reading the Newsletter every time we receive it.

I was born in England and John and I were married in Kensington, London in Aug. 1944. I served in the English A.T.S. for 4½ years and my home is in the East Anglia area, Framlingham, Suffolk so I really enjoy reading all about the old U.S. airfields in Suffolk and Norfolk.

We would really like to get to one of the reunions someday. Keep up the good work.

Best wishes,

John & Daisy Toney

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is check for dues and library fund. I sure enjoy the newsletter and always look forward to the next one. Due to physical handicap I don't get about much and can't make the conventions so the letter makes up for it.

Thanks for doing such a good job and keep it up.

Sincerely,

Arthur Schneider

Ms. Evelyn Cohen,

I recently came into contact with a stack of newsletters of the 2nd Air Divisions. I was amazed that such an organization existed, and for so many years. The newsletters brought back many memories of my time in the service in the 328 Bomb Squadron, 93 Bomb Group.

I was an aircraft mechanic, joining the Group at Barksdale Field, La. in the spring of 1942 and finally flying home with the Squadron aircraft in the early summer of 1945.

I would like to become a member of the organization. I am sending a check in the amount of \$10,000 to cover the membership fee and the roster of members, if it is available.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,

Rufus K. King
1619 S. San Remo Ave.
Clearwater, Fla. 33516

(ed: Coming into contact with a stack of Newsletters CAN be hazardous. Each issue gets heavier.)

Dear Mr. Patterson, (Dave 445th)

Having read in my local newspaper last week about the reunion this year of the 2nd Air Division, I got to thinking about my own memories of that historic occasion back in the last war and especially of the 465th Bomb Group, and with a chance remark at the American Memorial Library in Norwich I came up with your name and address. I was 16-17 years old at the time the 445th were at Tibenham. I worked on the base for the Air Ministry. I was also an Air Cadet (waiting eagerly to enlist!). I was there when the 445th arrived. I saw them leave at the end of hostilities, and I remember most vividly most of the happenings throughout those years.

I remember seeing James Stewart quite a bit before he left to go to the 453rd, also the Glen Miller Band when they came to the Cafe. I used to fly wherever I could at weekends. I have been in most sections on the base and met quite a lot of personnel, and I just wondered if anything I might recall may be of interest, such as the day old 'Bunnie' crashed. Writing this letter also reminds me of other aircraft names such as: 'Sweet Sue', 'Headwind Herky', '4Q2', 'Nine Yanks and a Jerk', 'Ten Aces with a Queen' and so on.

I would be very interested in anything relevant to the 445th and its personnel.

Best wishes,

Kenneth J. Fox
17 Fakenham Road
Drayton, Norwich
Norfolk NR8 6PS U.K.

Dear Evelyn Cohen:

I have enjoyed the 2nd Air Division News for the last two years through another subscriber. I would like to receive the News, and have enclosed a check for \$7.00 to cover dues.

I was the first member of the 853rd squadron to reach Pueblo, Colorado when the 491st Bomb Group was formed. I was with the unit until it was dissolved in October 1945. I am former S/Sgt. Weaver Noland of the 491st Bomb Group (H), 853rd squadron.

Thanks for your good work.

Sincerely,

Weaver J. Noland

Dear Mr. Robertie,

Mr. John Archer kindly passed on to me your comments about my novel, which may be of interest to some of your Association members. Incidentally, I have already suggested to the publishers that they might display copies at the reunion hotels.

Anyway, the details you require are: "A Skylark Descending," by B. A. Robinson, published by Hale at 4.50. Obtainable from: Robert Hale Ltd., Marketing Dept., Clerkenwell House, Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0HT.

It may be of interest that the book is entirely fictional, but the idea for it stemmed from the last big 2nd. Air Division reunion when I wrote an article for this newspaper about an ex-flier returning to this country for the first time since the war. The flier concerned was one of your members, Clarence Hooks, of Hixson, Tenn., who was with the Bungay Buckeroos at Flixton. (I hope to meet him again when he comes over with this year's reunion). Some of the fictional happenings are loosely based on actual events at Attlebridge.

Thank you for your interest, and I look forward to meeting you all once again in June.

Bruce Robinson

Dear Evelyn:

I have not received my Notice on 1979 Dues, and as my mail was held for some time at local PO while I was away over the Holidays, it may have been lost, as I checked back on other years and have always sent in dues before this date.

So — my check for \$12.00 is enclosed for 1979 Dues and balance for the Norwich Library Funds.

I have already sent an order to Bill R- for the 1979 Roster. Only improvement would be for the married women (Ex-WACs) to use their Army names, as who can remember who Mrs. John Jones is, if never heard who she had married — in most cases.

All doing a good job, regardless —

I'd like to have a card, if one has been lost from an earlier mailing.

Rena E. Owen
108 E. Neely Ave.
Comanche, Texas 76442

Friends of Library (Comanche County Library) volunteer work still takes up most of my spare time, and a lot not spare. Have been Friends Treasurer for 18 years and Saturday Librarian for 12 years. Why not a Reunion in Dallas - Ft. Worth area sometime?

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$7.00 for my 1979 dues. I'm sorry that I'm late in mailing my dues and will try to do better next year.

I will be interested in receiving a new Roster when there are sufficient orders to warrant printing one. I believe Bill Robertie said he plans to try again this fall.

It was quite a disappointment to me that I was unable to join all of you in California at the last reunion. I don't mean the "last" reunion; I mean the '78 reunion — as there will be many more reunions. I hope some day to be able to attend one of them. How about having one in Tulsa, Oklahoma?

That was an interesting article by Captain David O. Miller in your March 1979 News Letter about the B-24 being taken by helicopters from Tulsa International Airport to Barksdale.

You are doing a wonderful job, Evelyn. You and Hathy seem to be the only active WAC's left. What has become of them all? It was a grand bunch of gals, and I am proud to be a member of the Second Air Division Association.

Sincere best wishes,

Marie Mitchell Orr

Dear Bill:

The weekend of August 23, 1978 marked the first reunion of the Wheelahan crew of the 466th Bomb Group, 787th Bomb Squadron, 8th Air Force, WWII.

Five of the ten crew members, with wives, attended the weekend affair in Dayton, Ohio. Four being unable to attend and one is yet to be located.



(l-r) A. J. Bennett, Radio; Howard Lindsey, Co-pilot; George Harden, W. Gunner; Sid Bouwer, Navigator; Ed Makowski, Ball Gunner.

The five spent two days and nights getting reacquainted by telling 'war stories' and trying to fill in the time since they separated in England 34 years ago.

High points of the reunion was a tour of Heritage Park and the Air Force Museum, centering around the B-24 on display.

Tom L. Mitchell

Dear Bill,

I am an associate member, AAF researcher-collector. Also a member of the 8th AFHS, associate. In any event, I would like to have a request printed in a future Newsletter. I have been seeking an A-2 leather flight jacket with a B-24 painted on the back. Any size, any condition. Also, A-2 jackets with girls, bombs, etc., painted on them. Jackets with squadron patches also desired. Cloth flight jacket type B-10 and flight gear wanted. Top dollar paid for any item. Call - collect - 213 4640614 or write Bob Viau, 537 N. Gower St., L.A., Ca. 90004 - associate.

Bill, I use my items at military shows, gun shows and reunions. I wear the jackets I now have on weekends and have many people ask about them. I tell them about the 8th AF and what group it was, etc. I have two 8th AF jackets now. One is the 391st B.S. and the other has a B-17 on the back and an 8th AF insignia, with WHITE ANGEL painted around it. I have been seeking a B-24 painted on one for some time. I recently obtained a jacket with a gray painted B-24 but I noticed that this jacket had been in the CBI theater of operations, as there were needle holes on the back where a back flag had been once placed, and a CBI patch on the left shoulder with a HG AAF patch at one time on the right shoulder. Many of US (our) relics are being sold to foreign collectors who use them for purposes of their own. I have a nice A-2 with a B-25 painted on the back from the 5th AF. I can't wear it as it is a size 42.

Sincerely,

Bob Viau (SM)

Dear Evelyn,

Please send me 2 - 2nd ADA Blazer Patches as advertised in the March News Letter.

I was on Crew #25 with the 453rd Bomb Group, 733rd Squadron, and was shot down over Frankfurt, Germany and was a prisoner of war in Germany, until we were liberated by the British 2nd Army, just 3 or 4 days before V.E. day. We were at Stalag Luft IV, but left by foot in late January and walked until that final day of liberation.

Too many of our population today do not even realize the true meaning of freedom, as we have in America today.

Sincerely,

William A. Crandell

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Recently CWO (Ret) Mike Fagan of Atwater, California had an article placed in the Sacramento Bee about membership in the 2ADIV Assn. Being a former tail gunner in the 409th Squadron, 93rd Group, I was anxious to join. He advised me to get in touch with you and you would send me the necessary paper work to become a member of the Liberator Division.

Mike said you would be interested in my crews A.C. and when we came up from Italy from the 449th BG to England it was 1/Lt James B. Grace. During a mission he became ill and we had another A/C take over our crew. His name is (was) James Ware of Texas. Lt. Ware had just recently returned from Sweden where he and a crew had been interned for a brief period of time. Other members of our original crew were Lt. Leonard Clark, CP; Lt. Ed Kenney, B; Lt. Bill Hanes, N; TSgt Lionel Hale, FE; SSgt. Aldo Tesconi, FE; TSgt. Enso Bighanitti, RO; TSgt. Al Esparcia and myself as gunners. Lt. Kenney was lost on a mission while flying with another crew over northern Italy and we received a Lt. Jim Cady who came aboard as Bombardier and journeyed to England with us. With the exception of Al Esparcia, who lives here in Sacramento, I haven't seen any of my crew mates since the day they were shot down over Munich. I, at the time, had been grounded with a cold.

Looking forward to hearing from you, I remain,

Joseph T. Beach
Master Sgt., USAF (Ret)

(ed: Can't think of a better time to catch a cold.)

Dear Mr. Robertie:

Enclosed is the negative of the picture of the B-24 which appeared recently in the Second Air Division Association Newsletter. I appreciate your sending it to me. I had a nice enlargement made of the picture, which now hangs in my chambers.

Is the Association keeping a collection of pictures taken on missions flown by the Second Air Division? If it is, I may have some which I would be glad to forward to you.

Thanks again for sending the negative.

William H. Williams

(ed: We are always looking for photos to copy and put in our files and one day these will repose in our Memorial Room. Photos will be copied and the originals returned in good order.)

Dear Evelyn,

Today we heard from Mr. George Chant and he said he will contact you regarding joining. Said he received the Newsletter from you.

George got busy and found another of our men! Please send a membership application to:

Mr. John J. McCartney - Flight Chief 564/389th Bomb. Grp., 1815 44th Street, Pennsauken, New Jersey 08110.

George talked to McCartney over the phone. John has retired.

Dave Altschuler went to St. Louis, Mo. on business and hunted for another man. Please send membership application to:

Mr. Aaron J. "Jimmie" Feldman 564/389th, 10367 Corbell Drive #C, Creve Coeur, Missouri 63141

Jimmie was Elliott Adcock's assistant cook. Jimmie is now recuperating from a coronary. He manages a chain of liquor stores. Altschuler phoned ten Feldmans in St. Louis before he hit the right man! Then while in St. Louis with Jimmie, Altschuler phoned Frank Jacobs in Joplin, Mo. who was on his crew and Jacobs flew to St. Louis and that evening those three men had a wonderful reunion.

Jacobs flew to St. Louis in a terrific snow storm!

Roy Jonasson (389th)

Dear Bill:

Inasmuch as your last newsletter contained a flyer on a book written by Phil Ardery of the 389th, I feel some of our members who may have ordered the book would be interested in my remarks. Such remarks are especially appropos in view of Ardery's coverage of a very important incident which occurred between the two of us — the results of which were to later become Air Force policy.

One of Ardery's shortcomings was his very evident misunderstanding of crew integrity and, as a matter of fact, it becomes clear that he never fully understood its importance. His many references to his practice of ranking the first pilot out of the left seat whenever he boarded an aircraft occur throughout his book. For my own part, I was opposed to this practice and determined this should never occur in "A" flight which I commanded.

Shortly after our arrival in the Libyan desert, the 389th was alerted to fly its first bombing mission to Maleme, Crete. The squadron briefing for the mission was conducted by Ardery. Inasmuch as my crew was the senior crew in the squadron, Ardery announced in the briefing that Walsh's crew would lead, but that he, Ardery, would fly as pilot in the left seat with Walsh as co-pilot. I was non-plussed in view of the fact that no previous discussions between us had ever broached such an eventuality. I immediately informed Ardery, with other pilots present, that I would not agree with this disruption of crew integrity, and did not feel that any Squadron C.O., Operations Officer, or group staff officer should ever rank a pilot out of his position on a combat crew. I reminded him that I had many more hours in the B-24 than he, and I did not intend to subject my crew or any other crew in my flight to his command of the aircraft. Crew integrity, in my view, was and would remain paramount.

Ardery, not I, went to the group staff to complain about the conduct of an "inferior to a superior officer." (sic) said he was promptly rebuffed by both Brookes and Wood, who informed him that Walsh was correct. 389th Group policy was made then and there, i.e. crew integrity would never be violated. To corroborate this, both Jack Wood and John Brookes are still alive and able to verify the happenings.

The 389th policy developed as a result of the Ardery-Walsh confrontation was later to become 8th Air Force policy and, in fact, is the prevailing policy of the USAF today.

Because Ardery has taken such liberties in his book, I can only honestly state that the book has been written too late by one whose memory has become somewhat blurred. In summary, the book, *Bomber Pilot*, is a disappointment and, unfortunately, has fallen far short of its expectations. In this reader's view, it has become merely an inaccurate ego trip for the author.

Sincerely,

H. Ben Walsh, Col., USAF (Ret.)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

This past Fall my wife and I were in California and I called Charles Marlatt. He and his wife came to our motel and we had a nice visit. He told me that he had been to a 2nd Air Division reunion and that there was a 2nd Air Division organization. He sent me your address and I am interested in information about it.

Ms. Cohen, are you the pretty Jewish girl who worked in Col. Simons section of Air Division inspection? Remember Lt. Sanders? That's me. I still correspond with a few of the fellows I knew then, but have lost contact with most . . . I will appreciate any information about the 2nd Division.

Many thanks,

John L. Sanders

(ed: Yup. She's the same pretty Jewish girl. Hasn't changed a bit!)

Dear Sir:

Having recently read in our local paper of the intended visit of servicemen who served locally to visit the area, prompted me to write to you.

I worked with the 93rd Bomb Group at Hardwick airfield, first with the American Red Cross and later in the P.X., and over the years I have often wondered what has happened to all those gallant young men we grew to love and respect.

Sadly we are all past middle age, but looking at old photographs and mementoes of those days it brings back memories that I feel proud to have shared with those gallant young men. We lived so close to death and danger but we lived our lives to the full, and the happier memories will live with me forever.

The camp site is now desolate as many of you will know, but I still find myself spending an odd hour or so wandering around with the ghosts of the past on a summer afternoon, and though one can still see the light aircraft used for crop spraying it's the mighty giants of the past (the Liberators) that one is really looking for. It's like taking a step into the past to visit the old place, but I find it a pleasant experience to be alone with my memories of those far off days.

We knew so many of the boys and they used to visit my parents farm at nearby Pulham. Those I should most like to know about are Al Forestieri from Delaware, Conrad Sandish from Pittsburg and Don Tweed who worked in the P.X. with us.

I should like to hear from anyone who is anxious to write and renew old acquaintances, also good luck on your intended trip to Norfolk.

Anne Ingham (nee Blake)
The Street
Starston, Harlston
Norfolk, England

Dear Evelyn:

I am sending a check for \$12.00 for my membership dues for 1978. Please check and see if I owe any more. If so, please let me know. I know I am late with my dues, as I had forgotten to send it. There's just not enough time in a day to do everything I want to do. I am glad you are doing a good job of everything you set out to do. I enjoy reading the News Letter every month and hearing from Donald J. Olds and some of the others. Will have to close as I have a few things to do yet.

Gadd N. Norwood, Jr.

(ed: Newsletter every month? Never!)

Dear Bill:

Now for something completely different. I have received, via Tom Allen, a nice batch of B-24 photos of A/C that force landed, or crashed, in Switzerland. Among them are several 44th BG machines. I have dates and where they landed but no other info. Could anybody in the 44th tell me more about the following aircraft such as Pilot, mission etc.?

Date	force landed	Serial	Codes	Sqdn.
18 March 1944		42-100400	GJ-Y	68th
18 March 1944		42-109800	WQ-T	66th
18 March 1944		42-7618	QK-C	506th
18 March 1944		41-29431	GJ-Q	68th
18 March 1944		42-100112	WQ-Q	66th
13 April 1944		42-100330	NB-L	67th
21 July 1944		4295226	KQ-C	66th

Tony North (SM)

(ed: Sounds as if there was an important picnic in Switzerland on 18 March 1944 and everybody wanted to attend. Maybe some of the crews are members and can help.)

Dear Evelyn:

We are in the process of buying a new home in Florida. I thought I should tell you that I have given your address to a person who served in the 458th and who was in the Real Estate office in Florida to witness some papers for us. Keith and he got to talking about airplanes and come to find out he still has your old address in Norwich, England. You will be hearing from him.

Violet Farmer

(ed: Your old address in Norwich, England Evelyn? Details please!)

Dear Evelyn,

I do appreciate the news letter and of course look forward to any news from those who were in same group as I was, the 448th. I was one of the original personnel and flew over with the 713 Sq. in Nov. 1943 and finished 30 missions as engineer gunner.

Through the association I have corresponded with P. B. Thompson of L.A. who was the pilot of my first few missions, and Harry K. Bonfield a gunner on another crew I was with. And of course there is Joe Michalczyk who was on P.B.'s crew and was responsible for my hearing of the organization.

I'm sending with my year's dues 3.00 dollars for a 2nd Air Division shoulder patch if still available. If not just put the money anywhere you wish.

Thanks to everyone having a part in the success of the 2nd Air Division Association.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Hale

Dear Evelyn,

Just a short note to thank you very much for the '77 Roster and decals received last year and the periodic Newsletters of the 2nd AD. You and all of your cohorts are to be commended highly for doing a terrific job in perpetuating the 2nd ADA. Please contrive to keep up the good work.

Haven't been able to attend a reunion yet, but promise to attend one once it occurs in the Eastern part of the U.S.A. again.

Received a very nice letter from Dave Patterson of the 445th last year. One of these days, I'm going to get around to answering it. (Note: I'm a hell of a letter writer as you can plainly see.)

Enclosed is my check for \$6 for which please send me two of the 2nd ADA patches noted in the March '79 Newsletter.

Sincerely

Bob Conrad (445th BG)

(ed: I'm sure Dave will be glad to hear from you - If you don't hear from him first after he reads this!)

Dear Evelyn:

Please send me a 2nd ADA Blazer Patch. Payment enclosed.

I'm feeling real good these days. I retired from the Air Force in 1966 with 30 years service, worked at different jobs and loafed two years till 1973 and then got a job with the U.S. Postal Service. In June I'm retiring for good. With two retirement checks and some Social Security I think I'll be able to make it O.K. Hope so.

I'm a former right waist gunner of the 329th B.S., 93rd B.G. of the crew of the "Picadilly Filly". Was interned in Sweden from Oct. 1943 till Aug. 1944.

Hope to see you and some of the others at a convention if I can make it to one someday.

As ever,

Bill Culin

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Enclosed is a check for \$8.00 for which I hope to be enrolled in the 2nd Air Div. Association.

My qualifications are 35 missions with the 467th Bomb Group under Colonel Shower and Major Palmer from August, 1944 to March, 1945.

I became aware of this organization through Philip Day, of this city. He served concurrently with me and I have lived in Shreveport for the last 9 years but we had never met. A crew member of mine (another story) is married to an art student who takes lessons from a professional artist who is doing some work for Phil. Louis Richardson, the crew member, told me that this artist had a lot of Bomb Group material so now I am thumbing through about 5 pounds of 2nd Air Div. and 467th Bomb Group news letters.

Sorry we can't go to Norwich with you all, but I am looking forward to reading the news letters.

Yours sincerely,

Donald L. Kessler
Colonel (Ret) USAF
6230 Kathy Lane
Shreveport, La. 71105

Dear Pete: (Henry)

Just a note to let you know your letter to *The Decatur Daily* appeared in last Tuesday's edition. I hope you are successful in rounding up more members of the Second Air Division. It was through a letter similar to yours written to a Birmingham paper five years ago that brought me my first knowledge of the Second Air Division Association.

The only reunion I have been able to attend was the one in Lake Geneva. However, I will attend the one in Norwich this summer. Don Scharf, also of the 392nd, and I will travel from Atlanta leaving the evening of May 31. See you then.

Cordially yours,

Odell F. Dobson

Dear Evelyn,

Enclosed is a check for three dollars to cover the cost of the 2nd ADA Balzer Patch shown in the March 79 News Letter.

I have just recently written Earl Zimmerman in reference to the 565th Bomb Sqdn. My father was bombardier in the 389th Bomb Group. Do you have any other suggestions?

Duncan M. Gregg

(ed: You just completed the only other suggestion - writing to the Newsletter. If any of you 389th people knew Duncan's father please write.)

Dear Evelyn:

I notice it is time for dues.

My husband George F. Clark, 389BG passed away Aug. 16, 1978. I would like to continue as a member, both George and I enjoyed the News Letter very much. We attended most of the reunions in recent years and I have many happy memories of the good times and the wonderful friends we made. Also I would like to enter our son as an associate member.

Give the extra money to the memorial fund.

Mrs. Gaynell Clark

Dearest Evelyn:

Please send to me 4 Blazer Patches if you can spare them. If not just send one.

Walter D. Hardiek

P.S. I remain forever grateful for the news from the "Newsletter". Super.

Dear Bill:

I have received the latest Newsletter and enjoyed reading it immensely. Once you start reading the Newsletter it's difficult to stop. John Archer did an excellent reporting job on the King's visit to Alconbury.

I never read through an issue of the Newsletter but I think of the tremendous amount of work such a publication entails; Assembling the material, getting it organized, typing all of the articles for the printer, typing letters which are written in longhand, getting a mock up issue to the printer who fits the pieces together for each page, eliminating some articles because of space limitations, and then when the printer tells you to come down and pick up his several thousand copies hot off the press all that remains is typing mailing labels, stamping and mailing. (ed. You forgot stuffing!) When all that work has been completed you can relax in your not-to-frequently-used easy chair and start planning the next one.

The Russian trip, part 1, is one helluva story. Patterson's accounting of it was most spectacular, amazing and detailed, like he had just returned to his base. I suppose that once you have gone through an experience like that you never forget it. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Bob Coleman (93rd)

(ed: After reading your job description Bob I think I'll resign! Add to that the copying of photos members send in which should be preserved, seeing to it that they are returned to their owners via the same route they were sent to me, cataloging and filing, a ton of correspondence - I quit! Actually it's not all that bad. Ever since the membership count passed the 2000 mark (3500 now) I've had to use more and more outside help. Ask Dean. He pays the bills - when he's not wrecking cars that is! But let's be honest. Even though the job is a non-paying one I thoroughly enjoy it. I've met so many fine people as Editor, and hope to meet many more.)

Dear Ms. Cohen,

J. F. Thomas, ex-lend jockey of my airplane, and now a respected and soon retiring captain with United, and I, met by appointment at the Disneyland Hotel bar, while children climbed Magic Mountains. I'm happy to report that we successfully fought and won, WWII.

Success breeds success and we promised to re-fight it all, but in much greater detail, at the Norwich Reunion. Fred slipped your address in my pocket along with an irrevocable promise to show up, after nearly 100 years ex-battle, at the Norwich festivities.

Therefore, I wish to:

- order 1 - News letter, \$10 enclosed.
- order 1 - double room for Norwich, or environs.
- order 1 - pair of drinking boots.

Details on Norwich would be appreciated. Thank you.

W. P. O'Neill

(ed: A pair of drinking boots will be waiting for you - well oiled!)

Dear Evelyn,

I really enjoy all of the reading in the News Letter, and I think it is marvellous that some dedicated people carry the load to bring us the news and keep us informed.

I belong to the Canadian Legion, American Legion, and the V.F.W. and our News Letter is by far the best. I am enclosing a check for \$5.00 for the blazer patch. The extra \$2.00 will cover some postage charges. Sorry I will not make the reunion.

Ed. McCafferty

(ed: How come you missed the French Foreign Legion Ed?!)

Dear Bill:

A quick note for sincere appreciation for the nice plug on my Carpetbagger book, really first class, and I can find no argument with that. Also, ditto on the Newsletter itself - great job. And while it's on my feeble, the letters section in reference to the roster. That fellow has no argument either, but to the reply I say, "touche". Bust your tail for the outfit, and this is the thanks.

On the 2nd AD book, great idea, and certainly you have my permission to use any and all information in my book for the 458th. For the photos, I'll either send prints or negatives. The one planned for this year will have a few additions, but most of these are in connection with the Azon bomb project. So as you go through, just let me know how I can help.

Cheers,

George Reynolds (458th)

Dear Evelyn,

I was introduced to your organization by a chance encounter with a couple of last years' news letters. The enclosed check is for my membership - I was a pilot with the 392nd Bomb Group, 577th Squadron with my first mission falling on D. day.

Since the news letters were a year old, it occurred to me that the dues may have been increased; if not, use the remainder for any of your good causes.

Sincerely,

Roy A. Bay
10717 Sunderland Pl.
Louisville, Ky 40243

Dear Bill:

I have a friend who was given an A2 Flight jacket with "Shag Nasty" painted on the back of it. He is trying to locate the person who owned this jacket and thought that maybe the name related to an aircraft as well.

Anything you can do to help locate the rightful owner will be appreciated.

John Sutay
57th Bomb Wing Assoc.

Dear Evelyn:

Please accept this money order for my 1979 dues and also for Roy Glover. Also I'm adding an additional six dollars for friend Bill for new Roster, or whatever. I'm one of those who don't mind at all a small additional expenditure for the convenience of having a current Roster for reference.

I regret to say that as things stand I'm not going to be able to make Norwich this trip, but then I guess we can't always have what we want. In any event I'll sure be there in spirit, so take a lot of notes and photographs and give us a good, instant replay. Say hello to all my good friends for me and all the best to all our good friends in Norwich.

Jake Krause (458th)

Dear Evelyn,

Since Jonasson wrote to me about the Association, I feel like an orphan who just found his parents.

George D. Chant (389th)

(ed: Roy runs the world's best missing person bureau.)

LOOKING BACK

by

R. T. Coleman (93rd)



Eighth Air Force personnel on temporary assignment to North Africa, patronize a mobile "P.X." unit staffed with Arabs whose wares include shoes, Swiss watches and other goodies. It is rumored that the Yanks made out second best.



Come nighttime and the interior of this two hundred year old church Army building swarmed with the military. Capt. & Mrs. Buckwell, together with volunteers, assembled the tea & biscuits, fish and chips (wrapped in newspaper, "to go") before the Red Cross services were available.



Looking from the arcade towards the market place and City Hall, one beholds many of Norwich's shoppers with their ever-present shopping baskets.

Wartime civilian workers, seven abreast on bicycles, wend their weary way homeward. The red traffic light near *Mann Egerton Motors, Ltd.*, (open always) stops the bicycle brigade to allow pedestrians to cross.



This ancient narrow lane, reminiscent of medieval times, is lined with a variety of shops and business places, leads toward the famous Norwich Castle.



A Norwich "Bobbie" is surrounded by shoppers in the open market place next to Guild Hall.



Soldiers all — Sergeants and Sikhs — briefly communicate on matters of mutual interest, possibly on returning home after the cessation of hostilities, or about food, or their pay scales, or about their likes and dislikes in women. Yeah, wine and song also!



The "Princes Cafe Restaurant" offered a limited menu which was a welcome change from mess hall chow. However, the G.I. back from pass was glad to eat what the mess hall offered despite former opinions to the contrary.