

## NEWS LETTER

Vol. 17 No. 1

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

March 1979

# SHE FLIES AGAIN—WITH AN ASSIST

by Capt. David O. Miller

After more than 30 years of being towed from one parking spot to another, B-24 bomber 0141 again took to the air Saturday to the amazement of hundreds of unsuspecting people in a three state area.

Although the old "Liberator" was not flying under its own power, it was still a majestic sight to see the vintage aircraft gracing the skies over Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana. The flight came as a result of much planning and coordination to obtain the B-24 for Barksdale's Air Museum.

The principle players in Saturday's "airshow" were members of the 137th Air Transport Co. from the Topeka, Kansas, National Guard. The unit employed two giant CH-54 Skycrane helicopters to "leapfrog" the B-24 from the Tulsa International Airport to Barksdale.

The 15,000 pound load required the Skycranes to make five stops for fuel along the route. Everywhere the strange formation stopped, a curious crowd was not long in the making. One lady who lived near the Antlers, Oklahoma, airport commented, "From my kitchen window all I could see was this old looking airplane coming over the tops of the trees. I just couldn't believe my eyes!"

A dedicated group of spectators waited for the arrival which was scheduled for 3:30 p.m. However, due to a problem with the rigging, attaching the B-24 to the Skycrane cable, the formation did not arrive until after 6 in the evening. Spirits were not dampened

however, as the crowd cheered when the Skycrane gently eased the Old World War II bomber down for its last landing.

The aircraft was parked on the South ramp, and will require a considerable amount of restoration before it can be put on public display.



(ed note: Colonel Henry E. Goff advises that they have begun an authorized annex of the Air Force Museum, located at Barksdale AFB, containing displays and memorabilia, depicting the history of the Second Bomb Wing and development of strategic bombing. They will most gratefully accept donations of articles which would be maintained in accordance with Air Force Museum policy. Their major concern right now in restoring the B-24 is parts and manuals/tech orders. The airframe is in reasonable shape considering it has been parked outside for 30 years. They need a plexiglass nose and turret, top and belly turrets, side windows and a tail turret as starters. This would enable them to complete the exterior. The interior was completely gutted except for the bomb racks, so any interior items would be appreciated. If any of you have manual/tech orders please consider loaning them to the Museum, and if those of you who live in the area can offer physical help it will be greatly appreciated. For further information write to Lt. Col. Henry E. Goff, Chief Airfield Management, 2 CSG/OTM, Barksdale AFB, LA. 71110. Tel: 318-456-3484.)

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## YOU HAD YOUR JOB AND I HAD MINE

by Odell F. Dobson (392nd)

On October 15, 1978 there was an article in *Parade* magazine concerning a book by Hans Scharff who was the interrogator of downed U.S. pilots at Dulag Luft near Frankfurt. The article began with a quotation from Scharff's guestbook written by Col. Charles Stark: "You had your job and I had mine. But after that we had a damn good time." Therein lies a story.

I was the left waist gunner on Dick Rudd's crew which was shot down in "Ford's Folly" on the Hanover raid of September 11, 1944. My radio operator, Roger Clapp, and I were the only survivors. I was taken to a German Army Hospital in Giessen where I remained until the latter part of October. While there I was befriended by a German officer who offered to help me escape and keep me in his cellar in the town of Butzbach about 15 miles south. During air raids it would be necessary for me to go up into the house.

A few weeks after I was captured the German officer contacted the P.O.W. transit camp at Wetzlar to have them bring me some Red Cross parcels and shoes.

A few days later Col. Charles Stark with a couple of other officers and two German guards came into my room lugging 12 or 13 Red Cross parcels and books, including *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *The Robe*, a Red Cross suitcase and a pair of shoes.

During the visit Col. Stark, the German and myself put our heads together concerning the escape. Col. Stark was strongly opposed on the grounds that I shouldn't be walking away from a hospital, that the Frankfurt area was a so-called death area for escaping and evading P.O.W.'s and that if caught I would jeopardize the German and his family. Col. Stark's parting words were "Why walk when you can ride. The war will be over in two months".

He further advised that I should keep on bird-dogging by hobbling around on crutches in hopes that I would be kept at the hospital until the day our troops arrived. That never happened. A couple of weeks later I was sent to a prison hospital in the town of Obermasfeld and later to another P.O.W. hospital in the town of Meinengen, both located in what is now East Germany. In early December, I was sent to Stalag Luft 4, a large enlisted men's P.O.W. camp several hundred miles to the northeast.

By the middle of January 1945 columns of Belgium and Dutch prisoners began marching past our camp in front of the Russian advance, and on the night of February 4, 1945 and all day

on the 5th we could hear Russian artillery. The rumors were flying thick and fast that the Germans were going to turn us over to the advancing Russians and that our Man of Confidence was negotiating with the German Commandant to this end.

On the morning of February 6, 1945 the Germans told us to pack our belongings that we would be marching to the town of Starogard, about 125 miles to the southwest. They told us we would be walking about 10 miles per day and that trucks would follow bringing Red Cross parcels to feed us. Actually, I was looking forward to getting out from behind the barbed wire "bars". The only problem is that we didn't stop at Starogard but kept walking for 53 days at which time we were locked in box cars carrying about 80 men each.

Then began a stop and go trip of two days with no room to sit or lie down and barely enough to stand at which time we arrived at a prison camp on the outskirts of Hanover which was inhabited by French prisoners along with British paratroops captured in Holland, as well as the remnants of the American 106th Infantry Division from Luxembourg.

In less than a week we were about to be liberated again, this time by the British. Thereupon we began the second and final stage of our wanderings and this time ended up north of the Elbe River near the little town of Buchen where we were finally liberated by the British on May 2, 1945.

After I got back home I contacted the German who had befriended me and learned that one stick of bombs fell in the town of Butzbach during the war and that his house was one of those destroyed, and that his mother-in-law was killed as she came back up into the house to get her grandson's warm coat. Accordingly, it is highly probable that Col. Stark saved my life by throwing cold water on the escape since, undoubtedly, I would have been upstairs in the house when the bombs hit.

I wrote to Hans Scharff who now resides in California and he replied that Col. Stark now lives in Mexico and he has offered to forward a letter to Col. Stark for me and I have already sent him one.

Hans Scharff's book is entitled *The Interrogator* and is published by Aero Publishers, Inc. in Fallbrook, California 92028. The review in *Parade* magazine makes it sound like an interesting book and I am sure that all 2nd Air Division personnel who were interrogated by him will want to read it.



# THE AMERICAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY

## 1963-1978

W. Joan Bennis

The American Memorial Library, dedicated and opened in June 1963, has now been part of the public library service in Norwich and Norfolk for over fifteen years. My recent retirement from the post of Principal Assistant Librarian in Norwich seems a suitable time for assessing the impact which this unique memorial has had on visitors to and users of the library.

Let us think first of you, the members of the Second Air Division Association and other visitors from the U.S.A. including hundreds of relatives and friends of the 50,000 men who served and the 6,032 who lost their lives and whose memorial this is. From the personal contact which I and other members of the library staff have had with American visitors I know that you have been deeply moved by the appearance, atmosphere and contents of the Memorial Room. You have remembered with pride and sadness the men who died and have been deeply appreciative of our efforts to care for the Room so that it is a suitable repository for the Roll of Honor and the flags of the US and the Second Air Division.



But what of the users of the Memorial Library, the people of Norfolk and Norwich? For them a visit to the Memorial Room is a regular, one might almost say a routine, occurrence. The idea behind Memorial Library comes alive as they read the American newspapers and periodicals provided, consult the reference books for information (our latest addition is the US Post Office Zip code directory) or browse through and select from the hundreds of books available for loan. For them, the Memorial Library provides, as originally envisaged, "a daily influence of American thought and ideals" which

strengthens the bonds of understanding and friendship between our two nations.

The third group, for whom the Memorial Library offers material unobtainable or very difficult to obtain elsewhere, consists of readers interested in the history of the USAAF during World War II with particular reference to units stationed in East Anglia. We receive personal enquiries and letters from people throughout the UK. They may be writing books about the USAAF, they may be interested in the subject for its own sake or they may be fascinated by the old airfields with their overgrown runways, half-ruined buildings and occasional fragments of aircraft or machinery.



The Fountain with the Memorial Room behind.

We have acquired over the years, often thanks to generous authors and other donors, a number of Bomb Group histories several of which were published during or immediately after the war. These are among the most treasured possessions of the Memorial Library and we are equally careful to preserve for posterity current publications such as Roger Freeman's *Airfields of the Eighth*, Robert Vickers' *The Liberators from Wendling* and Marvin Barnes' *452nd Bombardment group*. A collection of wartime photographs is gradually being built up, mainly by donation. Researchers find this collection both interesting and useful especially when the photographs are identified, dated and captioned by the donors.

And lastly, what has the American Memorial Library meant to me personally? It has meant that what began as contacts with members and officers of the Second Air Division Association became friendships: it has given me the opportunity of meeting you and your countrymen frequently throughout the year: it has given me a closer understanding of your nation and your problems, often not so very different from our own.

The American Memorial Room is a

## END OF AN ERA

Sixteen years ago Miss Joan Bennis came to Norwich much as we Americans did 17 years earlier — unknown, unheralded and maybe a bit frightened by the new surroundings. This feeling did not last for very long.

Plunging into her new duties as a librarian at the Norwich Central Library she quickly took to heart the American Memorial Room. From that time on she can accurately be described as guide, philosopher and friend to the many Americans of the 2nd Air Division who visited the Memorial Room, and God pity the person who messed it up in any way.

On November 11, 1978 after 40 years as a librarian, Joan packed it in and retired.



Standing left to right, Mrs. Michael Barne, Roger Freeman, Tom Eaton, Nick Walter, Paul King, Richard Gurney and the star of the show Joan Bennis. Sitting: Lady Mayhew.

At her retirement party members of the Board of Governors, shown above, presented her with a book on the pattern of English building, a subject close to Joan's heart.

Although retired, Joan intends to remain active as a member of the Norwich Society and the friends of the Norwich Churches. Also, we hope, a frequent contributor to our Newsletter.

I know all of you feel as I do, that we can never thank Joan Bennis enough for her work in the Memorial Room and for the undivided attention she gave all of us when we visited the library. A cup of tea was a must. She will be sorely missed, but she will remain our friend for life.

Thank you Joan for making our lives a bit more pleasant.

William G. Robertie

place where the middle-aged and elderly still remember and the young wonder at the stoicism, courage and dedication of all the men of the Second Air Division who served here. I am proud to be an Honorary Member of your Association, I thank you for your friendship in the past and I look forward to the successful continuance of the American Memorial Library in the years to come.

# RUSSIAN EXCURSION — WORLD WAR II STYLE

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

## PART I

15 March 1945: The official USAAF records state: "37 squadrons (372 B-24s, 2nd Air Division) sortied against Zossen Army HQ (Nr Berlin). — Losses: Nil. — 4 B-24s believed safe on the Continent".

This is the story of one of those four B-24s "believed safe on the Continent".

At the 4 AM briefing at Tibenham (base of the 445th BG,) Charlie Cooper (our Flight Engineer) recalls being told that today's target was the main Nazi Armed Forces Headquarters, and that our raid could result in a devastating blow to the enemy. Hitler had been there within the last few days; if we were lucky he might be there today. Most of the HQ was underground; our mission was to destroy the surface installations and set fire to everything. He remembers too that we were briefed that the Russians had advanced well into Poland; that if we had trouble over the target area we should continue on into Russian held territory (estimated to be within an hour's flight from Zossen), rather than try to fly all the way back across Germany (several hours over enemy territory). For this purpose, each crew member was issued an arm band, showing on one side in bright colors the U.S. Flag, along with words in Russian denoting that the bearer was an American Ally, and to please contact the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, or other U.S. officials, regarding us.

Meanwhile, at the separate briefing held for the Navigators, Ken Branson, our navigator, was given the map coordinates (Latitude & Longitude) of several newly captured landing strips in Poland for emergency use. No maps were available, however, past the Berlin area.

After briefing, we assembled at our assigned plane, only to find on preflight run-up that the #1 engine was malfunctioning. Dick Nason (waist gunner) had misgivings and a sinking feeling in his stomach as we were assigned another plane just before taxi out time. He had heard the superstition about bad luck riding with you if you had a plane change at the last minute, like this.

It was a beautiful, clear day over England and the Continent — a real rarity! This made forming up and departing toward Germany a piece of cake — a nicely organized, by-the-book bomber stream, moving out from Eng-

land, through the "American Highway" over Holland, and onward. Flak was light; no enemy fighters nearby; beautiful P-51 escort, as we penetrated deeper and deeper into Germany.

Then, a call on the intercom from Ken: "Claud (Claud Palmer, our pilot), according to my map our section of the Bomber Stream is drifting off course to the left, and Hanover is dead ahead, a few minutes away!"

It was an exceptionally clear day; how those Hanover AA gunners missed the Group ahead of us as they opened fire a moment later is a mystery. "Stay in the Bomber Stream! Keep radio silence!" was the law, so we ploughed steadily ahead at 22,000' directly over their AA gun batteries.

Of the four bursts nearest us (the ground gunners were aiming more carefully now!) Dick Nason, who had the "best seat in the house" (as they blew right outside his window) says in retrospect that the real close one, that rocked the ship violently and filled it full of smoke, must have been a partial dud, because on previous missions he had seen complete destruction to other ships subjected to bursts no closer than this one. It appears that by this late date in the War, neither the Nazi gunners, nor their ammo was first class, for which in retrospect we give thanks!

Now, we instantly became very busy. Claud issued the orders: First, anyone hurt? Answers came back: all OK. Next, check for damage. Bob Honeycutt (tail gunner) called in: half the upper left rudder was missing. Charlie spotted smoke from all engines, #1 was worst, with what looked like a gas leak, in addition to black smoke. Ken said he was OK, but his map table had been shattered by a burst. (Fortunately at that moment he happened to be looking out the window). Lots of holes all up and down the plane made for a very cold windy interior for everyone. But the plane continued to fly; the engines continued to function, and we held our altitude and remained in the bomber stream.

It was a long way to Zossen this way; but by nursing the ship along the bombs were dropped on target; Bob from his tail position reported that the target was blanketed and well hit; then we turned with the bomber stream and headed home.

About then, #1 engine decided to quit. The other engines were vibrating and smoking, and showing definite signs of discouragement. Charlie made a fuel check and estimate; Ken plotted our ETA to England. From these data Claud suggested to all of us that we'd never make it out of Germany this way, and we would be fair game for some Luftwaffe hotshot to earn himself an Iron Cross; how did we feel about turning around and heading for Russia? We all replied yes: it was clearly the only answer. Not only were we too short on fuel, and also would be a sitting duck — but because of the condition this plane was in, the thing might fall apart anytime. So, 15 minutes toward home from Zossen, we made a 180 and took up a heading toward Poland. "Dave, call the fighters and get some cover". Dave Patterson, co-pilot, got on the fighter channel, and got an instant reply that they would be right over. Of course, we never saw them. Later it dawned on us that Zossen was as deep as they could go with their fuel limitation; they couldn't follow us toward Poland. But they were wise enough to fake it, and tell the world (including the Nazis) that we were being covered. Our "Little Brothers" did the best thing they could do to help us — bless 'em!

Ken had no maps past the Oder River (near Berlin), but from the coordinates given him at briefing, he picked the nearest strip inside the Russian lines, plotted it by using blank paper to extend his map, and gave us a course and ETA. To his great credit as a superb navigator, we arrived directly over the strip (with only one interim correction in heading he gave us en-route) at precisely his ETA (the flight was well over an hour in duration), so that Scotty (Carlton Scott, nose gunner) spotted it immediately from his vantage point in the nose, even though it was way, way down below us (we were still at above 15,000' altitude). While we circled (gingerly but rapidly) down, Ed Vaughan (our radio operator) got on his radio to call home base to let them back in England know we had cleared enemy territory, and where we were going to land. However, no matter how hard he tried, he could raise no one.

As we circled down, we saw fighters taking off from the dirt field we were aimed at. At lower altitude they joined us, first by making threatening passes



by us (they were Russian Yaks, complete with red star insignia), then by flying level with us, looking us over. Claud told everyone to leave their guns in the down position and "don't make any threatening moves!!". Charlie got out the red flares (Red-Russia was his reasoning!) and shot them off in a constant stream until he ran out of them. Everyone donned chutes and opened the hatches, ready to jump if the Yaks started shooting us down (rumors had it that this sometimes happened).

The land in this part of Poland was flat farm land with scattered farm dwellings dotting the landscape. The earth was dry and there was no snow or standing water on the ground. The field we picked was a few miles from the front lines. It was obviously a farm field converted to flying use: dirt strip down the middle; a couple of buildings on one side; a couple of parked planes. According to the data we had, the strip was 1400' long. As the 3 engines were still operating even though at much reduced power, we chose to make a wheels-down landing, with both pilots peering out the side cockpit windows for visual guidance, as our quick let-down had iced up the windshield. With emergency brakes (we lost our regular brakes with the damage to the #3 engine) and lots of prayer, we slid to a stop with the nose just touching the ditch at the far end. I asked Claud recently how he figured he could get a B-24 into a field as short as 1400'. His reply: "To tell you the truth, I never thought about lengths of runways in those days. I always assumed that they were all long enough to land on and take off of, because that's what the Army AF told me!"

As we slid to a stop, we were surrounded by a group of Russian soldiers, uniformed in rather ragged attire, but with very shiny, businesslike, unragged-looking rifles and sub-machine guns held at the ready. Claud stuck his head out of the top hatch, pointed to his U.S. Flag arm band, and shouted as convincingly as he could "Ya Americanets" as per the instructions on the armband. Then we all slowly climbed out of the plane, displaying our armbands, and trying to look friendly and like Allies, not enemy. The Russians showed no signs of recognition, but held us at gun point (we found out later that this field had been in German hands only a few days before; that these Russians were front line troops who had never seen Americans before, and were of course very suspicious). The Russians produced from their ranks a young officer, who supposedly spoke English. This attempt failed to establish communications, because, to his embarrassment, when put on the spot to talk, it was obvious his English, what there

was of it, was learned poorly in school. "Hello"; "Goodbye", — that was about the extent of his speaking vocabulary. (Looking back on my school days with foreign language classes, I can now sympathize with him, because we never got practical learning in those days in the spoken language either. He, like I, could probably conjugate verbs, and spell or count to ten like a pro — but talk in everyday language — no way!)

Finally a higher ranking Russian officer showed up, took a look at our armband verbiage, understood the Russian message, and in very broken English, with the help of our Russian "student", asked us our unit, home base, mission, etc. By now, we too were on our guard, so name, rank, and serial number was our answer. Our hosts didn't like that limitation one bit, but we saw the opportunity now to use the language barrier to our advantage, so double-talked our way around and around, feigning confusion and "no understand", — so after ten minutes of this frustrating interrogation, they gave up on this tack. Next, they wanted to know who were the officers, and who were enlisted men. We had heard that the Russians had a big class distinction between the two — treating enlisted personnel poorly in their own ranks, so here again we used the double talk and "no understand" to convey that we were all the same — all officers. When it got sticky, Claud became "Captain" to show some chain of authority. Again, they finally gave up and accepted our position. (As soon as we could, we shared the gold bars and/or officer hats so that we all had a semblance of uniform rank).

As we were ushered across the field to one of the two buildings on the field, we noted signs of recent ground action all about: occasional not-too-distant rifle fire; piles of German clothing, helmets, and battle gear; shallow graves (some with horses' hoofs protruding above the surface); bomb craters here and there; and along the perimeter, POW and civilian work crews repairing roads, etc. These work crews were typically guarded by Russian armed guards, carrying machine guns and riding in small horse-drawn wagons. We were all housed in the "hospital" — a one story barracks-like old wooden building (probably a converted farm barn partitioned into several rooms, with one room containing a bathtub and wash basin. There was no inside plumbing — water was brought in by bucket for use. Much to the embarrassment of all of us, we found out all too soon that the toilets were housed in a separate building, were set in open rows in a single room, and were "co-ed". We devised many ways

of handling this communal type situation; from a lightning-fast trip in and out when the building was finally empty, to groping in the dark, slinking in and out, hoping to be unnoticed!

In the "hospital" we met the hospital staff that were to take care of us: the Russian Doctor, and his nurse. (Funny, 33 years later as I write this, all the crew members I have contacted for this story remember vividly the nurse and the nurse's name, "Tanya" — but none of us can recall the Doc's name!) Tanya, a short, stocky girl, was about as broad as she was tall. She was very friendly and cheery, and had a big gold tooth which glistened when she smiled. But was she stocky and strong! Dick Nason recalls "I weighed 180 at the time. One time, kidding me, she walked over and picked me up like I was a feather! She could have picked up the whole building with no strain!" Anyhow, she and the "Doc" were the complete hospital staff, and we never saw more than two or three wounded Russians under care in the hospital during the time we were there. In fact, medical attention seemed to take a back seat to conviviality. The Doctor sang songs while he worked; Tanya, who was also the unit dentist, scurried about doing her chores, and we were accepted as friends, but always with suspicion, and we were always under surveillance. We were allowed to walk around the building and outside area within limits; but an armed guard was always somewhere nearby, watching over us.

There were a couple of wounded Russian flyers in the hospital when we first arrived; there also was a U.S. flyer there. The U.S. flyer was the only survivor on his bomber crew; he was obviously in a condition of shock the whole time we were there. As with us, the Russians weren't sure of his identity, but in his case recognized that he was harmless in his condition, so he was allowed the same freedom we had. His main interest in life was Vodka, and he spent most of his time trying to beg drinks of Vodka from the Russians.

A high point in our lives occurred when by chance Art Fetskos (our armorer-waist gunner) and the Doc discovered that they both understood and could speak a minimal amount of German. Now, we had finally established a usable intercommunication! Through this contact, we made it known again very strongly that we wanted the U.S. authorities to be informed of our whereabouts, and wanted immediate arrangements to be made to deliver us to a U.S. base in Russia (shuttle bases in Russia, operated by the USAAF, had been in existence for some time). The Doctor assured us that our wishes would be carried out. (to be continued)

# CASUALTY

## THE LOSS OF LT. EVAN L. McCLUNG OVER KARLSRUHE

by Ed Hohman



September 8, 1944, is a date I'll never forget. On that morning at an Eighth Air Force Bomber Base located in North Pickenham, I was getting ready for my

seventh mission as a radio operator on a B-24 crew.

The early morning briefing had informed us that our target was to be Karlsruhe, Germany. We were to bomb rail centers and marshalling yards in the continuing drive to cripple German supply lines.

Nothing about this morning's procedures and pre-mission activities gave any indication that the mission would be unusual in any way. We were, at this time, among the lucky crews who had not yet seen enemy fighters. We knew, of course, that even at this relatively late date when they DID show up it would be in full strength!

We had developed a healthy respect for flak, but here again, we had yet to see just what it could do at close range. Later this same day, we were to be introduced to this deadly menace in a close encounter of the worst kind.

Our pilot, Lt. Evan L. McClung, was an Oklahoman... a rather quiet guy for the most part. While he always tried to put me at ease, I somehow never could put aside the respect I had for him and the other fellows who piloted those big birds in combat. To me, he was always "Lt. McClung" or "Sir".

Lieutenant McClung was concerned about his crew and their safety. Before we climbed into the plane I can remember him telling us to delay opening our chutes if we had to bail out, since we would be flying in the high element and there would be planes beneath us. We didn't have to bail out, but the flak over Karlsruhe was intense and accurate... much too accurate!

I'm sure I wasn't the only combat crew member who never had any real interest in flying. It was a job I had to do for my country in time of war. Yet, looking back, there was something about a combat mission that made you function well in the air. I often think it was the fact that everything was so well organized. Psychologically, the briefing, the fact that you flew as a team, the flak suits, parachutes, air-sea rescue possibilities... all seemed to

help make it more bearable. Our mission to Karlsruhe, however, introduced us to something we just hadn't anticipated.

As we neared the bomb run, I began my usual routine chores of getting the flak suits out and seeing that the pilot, co-pilot and engineer were well protected. The metal helmets came out also as we anticipated the "fireworks" that were sure to come. I recall that the process of getting our engineer, Byron R. Jones, into the top-turret (and KEEPING him there) was quite a problem. Somehow, the seat just wouldn't stay latched, at least on the plane we flew many of our missions on, and I'd no sooner try to get back to putting MY OWN flak suit on when I'd get a heavy flight boot in my side! Jones would be letting me know the latch wasn't holding again. It got to be frustrating... but soon all hell would break loose with flak bursting all around leaving little time or inclination to worry about anything but just surviving the bomb run.

When the bomb-bay doors were opened I took my position in the well below the flight deck. It was a good view if you cared for that sort of thing... Looking down over Germany from 27,000 feet and watching the black puffs of smoke appear. I don't ever recall kicking or pushing any bombs out, but I do remember that it was one of my duties if the occasion arose. I can remember standing there by those open bomb-bay doors waiting for the worst to happen. On this mission it did.

A shell burst right in front of our plane. Pieces of the windshield splattered all over the flight deck. I climbed up between the pilot and co-pilot and could see that the pilot had been hit. My first thought was to get out the morphine, but as I took a second look I realized there was no need to ease his pain. Lieutenant McClung was dead... flak had opened up his helmet like a tin can.

It's hard to remember the exact sequence of events, but Jones came down from the top turret and Lt. Cal Shahbaz, our bombardier-navigator, came up from the nose to assist in removing the pilot from the cockpit. It was an awful experience. Our pilot lay dead on the flight deck to my left as I took my seat at the radio on the right side behind the co-pilot.

There were some problems transferring fuel, and I believe a little trouble

with one of the engines. Shahbaz stood between Jones (who had taken the pilot's position) and our Co-pilot, Lt. Valentine Vascik. Shahbaz's presence did a lot to restore a feeling of confidence and his later efforts brought us over an airfield in France. While we didn't see any enemy fighters, there was always that additional worry at a time like this. A bomber out of formation is a prime target for enemy fighters. It's the old story of not being safe 'til you're back on the ground!



Top Left: Lt. Vascik, Right: Lt. Shahbaz  
Bottom left: T/Sgt. Hohman, Right: T/Sgt. Jones.

We survived our seventh mission, thanks to the skill of our co-pilot, Lt. Vascik, and an *on the ball* engineer and bombardier-navigator. Lieutenant Shahbaz, who went on to become Colonel Shahbaz, stood behind Vascik as he landed the plane. His close association with the co-pilot, and his words of encouragement in a time of crisis, gave Vascik whatever "psychological assistance" he may have needed at that critical time.

Not many combat crews lose their pilots. Oddly enough, the records and the history of the 491st Bomb Group make no mention of the loss of Lt. McClung. When we lost our pilot over Karlsruhe we felt as though our time had come too, but we flew twenty more missions after this one. I've forgotten the details of most of them, but our "casualty over Karlsruhe", will never be forgotten.

### NOTICE

For those of you who are still looking for a copy of "The Mighty Eighth" by Roger Freeman try AIRFARE BOOKS, P.O. BOX 29602, ATLANTA, GEORGIA. Dave Mayor advises that they still have some copies. Price is unknown.



# CARPETBAGGERS

by Frank Townsend (492nd & 801st)

The 801st Provisional Group (Heavy) later redesignated the 492nd Bomb Group was perhaps the most unique and secret organization in the 8th Air Force. Even today if you mention the 8th Air Force, the initial reaction is mass flights of B-17 and B-24 bombers being escorted and protected by fighter planes. Many old time 8th Air Force members have little or no knowledge that there was a night flying heavy bomber group that did everything but bomb.

Crews assigned to this group consisted of 4 officers, (pilot, co-pilot, bombardier and navigator) and 4 airmen, (radio operator, engineer-top gunner, tail gunner and drop-master). Unlike normal bomb crews flying en-masse to one target, each crew of the Carpetbaggers was given a target. How they got there and back was strictly a crew decision. In other words strictly an individual crew effort.

Using the intelligence reports, the course to the target was plotted to avoid known anti-aircraft areas and enemy airfields. All course legs over enemy areas was limited to 30 nautical miles to prevent enemy night fighters from following, lining up and shooting down the plane. Forecast weather reports determined the altitude flown (usually 2,000-5,000 feet). Along with the wind direction and velocity the crew could determine the total expected flight time. Take off from the base was calculated so that the plane would cross the enemy coastline in full darkness.

Airplanes — take any model of the B-24, remove the waist guns; remove the nose turret if it has one and replace it with a greenhouse type of construction (so the bombardier can see the ground better for target or pilotage check point); remove the ball turret if it has one and cover the resulting hole with a folding board arrangement so large packages and 'SOE Joes' can be dropped through when necessary; add flame arresters or dampers on the engine exhaust so the exhaust cannot be seen at night; then paint the resulting plane a dull non-reflecting black and you have a "carpetbagger".

Experience — On or about 1 Sept. 1944, a couple C-47 aircraft were flown into Harrington (home of the Carpetbaggers) and at least one crew from each squadron was created to fly same. The 859th crew consisted of the operations officer Capt. Seccafico and Lt. Goldsmith, as pilots, a radio operator, an engineer and myself as navigator. After a few hours of familiarization

flights over England we were considered combat ready in a C-47.

On Sept. 5, 1944, our crew and another were assigned a mission in which we were to land behind the enemy lines SE of Paris. When we boarded the plane we noticed the cargo was in wooden boxes, tied down and bearing the words Mortars, Mortar Shells and Mortar Fuses; some cargo! Also in the corner were 2 Thompson sub-machine guns which we found out was the armament for our flight.

The other plane took off before us and the flight was uneventful until the target was reached. In the target area identification signals were given and the approach was made. Putting the landing lights on on the final, we noted that the field was grass and the other plane was off to the right in a plowed field. After landing we found out that the first plane had landed but while taxiing had gone up on its nose damaging the propellers. Our cargo was quickly unloaded by the underground into waiting trucks. At the same time the other plane was being camouflaged. Leaving the other plane and crew there we returned to our base. A repair crew was flown over the following night, replaced the propellers and the plane was flown out. During the entire period the enemy was kept away and was evidently unaware of what was happening.

On Sept. 9th, a 4 plane mission was assigned to the Assen, Groningen, Zwolle area of the Netherlands. Our crew elected to go across the North Sea, around the NW corner of the Netherlands and then east and south to the target. This area of the Netherlands contained some of the best enemy radar and gun defenses at this time. Forecast weather indicated a frontal system moving into the North Sea that should effect the flight back to base. To avoid detection we flew 50-100 feet above the North Sea but due to a misunderstanding the best 'GEE' stations were shut down as no flights were expected due to weather.

Using what we had available, but affected by the frontal system which arrived earlier than expected, we made landfall too close to the NW tip of the Netherlands. The enemy 88's let us know that we were not welcome but they missed by 100 yards.

Going east and up to 1000 feet we could see coastal checkpoints and proceeded to the target area. We never did locate the ground signals and after 30 minutes in the area decided to go home without dropping our cargo. In spite of all our arguments the post briefing officer stated that we had not gone to the target area as the other 3 planes claimed they had dropped on target. As a result we received no credit for the mission.

# REFLECTIONS

by Jacob T. Elias (44 BG)

Now and then I hear a song which sends me to a quiet (comparatively quiet, that is) spot in London. Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were very intrigued by the Unconscious. Reading their essays I begin to wonder more and more at the intricacies of the mind and how it works. Why does a song send you somewhere you haven't been in years, conjure up a scene of your youth? Why does a picture, a word, a scent, a melody open the door to a roomful of dusty memories? The psychologists claim the unconscious is the greatest part of man's mind. In their work with patients, Freud, Jung and their disciples had them dredge up memories, relate their dreams, and in talking of them the scenes long dormant arose and stirred up weaker memories that arose and repeated the process.

I think of my Unconscious as my memory bank in the mind-computer. A push of the right buttons brings to focus a memory, sometimes fuzzy, sometimes bright, sometimes in between. The buttons are pushed by many things. Some buttons are very seldom pushed, and what a surprise when one of them is activated by a scene, or a scent, a phrase, or a song.

The song came over one of our easy-listenin' radio stations in this area. "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square." Suddenly I was sitting on a cold bench under the half-denuded trees in London's Berkeley Square. I had heard the song often in 1943 and 1944 on the American Forces Network, so when in one of my leisurely walks through London I came upon this romantic square I looked around expecting to see the nightingales flitting around and singing to rapturous lovers. Remember that I was young and very naive then and took the song literally.

No nightingales were in sight. Most of the birds I saw were shabby looking sparrows, dully draped grackles and beggarly pigeons. Very disappointing. For an hour I sat and waited, until the cold drove me to the cozy shelter of a cafe and a warming cup of tea. Then it came to me that the nightingale was a nocturnal bird. So I returned to Berkeley Square after dark and waited again. No nightingales. The cold and the rain dripping from the sad trees finally drove me to more congenial surroundings. I heard the nightingale a decade or so later, but not in the inhospitable climate of Berkeley Square. I'd be waiting there yet and never hear it. How ignorant we were then! At least I was. (Secret: I'm not too smart now).

# NEWS FROM THE 44th's FLYING EIGHTBALLS

by Pete Henry

In the December 2ADA News Letter, this column, Bill Robertie printed a letter from Oliver O. Kalke who was with the 44th B.G. Base Technical Information Office at Shipdham. As a result of this, I received the following letter from my former crew chief, and while it does pertain to my own aircraft the story it presents could apply to all 44th crews, ground and combat.

"Dear Captain Henry:

Congratulations on your election to V.P. Received your letter — lost it — and found it again. Will answer in detail soon. Just finished reading your article in recent News letter and:

The Inspector never bothered us that I know of. The Staff Officer, or Operations Officer, who put the combat crews on one ship and kept them there deserves a medal. Before that was done, it was hectic.

As you know, ground maintenance and combat crews lived in different worlds, but as the missions went on a great amount of respect, pride in crew plus ship and fondness also grew. Some pictured the maintenance men as heading for the Red Cross club after the mission was under way, for a jolly time. B.S. Perhaps catnap a little because it may be a long night, but mostly it was sweating it out from the word go. Walking, eating or anything,

their thoughts were with that crew and plane.

Nothing was more pathetic and sadening than to see mechanics waiting by an empty dispersal stand when the others returned. Emotions improved when word came that a plane had ditched in the channel and the men were rescued, or that they had made it to the coast and parachuted out, but we never knew and that made it bad.

Back to the inspector who wrote to you. K+ 279, as you know, had the only electrical leading edge wings instead of rubber deice boots. The only thing he could have pinned on us was theft! We moonlighted and requisitioned about half of the old gas masks lens cleaner in the squadron to keep that leading edge shining, thinking that it might add a few mph. I could always pick you up before you started your final approach with that shining wing edge.

As for the crew chiefs on a combat mission, I don't believe that there were any crew chiefs in our group who did not know that 10 men and a ship depended on his judgement. True, the maintenance was not stateside where a plane could be pulled into a hanger for three days. On the line it was done mostly at night. Corners were cut, sure, not out of laziness or indifference, but because the top brass wanted that ship in the air as soon as possible

I know. In the Second Air Division, and the 44th, any one of them who did not care was weeded out. Before the war some of them did not know a wrench from a fiddle, but on the line of combat aircraft they knew when they initiated the flight form that the lives of 10 men were in their hands.

I've bummed around and lost all my K+ 279 photographs, Captain, but if you go out to Shipdham I'd sure appreciate it if you would take some Polaroids of the air dispersal stand, the one you finished your missions on. If memory serves me right it is around the perimeter from the control tower to the left. There was a Nisson hut near it and an English residence behind it. It is nearly to the far bend in the perimeter.

Thanks so much for your efforts in behalf of the Second Air Division Association. I recently signed up a member of the 392nd. He flew 32 missions and manages the airport here. If there is any information I can help with don't hesitate to ask. I believe I can make a good painting of K+ from memory. If I do I'll send it to you. Tell your inspector you knew K+ was o.k. because I would have heard it from you if it wasn't. Have a Happy Holiday Season.

Your crew chief, and proud of it,  
Felix Dunagan"

## JUST "FACTS" DON'T TELL THE STORY

by Charlie Freudenthal (489th)

I've spent a lot of time this week looking at photos of Halesworth, while I tried to put this piece together. The pictures seem to help to bring the printed and scribbled records that I have into clearer focus. Though the 489th's stay in England was short when compared with some of the others, there was packed into that time the hopes, fears, tears, laughter, anger, frustration, etc., of several thousand men. But records are flat, and they don't tell about this.

Actually, a great deal of the history, both official and personal, that I'm able to put together is totally new to most of us. I guess that everybody tended to live in his own little circle. Squadrons kept together, and within the squadrons the aircrews, ordnance, armament, photo, maintenance, medics, admin types and others all mixed for the most part with their own.

For instance; the 489th lost 52 men KIA and had at least 47 known to be POWs. Who remembers them? I can list most of those who were killed start-



Waiting for the PX to open at Halesworth, 489th BG. Summer 1944.

ing with the first combat casualty, Lt. Joseph Garber of the 847th, navigator on Ray Blanchard's crew. It was our first mission too — Oldenburg on May 30th. But maybe that isn't true because on the same mission we lost Lt. Edwin Clark and crew of the 846th. They were last seen going down near Heligoland and my records don't show anything any more than that. Just a few words, but eleven lives. And on July 7th I have a note that S/Sgt. Michael Pallotto of the 844th shot down the first enemy aircraft, either an ME109 or an FW190. The note doesn't say, and I don't remember. There must have been a lot of celebrating in the barracks that night! As a matter of fact, I can't find

Pallotto's name listed on any crew, but I've heard it was Lt. McMullen's. Who can recall? The mission was to a JU88 factory at Aschersleben.

In our time at Halesworth the 489th dropped 7,056 tons of bombs, and 3000 sortie credits were given. Translate that into man hours of bombs loaded, guns armed, aircraft made ready to fly "one more time", briefing folders made, powdered eggs and milk and other C rations consumed, and miles walked, bicycled, and trucked through black, cold and often wet nights and days. Add in the PASS TO LONDON — forty-eight hours in taxis, Picadilly Circus, the Red Cross Club, buzz bombs overhead, looking out for the Snowdrops, English beer when the Medical whiskey ran out, Monty in the newsreels, no sleep, and six hours on the train from Liverpool St. station to Halesworth, home of "The best G-D Group in the Air Force," by order of Colonel Napier, in Special Order #1, dated 17 January 1944. (Copies available on request). All the experiences were different, and yet they were all the same. Write yours down — today, and send to me!





## IMPROMPTU BOWLING ALLEY

by  
Delmar Wangsvick, 453rd

December 29, 1944: On this date I flew as Crew Navigator in Aircraft #681 with Lt. Walter Cullen as Pilot, to whose crew I had now been assigned for several weeks. (We had flown many practice missions as a crew in the preceding six weeks or so.) Our target was the bridge at Remagen, near Neuwied, Germany.

Immediately after takeoff we had trouble in getting number 1 and number 2 engines up to full power and were unable to continue our climb. We decided to abort and advised the "Old Buck" tower of our intentions. Fog had drifted in, however, and we were directed to go to the emergency base at Woodbridge, near the "white cliffs of Dover". The emergency runway at Woodbridge was reputed to be easy to find as it was one mile wide and three miles long.

However, we were still unable to climb so we "hedge-hopped" all the way to Woodbridge. We had planned to head a short ways out to sea and salvo our bombs — to lighten our weight and reduce the hazard. We were now losing some of the little altitude we had, however, and concluded that we could not risk over-shooting Woodbridge to get rid of our bombs — so we kept them.

To make matters worse, Woodbridge was now fogged in. They had recently installed a fog-dispersal device around portions of the perimeter of their huge runway. It consisted of steel pipe, mounted horizontally above the ground, with a line of tiny holes along the upper surface. 100 Octane gasoline was pumped thru this pipe, and that escap-

ing from the tiny holes on top was ignited. This system was in operation but had not been running long enough to clear the fog. We still could not see the ground — only tongues of fire and clouds of black smoke rising thru the fog. We were descending whether we wanted to or not, our only guide being a row of fire and smoke which we flew right into.

When we broke out of the fog at about 100 feet of altitude, we found that we were straddling the left hand edge of the mile-wide runway. There was no possibility of a turn to the right as engines #1 and #2 were providing very little pull and we had to keep engines #3 and #4 at high power in an effort to stay airborne a few seconds longer. Lt. Cullen and Lt. Jack Dean, co-pilot, were doing their ineffective best with right rudder. The result was that we touched down while still straddling the edge of the runway, marked by a row of gray columns about three feet high — which looked like concrete but fortunately turned out to be empty oil drums.

A number of British personnel standing nearby watched us descend but ran for their lives as we bowled over the row of oil drums. After a few hundred yards of this our pilots managed to slow down our aircraft. However, at the same time, their efforts to keep the plane headed in the direction of travel were overcome by its tendency to turn to the left ("into" the uncooperative engines, #1 and #2); the plane turned 90 degrees to the left and slid sideways — in the direction of the right wing.

Then the right main tire caught enough traction to stop, the momentum lifted the left main wheel into the air until the right wing tip hit the ground. With momentum now dissipated, the left main wheel bounced back onto the ground. With engines quickly "cut" our crew exited the aircraft in a split second, and we ran like jackrabbits in all directions. Remarkably, there was no fire nor explosion.

As we paused and looked back from a safer distance, we watched the "recently running" British troops cautiously approach our plane and look inside. When they saw ten 500-pound bombs still hanging in the bomb racks, they ran faster than they had the first time.

Our plane was not seriously damaged and was eventually repaired and returned to service.

None of us was physically injured, and some of the British troops took us to their dispensary — to be checked by a Doctor and receive individual shots of "grog" to calm our nerves.

We then had to wait several hours for a GI 6x6 (truck) to return us to our base, "Old Buck". While waiting we watched a number of crippled aircraft, returning from bombing raids on the Continent, make emergency landings on the huge runway where the fog had now cleared. I remember a U.S. B-17 landing with its brakes inoperative and a main-gear tire shot out. Another was a British Lancaster — the pilot's eyes blinded by blood — which flew directly into a small building, after having made a "go-around" following an initial attempt to land.

Crash crews were directed by a loud public-address system. Thus, anyone present could hear as well as see what was going on. We concluded that Woodbridge was an interesting place to be but that combat flying was almost restful by comparison.

## OLDS AND ENDS OF THE 453rd BG.

by Don Olds

Thanks to you who are still spreading the word about the 2nd ADA, we continue to contact many former members of the 453rd BG. Not all of them are interested in the association but it is nice to know where they are and what they are doing. In the past couple of weeks I've been in contact with Joe Felten a member of the Roger Counselman Crew #15 of the 732nd Squadron. Also been in touch with Ralph Fordyce who served on the Jay Wells Crew #71 of the 735th Squadron. The Wells Crew was shot down on the Brunswick raid of 8 April 44 and Ralph was the sole survivor. Both of these men were part of the original 453rd cadre which arrived in England in

January '44.

As time permits I'm still trying to piece together the group history. It appears one week in August '44 is missing and can't find anything on missions 182, 183, and 184 in November of '44. Can't locate, as yet, anything on missions 246 through 249 either. They were flown March 23 thru 29 of '45. Will have to go back through the film and try and locate these missing dates.

My family and I would like to thank all of those who sent cards and letters at Christmas. It was just impossible for me to acknowledge them all individually but we want you all to know they were much appreciated. A special thanks goes to Herb and Cynthia Bradley of Oklahoma City. They come

through Rolla every year at Christmas-time and make this their stopover. They always call us and invite my wife and I to the local steakhouse where they treat us to dinner. So, thanks again to all of you and we'll see you in Norwich.

## ATTENTION 491st BG

The history of the 491st Bomb Group — "The Ringmasters" by Allan Blue is again available. To obtain a copy send \$5.00 to: American Aviation Historical Society, Box 99, Garden Grove, California 92642.

This also applies to anyone else who is collecting Unit Histories. One other thing when ordering. Ask for Volume 9, Numbers 2 and 3.

Ted Parker (491st)

## ALCONBURY'S ROYAL VISITOR

by John W. Archer

Friday the 13th of November 1942 was not readily forgotten by members of the 93rd Bombardment Group (H), 8th Air Force stationed at Alconbury during their early days in England.

Without pomp or ceremony, but in a pure military manner, His Majesty, King George VI, arrived at 10:25 a.m. to make his first visit and inspection of an English airfield occupied by the 8th Air Force. In damp, overcast weather the big black Royal car rolled through the main gate at Alconbury then wended its way to headquarters.

His Majesty was greeted as he emerged from the car by Colonel Edward J. Timberlake Jr. commanding officer of the 93rd Bomb. Group.



Before words were exchanged, the King returned a crisp salute to his host, and was then escorted into the colonel's office.

Accompanying His Majesty were two R.A.F. officials, G/C Sir L. L. Greig and G/C E. Fielden, M.V.O., A.F.C., Sir Eric C. Mievill, K.C.I., C.S.I., C.M.G., of the Royal Staff of Equerry's, and numerous other staff officers and personal aides. His Majesty's official U.S. Air Force escorts, whom he met at the nearby railway station were: Maj. Gen. Carl Spaatz, commander of U.S. Air Forces in the European Theatre; Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, commander of 8th Bomber Command; Brig. Gen. Newton H. Longfellow, 1st Wing commander; Col. R. R. Walker, and a score of other Air Force officers.

There were informal rounds of introduction, conducted by Col. Timberlake in which staff officers were presented to the King.

Attired in a smart Royal Blue uniform, His Majesty's light blue eyes sparkled warmly as he warmed himself by the small stove in the office and conversed. Most of the talk was about operations and various raids, the King exhibiting keen interest in the problems as well as results.

Tea and cakes were served to the entire party. It was pure G.I. tea. When an apology was made for the tea and the made-to-stand-abuse mugs, the King wouldn't hear of it.

"Quite all right, I understand," he said.

In less than 20 minutes after arrival, His Majesty was ready to begin the tour of the base.

At the invitation of Col. Timberlake, the Royal guest smiled broadly and without assistance climbed into the rear seat of a jeep, sitting on the right of his host.

He was wearing a military overcoat.

English workmen still building the runways and hardstands stood in amazement as the Royal Daimler passed by. Long cheers broke out along the way.

First stop was the "Teggie Ann", a B-24D Liberator commanded by Major Compton and named for his one-year-old daughter. The King spoke briefly with commissioned members of "Teggie Ann's" crew.

He familiarized himself with the interior, directing pertinent questions to Col. Timberlake and Maj. Compton relative to positions of crew members, their armour protection, and was particularly inquisitive about the guns.

His face registered mingled surprise and satisfaction when he learned from

the Colonel the bomb capacity and the speed at which the explosives were carried to the targets. He also made inquiries about the Atlantic crossing when the Liberators were flown here.

His Majesty continued by reviewing the enlisted crewmen. He asked T/Sgt. Norman C. Tussey, a crew chief, "Are you receiving your mail?" The reply was "Yes Sir!" "How do you like the English weather?" was the next query, whereupon the airman replied, "I don't like it Sir!"

Later when asked by officers why he said that, the sergeant answered "You wouldn't want me to lie to the King, wouldja!"

The second and last stop was by the B-24 "Hellsadroppin" because it had bellyflopped in the mud after flak in the Brest raid had damaged its wheels.

Lt. J. A. Harvey who piloted the plane told the King it would be ready for action again within three days.

Maintenance men, engineers, armament and sheet metal experts swarmed over the plane and continued their work without interruption as the Royal inspection was carried out.

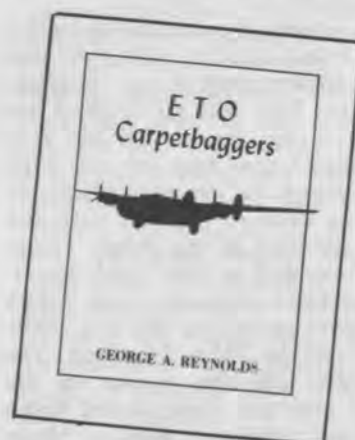
His Majesty bade farewell to Col. Timberlake as they strolled away from the damaged craft to the waiting Daimler.

He expressed himself as 'highly pleased' with 'what I've seen' and 'deeply grateful'.

There was another handclasp and another exchange of salutes and the Royal Car drove away, followed by a 10-car caravan in which rode members of the Royal Party, staff cars of Generals and others. Nearly an hour had been spent there. So well had the secret been kept that the officers and men at Alconbury thought it was Mrs. Roosevelt who was coming.

## 492ND BOMB GROUP-AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND

Former ETO "Carpetbaggers": Your story of flying those black B-24s to drop leaflets, agents and equipment to the underground, then going to Sweden to retrieve interned Allied airmen, plus other activities under Col. Bernt Balchen's direction is in print. Soft cover, 8½x11 booklet, 24 pages and 20 photos or rare aviation history, about 90% unpublished before. Cost: \$3.50 (\$4.00 foreign) each. Write: George A. Reynolds, 848 South 86th Street, Birmingham, Ala. 35206.





## CLAY PIGEON

by Joseph A. Kroboth (389th)

I was quite interested in the article written by Robert S. Ramsey, Jr. in the Dec. 1978 News Letter entitled "Was the 389th Rammed?" It told about an FW-190 landing on the lead plane and then hitting the deputy lead, sending them both down. The third plane in the lead formation was observed with its 3 and 4 engines on fire. I was the radio operator in that plane.

In our squadron the engineer flew in the top turret. If enemy planes were sighted he was supposed to get down and attend to engineering duties while the radio operator replaced him in the turret. In our crew the engineer, T/Sgt. Bernard being a large fellow was a very tight fit, and myself not being a runt, the first time enemy planes were sighted it took us so long to make the exchange that the planes were long gone. Consequently it was decided in the future, I was to be an acting engineer while Sgt. Bernard remained in the turret.

As we pulled out of the formation with two engines streaming fire, the pilot, Lt. Clyde Christian gave the order to drop the bombs and shut off engines 3 and 4 in one breath. On our plane one job of the radio operator was to manually open the bomb-bay doors and hold them open when the bombs were to be dropped since there were cases of bombs taking the doors with them when opened by the bombardier. Seeing the doors still closed, I dropped down and just barely got them open when the bombs started falling. Then I made a quick dash to shut off the engines, but on the way my head caught in some harness hanging from the top turret which really stretched my neck. Getting loose from that took some time but I finally got to the switches, turning off the engines and putting out the fires.

We were now alone, flying at a steep angle on 2 engines several hundred miles in German territory and gradually losing altitude. Soon the pilot said to turn on an engine but to be ready to shut it off in a hurry. It was shut off in a hurry when flames again streamed out.

Soon a number of planes were seen bearing down on us. To our relief they turned out to be British Spitfires who indicated they would escort us out of Germany. This did not last long since some German planes were observed in the distance and the Spitfires took off after them.

Since we were losing altitude, the pilot gave the order to drop out every-

On the 16th of July 1943 the 389th went to Bari, Italy. The official records indicate no losses even though there were approximately 34 fighter attacks.

Just before take-off I became a displaced person on my own plane — a sandbagger got on board and took my seat next to the liaison transmitter on the flight deck.

Things were more or less routine until we got ready to bomb. It was then that we discovered we could not drop out bombs due to a malfunction. The bomb bay doors would not open and no matter how hard we tried we could not dislodge the bombs. We did manage to drop one through the doors and that was the extent of our bombing.

At this time we were engaged by fighters and took a hit from a cannon just below the pilot's seat. The subsequent explosion cut all the electrical wires to the instrument panel and wounded our sandbagger who was hit in the mouth. He started to bleed very badly. The pilot, Lt. James, feathered #3 engine, left the formation and lost altitude so our sandbagger could breathe without using his oxygen mask.

A QDM was obtained and we headed for home leaving the fighters behind. Half way home, and across open water, we lost #1 engine. Still no luck with the bombs so we replaced the pins in the fuses.

As we approached land another engine started to act up and things were getting a little shaky as we had no hydraulic system to operate the main landing gear. Our engineer started to hand crank the main gear down and I kicked out the nose wheel as we ap-

proached the desert. thing we possibly could to lighten the load. Among some of the articles dropped were flak suits, which was a mistake because in time we were flying low over the battle lines on the ground. From the number and shape of the holes in our plane it was obvious a number of ground gunners used us as a clay pigeon.

However, we made it over the lines to a good landing (one we could walk away from) at Hellmund, Holland. It had an airfield and was being used

proached the desert.

No attempt was made to find an airfield because we lost the third engine. Lt. James held the B-24 up as long as possible to make sure the main gear was down and locked. With three engines out and a full bomb load aboard just how long can you fly! So down we went, ready or not. As we came in over the coast we fired red flares in hopes someone would see us and send help for our sandbagger. No such luck. Fortunately the gear held and the landing was more or less routine.



Alan Green, Russ Hayes and Earl Zimmerman

After landing the last I saw of our sandbagger was him heading across the desert swearing to no one in particular. Of course had he not boarded it would have been me with a mouth full of broken teeth.

Thirty five years later, almost to the day, I related this story to a bunch of 389th boys at the Norwich Pub in San Diego and the good looking fellow next to me jumped up and said "That was me. I was the sandbagger". For the first time I knew his name — Alan Green.

mainly as a tank repair depot. We soon learned there were worse places to be in than a burning plane when some men were observed hosing out the charred remains of bodies from a burned out tank.

We spent several days here and then were taken by truck through the battle-scarred country side to Brussels, Belgium. From Brussels we were flown back to Hethel and after 31 missions given R&R at a beautiful but very chilly English castle.

## AIR FORCE MUSEUM

by Edward J. Hohmn (491st)

I just happened to think that my recent visit to the Air Force Museum at Dayton just might be of interest to our readers . . . as well as an inducement to their visiting the museum.

It was my first sight of a B-24 since Feb. 14, 1945 when I flew my last mission. Or shall I say, the first time INSIDE one since then, at least!

It was a real thrill to walk through the bomb bay (squeeze through, I should say with my "expanded shape") and crawl up to the flight deck once again. Since this was a "D" model, the radio position wasn't quite the same. A swing-out seat positioned the radio operator facing the right side, rather than his forward-facing position on the "J" model behind the co-pilot.



Inside waist facing bomb bay.

I stood on the flight deck for some time . . . thinking about all those missions . . . when I looked out on clear skies filled with B-24's and black puffs! I thought about our seventh mission when we lost our pilot, Lt. Evan L. McClung over Karlsruhe, Germany.

As I stood beneath the wings . . . reminiscing, I wondered if I'd want to climb aboard again under those circumstances . . . I wondered if I'd have the confidence that it would get us off the ground with that bomb load. I must confess, I don't care to face that fear again. We all did our job, and I'm glad we did . . . but to go again . . . well, I don't think I've got that sort of "gusto" at this late date.

I think anyone connected with the Air Force, or the Second Air Division, would enjoy the Museum and its many exhibits, planes, memorabilia, etc. The book shop is a treat in itself!

You might want to mention this IMPORTANT item. Anyone who wants to WALK THROUGH or get INSIDE the B-24 they have there MUST write in advance and arrange for such a tour. They will provide a special guide, but WILL NOT let you inside without these special advance arrangements.

You must write a letter mentioning the time of your visit, your background, etc., and address the letter

## MUSEUM GETS RECORD OF LIBERATOR TRAGEDY

submitted by George Gosner

The pilot of a US Liberator bomber nosed his craft through the heavy fog that shrouded the landscape, hoping to glimpse the runways of Burtonwood airbase, near Warrington.

But instead, his gaze met the imposing mill chimneys that were so much a feature of the Burnley skyline in 1945.

Flying at close on 200 miles per hour, Lieutenant Charles Goeking desperately maneuvered the aircraft over the town, only to find the intimidating sight of Black Hameldon Moor looming up out of the twilight of a cold February evening.

Pulling back sharply on the stick Lieutenant Goeking seemed to have pulled the plane clear of the moor, but suddenly the crew were jarred as the tail section dug up the turf and detached itself from the fuselage, which crashed a hundred yards further on.

There followed a desperate bid to save the lives of the airmen. But despite brave efforts, eight men died — four outright and four later from their injuries.

That wartime tragedy over the skies of East Lancashire was the spark that brought together men from both sides of the Atlantic in an attempt to piece together the facts leading up to that fateful day.

Now their task is complete. A detailed chronicle of the tragedy has been

sent from American researcher. Mr. George Gosner, a former US Air Force man stationed in wartime Britain, to Mr. Kevin Mount of Hillcrest Avenue, Burnley who in turn has offered the manuscript to Towneley Hall museum.

Curator Mr. Hubert Rigg said today that he would be delighted to accept it as a permanent record of the incident.

Mr. Mount's interest in the crash brought him into contact with Mr. Gosner, who was involved in the actual clearing up operation following the disaster and who afterwards determined to put together a graphic account of what happened.

The two men met and Lieutenant Goeking, who had been thrown on impact through the two-inch thick windscreen of the plane returned to the scene to relive the harrowing incident.

Mr. Gosner, who visited the crash site the day following the tragedy, explained in his account: "On the moors the wounded lay strewn about in agony for what must have been hours before rescue teams could be formed to make the climb to the scene."

After the war, Mr. Gosner made three trips to England in a bid to revisit the scene, though each time poor weather thwarted his missions.

But his persistence was ultimately rewarded when he visited the scene with Mr. Mount.

## RIDDLE OF GLENN MILLER'S GRAVE

by Colin Pratt, Daily Express

The Body of band leader Glenn Miller may not lie in the English Channel after all — but in undergrowth on a Buckinghamshire hillside.

From the archives of R.A.F. Halton, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, it has been discovered that a small aircraft crashed in the area on the same night that Miller's plane vanished.

It was always believed he had gone down in the sea — but now the new evidence is to be seriously investigated.

The date was December 19, 1944 when Miller took off in thick fog from Twinwoods in Bedfordshire to set up a Forces' concert in Paris.

Nothing was ever heard of him again. Now it is known that a light plane crashed in the Kimble area near Princes Risborough, at about the same time.

No trace of this aircraft was ever found either.

to Col. Uppstrom, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio 45433. Include your phone number, dates and time you plan to visit the museum. I

Mr. Roger Barfoot, secretary of the Chilterns Historical Preservation Society which specializes in aircraft archaeology said:

"We think that this airplane was the Norsman radial - engined monoplane which the band leader was travelling in.

"Whatever happened, Miller's plane crashed suddenly because his pilot didn't send any distress calls. This would tie in with it suddenly hitting a hillside."

Mr. Barfoot believes that if Glenn Miller's plane had developed engine trouble over the English Channel then the pilot would have had enough time to send an S.O.S.

The area of the Chilterns crash is heavily wooded and choked with undergrowth.

Mr. Barfoot and his group, aided by metal detectors, and members of the local Glenn Miller Society, plan searches early in the New Year.

was contacted twice by phone and advised as to who would meet me there. It was a real thrill to get this "Special Treatment."



# BULLETIN BOARD

## ROSTER - 1979

Response to our Roster notice in the December issue was something less than enthusiastic — a great deal less than enthusiastic — indicating that the vast majority of our members feel they can live without one. That is exactly what we wanted to find out.

It takes a great deal of money to print and mail a Roster as large as ours, and counting the response (108) it would have been a poor use of our member's money.

If you want to know whether or not a certain person is a member write to me and I will give you that information.

Bill Robertie

## OPEN LETTER

During the past ten years I have been besieged by requests from various sources for photos, war stories and artifacts pertaining to the 389th BG and I have been more than happy to oblige. However, I have recently learned that one of our very own, Bill Robertie, has been *ordered* to compile a book about the 2nd AD and I think it's about time.

As you know we have the best Newsletter in the business and Bill has been responsible for its success. During my tenure as President it became very apparent that Bill has sacrificed in many ways as the Editor of the Newsletter. He has given freely of his time and all for the good of the 2nd AD.

Now I call on all members to dig down into that footlocker for those unpublished photos, sharpen the pencil and give Bill a few memories of your time in England or Africa, whatever.

I understand that Bill will use some of the stories which have appeared in the Newsletter over the past several years, but he will need new material from the troops to really make a 14 carat edition of this book. Now is your chance to contribute to a worthwhile cause so let's get the program on the road. Do it now. If you wait too long you might miss the boat.

Earl L. Zimmerman

(ed: Can I miss the boat? PLEASE!)

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*submitted by Dave Mayor (BAD-2)*

If a man calls you a donkey, ignore him. If two men call you a donkey, get a saddle.

## DUES

Latest word from Evelyn is that all the dues notices have been mailed and the early birds have responded quickly, as usual. For those of you who have put off paying your dues for one reason or another (Holiday season and the Christmas bills — Our good Uncle with his outstretched hands etc.) this is a reminder that if you haven't paid your dues yet the time has arrived. It does make our jobs a lot easier when this item has been put to bed.

Remember, if you are having financial problems please let Evelyn know. It's strictly confidential between thee and she.

## 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.



## MISSION TO WESEL

by Col. U. P. Harvell (44th)

Reports of Liberator Airmen and Captain U. P. Harvell, who took movies of the crash and explosion of two bombers during the low-level delivery of supplies on March 24, to the armies under Field Marshall Montgomery immediately after their spectacular crossing of the Rhine, gave little hope that any of the crewmen could have survived the fiery crash. Sgt. Robert D. Vance, 21 year old waist gunner from Empire, Ohio, returned, however, to prove that appearances are deceiving. He also reported that a tail gunner, Louis J. DeBlasio, wounded but miraculously alive, also survived to tell the tale.

Sgt. Vance and DeBlasio, after a harrowing escape from the ship that had hit the earth once to rise and fly for fifty seconds before crashing and exploding were prisoners of the Germans for eight days and were liberated by advancing troops of the 2nd U.S. Armored Division.

"I don't remember much about the crash," he told men after returning to his base in England. "All I remember is flames coming from the bomb bay and a heavy blow which must have been when we hit the ground the first time. The next thing I knew I was crawling away from the plane as fast as I could and was telling DeBlasio, who was with me, 'Pray: pray now as you never prayed before.' We crawled away from the burning wreckage and bodies of the rest of the crew and took refuge under a wagon near-by in a field. Some German civilians came by and treated our wounds. I vaguely remember riding somewhere on a haywagon. The next thing I recall is being in a place that was apparently a dancehall. The floor was covered with straw. British, American and German wounded were crowded in there."

Asked if the treatment he received was any different from the Germans, he reported that it was not. "We were all treated the same. I have to give them credit for that."

DeBlasio and I were later transferred to a hospital staffed by Nuns where we were also treated well. "Easter Sunday was our big day," Vance reported. "The Nuns gave us each three eggs which was really something after a diet of black bread and coffee. We went to both Catholic and Protestant church services but couldn't understand either one of them. In the afternoon, 2nd Armored Division tanks came into town and we went outside to see them. They threw us K-rations and cigarettes. They were certainly a welcome sight."

## VICISSITUDES OF WAR

by John A. Miller (100th)

One late afternoon after it had been established that there was a 'stand down' for the next day and no missions would be flown, I decided to visit one of the local towns and absorb some of the local liquid culture. I grabbed a bike and pedaled off down the road to Horham, about five or six miles away.

When 'Time Please' rang out at the Pub I was in, I went outside to get on my bike and ride back to the base. Everytime I tried to throw my leg up over the bike to get on I would fall flat on my backsides!! Well I struggled with this insurmountable problem for some time and finally, by placing the bike in the gutter and me standing on the curb laying forward over the handlebars, I succeeded in mounting this uncooperative English steed.

I fell numerous times but I would remount (Nothing can stop the Army Air Corps!) and I finally did get out of town. It was about a five minute walk and it only took me about an hour on a bicycle!

After I got out of town, for some reason I started doing better. I would crash only about every ten or fifteen feet. Quite an accomplishment and a tremendous improvement over my previous performance.

Sgts. Vance and DeBlasio then returned to the hospital and soon afterwards an American ambulance arrived and started them on their journey into allied territory. DeBlasio remained at a hospital on the Continent for further treatment, but Vance, who had received a slight head wound and fractured shoulder, was soon returned to his base in England.

*The above material has been authenticated through research from the historical research center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. Also by Robert D. Vance of Ontario, Calif. The film showing the crash of the two bombers was made by U. P. Harvell, who was on the mission. Super 8 copies of the film are available. Write to: U. P. Harvell, P.O. Box 655, Ellenton, Florida 33532.*

Then, just when I was performing my best and had a period of sustained and somewhat level flight there in that black night, I came to a hill — the hill of all hills. Down it went and curved to the left across a narrow bridge.

Mayday! Mayday!

Before I knew what was happening I was committed. Down, down I dove! Where's my brakes!??? My brakes must be shot out!! Too late I remember that they are on the handlebars! My speed was tremendous! It passed the redline! I tried to make the left bank! The 'G' forces were overwhelming. Me and the bike virtually disintegrated. The horrible sound of my machine and my body coming apart, plus my screaming as I bounced, was deafening!!! This was my final crash for the night.

When I regained consciousness everything hurt. I remember that I even hurt under my tongue. War is truly hell! I decided I would just remain where I was. Sooner or later someone would find me. So they would court-martial me. They couldn't do any more than shoot me. What the hell.

Then, through that black and foggy night I heard a truck approaching. It had to be a G.I. truck. What else sounded like that?

I stood up the best I could in the middle of the road. I'm sure I must have resembled Igor there in the black with the fog swirling around me. The driver finally saw me and rather than run me down he stopped. I told him my problem and asked for a lift to the base. "I don't know where it is," he said. Rallying my little remaining strength I managed a reply. "Your driving around out here in this fog and black night and don't know where in the hell you're going?" "I know I'm going to some base down this road someplace," he replied. "That's fine," I managed, "just take me with you wherever you're going."

After that enjoyable night off the base, I never went to town again. It was much less strain on my body merely to fly my missions, sweat out the flak and fight the Luftwaffe. Believe me it was!

## A CHALLENGE

(submitted by Joe Michalczyk 448th)

One of our flight instructors was sent out to help a pupil who has radioed that he was about to make a forced landing a few miles from the base. The instructor spotted the plane standing in a field small enough to present a real challenge to his professional reputation.

With determination, full flaps and engine just above the stall, he maneuvered brilliantly into the field. Climbing out he shouted angrily to the pupil, "How the hell did YOU get into such a small field?"

"I landed in the big field over there," the pupil explained. "In order to leave room for you, I had the farmer tow me over here."



# LETTERS

Dear Mr. Strong (Ray):

I am fortunate in possessing a copy of "NEWS LETTER" produced by the 2nd Air Division Association, Eighth Air Force dated September 1975. This particular copy contains an article pertaining to the premises now occupied by the Lancashire County Fire Brigade Training Centre, which was, at one time, used by the 2nd Air Division (Eighth Air Force 127th Replacement Battalion). I am hopeful that you can put me in touch with someone who was stationed at this particular base during World War Two who may be able to assist me in research which I am currently undertaking.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter, and assure you that I shall be grateful for any introductions which I can follow up.

Yours sincerely,

H. Finney  
Commandant  
Fire Brigade Training Center  
Washington Hall, Southport Road  
Euxton, Chorley PR7 6DH  
England

Dear Evelyn:

During WWII I served as a bombardier and navigator in 8th AF with the 458th Bomb Group at Horsham St. Faith in Norwich, Norfolk, England. The existence of the 2AD Association has only recently come to my attention through C. E. Wallace, who I understand is V.P. for the 458th Bomb Group. I am enclosing my membership application together with my check for \$7.00. Please enter my membership and place my name on any mailing lists originating from the Association.

I am delighted to learn of the Association. I only wish I had learned of it sooner. Should you need any kind of "on the spot" assistance from time to time in the U.K. please let me know as I am a permanent resident here.

Cordially,

D. W. Brewer

(ed: If any of us manage to get arrested on our trip back to Norwich this June we'll yell for help - believe me!)

Dear Bill:

I have some additional information about the MASSILON TIGER that I would like to share. After the "Tiger" arrived in England it was sent to Rackheath Air Base near Norwich. It was assigned to the 467th Bomb Group and I was the crew chief.

After flying many combat missions, and the end of the E.T.O., I flew back to Bradley Field, Conn. on the "Tiger".

I knew of the background of the MASSILON TIGER, and I thought the people of Massilon would like to know about their plane, so I wrote the Mayor of Massilon and gave a full account of missions etc., along with a photo. In return the Mayor wrote me a very nice letter; sent the key to the city and an enlarged picture of the one I had sent to him. I would like to say that I am enclosing the picture, but shortly after I received same, our home burned, and I saved none of my pictures.

Bill, my wife and I attended the Reunion in Colorado Springs and enjoyed seeing everyone so much. I would like very much to have a Reunion in the Dallas - Ft. Worth area. We have so many points of interest and plenty of hotel space. Think about it!

Lusie F. Piland

(ed: I am thinking about it, but keep in mind that I lived in Dallas for over two years.)

Dear Bill:

Received your letter and was glad to hear you could use my article. Enclosed you will find a small photo of the crew that I flew with on the majority of my missions. Sounds funny but I was transferred to the 801st B.G. as a replacement for the navigator originally assigned this crew. He was shot down while flying with another crew. Since all the other members had 6 missions and I only had 2 when assigned I had to fly 4 missions with other crews.



Back Row (l to r): 1st Lt. Edgar F. Townsend, Jr. (Nav.); 1st Lt. Samuel Goldsmith (Pilot); 2nd Lt. George A. Procnar (Bomb); 2nd Lt. Earl E. Bitzer (Co-Pilot).

On the back are the names of the officers on the crew but I cannot supply the names of the airmen. Many of my notes, photos, etc. were lost in 1946 and truthfully I cannot recall their names. Sometime this month, I hope to get to Maxwell AFB and can find this information in the records. I will advise you if I am successful.

Thanks for the information about George Reynolds and his book. I will contact him as I am interested in the 'carpetbaggers'. In the meantime I will try to supply you with more articles.

Sincerely,

Edgar F. Townsend, Jr.

(ed: Continue to write those articles Jack. We'll make you famous yet!)

Dear Bill:

Don't want to start an intra-divisional war, but Lewis Callaway of the 491st BG was wrong if he thinks that the "Big Bang at Metfield" photo (Vol. 16, No. A, P. 15) photo was taken at his base. The fact is it was taken at Bungay (446th BG) and all the men shown were members of the 460th Sub-Depot, stationed there. The photo was taken by Sgt. Joe Bommarito (the outfit's barber and photo nut). Immediately after the big "bang", we all ran out of our barracks and Bommarito, with his ever trusty camera, wanted to add a little drama. I was the nearest guy and he shouted to me to point up at the black cloud. I complied. Directly behind me (facing camera) is Sgt. Eugene (Pete) O'Grady. Behind him is Sgt. Al Shroades. The guy on the right is either Sgt. Al Cesari or Sgt. Robert Nettleton (forgotten which). No way I can prove this (particularly if you looked at me today, as I have lost about 3-4ths of my hair!), but if put to the test I'm sure I could rustle around the attic and come up with one of the original snapshot prints of this photo which Sgt. Bommarito gave me when he had it developed.

Sincerely,

William F. Taylor

Dear Evelyn:

Just a few lines to thank you for all the nice reports that the paper sends out. I enjoyed the issues on the conventions and if time permits would like to attend one soon.

I was a radio operator-gunner 453rd BG, 732nd Squadron. Captain Kenton W. Morris sure would appreciate hearing from the rest of the crew but I have mislaid all the addresses.

Lavern R. Howe  
212 East South  
Piano, Ill. 60545

Dear Ev:

Can you use a news story? I have a dandy!

While on a vacation trip to Minnesota in July '78, I looked up and found my B-24 pilot. My wife and I were invited to his home where his wife cooked us a terrific meal and "picked" blueberry pie.

During the evening I got the bright idea of phoning our crew members, having the address of just five; flight engineer, radio operator and three gunners. Hit the jackpot finding all five at home. Got two out of bed.

Since then I've located our long, lost bombardier in Ohio. Our Co-pilot was killed in an auto accident in Texas in the '60s.

Sincerely,

Don Ferguson (491st)

(ed: Bet you made the phone company happy also Don. Good thing those gunners you got out of bed aren't still practicing their profession!)

Dear Bill:

Enclosed please find my check for \$2.75 for a copy of the 1979 Roster.

Being a long-time participant in the newspaper "game" I can appreciate your problems with printing and mailing costs. They're really getting phenomenal — which leaves less in the till for editors (sigh).

Thanks for your good work and the product that results. It's always mighty interesting. Cheers and all bests.

Herb Harrigan (448th BG)

(ed: Less in the till for editors? Unfortunately there's nothing in the till for this editor. Any openings for unpaid editors on your newspaper? Better still, how about you going to work for us by way of some articles? Join the club Herb — it will drive you nuts!)

Dear Bill:

So many thanks for sending the latest newsletter, red-hot off the press. Certainly appreciate your continued kindness in furnishing the fine reading material. It seems that you have a new generation of writers now. New names crop up all the time, and they seem to get involved in the affairs of the Association, which must be pleasing to you. But, it is nice to see the familiar names, such as Earl Zimmerman, Walt Rude, and other early members still active within the ranks.

As the reunion visit gets nearer, and should any last minute preparations need attention from this end, please do not hesitate to explain your needs, I will do my best to look after them.

This looks like being a big affair, let's trust all goes to plan — can it be better than your Stateside reunion of this year!

Enjoy the Xmas fare —

As Ever,

John W. Archer  
England

Dear Bill:

Here is my \$2.75 for a copy of the '79 Roster should you print one.

With costs the way they are today it is a wonder you can do it for this amount. I have a 1977 Roster and I think you did a great job on it. I have contacted several old buddies I never would have found if it were not for your good work.

Jack E. Thurman

(ed: Thanks for the compliments Jack but you will read elsewhere in these pages that we failed to come up with sufficient orders to warrant a printing. We'll try again this Fall.)

Dear Mr. Robertie:

Enclosed is a photo of members of the 466th taken in Chicago 8-20-45 during a stopover from a troop train on our way to Sioux Falls, S.D. We had a couple of hours to kill so we found an "Oasis" not too far from the railroad yard and as you can see a good time was had by all. I forget the names of my former buddies, but the heavy set G.I. in the middle of the snap was



strafed by an enemy plane one night while driving a truck near Norwich. Fortunately only the truck suffered injury. If you can publish or print this photo maybe someone could identify himself or recognize someone. I'm the second from the right standing with a beverage.

Sincerely yours,

M. J. Valencia, 466th

P.S. I enclosed a stamped, addressed envelope as this is the only photo I have.

Dear Sir:

The December '78 News Letter was received this date, and noted the picture of the B24 on the front page. I used this photo for a Christmas card when I was a member of the 93rd Bomb Group '43 or '44 as its Special Service Officer. It was given to me by the OIC of the photo lab whose name I can't recall.

I have been trying to get an 8" by 10" made from it for framing, but with no success. I have two copies of the Christmas card, but local photographers just seem to have difficulty in photographing it. Will you be so kind to send me either the negative or an 8" by 10" and cost.

As I recall, the nephew of Fred Warring, the band leader, was its pilot, as he came into my office the next day asking for a copy stating that fact.

Your assistance will be appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gerald Smith

Dear Fellows, and  
Ms. Cohen of course:

I am writing just for the hell of it. Have done nothing much except pay my dues. I think I am up to date, but Evelyn knows. She does a remarkably good job.

I had to laugh a little when I read some guy 72 or so says he was the oldest in the 389th. He wasn't. I was.

On Sept. 19, 1943 Capt. Rodenburg's plane cracked up at Hethel. We lost six very good men there and I was 42 at the time. Every one who knew me at the base called me Pop. I believe I am the sole survivor of that crash and while I am not in perfect shape I am still skipping along at a slow pace. Maybe I am slow because I am old — 77 at the moment and 78 in April of 1979. Lots of good wishes all around.

Lloyd B. Harris (389th)

(ed: Mind giving us your elixer for longevity Lloyd? Better still, how about the story of that crash. Information that I have says you were slowning the engines.)

Dear Bill:

I am very sorry to hear that there is so little interest in a 2nd Air Division Roster for this year. The price was so incredibly low for such a volume too.

I am a former Pilot of the 466th BG and last saw the surviving men of my crew in December 1944 just a few days before I returned to the zone of the interior on the hospital ship "Wakefield".

About two years ago I found my tail gunner. Through him, this Christmas, I found one of the waist gunners. From him I learned that my radio operator and navigator are both now dead. My co-pilot died in England in 1944. So now in my sixtieth year I have decided to try to organize one final reunion. Do you have anything on these four men:

Robert L. Young — Wayne A. Gardner —  
Clarence E. Peterson — William L. Aldrich.

I am going to ask you to accept my original check for the trouble of checking the Roster regardless whether you find anything or not. Your time is valuable and these four names are exactly what I wanted out of the entire book.

Sincerely,

Lloyd G. Fwithmyer

(ed: I couldn't help you with those names Lloyd but maybe one of our members can. Your check was placed in the stamp fund and our treasurer thanks you on bended knee.)

Dear Evelyn:

I very much enjoyed getting the Newsletter. It was unfortunate I did not have a copy in the summer of 1977. That was the year I returned to my old base in Bungay. It was the most emotional moment in my life as I stood on the runway — quiet, empty and silent except for the sound of the wind and the chirping of the birds. The stately Flixton Manor House has been leveled except for the first floor which is now used to stall cattle.

If I had a copy of the Newsletter I would have tried to contact some of the people in Bungay, Beccles or Norwich who are members of the Memorial Trust. Somehow I had the impression that our Memorial was in the Norwich Cathedral rather than in the Norwich Library.

Best wishes,

John Tolyanic (446th)

Dear Evelyn, et al

The December '78 Newsletter was most welcome, and an excellent one.

The "tree in Jerusalem via Sol Greenberg" was a touching and thought provoking article. It gave me a small brainstorm — why don't we plant a tree outside the Norwich Library, similarly? Perhaps it could be planted in front to "advertise" our memorial room inside, or just outside a window of the Memorial Room, where it can be seen from inside and out? Re-read the last sentence of the article, and you'll see "my" idea already nearly written! Perhaps a tree could be planted at June '79 Norwich reunion! Maybe it could be worked into the June 2 or June 5 program schedule.

Enclosed is my '79 dues check with \$10.00 for the Library Memorial — tree or no tree.

My wife and I, with our son and his wife, made our long dreamed for trip to England, Scotland and Norwich last June. It was a beautiful revisitation, and affected me deeply. I will write a separate letter to you, soon I hope, giving some details that may be of interest to those going to Norwich in June. I sadly expect that I won't be able to go along with you all. I do encourage those who might be undecided to decide yes.

Best wishes,

Harry N. Craft (Crabbe)  
458th Bomb Group

Dear Evelyn:

I just contacted a new prospective member for our Association thru a friend of mine who knows a friend of his and knew he was in England during the big war flying bombers. Turns out he was a pilot in the 445th B.G. He doesn't know anything about the Association, wants to join and sounds interested in Norwich in 1979. Would you please send him a membership application, information on Norwich and a newsletter or anything else you may have.

My wife and I are still planning on England in '79. After San Diego this year we don't want to miss these wonderful reunions. Thanks so much for all your time and work for the 2AD.

Thanks again, Sincerely,

Frank R. Gibson (448th BG)

Dear Evelyn:

First off, please accept my belated thanks for the 2nd Air Division plaque which Mel Povol delivered to me. It is hanging in my den and it gives me something to look at with a great deal of pride.

I read with much interest in the last issue of the News Letter of Sgt. Roy Jonasson recounting his experiences with the 389th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force. He also stated that the 389th was "best known as one of the 5 bomb groups who went on the first Ploesti Oil Field bomb runs in a low level attack", etc. In the next paragraph, he says that the bomb group was also known as Jimmy Stewart's unit when he served in the Air Force.

For the sake of historical correctness, I must refute that last statement. Jimmy Stewart was assigned to my group (which was the 445th Bomb Group) as a 1st Lt. Operations Officer — approximately July 1943 — at Sioux City, Iowa. Lt. Jimmy Stewart subsequently became Lt. Col. Jimmy Stewart as the Squadron Commander of the 700th Squadron, 445th Bomb Group, and served in that capacity at our base in Tibenham, England until he was transferred to Wing, which would be approximately January 1945.

Jimmy Stewart arrived in England with the 445th Bomb Group, piloting a B-24 aircraft called the "Tenovous" in November 1943, which was after the Ploesti Oil Field bomb mission. It would then be a physical impossibility for him to have served with the 389th Bomb Group.

With pleasant personal regards.

Max F. Lubel

(Ed: I wonder if Jimmy is aware of how many Bomb Groups he flew with, as quite a few claim him. Maybe HE will shed some light on the matter.)

Dear Bill:

Enclosed is photo of 491st ship crashing in Holland. DiPalma was the tailgunner and only survivor. The date was Sept. 18, 1944. I witnessed this unfortunate event. This ship (210F-854th B.S.) was flown by Capt. Hunter and was the 491st lead ship for 41 A/C dispatched that day.



I have several other photos that are relevant to this mission if you need them for your article.

Theodore Parker

(ed: YOUR article Ted, and get with it!)



Dear Bill:

I had the rare pleasure of returning to England 33 years to the day (9/10/78) after leaving Hardwick (93rd Bomb Group; Air Field. Not only did I find the old base, but also visited the Memorial Library in Norwich.

After seeing the Memorial Room, it made me proud to be a member of the great Second Air Division of the Eighth Air Force. This has to be the finest Memorial dedicated to the Airmen we left behind so we the living might remain free, to find life, liberty and happiness.



It was a sad sight to stand on the main runway (covered with grass and weeds) at Hardwick air base and remember back when this base was home to several thousand men. All that is left is the main runway and three or four buildings being used for a Government crop dusting operation.



I had another surprise this day. I looked up the 93rd Bomb Group's old watering hole, The Three Nags Pub, and to my surprise I found that Daisy Elmar still owns and operates this Pub. Daisy is now 77 years young. We spent several hours with Daisy going through her pictures and letters she has received over the years.



I am enclosing a picture of the Three Nags Pub. If you would care to use them for the News Letter, I would like an extra copy to mail to Daisy.

I am looking forward to being a member of the Second Air Division Assn.

Cordially,

Len Hillebrand

(ed: And we are looking forward to having you Len.)

Dear Evelyn,

Hoping you had a good holiday and sending you the very best for the New Year. I find this rather hard to do, but I'm asking if you'll please keep me on your active file until I'm able to take care of my dues. I've been rather hard hit with rheumatoid arthritis and have undergone 8 joint replacement operations including both hips and knee and a wrist. I'm still on total disability and unable to work though I'm able to walk quite well now and get around fairly good. Strangely enough, 35 years ago today I reported for active duty in the Air Force. This association means much to me as I'm sure it does all the other members and we owe people like yourself who have worked so hard to make it what it is today, a big vote of thanks for a job you are doing so well. I had hoped to make Norwich this year but it's not possible now. As yet I haven't been able to attend any reunions but that leaves me something to look forward to doesn't it?

Hoping to meet you in person one of these days. Good luck and God Bless. Thank you

A hangin' in there

8th Air Forcer

(Ed: Just continue to hang in there Old Buddy. Forget the dues.)

Dear Miss Cohen:

Enclosed is my check for \$7.00 in payment for one year's dues to the Second Air Division Association. I was unaware that such an organization existed until I saw an article about it in the Sacramento Bee recently. I wrote Mr. Michael Fagen, Atwater, California, whose name and address appeared in the article and he sent me the attached membership application.

I joined the 446th Bomb Group in August, 1943, went overseas with it in November of that year and completed 28 combat missions as a member of it by the end of April, 1944. At that time I was sent to the 458th Bomb Group as a Lead Crew Training Instructor and remained there until my return to the states in December, 1944.

I wish I could have attended the reunion in July in San Diego; and, I would have if I had known about it. Mr. Fagen mentioned in his letter that your September newsletter contained a listing of the 446th members and their wives that attended the reunion. I would very much appreciate your sending me a copy of that particular newsletter if you have an extra one.

Mr. Fagen also mentioned the reunion in Norwich, England in May, 1979. Have the plans been finalized and are there any spaces left for this trip? I don't know at this time whether I would be able to attend but would certainly like to. What would be the last time that you would have to know in order to be included on this trip if space is still available.

I am enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience in answering my questions and sending me a copy of the September newsletter if you have a copy.

Sincerely,

Thurman Spiva  
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

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. Thank you.

Mrs. Gaynell Clark (389th BG)

Dear Evelyn,

Thanks to your address in the News Letter, I can mail a check for dues and a contribution to the 2AD fund. Am sorry to say I have misplaced my 2AD roster. Also can't find a dues statement.

I am always pleased to receive the News Letter and feel indebted to those who contribute so much time and talent to the fine articles.

I thoroughly enjoyed the 1975 reunion in Norwich and hope to make another at a future date. Best regards for the New Year and also the Newsletter staff.

H. Jack Russell (44th BG)

Dear Evelyn:

Please find enclosed my \$7 for renewal of my membership of the 2nd Air Division Association. Congratulations on a superb newsletter which I eagerly look forward to receiving. In the new year I will send some photos of the museum I am curator of at Flixton near Bungay. In it we have four rooms, one of which is all American Airforce, mostly on the Eighth Airforce E.T.O. Quite a few of the exhibits are to do with the 2nd Air Division Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Peter Frost

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed you will find a check for my annual dues, plus a check for the memorial fund. I wish to dedicate \$50 for the memorial fund to a very dear friend of mine who, I eventually found out, was killed during a mission to Kiel, Germany. Howard Wilson and I became associated with each other in basic training, and followed each other through AM School at Shepherd Field, Texas and advanced AM School and B-25 factory school in California. We both went from there to gunnery school at Tyndal Field, Florida, and from there to Hill AFB in Utah where we were both assigned to go to Boise, Idaho to join B-24 crews. That is where our roads separated temporarily. Howard was assigned to a crew other than mine, and went overseas with the 448th Bomb Group and was killed on his first or second mission over Germany. Howard was from Radford, Virginia.

This living memorial that we members of the Second Air Division are participating in is very close to my heart and my feelings.

My personal regards to you for your efforts on behalf of the Second Air Division and the hard work you have put in over the years. Everyone is appreciative of your efforts.

May you have a happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Harry K. Bonfield  
448th Bomb Group

Dear Evelyn:

I am enclosing a copy of the base newspaper from Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. As you may or may not know, Barksdale AFB is the home of the 8th Air Force. As such, they have one of the largest Air Shows in the Nation each year. Also, once a month, they bring in civilian visitors from one of the 8th Air Force bases for a three day visit.

It would appear that the new museum would be a Golden Opportunity to push the 2nd Air Division. Also, our current members may want to know of the plans. I'm sure we could also contribute to the museum in the form of photos, unit histories, etc.

Sincerely,

H.E. Hansen Col. USAF (Ret.)  
466 BG

Dear Bill:

I notice at page 9 in the December Bulletin that you are requesting payments of \$2.75 for a Roster from those Members who are interested. Please find enclosed my check for same.

I must say, however, that I do not think such a change in policy, that of providing free rosters to the Membership, should be determined by one Officer of the Association. And, I disagree with your whole proposition that it costs as much to print a roster as a book.

It also seems to me that any funds having to do with projects of the Association should be channeled through the Treasurer rather than being collected by numerous individuals in the Association and I intend to address Rokicki and Burman on the matter.

Yours etc.

Thomas Messenger (Hdq)

*(ed: Into each life some rain must fall. We welcome criticism Tom as it keeps us on our toes, but can we construe this to mean that your ready, willing and able to pitch in and help? You might not be aware of it but the vast amount of work involved in running the Association falls on the shoulders of a dedicated few. We distribute the workload whenever and however we can. No ONE person makes these decisions.)*

Dear Evelyn:

If you ever come to Seattle look me up. My partner and I have a F-86 Sabre which we found in a junk yard in California in several pieces. After 5 plus years of searching for parts, and lots of sweat, we were airborne.



This is a little swifter than a '24 which is still my first love. My partner and I joined the Air Force together. He ended up in fighters and I in heavies.

John A. Kamacho (392nd BG)

Dear Pete (Henry):

I was very pleased to learn that so many of the 2nd AD enjoyed their reunion in San Diego. As it was my first introduction to the annual event, I had no basis for comparison. However, I certainly had a grand time. I met an old friend from the 67th Sqd. that I hadn't seen since May 1945.

I heard your generous offer to write to all local newspapers if we would furnish you with the necessary info. I made a mental note to do my part then promptly forgot to do it! Thank goodness you are persistent and renewed your offer in the Sept. Newsletter.

Either in a prior Newsletter, or at the reunion (maybe both), I learned about a B-24 that was and is the pride and joy of the Pima Air Museum located about 12 miles south of Tucson, Arizona. So last week the wife and I took a little trip over there to see if, in fact, the airplane really existed.

Sure enough. As I drove up to the fence straight ahead of me was a low, squat airplane, twin vertical stabilizers and a beautiful thin wing so familiar in my memories.

The museum also has a WW II barracks outfitted with uniforms, pictures etc., including a signature book. I only found one from the 44th BG and his name wasn't in the 1977 Roster. Hope you get him to join.

Will Lundy, 44th BG

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed you will find a chDear Evelyn:

I recently located a former member of the 2nd Air Division (93rd BG) while using my ham radio station.

I was on a business trip to Las Vegas and one evening I was talking over my ham set to another station at Bullhead City, Arizona on the Colorado River about 90 miles south of Las Vegas. In the course of the conversation, I mentioned that I had just attended a 2nd AD reunion convention in San Diego where I had a very enjoyable time.

Shortly after mentioning this a ham station (WA6LEA) broke in and said he was a member of the 2nd AD and would like to obtain information on how to join. I am therefore sending you his name and address so you can send him the necessary info to join. His name is Charles Manning, Box GK, Needles, CA. 92363.

Maybe 2nd AD members who are ham operators could let the word out and pick up some others who were in the 2nd AD.

Pat Burns (392nd BG)  
Amateur Radio W6GUE

*(ed: Now that's a new twist, but damn logical. All you ham radio operators get cracking.)*

Dear Evelyn:

In October I was honored by an invitation to place a wreath on the monument of Johannes Post in Holland.

He was one of the leading resistance leaders of WW II and had helped return some 1500 flyers to their friendly lines. He hid many Jewish and other people wanted by the Nazis and arranged many escapes. He was later captured and shot by the SS but his organization carried on.

Since I was sheltered by his escape organization when I parachuted into Holland in Sept. 1944, I received the invitation to attend this 3 day function and ended up being the unofficial rep. of the U.S.

I have many newspaper articles and pictures of the trip for some time in 2d Air Div. future presentation. A visit with Prince Bernhard was a highlight of the trip.

James F. Cotter (389th)

Dear Evelyn:

Please forgive this tardy dues remittance — the extra may go to the library fund.

Hope one of these years to be able to take the time to attend a reunion and meet some of you people who are putting so much into the organization. I, for one, derive much pleasure and satisfaction from the memories stirred by contact with the Association, and I do want to thank you people who make this possible.

Best wishes,

Edward L. Squires  
389, 392 & 44th

Dear Bill:

Although I flew most of my 34 missions with the 453rd BG I was also part of the 489th (9 Missions) and the 458th (1 Mission). Please list me as a member of these Groups when the new Roster comes out.

I wonder if any other crew flew with three different groups and wings in the 2nd Air Division? Both the 489th and the 453rd were removed from operations so they could train in B-29s for the Pacific war so our crew ended up in the 458th. We also went to another base to bring back the B-24s from Sweden. The maintenance on these was even worse than the combat planes, but not so critical then.

Wayne E. De Cou

Dear Evelyn:

Am enclosing my dues for the coming year along with a small contribution for the Memorial Room. Margaret and I spent a pleasant three days in Norwich in September while we were in England. We stopped by the Memorial Room and just enjoyed being there and seeing what has been done. We were truly impressed. I took a few pictures which came out just fair, but am glad to have them for our album.

Our month in England was highlighted by attendance at several memorial services and celebrations during Battle of Britain week. It was thrilling to just be present during this historic occasion — which happened quite unexpectedly. I did not realize that this anniversary would occur during September when we were planning our trip earlier this year.

One most enjoyable afternoon Margaret drove out to Rackheath, home of the 467th Bomb Group, and just drove around to see if I could find any leftovers from the war years. Not too much is visible, but I did locate the old control tower (in a rather poor state of repair) and the entrance gates to Lord Stracey's home — fondly remembered as 'The Golden Gates'. They too, I regret to say, looked the worse for wear. No one was around on that day which was Sunday and we were unable to spot any other familiar sites. Later in town I talked with a local who said that some of the old Nissen and Quonset huts were still around, but hard to spot from the roads. Wish I had been able to take more time and wander about on foot, but the usual tourist pressure was with us to keep moving. We did spend an hour or so at the Cathedral and the Castle in Norwich and found a great place for some 'fish and chips'. All in all a most enjoyable and memorable trip. I hope that all who possibly can will make the trip back to East Anglia and enjoy the beauty of the land and the warmth of the people.

Sorry we won't be able to join you in Norwich in '79, but having just returned our budget is a bit stretched for another sojourn overseas. Will be thinking of you all while you are there.

Carl E. Epting, 467th

Dear Bill:

Here is a copy of *Sweet Moon Beam McSwine*. She was a B-24H with the 704 Sqdn. 446 Bomb Group. Top left (Me), Elmer Mott, Tail Gunner; Mike Kral, Right Waist Gunner; Henry E. Kosek, Ball Gunner; Sgt. Glandsrock, Left Waist Gunner; Ben S.



Sweberg, Radio Operator; Frank A. Ross, Flight Engineer. Bottom left: Robert C. Nack, Pilot; Lt. Mitchell, Bombardier; Robert J. Lyles, Co-Pilot. Please print this when you can. You may keep this copy.

Thanks

Elmer Mott





To each his own. How did they do it? Very carefully.



Hard to believe that most of the mechanics in the Air Force hardly knew a spark plug from a fuel gauge before they joined up. Once trained they worked wonders.



The Red Cross Aero Club at the 93rd was a place to read, relax and just plain shoot the bull.



Hair cut North African style. A barber with a side arm usually encountered little resistance and certainly no criticism!

# LOOKING BACK

by

*R. T. Coleman (93rd)*



Princess St., Norwich. How many of you walked that more than once. The multi-flu chimneys indicated a fireplace in every room. Early central heating!



Loading up for low level drop over Holland during 1944.



Troops on leave waiting for a train. Could by Ely.

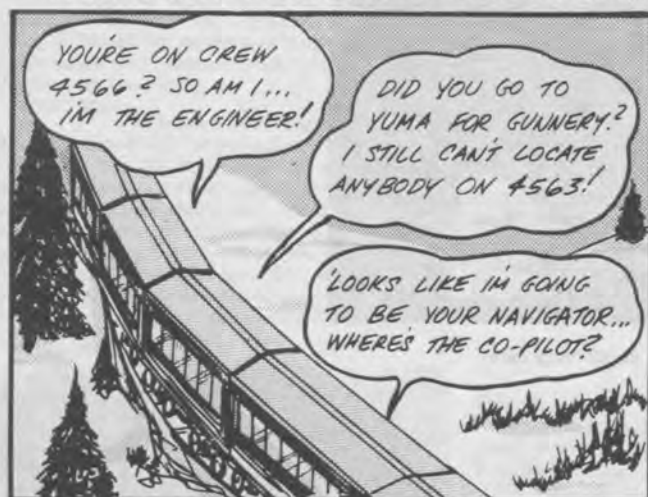


The end had to come and it did. A typical scene at all the 8th AFBs on VE day.

# FLASHBACKS

by ED HOHMAN • 491st

## THAT FIRST MEETING OF THE CREWS...



REPLACEMENT CREW MEMBERS OFTEN MET ON TROOP TRAINS- ENROUTE TO THE COMBAT TRAINING FIELDS IN THE STATES.



EXERCISING "SLACKED-OFF" A LITTLE OVERSEAS

## THE TASTE OF THAT FIRST WARM BEER IN A METAL MESS CUP!

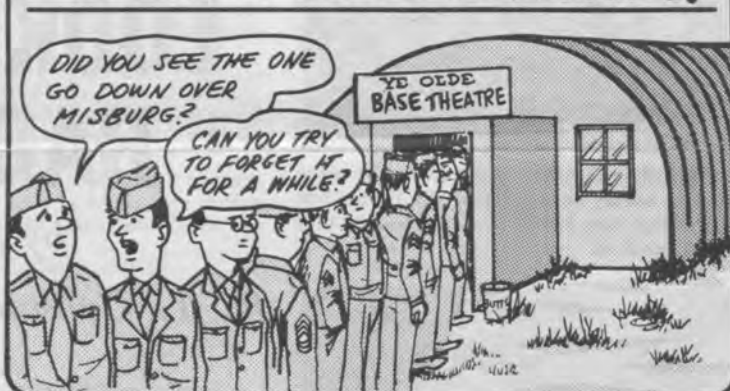


## ODD BUT TRUE!

A HOTEL IN NOTTINGHAM ACTUALLY HAD A CURFEW!



## THE "GREAT ESCAPE" (?) MOVIES!



## PHOTOS of the FORTIES



GETTING THE FEEL OF A TURRET... PART OF GUNNERY TRAINING IN THE STATES.