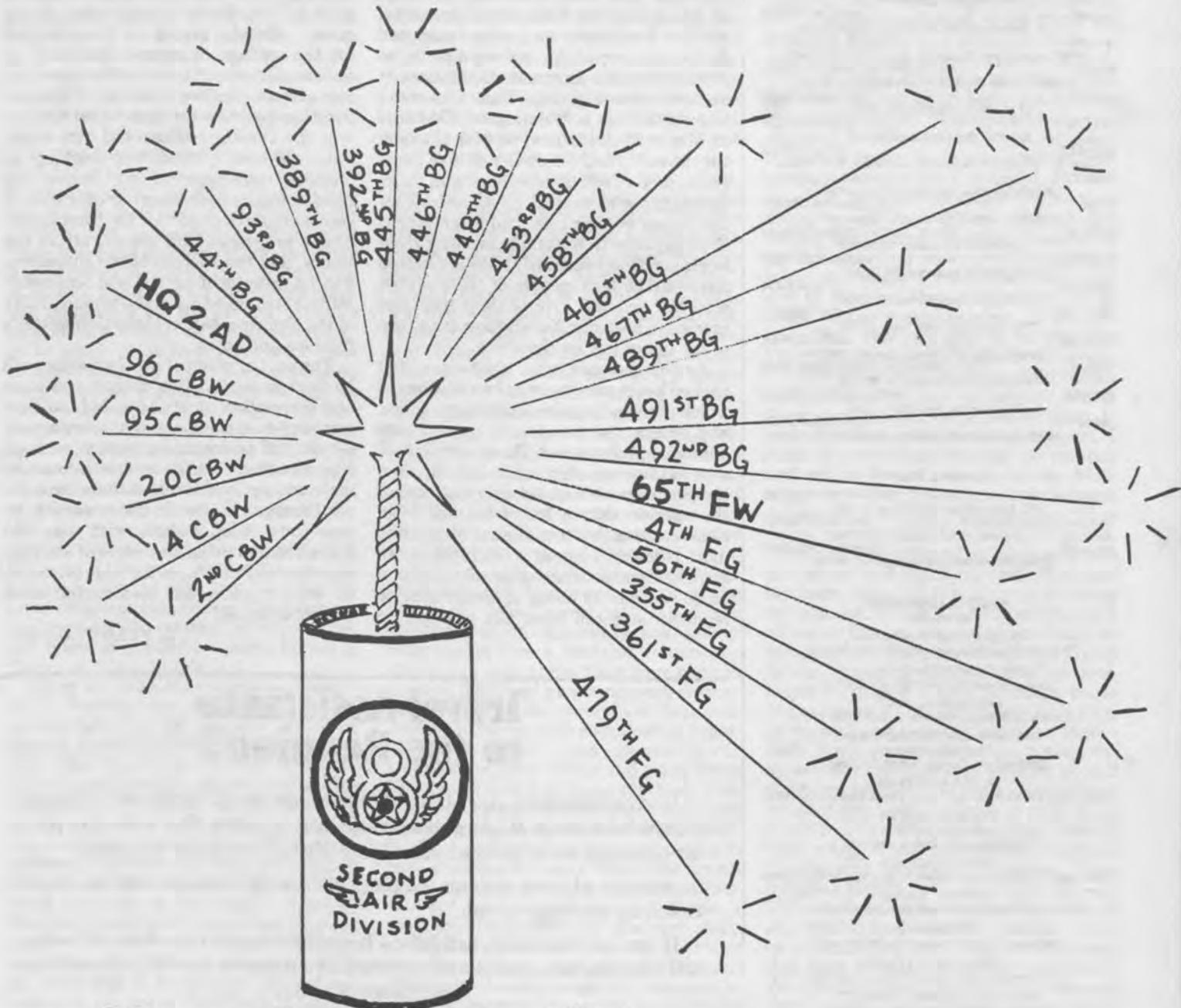


# JOURNAL

Vol. 24, No. 2

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

JUNE 1985



*From the Spirit of '76...  
with the Spirit of 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division...  
through the Spirit of V-E Day... — — — — —*

## Second Air Division Association Eighth Air Force

### OFFICERS

President J. FRED THOMAS  
8933 221H Biscayne Ct., Huntington Beach, Calif. 92646  
Executive Vice President Bud KOORNDYKE  
867 Reynard SE, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507  
Vice President  
Membership EVELYN COHEN  
Apt. 06-410 Delair Landing Road  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19114  
Vice President  
Journal WILLIAM G. ROBERTIE  
PO. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938  
Treasurer DEAN MOYER  
549 East Main St., Evans City, Pa. 16033  
Secretary FRANK THOMAS  
118 Lakeview Dr., Carlinville, Ill. 62626  
American Representative Board of Governors JORDAN UTTAL  
7824 Meadow Park Drive, Apt. 101, Dallas, Texas 75230

□ □ □ □ □

### GROUP VICE PRESIDENTS

Headquarters JAMES H. REEVES  
Box 98, Thomasville Rd., Moultrie, Georgia 31768  
44th BG HOWARD C. HENRY, JR.  
164B Portland Lane, Rossmore, Jamesburg, N.J. 08831  
65th FW COL. GEORGE M. EPPERSON (Ret.)  
2369 Oak Crest Drive, Riverside, California 92506  
93rd BG CHARLES J. WEISS  
21 Moran Dr., Waldorf, Md. 20601  
389th BG LLOYD E. WEST  
Box 256, Rush Center, KS 67575  
392nd BG J. FRED THOMAS  
8933 221H Biscayne Ct., Huntington Beach, Calif. 92646  
445th BG FRANCIS J. DIMOLA  
390 Madison Ave., New Milford, N.J. 07646  
446th WILLIAM F. DAVENPORT  
13762 Loretta Dr., Santa Ana, CA 92705  
448th BG LT. COL. LEROY J. ENGDahl, (Ret.)  
1785 Wexford Dr., Vidor, TX. 77662  
453rd BG MILTON R. STOKES  
PO. Box 64, Westtown, PA 19395  
458th BG E. A. ROKICKI  
365 Mae Rd., Glen Burnie, Md. 21061  
466th BG G. C. MERKET  
716 Top Hill Dr., Tyler, Texas 75703  
467th BG JAMES COFFEY  
39 Hardscrabble Hill, Chappaqua, N.Y. 10514  
489th BG COL. CHARLES H. FREUDENTHAL (Ret.)  
8421 Berea Dr., Vienna, Va. 22180  
491st BG CARL L. ALEXANDERSON  
RR2, Pawling, New York 12564  
492nd BG E. W. (Bill) CLAREY  
2015 Victoria Court, Los Altos, Calif. 94022

□ □ □ □ □

### JOURNAL STAFF

Editor WILLIAM G. ROBERTIE  
PO. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938  
Director of Public Relations FREDERICK MEYER  
1317 Cedar Road, Ambler, Pa. 19002  
Art Dept. EDWARD J. HOHMAN  
695 Richmond Drive, Hermitage, PA. 16148

□ □ □ □ □

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEMORIAL

THOMAS C. EATON, Chairman  
3 Upper King Street, Norwich, Norfolk, England  
PAUL R. KING, Vice Chairman  
Noverre House, Norwich NR2 RH, England  
MRS. MICHAEL BARNE  
Crowfoots, Sotterley Beccles, Suffolk NR34 7T2  
CDR. MARK EDMONSTONE CHEYNE  
Ditchingham Lodge  
Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk, England  
ROGER A. FREEMAN  
May's Barn, Dedham, Nr. Colchester, Essex, England CO76EW  
FRANK W. GADBOIS  
Dept. of the A.F.  
RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk, England  
DAVID J. HASTINGS  
"Westerling", Salthouse, NR, Norwich, Norfolk, NR136RQ, England  
ALFRED A. JENNER  
15 Ranson Rd., Norwich, Norfolk NR14AJ  
LADY MAYHEW  
588 Bracondale, Norwich, NR1 2AR, England  
MRS. ANNE COLLINS  
24 Grosvenor Sq., London W1A IAE, England  
PROFESSOR HOWARD TEMPERLEY  
School of English and American Studies  
University of East Anglia, Earlham, Norwich, England  
JORDAN UTTAL  
7824 Meadow Park Drive, Apt. 101  
Dallas, Texas 75230  
LT. COL. W.D. WUEST  
14 St. Andrews Close, Hingham, Norfolk NR9 4JT

## President's Message

In line with our intent that all members be kept informed as expressed in our initial message in the December 1984 issue of the *Journal*, we think it fitting that we bring you up-to-date on Association activities as they stand at the midpoint of our term of office. While it probably appears to the average member that things are quiet, we assure you your Association's affairs are being given full attention by those with the responsibilities of administration.

Along with all the routine activities of office the past several months, we polled all members of the Executive Committee, all Vice Presidents, and other interested parties for input for an agenda to be presented to the Executive Committee at our midterm meeting. Your Executive Committee met at Wilmington, Delaware on March 22 and 23, and we wish to thank the eleven of the thirteen Committee members, three ex-officio members, and those assistants who worked in the wings, for the giving of their time and attending at their expense to make our meeting most worthwhile and successful. We are indeed fortunate to have people of their caliber who can and will give of their time and monies to keep our Association at the top of the list of any on the scene.

As for the meetings, thirteen action packed hours were spent in two sessions at which practically every department, office, and program of the Association was examined and discussed. There was little, if any, extraneous conversation, and when the meetings were ended, everyone was of the opinion that a lot of air had been cleared, plans laid to make our operations more efficient, and our Association more attractive and interesting for our members. In no way can 13 hours of discussions be reported in detail here, but you will be

interested in some actions voted by the Committee: It was voted that all possible be done to get out a Division roster to all members without further costs to the member. We have estimates of costs being worked up in several areas of the US, and we are optimistic that an up-to-date roster can be afforded. We now have a new IBM computer which is in the final stages of being programmed, and one program will allow our members' addresses to be printed out in Zip Code listings so that we will be able to change the mailing of our *Journal* and other mass mailings from first class mail to Non Profit Organization postal rates...thereby giving us the potential for the savings of several thousands of dollars per year. Considerable attention was given to the improvement of communication between the individual Groups and the Division offices and vice versa. Also, we have a committee working on changing our logos for our *Journal* and our stationery to freshen our outlook and project more of a true Air Division image. Those programs, and others, are in the works, and the success of our intentions will be dependent on the will and determination of those given the responsibility of the implementation of the Committee's motions and votes.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held in conjunction with our reunion and convention at McAfee, N.J. on September 5-8. A portion of that meeting will be allotted to include a session with all Vice Presidents in the interest of continued and improved interrelations throughout the organization. In the meantime, we urge you to keep in touch with your Vice President and make him aware of any suggestions you may have for improvements or ways to make our Association more enjoyable for all.

J. FRED THOMAS

## Travel Assistance to the Reunion!!

Bud chamberlain, Assistant VP 489th, one of our Southern California members, is aware of a large nationwide travel agency that will make your air reservations at no charge, and provide the best fares available.

Because of their volume buying, additional savings may, in many cases, be available to you.

If you are interested, call Lifeco Travel Services at one of the following toll free numbers, and identify yourself as a Reunion bound 2AD member.

US (800) 621-3311  
Calif. (800) 621-6472

Your reservations will then be made and tickets mailed or delivered directly to you.

# "Escort to Valor, Courage and Undaunted Determination"

As seen through the eyes of a former P-51 Mustang Fighter Pilot of the 8th Air Forces Fighter Command, 4th, F.G.

by Major Warren Johnson

"... with undaunted courage and obvious bravery, the B-24 bombers made their way to the target through murderous enemy flak, thick enough to get out and walk on ... then one bomber at a time would receive a fatal direct hit and suddenly or sometimes slowly, roll over and begin going down in flames ... as an escorting fighter pilot who had to stay clear of "Flak Alley", I witnessed the B-24 bomber crews dogged determination to reach their assigned targets ... I felt so helpless, wanting to do something more to help those brave men through their courageous defiance of death ... we could only pray for them and count the chutes as they would appear, coming out of a burning B-24, hoping that we'd be able to count all ten crew members as survivors who would, though soon to be captives of the enemy, remain alive. . ."

During the forty years since the end of World War II and as a former member of the "Mighty 8th" Air Force, I have always felt that too little has been said about the heroism and death-defying courage of those brave and determined bomber crews who smashed the war-producing industries of Hitler's Third Reich. I can vividly recall our arguments on the ground with the crew members of a B-24 Bomber Division, as to which of us had it the best. They claimed that "they had it the best because they had four engines where we fighter pilots only had one." Actually, in my own opinion and considering the loss of our fighters, I still maintain that the bomber crews had the toughest job. However, in all fairness to both sides of an argument of this nature, I would like to point out that for every fighter pilot we lost in combat while escorting the bombers, we'd lose four when we'd Rhubarb an enemy airbase or try to take out Nazi mechanized armor, or even trains. The Germans had very deadly ground fire capabilities and many of our fighter pilots buried in Germany attest to this fact.

There are numerous missions which I recall whereby our assignment was to provide fighter escort for the B-24's of the Second Bomb Division. It was during a very cold April day in 1944 when we entered our Operations Room at 0500. Our Operations Officer lost no time in giving us the customary data as to the targets, the "anticipated" weather conditions and, of course, where and at what altitude and time we would rendezvous with the 2BD. I recall that one of the targets would be Mannheim because it was to be a primary target. There was also a "target of opportunity" in case inclement weather made the bombing of Mannheim impractical, even with the use of Pathfinder radar. We were dutifully warned of the possibility of heavy enemy fighter opposition which, by this time, had become common to us.

It was barely light as we left our hard stands, got on the taxi strip and began

"S-ing" our Mustangs from side to side to avoid running into the plane ahead of us. This had to be done because our tailwheels were still on the pavement and you couldn't see without swinging back and forth. Once we reached the main runway we all were quickly airborne. We met up with a large bombing force of B-24's over France at the pre-ordained time. As our squadrons drew up along side of the B-24's, their crews began waving to us and we waved back. We soon began our ascent and climbed above the bombers where weaving back and forth enabled us to stay with them due to the variations in the cruising speeds between bombers and fighters. It was clear and cold up there and we, as well as the bombers, were leaving white contrails. We were now approaching Ulm, the southern part of Germany, and if the Nazis hadn't already picked us up on their radars, our contrails we knew would be just as effective. About a half hour away from Mannheim, one of our fighter pilots broke radio silence and excitedly shouted, "Bandits at one o'clock high." Those of us who hadn't cleared our guns did so at once. We were soon attacked by a "Gangurschwaden", usually comprised of twenty ME-109's, and they were vicious. They tried to break through our fighter cover but we shot down five of them before they could get within effective range of the bombers. I guess that those remaining Krauts got the message, split off and headed elsewhere.

When the bombers lined up on their P.I. and entered "Flak Alley", all hell broke loose — it was murderous and devastating. Although we had to climb up and away from the B-24 bombers, we nonetheless had to clench our teeth and still try to pray for those poor yet brave and courageous dedicated souls who were now on their assigned target run. Many of the bombers received direct hits, rolled over and began plunging towards earth as they left a trail of flames. We tried to count the chutes but sometimes there were none to be seen. The Nazi gun crews were demonstrating the deadly accuracy of their anti-aircraft batteries with a vengeance, especially as we fighter pilots saw more of our comrades in arms rolling and going down in flames. Those B-24's who survived "Flak Alley" and made it to the target, really did a memorable job on Mannheim. The bombardiers had set their intervalometers in such a manner that very little of the target, if any, escaped. I vaguely recall that they bombed from 22,000 feet and it was a masterful demonstration of superb skill.

Right after the bombers began turning away from their target area and entered their pre-selected course for returning to England, we were jumped by the Luftwaffe from several different directions. The Mustang fighters tore into them in a desperate attempt to save the B-24 bombers. Although we managed to shoot down several Nazi fighters, quite a number of them

managed to get through to the bombers whose gunners succeeded in shooting down several more. The bombers managed to sustain numerous and vicious attacks but they most certainly held their own against the Luftwaffe. The battle entered into a large formation of cirrus cumulus clouds and many of us got separated. We learned the Krauts had broken off their attacks and called it a day, although they did pay a stiff price for their efforts. We had not lost any of our fighters.

By this time, other than the compass heading that I knew I should be on, I was lost. Having a soft-spot in my heart for crippled bombers, I dropped down to around 8,000 feet to see what I could find. To this day I didn't know whether it was intuition or just plain luck, but I came upon twelve badly damaged and severely crippled B-24 bombers, most of them trying to make it on two engines and leaving numerous trails of smoke. I pulled up along side of the starboard bomber, dropping my flaps fifteen degrees and pulling back on my throttle. I had to be careful to keep my nose up to avert getting into a stall angle. I looked the B-24's over and to say that they were in bad shape would be the understatement of the century. They were sure glad to see me; they knew they were sitting ducks for an attack.

I decided to risk breaking radio silence and put out a call for P-51 fighters, giving them our heading, speed and altitude. It proved to be a good move on my part. I received numerous "Rogers" to my call and within several minutes eleven Mustangs arrived on the scene, none too soon. A Lieutenant fighter pilot asked me, "How do you want to work this, Major?" I replied, "You take five of the silver birds with you and weave back and forth underneath the bombers, while the rest of us do the same thing above." About ten minutes after we'd all gotten into our respective positions, we saw another "Gangurschwaden" of Kraut fighters swooping down to kill off the near-helpless crippled B-24's. Somehow those Hitler-loving S.O.B.'s didn't see us in time as we gathered together, gave our Merlin Rolls Royce engines 75 inches of mercury, opened our throttles and went on up and met them head-on. We quickly split them up, shot down six of them and gave chase to the rest in such a manner that none of them even got near the crippled bombers. Our fervent tenacity to protect those crippled B-24's was too much for der Führer's finest and they quickly broke off and headed for home. The bomber crews by this time had seen what we'd done and they were all ecstatic with joy and relief. We talked to them over our intercoms and they couldn't express enough appreciation. I told them to be sure to "ring for room service" whenever they needed us, and they all laughed. We stayed with them until they all made it back to England. I'll never forget their waving to us as we parted.

# About the Memorial

by Jordan Uttal

Based on reports given by Evelyn Cohen and Dean Moyer at the recent Executive Committee meeting in Wilmington, Delaware, there has been a continued flow of contributions from you for the Memorial Trust. Repeated thanks to all of you who sent in donations with your dues. They are much appreciated.

As explained in the March issue, these funds are, as in the past, held in escrow until presented to the Trust, usually at the banquet of our Annual Conventions. May I invite your attention, again, to the fact that these funds are turned over to "The Memorial Trust of 2nd Air Division, USAAF" (even though you properly make out your checks to the 2nd Air Division Association). The Board of Governors of the Trust invests these funds into channels recommended for Trusts under British Law, and makes grants of funds annually for the support of the 2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room. These funds are spent by the Norfolk County Library Authority for new books, films, and cassettes for the Memorial Room, and for shelving elsewhere in the Central Library. In addition, we agreed, years ago, to the idea of sending surplus stocks to branch Libraries throughout Norfolk and Suffolk, the general area in which all the Fighter and Bomber bases of the Division were located.

It should be emphasized that the Memorial consists of more than collections of books, films, and cassettes about America and Americans. Outreach programs have started to attract present and future generations to strengthen the ties between our two peoples, ties that were firmly forged by the associations we made with the local people, civilian and military, of Great Britain. At present we are concentrating on school talks, an active campaign going on right now by our temporary American Librarian, Mrs. Sue Vision. Reports, to date, have been excellent. In addition there are frequent showings all around East Anglia of David Hasting's two films, "Remember Them", and "A Village Remembers".

**Values of Old Friendships:** They are many as all of you know. As you were advised previously, the cost of the American Librarian six month tenure has been covered by a grant from a local Norwich Charity, the Anguish Foundation. By coincidence, the head of this Foundation, Mrs. Jessie Griffith, is a former Lord Mayor of Norwich, and she marched in the procession at the dedication of our Memorial Room in 1963. I am not too sure of this, but I believe also that the Executive Secretary of the Foundation is a former Clerk of the Trust, our old friend John Howard.

**Individual Group Rolls of Honor:** The final batch of five first drafts arrived the first week in April thanks to the efforts of Paul King and his staff. All fourteen Bomb Groups have now been received, subjected to the corrections I was aware of, and sent to each Group V.P. for further examination, additions (with proof) and any other improvements. Six have already returned theirs, and they are already back in England. With good luck, and the continued attention of our friends in Norwich, the final corrected copies should be in our hands for presentation to each Group in September at our Convention. I am pleased to say that I have also received lists covering the five Fighter Groups, bless them all. Considerable checking has to be done on them in view of the fact that they were assigned to us, operationally on 1 September 1944. But they, too, will be represented properly, in their assigned niche in the Memorial Room.

I can tell you now, that the last official figure of our losses, 6,085 men who lost their lives in line of duty, will be substantially increased. Special thanks will be given to those individuals who had the foresight to keep foolproof records for their groups, so that we can finally pay honor to those whose names were omitted in the original Master Roll. It has been impossible to locate anyone who knows how the original list was made, and after all these years it would serve no real purpose. The fact is much work has been put in so far, and is going on now to make the Roll of Honor as true and complete as possible.

**Film Tributes to 2nd Air Division:** Soon after the appearance of the December *Journal* mentioning the availability of the

## Faces of Hope

By Leroy W. Newby

While appearing on Pittsburgh's WTAE-TV Jack Bogut show, in July to discuss a book (Target Ploesti: View from a Bombsight) I had written on the human side of the bomber's war over the Balkans, a lady called in and said, "I lived in Belgrade and prayed for you American Boys as you flew by on the way to Ploesti (Romania). This is my first opportunity to thank one of you in person.

War was impersonal to us bomber crews flying over German occupied countries. We fought things and machines — not people. We dodged flak and fighters, never seeing our faceless enemy.

A reader had previously written, "You probably did not see a small American-born boy waving to you on the way to his Budapest bombshelter on July 30, 1944."

We also never saw the unraised faces

Videocassettes of David's films, he had received enough orders to have a second printing accomplished. Those who ordered received their copies in mid or late February. Because of the decline in the Pound, David wrote each person asking whether a refund was required or whether the excess be donated to the Capital Fund of the Trust. Each person chose the latter option, and David has written me that the check for the excess will be presented at the May meeting of the Board of Governors which I will be attending.

Since then I have received inquiries from at least five more members who "missed the boat", but David has agreed to have another printing done on 1 August 1985 provided he receives enough orders for the run. A minimum of eight is required. Further because of the currency situation the price is reduced to \$65.00 each, subject to further fluctuations. So, if you wish to order, please write direct to David J. Hastings, "Westering", Salhouse, near Norwich, Norfolk, England NR13 6 RQ, telling him which Video you wish, and enclosing a check for \$65.00. He says he can order either VHS or Beta, but he needs a minimum of eight orders. Your checks will be returned in the event that he does not receive enough orders.

**Lady Beryle Mayhew:** Have just heard from our dear friend that she intends to move from Norwich, and after forty years of service to the Memorial Trust (she is an original Governor) she intends to retire. She will receive the best wishes from the Association when I see her in May, and I hope to have her new address for those who care to write her, in the September issue. Just consider, she was working in our behalf before the 2nd Air Division Association was formed!!!

Looking forward to seeing you in September . . . .

of oppressed people living under German tyranny — faces that saw in us tangible evidence that help was on its way. We were not privy to seeing the love and gratitude in those faces for American youngsters flying to their potential death.

An Austrian wrote that he cheered from his Vienna basement window on July 26, 1944 as our 460th Bomb Group hit the Zwolfaxing Airdrome. I enjoy his Christmas and vacation cards.

A Czechoslovakian wrote that he has visited nearly 85 crash sites of downed American planes, and has devoted his life to lecturing young people on how hundreds of American youngsters gave their lives for the freedom of Czechoslovakia.

The royalty checks and talk shows are nice, but the reward I really cherish is the realization after forty years of the hope and strength we young bomber crews unknowingly had given to downtrodden people whose beloved country had been overrun by invading troops.

# Open Letter to the 93rd

by Charles Weiss (93rd)

**93rd Memorial—Hardwick:** Thanks to those of you who finally are getting around to it and are sending in your contributions. We are still a long way off. Get off your duff and send it in! Make checks payable to 93rd B.G. Memorial Fund. To date (April) only 32 out of 360 members have contributed and that's not so hot!! Please do your share, we have to know how much we have to work with in order to determine the magnitude of the Memorial. For those of you who have joined since the last *Journal*, please contact Gene Alvord, project officer, at 4902 N McBride, Tacoma, Washington 98407 in order to find out about the Memorial plans. Don't be left out and miss the opportunity to have a part in the Memorial. A committee has been set up to assist Gene on the plans and design. Committee: Alvord (chairman), F. Mabee (328), J. McMahan (329), C. Vasquez (330), J. Beach (409), John Archer (good friend of the 93rd), Dave Woodrow (owner of Hardwick), and me. Something great ought to emerge from such an august group!! To date (April) we

have contributions of \$900.00 and to do a nice job of the Memorial we figure we need about \$2,000.00 to \$3000.00. So get with it!!

**Group Roster:** Since the last issue of the *Journal* great things have happened to the 93rd Roster. Glenn Follweiler, 1881 E. 5150 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 has taken over the task of providing the 93rd Roster to those who would like one. He's added a real nice touch — put it in book form; Group patch on the front cover; all other Support Groups' insignias too; and has included a geographical index. One can tell at a glance who the other members are that live in his or her state. To get one of these Rosters just send Glenn \$3 to cover his reproduction and postage costs.

**Locator Requests:** Dick Porterfield, 147 Avenida Alipaz Walnut, Calif. 91789 would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew his brother **Charles L. Porterfield** who was co-pilot on John W. Pryor's crew when they were killed in action enroute to Africa (Ploesti raid) (409th Sqdn.).

George Tachuk, 19892 Hilliard Blvd., Rocky River, Ohio 44116 would appreciate hearing from anyone who remembers his twin brother **T/Sgt. John Tachuk** who was killed in action on December 20, 1943 (329th Sqdn.).

**Association Dues:** Great day in the Morning, I just received a notice from our Membership VP and it wasn't good!! It seems that 19 of our members are being dropped because of failure to pay the annual dues! Don't let that happen to you! I'm sure that in most cases it is an oversight. Don't let those dues slide. Especially since we will be having the big 40th Reunion in Norwich in 1987.

**93rd Patch:** Joe Beach, 4128 Galbrath Dr., N. Highland, Calif. 95660 has had some patches manufactured and can supply any one with same. Just get in contact with Joe. Joe has donated all moneys which have been over his cost to the 93rd Memorial Fund — a check for \$55.50. These Patches really dress up your old baseball cap. Many thanks Joe.

**Lost Souls:** It is remarkable that so many ex-members of the old 93rd still haven't heard of the 2nd Air Div. Assn. Violes Planary just told me that they have located all members of their crew (3 deceased), as well as three who were added later on. End product is they are having a Crew Mini-Reunion! After how many years? How about some of the other crews and Service Sections doing that. It is really wonderful to once again rekindle old friendships!! While you are at it — Sign Em Up!

## 8 Ball-Y-Hoo

by Pete Henry (44th B.G.)

Your correspondent attended a 2ADA Executive Committee meeting in March and it was one of the most productive meetings we've had in several years. Everyone is looking forward to the September reunion in McAfee, N.J. including the trip to West Point on Friday, Sept. 6.

Luncheon will be served in the Cadet Chapel and 50 cadets will be with us, along with the West Point band. The Officers Club has never served luncheon to 1000 people and they are all very excited about our group visiting the Point. Evelyn Cohen reported that plans have been made to hold the 1986 reunion July 10-13 in the Chicago area so you fellows in the Midwest can stop complaining about all the reunions being held on the East or West coast. In 1987, we will go back to Norwich the end of May.

Jordan Uttal reported that the Roll of Honor in the Memorial Library in Norwich will shortly total 6225 names of comrades from the Second Air Division who gave their lives during WWII. One hundred and forty-five names of 44thrs will be added as a result of Will Lundy's untiring efforts to confirm every man who was lost.

Our President, Fred Thomas, has as one of his objectives this year to supply every member a complete Roster of all 2ADA members. It has been 5 years since yours truly was successful in obtaining the last Roster printed in 1980 and we have almost doubled the membership since my term as your President.

Since mid-February, I have received several letters from Marc Harris in Weirton, W.V. Marc is the son of Lt. David Milton Harris of the 506th Squadron and Marc advised me in his first letter that his father passed away 22 Dec. 83 just 2 days after his 62nd birthday. I was able to answer some of Marc's questions but not all. He wrote to Roger Freeman (author of *The Mighty Eighth*) inquiring about Lt. Harris' wartime activities. Roger replied that his father's crew was shot down 21 June 44, while flying in a 67th Sqdn. plane on a mission to Berlin. The plane's markings were NB on the sides, E on the tail, B24-J with serial number 42-100411.

In Marc's letter 2 Mar. 85 he writes, "Now comes the unbelievable part. I recently purchased *Forty-Fourth Liberators Over Europe*. While looking through the book, I discovered a full page picture of a B-24J in flight, dropping its bomb load. Underneath the picture it says "Bombs away". The markings on this plane are (you guessed it) NB-E-42-100411!! I just about fell out of my chair. It's the same plane that my Dad was shot down in. I wonder if there is any way to get a copy of this picture so I could frame it."

I provided Marc with names and addresses of several men on his father's crew and he has been in touch with the remaining living members. His father spent some time in Stalag Luft III and Marc would like to hear from any men who were there and might have known David Harris. Please send any information about Harris' crew, roommates in Stalag Luft III or B24J serial number 42-100411 to Marc

Harris, 300 Mildren Ave., Apt. 8, Weirton, W.V. 26062. Marc and his mother are planning to attend the 2ADA reunion in New Jersey in September.

Last summer, I received a letter from Elsie Mertz ordering an 8-Ball patch and a copy of Will Lundy's *67th Sqdn. History*. She asked me to send it to her at her daughter's address as they were to be a surprise gift for her husband, Howard. She wrote again in July and advised me that these would be held for Christmas gifts and inquired about *44th Liberators Over Europe* and *The Trolley Mission*. I referred her to Will Lundy.

In January, I was saddened to receive a letter from Howard advising me that Elsie was killed in an auto accident in October and did not get the chance to give Howard his Christmas presents. He found them when the family were going through Elsie's effects and they had notes on the books indicating that these were to be given to Howard for Christmas.

Howard was in the 460th Sub-Depot at Shipdham and is very proud of the work that he and his group did on our planes — changing engines, fuel tanks, wing stabilizers, adding armor plate beside pilot and co-pilot seats, replacing cables and repairing battle damage. He feels that the boys in the Sub-Depot never really got the recognition they deserved (rightly so) and would like to see more stories about the ground men in the *Journal*.

If your boys will send us the stories, Howard, we'll see that they get into print. Please accept our sincere condolences on the loss of your beloved Elsie.

# The 448th Speaks

by Leroy J. Engdahl

First, I want to make a correction to my article in the December issue of the *Journal*.

At our Palm Springs reunion I had asked our members to supply me with a few human interest items about themselves including for one "how many children you have".

I somehow gave credit to my good friends Ben and Charlotte Everett but credit should have been given to Paul and Mary Ellen Homan who have eleven children, but listen to this, "all eleven are college graduates". I don't know if that's a record, but I would like to know if anyone in the 2nd Air Division has that many college graduates in their family. Mary Ellen and Paul certainly deserve a lot of praise.

In the December issue in the "448th Speaks" you saw a picture of the Seething control tower as it is today.

Hopefully by the time we go back to Norwich in 1986 it will look much different.

As you know we are helping members of the Waveney Flying Group who own the part of our old base at Seething that contains runway 07/25 and the control tower with the restoration of the tower to its war time appearance as we knew it.

We have had fifty-two donations, thirty-six orders for runway plaques, and seventy-four orders for the beautiful tea towels totaling \$2,537.00. From this has to be paid the cost of the tea towels and materials for the plaques plus the mailing cost from England to the States. Also Mini Whitehead has mailed each of you a "Thank-You Letter" and does the banking for this project.

I want to thank each of you who have contributed to this wonderful project especially to several widows who are concerned with the preservation of our World War II control tower. Most of these widows also contributed to the granite memorials we dedicated last June at Seething. You are to be commended and I really appreciate it.

For those of you who have not yet made a contribution and intend to do so please do so as soon as possible as good weather will soon be here and volunteer workers from around Seething will be busy but we do badly need funds. It is a rough guess we will need between \$5,000 to \$7,000 to do this job right.

By the way, if anyone has good pictures of any of our 2nd A. D. control towers inside and out we need help in knowing how the tower originally looked. All pictures or specifications will be photographed and returned to you as received.

Our friends in England are having a hard time finding anything that will help them. We want it to be just as near the same as it was as possible, so if anyone can help in this regard I would really

appreciate it.

Remember any cash contribution toward this WWII Memorial is fully tax deductible, so please be as generous as you can. Thanks!

Also in regard to the lovely tea towels having a map of Eastern England showing all American bases by town and by group number with an overlay of all American planes operating in England during the war is a beautiful memento and can be purchased for \$10.00 by anyone, not just 448th. Just make out your check to Ralph Whitehead and mail to me at — 1785 Wexford Drive, Vidor, Texas 77662, and I'll mail to England and keep tabs on our orders, donations, etc.

Our 448th group reunion at Shreveport — Barksdale AFB is coming a long just fine. We now have over one hundred who say they are very interested in attending our first ever state-side group reunion.

I have talked with Barksdale officials and they will join with us in a memorial ceremony on the base at 11:00 A.M. on

Saturday, June 15th, followed by lunch on the base and a base tour. Air Force buses will pick us up at our hotel and bring us back afterwards. We have an excellent program arranged and many people are new members and will be attending for their first time.

Thanks to all your help we have grown in membership in the 448th from 303 to 424 since the 2nd A.D. reunion in England in 1983. Keep sending me names of your buddies and friends who are not on the 448th Group roster I sell for \$1.00 plus postage. I now have a two page supplement to rosters made up prior to July, 1984. If you bought one please send a self-addressed stamped envelope and I'll send this to you at no charge.

Thanks to everyone who has sent me money for stamps and photo copies, etc. I really appreciate it. My expenses do run pretty much and I can always use stamps.

Let me know right away if you intend to make the reunion at Shreveport as room reservations will be a problem if you wait.

## A Most Unusual Mission Somewhere in England

by W. L. Orient (93rd B.G.)

On October 7, 1944 Lt. H. H. Cook's crew were briefed to bomb oil refineries in Magdeburg, Germany. It was Cook's last mission to complete his tour. In consideration of this event we were assigned to the newest and best airplane in our 328th squadron and the best inside formation position. Over the target area we were hit by flak barrages. We lost power on two engines and everything mechanical was loused up.

We left the area on a long glide, on our own, headed for Brussels, Belgium, which had been liberated. We ran out of altitude and speed at Antwerp, Belgium, (which was in German hands that morning at briefing). We headed into the Luftwaffe Field at Antwerp. Waist guns were manned. I was in the top turret on landing. ME 109's and FW 190's were on both sides of the runway. (Lucky for us, they were damaged and deserted.) We were told to hold fire unless fired upon. We got to the end of the runway and kept going as far as we could go. A Belgian civilian in a lorry drove up to the plane in minutes and told us he would try to help us. "Get in!" The Germans were still in the area, although they had deserted the field that morning. He eventually took us to the Century Hotel, the fanciest and nicest hotel that I have ever stayed in. We registered and got settled.

That night we (the enlisted members of the crew) went on a local liberated pubbing mission. It was nice to be the first Americans in a newly liberated city.

Hank Bratyanski passed out on us and we would drag or carry him from pub to pub — park him against a pole on the curb. Two Belgian policemen asked us if he was ours and would we take care of him? We said we would and we did, as always. "Chafe" Miller would ride the street car out to the fighting area in the mornings and report directly on the war.

Antwerp was a lovely town to us, except there was nothing to eat. The Germans had gleaned the place. We went back to the airfield once. It was newly occupied by a Polish Spitfire outfit. They offered us their fare — boiled cabbage and rum for breakfast. I considered myself a fair boozier, but I couldn't drink their rum. I filled my cigarette lighter with it and had the hottest and longest burning refill in the ETUSA.

After about three days a couple of MP's came up from Brussels, loaded us in a GI 6 wheeler and hauled us and our acquisition of liquors to an airfield in Brussels where ATC flew us directly to our base in Hardwick.

We were back flying combat on the 17th of October. Frank Cepl our original co-pilot took over the crew. Lt. Cook had to fly one more mission and he flew with us as co-pilot on the 25th of October.

There were many pleasant memories from our Antwerp mission and we enjoyed the Friday afternoon parties with the Antwerp juice. I still have my Antwerp penknife.

# 392nd Bomb Group Report

by J. Fred Thomas (392nd)

We have recently received a copy of the Roll of Honor for the 392nd Bomb Group. Did it ever occur to you how many names are on that Roll? According to our count, there are 747, and further, we heard that only the 44th Bomb Group sustained greater losses than any of the 14 Bomb Groups of the Second Air Division. It gives you further cause for thought when you realize that the 392nd, 44th, 492nd, and 491st Bomb Groups were all in the 14th Combat Wing. Add it up— we believe we paid our dues.

In line with the above, we will continue our report started in the March issue of the *Journal* in which we spoke of our obelisk at Wendling and the plans for a stone and a tree to be placed at the USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB. As for the Dayton project, things are right on track; thanks to the fine work of Bob Lane, the cooperation of Bob Vickers, and your usual generous replies to our requests for help to give recognition to the sacrifices and successes of the 392nd Bomb Group for the part played by the Second Air Division in WWII, and to pay honor to those of our Group who made the ultimate sacrifice. At this writing, Bob has been to Dayton and selected a site for the memorial. He will be going back in the near future to finalize the plans and look over the scene, now that the snow has departed. We are now at the point of getting of a number of our members thinking to compose the inscription on the stone and/or plaque. We have suggested it be something fitting, inspirational, and descriptive of the tenacity of our Group, yet not flamboyant, and we expect that is what we will have. We have asked a number who have been with the Group for longer periods to help with this composition, and I'm sure Bob and his contacts will come up with something profound which will instill a sense of pride in all who visit the memorial. Then, that brings us to select a date for the dedication of the memorial. Needless to say, we would like to select a date which will enable a great many of our 392nd B.G. members to attend. To an extent, the season for planting a tree, the schedule suitable to the USAF Museum, and other programs will determine the date for the dedication, but we are considering September 15; that is just a week after the finale of our McAfee, N. J. Division reunion. It is our thinking that those who had been to the New Jersey reunion could make their way by Dayton on their way home, attend the dedication and continue, thus avoiding another separate trip for the event. Those are just some of the considerations required, so we will have to let you know the details by a separate mailing when everything is settled. Regardless of

the date, we hope you will plan to attend this event which is something that should give you a great deal of satisfaction.

By the time you read this, it is expected we will have made our trip to Norwich and Wendling. While attending other Association ceremonies, we plan to visit Wendling to meet with Denis Duffield, Mr. and Mrs. Parker, members of the Beeston Parish Council, and others who take an interest in keeping our obelisk and its grounds attractive, and our history alive. A letter from Mr. Parker tells us of some of the problems of the drainage at the obelisk plot which make it difficult to cultivate as needed for the garden they would like to have there. He was planning to put in some tiles that would improve the drainage, and that takes work and expense. We would like our Group to help him with that to some extent. A letter from Mr. Duffield reports that the new owners of the property that includes the old Officers Mess and Club are having the building reworked and it will be preserved in some manner. At least, it will not be bulldozed.

We thank those of you who have sent us stories for the *Journal*. While at one time the *Journal* was hurting for articles, things have changed since our membership has increased greatly. None of us can complain at the print accorded the 392nd B.G., but we realize some of you are disappointed that your articles haven't been published. We have submitted a number which have

been returned by the Editor because of lack of space, but we will keep submitting them until he can accommodate us. Don't let that keep you from sending us any good stories, however, we have only a couple or so on hand, and we have to be prepared for a drought. We continue to have members looking for members of their crews. This indicates there are still a lot of our people out there who haven't heard about us. Vincent Cunningham, who served with the 577th and 579th Squadrons, is looking for John C. Daley (P), Orville G. Stebner (CP), Ottie S. Firquain (R), Billy T. Beville (WG), Gailor E. Minster (E), Norman S. Appel (WG), Joseph E. Berry (TG), and Robert A. Cole (WG). Alfred P. Rinke, who was on Lt. Wyeth C. Everhart's crew, and was shot down on the Hamm raid on April 22, 1944, would like to find Everhart, F. J. Sassmann, H. G. Korman, J. P. Chat-ten, Norcutt, Fred L. Veit, Thomas E. Johnson, James W. Beard, Robert G. Fowler, David E. Nelson, Charles A. Haupt, Verden E. Doan, Joseph L. Garafalo, Elroy J. Prud'Homme, and James W. Hammond. Please help us with this if you can.

We are pleased to report that we had 12 happy couples representing the 392nd B.G. at our So. California area reunion which 201 members and guests attended at Santa Ana on March 2nd. Several asked for Myron Keilman and Ben Hunsaker. Where were you CO's?

---

## 2ADA Film Library

The following VCR tapes are available for 2ADA members rental. All are VHS format.

- I "Remember Them"
- II "A Village Remembers"
- III "Target For Today"  
"The Men Who Flew The Liberators"  
"2ADA 1973 Reunion — Colorado Springs"  
"2AD Memorial Dedication — Norwich 1963"
- IV "The Mission"  
"Night Bombers — RAF"  
"Schweinfurt & Regensburg"  
"Memphis Bell"
- V "Ploesti"  
"93rd B.G. in North Africa"  
"The Fight For The Sky"  
"2ADA Reunion Film Clip — Norwich 1983"
- VI The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 1-8.
- VII The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 9-16.
- VIII The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 17-24.
- IX The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 25, 26  
The Air Force Story — Vol. II — Chapters 1-6.

Send \$3.00 for any tape (order by Roman Numeral I - IX) — maximum 2 tapes at a time — to: Pete Henry

164 B. Portland Lane, Jamesburg, N.J. 08831

---

# Hethel Highlights

by Earl Zimmerman (389th)

Merv the Magnificent. He was only a Pfc. in the 565th Sqdn. but he was a wheeler-dealer of the first order. He was a farm boy from Iowa, stood about six foot two and weighed around 195 and reminded one of Lenny, in "Of Mice and Men", played by Lon Chaney. He was the type who tripped over his own hulk and was the only G.I. I knew that was on permanent KP and loved every minute of it. Merv lived in the Nissen hut next to the orderly room and kept the lads supplied with goodies from the mess hall.

On March 24, 1945, I was to be married in the cathedral in Norwich, but on that day all personnel were restricted to base as we jumped the Rhine River that day and all of our B-24s were loaded with containers for the paratroopers. In any case, I appealed to the Chaplain and Base Commander, but to no avail. I cycled back to the orderly room and the first sack, M/Sgt. Holmes, asked why I wasn't in town. When I told him, he stuck his head out of the door and yelled for Merv. Merv enters and asks "Duh you want me Sarge." "Yes, Zimmerman is restricted to base, but has to get to town for his wedding." "No sweat Sarge. I'll get a truck and make a supply run. He can hide in the back." And so it was done. I arrived in time for my wedding, but had to use a hung over G.I. by the



name of Jerry for my best man. He had been to a school and just returned to Norwich. If you recognize him, please let me know. He is on the left.

Merv was the proud owner of the Purple Heart and as far as I know, the only ground pounder at Hethel to wear one. It happened this way. During the night of the Hamm Raid when all of the planes returned after dark, the JU-88S followed them in and shot them up while in the landing pattern.

One plane was on fire on the main runway and Lt. Foley's plane had just hit

the radar shack upon landing and killed all inside. At this time Merv was on a midnight requisition to the mess hall and was returning to his hut with a large ham, five loaves of bread and two pounds of English butter. With all of the flak flying around and tracers filling the air, Merv started to run across the field and fell into a machinegun pit and sustained a wound in the head. From here on the story gets fuzzy, he was sent to the hospital and the next day awarded the Purple Heart by the Sqdn. Commander while in the sack. Someone complained about his Purple Heart and an investigation revealed that ham grease was found on his jacket, but also some gun lubricant, therefore he was allowed to keep his Purple Heart. Wasn't it wonderful the way Merv volunteered to help the machinegun crew in the time of great peril to Hethel. I am sure his citation did not read, "As he was running across a darkened field with a stolen ham, he was wounded by falling into a gun pit and scraping his head on the machinegun." In any case Merv was a jolly ole soul and had a grin for everyone.

He made friends with a local farmer and one story is worth telling.

Merv's friend needed a new tractor, but things being rationed the best he could do was a second hand tractor which the owner offered to trade for 200 pounds of sugar. Merv could not appropriate that much without the Sgt's. blessing so he worked a deal. As the Mess Sgt. was a connoisseur of fine wines, he would catch a ride on the "Trolley Run" to Paris and trade some cigarettes for some fine French wine. He took five cartons and found that he needed much more for good wine, but he did manage to make a deal with a seedy looking Frenchman who wanted two bolts of English wool. Merv returned to Hethel and for two months scrounged around and finally traded — heaven knows what — for two bolts of fine English wool. Another trip to Paris and he returned with three cases of wine for the six stripper.

One day while on a supply run to the depot, a six by, with Merv at the wheel, stopped at a farm house, 200 pounds of sugar hit the ground with a thud and Merv roared off down the narrow lane toward Hethel. The roar of a second hand tractor was heard near the farm one week later.

One fine English day, we learned the secret of Merv's infectious grin. Two dog-faces from Hethel were cycling to the "Whistling Swan" pub and passed a thatched roof farm house. They noticed Merv in the back garden picking Brussels sprouts and standing next to him was a buxom blonde who stood five foot six and weighed in about 130 pounds, or for you

limeys, just under ten stone. Buxom, according to Webster, "Having health, vigor and comeliness, plump and rosy; jolly."

You combat flyers with your white silk scarves and spam ribbons think you had it made on the liberty runs into Norwich. Merv was a stone's throw from the farm and between meals his bicycle automatically headed for the farm. The blonde was the best fed gal in the county and Merv spent his time overseas studying agronomy at the farm. Rumor has it that a few salvaged parachutes found their way to the farm. The NCO in charge of the parachute tower was known to be fond of chocolate cake. Therefore this deduction is made; the NCO was fat and the blonde wore white flimsies during the war years. No rationing for Merv. If you're out there Merv, drop me a line and pass on some of your more secret deals. I heard one about fresh eggs being scrambled in the line shacks near the hardstands and abundant gasoline for the tractor. How about a brace of pheasants showing up in the Nissen hut for a snack for the lads in radar. What about — well that's another story. Stay tuned.

---

## Folded Wings

Hdq.

A. A. Panella

44th

John F. Byers

Thomas J. Barnett

Brother R. J. Marotta

93rd

William C. Clayton

J. Walter Gallagher

Alfred G. Minisci

389th

Daniel W. Dittman

Robert G. Martin, Sr.

445th

William J. Devine

446th

Norman C. Ellis

448th

Richard P. Miller

458th

Henry Jaber

489th

Carl M. Hillstrom

Milton R. Johnson

---

# Old Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck

by Milt Stokes (453rd)

Some of you have wondered where the phrase "Bunchered Buddies" came from. As you know, we assembled a heck of a lot of airplanes in the air over East Anglia in preparation for a combat mission. There had to be a fixed point for that assembly to begin. It was a radio beacon. The 2nd Air Wing used Buncher Six. There may have been more than three groups; i.e., the 453rd, 445th, and 389th, using this buncher. At times it seemed as though every group in the area circled Buncher Six. Planes would climb up through the funnel of the beacon, keeping the radio compass as close to 270° as possible.

When new combat crews were introduced to this assembly method for the first time bedlam broke loose. Strange planes would zoom through your formation. When flying formation, one couldn't hit the panic button and dive or climb to a safer altitude. No altitude was really safe! So, you held your position while your mates caught up. You will remember, too, that we flew in some of the worst weather conditions imaginable. Snow, rain, clouds and the half light of the early English mornings kept the crews' stomachs churning. Further adding to the discomfort was the sluggish feeling of the controls of an unstable aircraft. When fully loaded with bombs and gasoline, the B24 responded reluctantly to rudder, elevators and ailerons. She was a lady though; she moved when she was ready. One couldn't force her or she answered with the first shudders of a stall. Take your time, watch air speed indicator, angle of attack, keep manifold pressure up, watch cylinder head temperature, fly good formation and, eventually, the planes would break through the clouds. Some times — quite rarely — one would fly into blessed bright sunshine. On occasions, when coming out on top, the entire coast of occupied Holland could be seen, boldly outlined in the gray waters of the North Sea — what a sight — what a thrill! The battle of Buncher Six had been survived one more time.

Last year the 453rd and the 445th met at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, for a three day mini Reunion, May 6-8th. There were 225 people in attendance for the service of Thanksgiving and tree Dedication. It was a wonderful and moving experience. We commemorated the May 8, 1944 Mission to Brunswick, Germany. On that raid we lost ten planes. Eight of them over enemy country, two crashed in England. Reported MIA were Lts. Witten and Keith of the 732nd Squadron, Lt. Parker of the 733rd Squadron, Lts. Hart, Banks and Stilbert of the 734th Squadron and Lts. McKay and Lovell of the 735th Squadron. In addition, Lts. Jones and Asbury crash-landed at Watton. Lt. Catlin and crew,

with their plane badly shot up, bailed out near Long Stratton in England. The ball turret gunner, S.Sgt. Bates, didn't hear or couldn't respond to the bailout order as he was badly wounded and rode the plane to the ground. He survived the crash. It was interesting and appropriate that four men of the Witten MIA crew showed up at Dayton — they were besides Witten, Abe Wilen, Buck Croxford and Walt Conneely.

At the mini Reunion in Dayton we awarded Andy Low the "Buncher Six Award" for his "... continued rallying force in the 453rd BG from March Field, California, through a term as a P.O.W. in Germany in 1945". He has done so much to keep us going in more recent years. We wish to continue giving the "Buncher Six Award" by presenting it to someone who served in the 453rd BG during WWII. Your nomination for the Award is needed now. Please submit to me as soon as possible, your nominee's name, when he served, what he did that you think was outstanding. The Award will be made at the reunion in Great Gorge, McAfee, N.J., Sept. 5-8, 1985. Remember to make your reservation early if you don't want to be left out. We of the 453rd BG would like to have the largest number in attendance. We can't let Frank DiMola and his 445th group outnumber us — can we?

In the last *Journal* you were offered a roster of the 453rd. Maybe we were a little

too hasty. It will take longer than expected to comply with the requests, so please be patient, you will get that list.

Recently when in the house of a friend who was a combat member of the 2AD, I had a glimpse of what life is like when you lose your helpmate — your wife. I have known this friend for some time. He has never joined the 2ADA, although I have asked him to many times over the years. I'm sure he would find some old Buddies who could help relieve the loneliness. He has been very depressed, almost as though he has given up on life. To him life has lost its yeast. This has set me to wondering — we must have many men in our group who would welcome a friendly letter from you — yes, you. A lot of people get only junk mail or bills. Personal letters are rarely found in their mail boxes. Very shortly you will receive the name of a man who, as far as we know, has never joined our 2ADA. Maybe that someone is waiting for your call or letter. Would you write to him? Please send a friendly letter, let him know that his old friends do remember and are interested in him.

If you don't want to help in this crusade, just drop me a line and say so; otherwise, I shall send to you a name and address. You do your best. A nice friendly letter would not be too difficult for you to write. Start it now. The name and address will arrive shortly.

---

## Dallas Mini-Reunion

by G. C. Merket (466th)

On February 9, 1985 we had our "Bash" (mini-reunion) in Dallas, beating the weather by three days. The cold and ice departed leaving us CAVU weather with temperatures in the high sixties.

About 150 people attended with only ten no-shows. They represented the 56 Fighter Group, all 14 Bomber Groups, Hdqs. 2AD, one U.S. Navy Group and one Pilot representing the Luftwaffe (JU88). The 467 group led the mission with 14 members in attendance, 466 was deputy lead with 10, and the 458 was in reserve with 9 members present. States represented were Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

We were honored to have Fred Thomas, 2AD President with us. Fred made a short speech stating that he would be available and would welcome any suggestions from

the membership.

We had our usual take-off with the Candle-lighting Ceremony. Jordan Ural usually conducts this meaningful part of all 2AD Reunions and we were very disappointed that he was ill and unable to be with us and conduct the ceremony for us.

Lucian Smith added a bright note by bringing seven members of his family with him. It was really nice having some young people attend, it gets tiresome looking at all that grey hair.

Every time that I attend one of these reunions I see some old friend that has been out of pocket since we flew to the ETO and this time was no exception. I enjoyed seeing Bill Gallagher who was the pilot of Chicago Red, the plane and crew that part of our squadron staff flew over with.

We hope to have this mini-reunion again next year, but will probably not challenge the weather and flu season again. At any rate, a "bang-up" time was had by all and we are looking forward to a bigger and better Bash next year.

# I Remember: Those Big Formations (Part II)

by Myron Keilman (392nd Bomb Group)

The concept of bombing in formation is nearly as old as the first bomber airplane. In November 1914 First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill ordered the bombing of Germany's zeppelin base at Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance. The zeppelins were bombing London at night. On 20 November a formation of four Avro biplanes flying from Belfort, France dropped eleven 20 pound bombs on the zeppelin base. They hit the hydrogen gas generating plant, but missed the zeppelins. One was shot down by ground fire.

Formation flying actually began as a defensive measure by WWI reconnaissance airplanes. When in formation the gunner in the rear cockpit of the airplanes could bring to bear considerably more fire power on the attacking pursuit airplanes than a lone or single gunner. This principle was also true for the vulnerable bombers.

The second reason for a bombing formation is to place the largest concentration of bombs on the target in the shortest time possible, thus subjecting the force to anti-aircraft fire for the least time and achieve the greatest damage.

From the time of General Billy Mitchell the foundation of air doctrine lay in the conviction that bombs can destroy any man-made structure. The tactical doctrine, as told by General Haywood Hansell, an early day 8th Air Force Wing Commander, espoused defensive fire by tight formations and "fight through to the selected target." The air doctrine also believed in selected vital and strategic targets rather than area targets or cities such as both the Germans and British used. Since such targets were hard to find at night the air doctrine further embraced daylight bombing tactics throughout World War II.

Our new crews in 1943 and 1944 had very little training in formation flying. They had been limited in flying hours for it, and their instructors, for the most part, had had little or no four engine formation training themselves. In fact, some of them were down right afraid. It wasn't until 8th and 15th Air Force pilots returned to the States in sufficient numbers that the state of training improved. Our replacement crews in late 1944 and 1945 were considerably better trained in the techniques of formation flying and our compact bombing patterns verify it.

Formation flying was indeed somewhat hazardous. This no doubt contributed a lot to the loose and strung-out formations. A lot of pilots were simply afraid to "close it up." There were four incidents in the 392nd that airplanes in formation collided.

The most "scary" thing to imagine is an incident where two formations collide. This could happen as the wing and division

bomber stream was forming. One group coming into the stream could misjudge the rate of turn and the rate of closure and collide with a group already in line. It was also a possibility at the initial point (IP) or even the rendezvous. I happened to have ridden through one in the Fall of 1943. Our group was on a training mission with the 44th Group. We were in the process of making a wing assembly maneuver as described above. I don't recall which group was doing what, but all of a sudden the two groups of eighteen airplanes were dodging one another in the damndest melee you can imagine. As a squadron operations officer, I was flying with a new crew somewhere in the middle of the formation and didn't see the incident coming until diving and dodging airplanes loomed all around. You know, there wasn't a single collision. However Lt. Donald Whitford witnessed two groups of B-17s collide somewhere over the continent. From his recall it was a sad sight of destruction to both groups.



Formation flying in four engine bombers was not easy. To hold a "tight" position of nose to tail and wing tip to wing tip on the element leader for eight hour missions required concentration, skill, stamina, and team work of both pilots. If a pilot was selfish and couldn't or wouldn't trust his co-pilot he "pooped" himself out after a couple hours and fell back in formation. After several airplanes loosened up, the formation became strung out. It then became highly vulnerable to German fighter attacks — to say nothing of what it did to the bombing pattern. The Jerrys had "picnics" with loose, strung out formations and "tail-end Charlies." One Luftwaffe pilot, Lt. Herbert Rolliuage, alone shot down 44 B-17s and B-24s. Lt. Eder shot down 36 plus 32 probables. A list of 27 outstanding day fighter pilots are credited with 682 four engine bombers. Of course in so doing they were shot down several times themselves either by our bombers or our fighter escort.

In January 1944 General Jimmy Doolittle sent a personal letter to each of the

three air divisions commanders concerning the importance of flying close formation and keeping the group formations closed up. He said, "Two points must be firmly impressed on every pilot in our bombardment formations. One, the integrity of each group must be maintained. The formations must be kept closed up and there must not be a single avoidable straggler. Two, the group leaders must reduce the length of the combat wing columns..."

General Hodges, Commander of our 2nd Air Division, endorsed the letter to all airplane commanders stating in part, "Air discipline and compact cohesiveness are the principal contributing factors to the effectiveness of defensive bombardment formations."

There were many occasions, however, when a group couldn't maintain the desired close formation of wing and division integrity. I experienced this on the disastrous mission to Fredrickshaven, 18 March 1944. Our two twelve-ship formations experienced heavy accurate flak on the bombing run. Both squadrons were badly shot up and several airplanes were shot down. My airplane, in the lead, had to feather an engine. This reduced our speed ten miles an hour. When we emerged from the target area the formation ahead of us was nearly out of sight. Then the German fighters attacked. Without friendly fighter cover our little group of remaining airplanes suffered three concerted attacks. Only fourteen of our twenty-four airplanes returned to Wendling that day. Then, too, during the spring and summer of 1944, daily maximum effort missions were exhausting for the combat crews. Crews had to fly four and five days in a row. They were just plain worn down and physically couldn't hold tight formation the whole route. J. Fred Thomas, Jr., a flight leader in my squadron, recalls "Our formations at times looked like a bunch of airplanes going somewhere." Fred and his crew flew their combat tour of 30 missions in just 69 days — seven days of which they were on R & R (rest and recuperation). The pilots leading the low elements (3 airplanes) had it especially difficult. They had to look upward, often into the sun, for hours. As a result, the low left element more often than not hung back out of tight formation. In so doing, they were most vulnerable to fighter attacks. It was known as the "coffin corner".

The German fighter tactics against our formations were pure and simple. A "gaggle" of six or eight — maybe more — Messerschmits (ME-109s) and/or Folke Wolf (FW-190s) would attack a formation of B-24s from eleven to one o'clock (Remember the movie "Twelve O'Clock

High"?). They dove in unison with guns blazing, and broke away only at the last instant. Then they would circle back, regroup, climb high ahead of us, and again dive into us with their guns blazing. I have flown through as high as three such attacks by the same "gaggle". — Ask Vernon Baumgart! El Lobo landed that day with 147 holes and a blinded navigator. After such attacks, they would split up and attack individual B-24s that were shot up and couldn't stay in formation. They attacked these and/or any stragglers relentlessly from astern, head on, diving or any old way until they ran out of petrol, ammunition or our friendly fighters came along. Of course there was the matter of the B-24 getting hit so badly it ceased to fly, or caught fire and spun into the ground—sometimes some of the crew managed to bail out. — And sometimes the Germans were shot down by our gunners with their turrets of twin .50 caliber machine guns.

The tactics of fighters armed with rockets were different. They made individual head-on attacks, or they sat back out of range of our tail turret and lobbed the rockets at us. On head-on attacks, they fired their wing-mounted 32mm rockets, then their 20mm cannon and 7mm guns. Their rate of closure was so fast that our gunners couldn't track them. Often they couldn't dive below or pull up over us and had to come straight through our formation. It was real "scary". The Germans were plainly discernible in their cockpits.

Of course, Germany couldn't withstand the superiority of our fighter forces (P-47s, P-38s, and P-51s). After May 1944, German fighters became only a minor detriment to our bomber formations.

Maintaining qualified and experienced lead crews was a big problem in the 8th Air Force. So fast were missions flown in the Spring and Summer of 1944 that crews were completing their 25 to 30 missions before lead crews could be selected and trained. As a result bombing accuracy fell off appreciably. The 2nd Air Division commander, General Kepner, and all the wing and group commanders were in a quandary. By September Colonel Al Showers, 446 Bomb Group Commander, had perfected the lead-crew squadron concept and their bombing accuracy attained the best in the 2nd Air Division. Thus, in November 1944 the 392nd received approval to establish a lead-crew squadron and I was assigned as its squadron commander. Four of the best lead crews from each of the four squadrons were assigned to me plus several potential lead crews; that is, crews with ten to fifteen missions and high lead-crew skills and attributes. A rigid ground school and flying training program was established. Before a lead crew completed its missions a new crew would be selected from one of the other three squadrons. It was "stood-down" from flying combat missions until it was trained

and proficient in lead-crew duties and expert in practice bombing. Our group, for one, definitely benefited from the lead-crew squadron concept. We attained and maintained one of the very best bombing accuracy records of the fifteen bombardment groups in the 2nd Air Division. — Ask Joe Whittaker, 2nd AD Bombardier.

Who were the people that led these formations? They were the best available pilots, bombardiers, and navigators in each group; supported by their flight engineer/gunner, radio operator, two waist gunners, tail turret gunner and in '42, '43 and early '44 a ball turret gunner suspended from the belly of the airplane.



THE PILOT

The pilot was selected because of his proven ability as a pilot and his leadership qualities—an aircraft commander in every sense of the word.

Our formations lead airplanes each carried three navigators—a dead-reckoning, a pilotage, and a radar. The dead-reckoning (DR) navigator directed the course of the formation according to the 8th Air Force and 2nd Air Division's operations order and flight plan. Routes must be flown as briefed: Rendezvous points, bombing run initial point (IP), and times crossing in and out of enemy territory must be made "good". He kept the log of all mission activities.— Yes, he was a busy person!



THE NAVIGATOR

The pilotage navigator flew in the nose turret and when cloud conditions permitted called out landmarks—cities, lakes, rivers, railroads, etc.—to the DR navigator.

During the summer of 1943 radar bombing came into use. Its rotating antennae installed in the ball turret well of the B-24 could scan a 100-mile wide area of the terrain and transmit a map-like display on a radar scope (cathode-ray tube). The radar set was nicknamed "Mickey"—in short for a Mickey Mouse contraption. It indeed was

a mysterious and sometimes cantankerous maze of electronics. The radar navigator was referred to as a "mickey operator". The airplanes thus equipped were known as "Pathfinders" or PFF for short. Bombing by means of the radar set—when visual conditions ceased to exist for the bombardier—was known as bombing by PFF.

The radar navigator worked with the dead-reckoning navigator and bombardier in a highly coordinated manner. He and his "mickey-set" made it easier to make the timing at turning points good, routes flown more accurately, avoid flak areas, and to bring the formations from the IP (initial point) to the target on the precise course. Thus, if the target could be identified and bombed visually the bombardier would "take-over" and lay the Norden or Sperry bombsight cross-hairs on the point of impact, kill the drift, and release the bombs. Otherwise, the bombs of the whole formation were released through the bombsight by the radar navigator calling course corrections and distance from the target (rate) to the bombardier. During the last six months of the war (January-April 1945) some very accurate bombing was accomplished by the "mickey operator" and his H2X radar set.

"MICKEY, H2X 100 MILE EYE"



The lead bombardier was entirely responsible for getting the bombs on the target. He had to be completely familiar with all aspects of the target so that he could accurately bomb under almost any condition, where any part of the target area was visible. He had to be cool and calm under pressure. From an altitude of 24,000 feet he had to distinguish factories, marshalling yards and the like under smoky, hazy, and broken cloud conditions. Viewing bursts of 88 and 105mm anti-aircraft fire (flak) through his bombsight optics could really "shake" him. On automatic pilot he actually flew the airplane from the initial point (IP) to the target, while performing necessary evasive action—delicately—so as not to spread out the formation or lose sight of the aiming point. His bombsight released by radio signal all the bombs of the formation.

(continued on next page)

## I Remember (continued from page 11)

Of course, the flight engineer/top turret gunner, the radio operator, two waist gunners, tail turret gunner, ball turret gunner and nose turret operator (generally a pilotage navigator) all played important roles in making a lead crew a coordinated team of aviators.



THE BOMBARDIER

Then there was the air commander or command pilot. They were the senior pilots of the group (group and deputy group commanders, group operation staff members, squadron commanders and squadron operations officers) that flew in the lead and deputy lead airplanes. They were responsible for the tactical disposition of their respective formations including division wing, group and squadron leads. They were specifically charged with maintaining the integrity of the Division formations and to insure the success of the mission. They most always flew in the co-pilot seat; thus facilitate viewing the formation and bomber stream, and be in a position to take over control of the airplane if an occasion warranted. In this regard, reflecting on the 43 missions I flew, I only

deemed it necessary to take over control one time. Of course, when flying deputy lead I rotated with the pilot every fifteen minutes or so in flying formation. I remember that on one particular mission while we were under heavy enemy fighter attack the pilot and I kept changing over flying the airplane every few minutes. Neither one of us could stand just sitting there watching those "Huns" diving into our formation with their guns blazing.

Those great formations of bombers streaming Eastward across the English Channel every morning were awesome to behold. It took approximately two hours for the Eighth Air Force to assemble and depart. There was hardly an area from Kingslynn to London and eastward that didn't reverberate with the drone of those formations—often 3000 airplanes strong. With fighter escort airplanes also going and coming in relays, and finally all these bombers returning to their bases (minus those that were shot down) there was hardly a time in the day that the relentless sound of warplanes wasn't filling the air.

Can you imagine how the people of France, Belgium, Holland and the whole



THE AIR COMMANDER

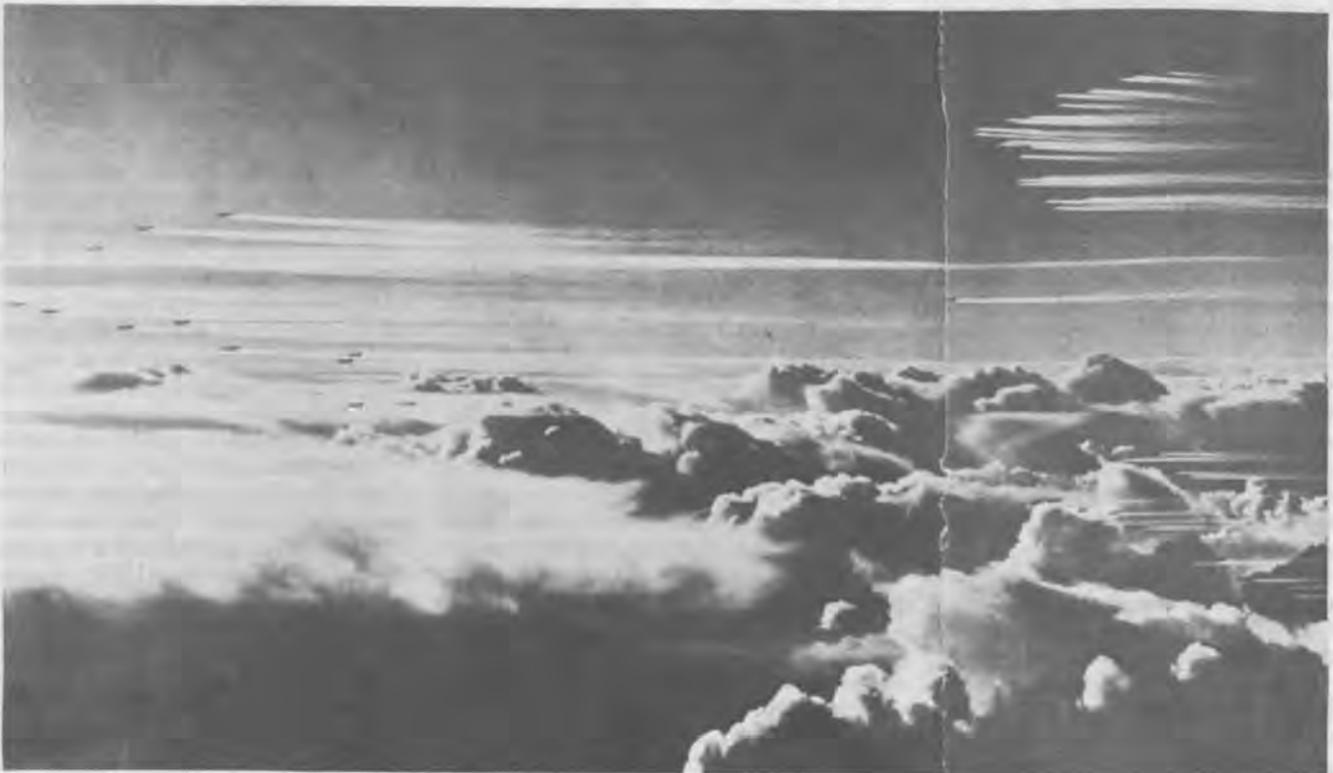
of Germany felt listening to the seemingly endless sound of our big formations coming and going?

Can you imagine their anxiety in knowing that their factories, marshalling yards, airfields and adjacent communities would be bombed?

Then there were our own ground forces that after D-Day witnessed the Big Formations. I have often listened to infantrymen, signal corps men, and other acquaintances tell me how they watched our formations—"As far as the eye could see"—penetrate Germany. Yes, they cheered as we were East-bound. Then thumbed their noses at us as we flew West-bound—knowing we would sleep in beds that night, instead of a foxhole or bombed-out hovel. Little did they realize that often more than a few airplanes, with their crews, would be shot down in flames. Some fortunes would survive the heavy anti-aircraft 88mm or 105mm explosions and/or fighter attacks by bailing out and wind up as prisoners of war (POW's). Very few U.S. infantry or others were ever taken as POWs and had to suffer the indignities until V-E (Victory in Europe) Day.

Formations of the 392nd Bombardment Group flew 269 missions from 5 September, 1943 through 25 April, 1945. 184 airplanes were shot down or otherwise lost. 1,138 crewmen were killed or missing in action. Some returned after VE-Day from prisoner of war camps. The Second Air Division counted 6,032 known killed in action (1942-1945).

There never was and there never again will be great armadas of airplanes flying in close formation as in 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945.



# BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP  
by  
William F. Davenport



Received a note from Bill Wight regarding his experiences on the first and thirty-fifth mission as a bombardier with the 707th. The first mission, with Bill Raynor as pilot on 13 August 1944 to Rouen resulted in flak damage to the hydraulic system and a hot — no flaps — no brakes landing at Bungay. The thirty-fifth and final mission with Pilot John White to Maydeburg took a lot of perseverance to accomplish. After take-off, the gear would not lock up leading to a return and transfer to the spare, which developed a flat nose wheel tire during taxi. After a quick change "a la Indianapolis" they took off and intercepted their squadron off the coast of Belgium, where they swung into formation to complete the mission.

Bill also said he has "Lou Gehrig Disease" but is still getting around and sends his regards to all his old friends.

I have also received a note from Calvin J. Chang, Jr. inquiring about his father. His father's name was the same and he was a Ball Turret Gunner in the 704th Squadron aircraft Sugar Baby. Any of you readers who may remember Calvin J. Chang, his son would like to hear from you.

Charles L. Kline of the 93rd Bomb Group responded to my request in the last *Journal* regarding the Hondo museum. He also stated he was shot down in January 1945 and interned in Sweden. He asks the question if anyone knows of an association of and for Swedish internees. He also states he recently retired and now has time to get involved. So if no association exists, maybe some of the other internees might get in touch with Charlie and get something going.

Kline also said he thinks the *Journal* should be expanded even if dues must be raised. Unfortunately, it takes more than money to expand the *Journal* in a worthwhile fashion. If we get enough interesting stories sent to us VP's I am sure we would get them out to the troops either in the *Journal* or through individual group newsletters. This is an item we should be giving thought to for our New Jersey Reunion group business meeting.

Those of you who cannot attend the New Jersey meeting should get your inputs in to me on the subjects of memorials and other activities; see your March *Journal*.

Speaking of March, I did get over to Bungay and had nice visits with John Archer, Nick Walter and Paul King. John and I spent an entire Saturday together.

He picked me up at the Lord Nelson and we proceeded to Bungay by way of Seething. John showed me the memorial stones erected and dedicated last summer on the old base and in the village cemetery. The 448th met, as I understand, last June for several days, staying in the area nearby in B&B's and Pubs. Fortunately for them their airfield is still being used for flying activities.

At Bungay, I found Flixton Air Field, our home for two years, being dismantled. Yes, the runways are being broken up and put through a giant crusher to make gravel for road fill and other uses. John and I stopped by to talk with the gentleman who is reconstructing St. Mary of Flixton Church gates. He has removed the gates as you see in the photo of your VP and is searching for the best quality oak to reconstruct them. You wood workers certainly know more about this than I, but it is important for long life exposure to the elements of nature that the wood be properly dried, not too quickly or too much. I was impressed with his interest in going the job in the best fashion and not taking any short cuts. It is intended to completely reconstruct the gates, using new materials etc. with the exception of the bronze plaque which will be reused. As you can see from the photograph, the posts which are to be replaced have been pushed over by the 12" diameter tree on each side.



Bill Davenport at gates of St. Mary-Flixton.

These trees were part of a hedge row some 40 years ago when the gate was erected.

John and I visited Mrs. Henseley, who

is the current church Treasurer, to discuss the removal of these trees near the gate and the establishment of a "Trust" or other mechanism to provide for the Memorial gate in the future.

Mrs. Henseley was a child when we were there, but she remembers all the Americans and appreciates our desire to perpetuate the Memorial gate in memory of the 390 or more members of the 446th who were killed in action. Subsequently, Paul King gave me the address of an office to contact in the Church of England regarding a trust.

John and I explored the old foundations of our home away from home, locating the Officers Club and adjacent air raid shelter and areas where quonset huts once stood, before retiring to the "Black Swan" for an excellent lunch of fish and chips washed down with a pint of lager. Then back to John and Lorna's home to see the video tape made during our 1983 visit. It is very good and since my return home I have had it converted to the American VHS standard. This together with the video tape of the March AFB Memorial will be shown at New Jersey if facilities are available. We spent the remainder of the afternoon reviewing John's fantastic collection of keepsakes from the war. Some of which John let me take for sharing with you.

Every place you turn you find 2nd Air Division people. At Mildenhall I met Bob and Irma Dubowsky, who were also awaiting Space A transportation to the states. Bob was the contributor of the article "Combat With a Hat" in the June '84 *Journal*. Bob and I discussed the future and present of the Association. Bob pointed out that the locations selected for meetings have not considered a number of areas of the country which have a sizeable contingent of 2nd ADer's. He feels that Florida, where he lives, would be a good location. I promised to look into his request at the next meeting.

Herb and Reba Gordon checked in with the latest totals on the fund raiser we have underway. They were on their way to Australia and New Zealand. Come to think of it, I didn't relate the funds with their trip. Should I have? Thanks to all the contributors and those who wished us well but couldn't. We would certainly accept any fund surpluses you might have, just send them off to Herb, or me if you don't trust a guy who has taken off for Australia!!

I should say in all fairness, we do hope Herb and Reba have a great time down under and we will see them in New Jersey, I am sure. Speaking of New Jersey: If you haven't sent your deposit to Evelyn, look at the back cover of the last *Journal*, Mar. 85.

Almost forgot, we had twenty-three 446th's out for the Southern California Reunion March 2. Incidentally, this was the first time Joe Heinemann and I had met since October 1944. Joe and I served on the same crew in the 705th.

Keep tuned to Beach bell.

# Jimmy Stewart's Finest Performance

by George Makin (389th)

For many years, I have wanted to write this story but was afraid my facts or recollections would be in error. On January 7, 1944, on a raid to the I.G. Farben Chemical Plant at Ludwigshaven, Germany, a great individual who we all admired for his theatre performances, saved my life and the lives of many other men in the 389th Bombardment Group of the 2nd Combat Wing. I am referring to the skill, airmanship and discipline of Brig. Gen. James M. Stewart, Retired.

The details of what happened on that January 7th, can best be described by quoting a December 1945 Saturday Evening Post article and noting passages from the official Air Force Records on Mission #38, file 72 of the 389th Bomb Group. The official record states that the I.G. Farben Chemical Plant was hit on this day through cloud cover with unobserved results by 23 aircraft of the 389th B.G. which unloaded 264 500-pound bombs from 23,000 feet, the attacking bombers having experienced no trouble from the meager and inaccurate flak and scarecrow rockets.

Slight enemy fighter action was met from the I.P. to the target. Those attacks were successfully repulsed. Not so, however on their return, as there were determined attacks of the FW-190's and the ME-109's south of Paris. The 389th led the 2nd Combat wing — Major Caldwell was the air commander. The wing formation after the rally point found the leader increasing air speed and taking up a course south of that as briefed. At first, the other aircraft thought the leader was making a dogleg to fall in behind the B-17's. But when it became evident that this departure from course was being adhered to, attempts were made to call the leader. The excessive air speed caused groups to string out. At 13:08 hours, the 389th found itself alone and unescorted south of Paris. About 35 FW-190's and ME-109's made vicious attacks. In the running battle, the leader, Capt. Willhite with Major Caldwell, was shot down. Also shot down were Lt. Smith and Lt. Matson. Claims allowed for this group were 15 destroyed, 1 probable and 8 damaged. End of official file.

It should be noted that the deputy leader of the 389th was Norbert Gebhard's crew and when the leader was shot from the sky, it was Jimmy Stewart who moved his entire group, the 445th over the top of the new leader. It was this move that saved the 389th from annihilation because planes were spread out all over the sky and the aggressive yellow nose fighters would surely have made their kill. I was the bombardier on deputy leader Gebhard's crew, and I became a believer in the leadership abilities of Jimmy. After he placed his aircraft over the new leader, the remaining planes of the 389th got back into tight

formation for the trip back to England.

Col. Milton Arnold wrote a letter of commendation to the 445th B.G. and Capt. James Stewart in particular. One statement from the letter commends the group on the splendid display of superb air discipline. It further states that "the good judgment of Capt. Stewart, your



Jimmy Stewart and George Makin (389th BG), Norwich, England, 2nd AD Reunion, May 1983.

Group leader, in maintaining an excellent group formation, yet making every attempt to hold his position in the Combat Wing formation, is to be commended."

## Spy

by Tony North

Many years ago when I was a boy and the 2nd Air Division had occupied Norfolk I used to spend a great deal of my spare time hanging around the various air bases within reasonable cycling distance of my home in Norwich. Horsham St. Faith was my nearest and favorite venue, but during the longer days in the summer of 1944 I ventured further afield to the uncharted territory of Hardwick, Hethel, Seething, etc. I used to talk to the ground crews working on the aircraft and, if I was very lucky, to one of the "gods" who actually flew in them. Of course, I shouldn't have been on the airfield at all but everyone was friendly and no one seemed to mind very much.

I had a notebook in which I recorded my travels, what aircraft I'd seen and sundry other bits of information and this notebook, naturally, became very precious to me until one day disaster struck.

Myself and a friend had cycled out to Hethel and had stopped in a lane which ran along the northern boundary of the airfield near the shooting butts. I was writing something in my notebook when a jeep came along the lane at quite a fast speed. With no sense of impending doom, I didn't take much notice until the jeep screeched to a halt and an officer got out, came over and said "What you got there, son?" It was too late then to conceal my notebook and in any event in my young innocence (I was fourteen at the time) I

When it was noted that the lead aircraft was off course, two alternatives were open to Stewart, both of them bad. He saw another formation leaving Ludwigshaven on course and knew he could easily switch over and tack on behind it, thus insuring the safety of his own group. But this would have meant abandoning to its lonely fate, the group which was blundering away from the main procession — an easy prey for fighters which were sure to single it out on the way home. And yet, if he continued, for the sake of wing integrity, to follow a leader who was heading for disaster, he must accept the certainty of sharing concentrated fighter attacks and extensive flak damage. With a hollow feeling in his stomach, Jimmy told the new leader of the 389th that he was sticking with them. He closed the 445th group in for support and the new leader changed course, came home safely with no more loss of aircraft or lives.

As I look back over 40 years and recall the air battle on that cold January day, I think of how the best of the German fighter pilots were pitted against two of the best bomber groups of the 8th Air Force and each won a part of the battle. But to me, this was Jimmy Stewart's Finest Performance.

wasn't greatly concerned; I just thought the officer was being friendly as most Yanks were. However I was mistaken because after glancing through my book he proceeded to give me a long lecture on the sins of recording secret information, took my name and address and, worst of all, confiscated my notebook.

I cycled home in deep depression hoping that would be the end of the matter, but some time later the father of the boy who had been with me, who happened to be an Inspector in the Norwich City Police came to my house and said that they had received a very serious report about me "noting movements of aircraft of use to the enemy," etc. I had visions of being incarcerated in the Tower of London, where all the best spies were sent in those days, but my friend's father found it all very amusing and explained that I was too young to be charged with any offense and what should have happened was that I should have been taken before a high-ranking uniformed police officer and, in the presence of my parents, given a severe telling off and warned as to my future conduct. That never happened as I suppose my friend's father was deemed to have done the "telling off" so that was the end of it, but, needless to say I never went to Hethel again.

I have thought many times since, when I have been involved in research on the 2nd Air Division how useful it might be if I still had that notebook, so perhaps the officer who took it might read this and care to write me a letter of apology or, better still, return my notebook!

# 466 Bomb Group Characters

by G.C. Merket (466th)

Not all war stories are horror tales about fighters, etc. There were some funny episodes also that we can look back on and laugh about.

All bomber groups had their "Characters" and the 466 was blessed with its share. One of those was a pilot, a first lieutenant regular army who was an ex-cavalry officer and went through pilot training in grade. He was probably getting a major's pay. He made captain as a lead crew combat commander and was one of the best pilots in our squadron.

The following is an account of one of the missions flown by this pilot and his crew of which I was a member. By the way — this pilot was about 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighed about 145-150 pounds soaking wet. (How many stone would that be?) The co-pilot was an ex pro football player. No need to mention his size — let's just record that he crowded the right hand seat.

We had the usual take-off and finally formed up more or less on schedule and headed for the war. We crossed the English ditch and ran into the usual little black puffs of smoke over or near German cities along the way. We reached the I.P. right on time and made our bomb run to the target as usual with no drift to kill. Our navigator considered it a poor job if I had any drift to kill. We dropped the bombs and headed for the Red Cross hut and those peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, washed down with de-briefing G.I. whiskey.

On the way home we ran into some more of those little black puffs and one of our engines got temperamental. We had to relinquish the lead and try to get back on our own. This is when we went into some friendly white clouds and headed for home.

One of our pilot's rules was that everyone stay at his position until we were on the ground. This meant that the co-pilot stayed on the fighter channel until his help was needed on the landing check list. Everyone stayed at his position and when we made land fall we found the weather was lousy. We went in low — in fact so low we didn't have any trouble reading the number on the hospital we just happened to be flying over. The little book confirmed our position. (Something was wrong with Gee.) As the co-pilot had not heard anything on the inter-com, he was really puzzled about why we were taking so much interest in the hospital below. However, when he remembered that the pilot occasionally visited a certain nurse, he began to put two and two together.

When we turned on final the co-pilot began in no uncertain terms to make it clear to the pilot that he did not mind

# A Quick "How To" Guide for Members

Who to contact for the answer to your question or problem.

## Lost Buddies & Group Historical Info:

Ask the Group VP

Help in search for WW II acquaintances; information on those you now have located; info on any Group ("then" or now); rosters; etc.

## Journal Data:

Ask Bill Robertie

Questions about articles, people, photos (already published in it, or ones you may want shown in a future issue); extra copies; lead time for submitting data; etc.

## Membership Policy & Dues:

Ask Evelyn Cohen

Membership categories; Association membership policy; questions on dues (send dues payments to her); membership cards; etc.

- (Some notes: (1) new plasticized cards when issued are valid only if dues are current;
- (2) Assn. has a policy to provide free dues coverage for those members unable to pay;
  - (3) dues paid by *new* members joining after July apply to the rest of that year and all of the next;
  - (4) dues are on a calendar year basis; statements are sent each year end; please send dues payment back with the statement;
  - (5) three types of memberships apply: Regular (only those in, or associated with, the 2nd Division in WW II); Associate (Regular member's immediate family); Subscribing (other interested persons). For further details, ask Evelyn.

## Booklets, Decals, Patches:

Ask Evelyn Cohen

The Assn. has a supply of various items available at cost to members.

## Lending Library:

Ask H. C. (Pete) Henry

Pete is custodian for items to borrow for mini-reunions, etc. He has: Combat films, posters, visual aids, hand-outs, etc.

## Second Air Division Memorial

Ask Jordan Uttal

Ask Jordan about any and all information regarding the Memorial Trust, the Library, the auxiliary Memorial programs (cassette tape program; endowment program, etc.), donations, etc.

- Donations: (1) ALWAYS make checks to "2nd Air Division Assn.",
- (2) Specify on lower left corner of check, or by separate note, designation: Capital fund; or other contribution (books; books in memory of . . .; etc.).
  - (3) to offer a specific book: write first to Colin Sleath of the Norwich Library (ask Jordan the procedure).
  4. Donations to Capital Fund: send with annual dues to Evelyn Cohen; otherwise, send to Dean Moyer (Treasurer).
  5. Other contributions: send to Jordan Uttal with note detailing purpose, honoree(s), etc.

See June 1983 *Journal* article, or ask Jordan, for more details.

## General Notes:

All addresses of those named above are published on page 2 of every 2nd Air Division Association *Journal*.

Always make all checks out to "2nd Air Division Assn." unless otherwise specified.

All Association Officers are eager to help you in any way they can regarding the Division and the Association. Feel free to contact any one of them. The above listing provides you with the *best sources* of information.

being his co-pilot and doing all the things required of him, but he took a very dim view of flying all over England after a very tiring mission just to signal a nurse that he would be over to see her. A sort of fight erupted at this point. What with full flaps and all the other distractions, we made a pretty exciting landing as viewed from

the nose of a B-24. (Leeds, if you remember this incident a little different, just don't say anything.)

This crew had a ball-gunner that was a charter member of "Characters, Inc.", but that is another story I hope to get into the *Journal* one of these times. See ya'll in New Jersey Labor Day.

# Mission Failure and Survival

by Charles McBride (448th BG)

It was during the recent 448th memorial dedications to our fellow comrades who fell in action in World War II, and which coincided with the fortieth anniversary of D Day, that I was introduced to Mrs. Mimi Grix in the church yard of the village of Seething from which our old base was named. Mrs. Grix, now age 71 and a French national by birth, wanted to present to the group members one of her prized reminders of the war, a souvenir scarf showing a map of the Normandy towns that figured so prominently in the invasion routes of the allied armies that began on D Day.

Mrs. Grix, or Mimi as she preferred to be addressed, purchased the scarf soon after the war and had kept it perfectly preserved during the ensuing years. I was selected to accept it from her on behalf of the group when it was learned that she had been an active participant in the French resistance movement in the vicinity of Avranches, a town near St. Lo. She was involved in numerous dangerous ventures in aiding and comforting both French civilians caught up in the wake of war after the fall of France in 1940, as well as active assistance to downed allied flyers with whom she came in contact, the latter actions being at the risk of immediate death if discovered by the conquering enemy.

I too became affiliated with the resistance movement for five long months as the bombardier of Charles Knorr's crew flying The Crud Wagon when it was unable to reach the English coast on the return leg of the infamous mission of April 1, 1944, and had to bail out over northern France. Mimi and I, consequently, shared many common experiences during that trying period. My mind began to wander back to the beginning of that most unique adventure of my life when, coincidentally, two women of the resistance played a key role in my successful evasion from capture.

A total of five aircraft of the 448th were lost on this mission, not from either flak or fighters, but incredibly by the lack of fuel to reach English soil. This was the day when my group, led by its commander, Colonel James Thompson (killed on this operation) was the division leader to attack the I.G. Farben chemical works at Ludwigshaven. Upon entry of the enemy coast, the lead plane took up an erroneous heading to the target and was never able to correct the navigational error. After expending almost an hour in searching for Ludwigshaven, the two trailing combat wings began breaking up the division formation to locate and bomb the target, which only added to the chaotic and confused situation. Finally, two groups comprising the 14th Combat Wing, the 392nd and 44th, flew over Switzerland and bombed the town of Schaffhausen in error.

The 448th, now the only remaining group of the leading 20th Combat Wing,

caused by early abandonment of the mission by the 446th Group soon after entry of the enemy coast, and the 93rd Group, which mistakenly and alone bombed the French town of Strassbourg and departed the formation for England, finally joined up with the 2nd Combat Wing and bombed a small target of opportunity, Pforzheim, Germany near Stuttgart. The journey homeward of three hundred miles to the Channel in the face of stronger than normal headwinds, combined with the long period spent over Germany searching for the briefed target, produced a critical fuel supply situation for all the bombers. Nearly half of those planes of the 448th to reach England were unable to fly all the way to Seething because of their near-dry gas tanks.

After dropping out of the formation due to its critical fuel situation and flying alone for nearly an hour, The Crud Wagon's occupants parachuted out near the town of St. Pol, France, approximately 23 miles from the Channel. Fortunately, I was one of the three crew members to evade capture upon reaching the ground, not from any ingenious or novel move I was able to execute but simply from blind luck, combined with the quick actions of French villagers to hide me from sight.

They were waiting for my landing in a fruit orchard, and upon my straight down impact on the ground, began swarming around me, tearing off the upper portion of my electric suit, helmet, and flying boots, and replacing them with farm like clothing. Then we all began walking with some urgency, and within a few minutes everyone except a lone teen age girl had melted away. She led me directly to a haystack at the edge of the village, and indicated by sign motions that I was to climb up into it instantly, after which she abruptly ran away.

I promptly followed her instructions but upon reaching the top of the mound, found that it was too tightly packed to pull it in over me. I then climbed down and sat alongside the stack, and began to think of all the things that had just happened to me in the last brief hour. My solitude was short lived, however, with the sounds of voices nearby which caused me to turn my head to the left to determine the source. Then I saw a German soldier with rifle in hand, accompanied by a French farmer, walking perpendicular to my line of sight. They passed within fifty feet of my position, and had the soldier merely turned his head to the right as he came abreast of the haystack, he would have seen me plainly sitting there. Quickly responding to this close call, I laid down alongside the stack, while pulling enough hay over my body to avoid being seen, even though I realized that a natural place as this would be one of the first choices to search for a person in hiding. Somehow, though, this enemy never came to such a conclusion,

and my first exposure to capture had passed satisfactorily.

Altogether, I was in the haystack fifty three hours, during which time food and drink and two English written notes were delivered by a young girl. My instructions were to be prepared to follow her late this afternoon across a plowed field to two bicycles hidden for our use. Once on the bicycles, I was to follow behind her about thirty yards and if by chance she was halted by a German patrol to stop and inspect my bicycle as if it were broken, then walk it off in the opposite direction so as to avoid any association between us. We soon reached our means of travel and quickly headed for St. Pol, about four miles away. For at least this part of France, the Germans had imposed a curfew at 9:00 PM and anyone caught on the roads after the hour was subject to arrest. A few minutes before curfew we arrived at the destination, and turned down a dark alley in the residential area of the town. The girl stopped at the rear entrance of a house, went to the door and rapped twice for entry. There was a muffled exchange of words between the occupant behind the door and my guide, then it opened slowly and we went inside.

The entry hallway was quite dark. We were led by a man into an adjoining sitting room, well lit, whose occupants were two women. They appeared to be in their late thirties or early forties. After the introductions had been made, they began to explain in excellent English theirs as well as my own status and future outlook. One was French Canadian and the other native French who was married to a British soldier. Both their husbands had been evacuated to England at the fall of Dunkerque in 1940. Since that time the wives had combined forces in the resistance movement and were in charge of the local organization in this area of the Pas de Calais. They had participated in aiding

*(continued on next page)*

## Change of Address

When you move please send your change of address to:

Evelyn Cohen  
06-410 Delaire Ldg. Rd.  
Philadelphia, PA 19114

on the form below, as soon as possible. To send the change to anyone else (Bill Robertie or Group VP) simply delays the change appearing on our records. This could mean that the next issue of the *Journal* will go to your old address and could be lost in the great jaws of the Post Office.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

name
address
group

many downed airmen such as myself. One of the women began by apologizing to me.

"I'm sorry we had to leave you in the haystack so long, but it was necessary to make sure you were genuine. You see, the Germans have occasionally parachuted out of planes in an effort to contact members of our organization. We were pretty sure of you and your comrades, though, because we saw the parachutes and knew that many were caught immediately."

"Please don't worry about that," I reassured her, "I'm only too glad to be here at this moment and not on a train to a prison camp."

They were quite upset in general at the heavy frequency of bombings conducted by the American air forces in the past few months. They were only too aware that on some of these missions, towns had been hit causing heavy civilian casualties. It was not difficult for me to understand their feelings or the realization that many of their towns had suffered in error from the extremely difficult tasks of locating and bombing the small V-1 flying bomb targets which were often erected adjacent to towns and villages. This situation was especially true when these targets were attacked from high altitude. Most of the flying bomb sites (called Noballs by the air crews prior to their first launchings against London shortly after D Day) were located in this and adjoining areas of the Pas de Calais.

Changing the subject, my two hostesses finally began to divulge some personal information that concerned me greatly.

"One of your airmen, Jack Cooper, escaped from the enemy soldiers and is now in hiding like you. He ran away from a German who had his hands full in capturing another of your men who landed nearby. The man Cooper is now in Fillievres living with one of our members. We are going to send you over there tomorrow to join him until we can find a better place."

At this point the women notified me of the taking of ten hostages by the enemy within the village where I had landed. I was of course shocked to realize how deadly serious this business had become, and partially due to my being free at this

moment. These two leaders had provided me with some startling news for certain, especially Cooper's escape. Maybe there would be more to elude capture, although they were not optimistic. Everyone had been accounted for by their organization that landed in the St. Pol area. However, this still might have exempted Stanley Baranofsky, the navigator, who had jumped a few minutes before the others, and thus may have landed outside this general area.

I then asked the two leaders about the prospects of getting down to the Pyrenees Mountains some 700 miles to the Spanish border. To this query I was told emphatically: "It isn't possible to do such a thing for you. Several months ago we were actually transporting parachutists to the border, but the bombings of our railways have made it too risky. Also, some of our leaders in Paris have recently been arrested by the Gestapo. It's out of the question. I'm afraid there is no other choice for you except to remain in hiding with us and wait for the invasion."

The invasion! That fondly held hope of millions of souls throughout the conquered countries of Europe would now be embraced by yet another individual as the only means of freedom from a tyrannical victor. Little did I then realize how eagerly I would await news of the commencement of this momentous event during the following two months. It would become the most overriding subject of my life and that of the people with whom I would be associated.

Next morning after a most restful sleep on a regular bed. I was given new instructions for my next journey, including some personal advice.

"Jacques will escort you by bicycle over to Fillievres. It's about seven miles away, and you are to ride behind him as you did yesterday with the girl. If he is stopped by the Germans, get off your bicycle and pretend it is out of order. By all means don't let them connect you with him. And remember, you are going to see a lot of German troops today, but I know you won't panic and do anything to cause us to be captured and lose our lives. You are a soldier and will know how to keep your head."

With that send-off we went out the back entrance and soon onto the main street of St. Pol. I was never again to meet these brave leaders, but was later advised that they continued their under cover operations until their liberation several months later. Their advice about the German soldiers was, if anything, understated. The entire street was filled with troops as we made our way through the heart of town. Military uniforms far outweighed the number of civilian attires. I could scarcely comprehend the fact that here in broad daylight was an evading American airman riding a bicycle through the midst of what seemed like the entire German Army, and in a seemingly nonchalant fashion. My guide was a thoroughly seasoned professional in this clandestine work, and displayed no outward anxiety whatever in

leading me through the city and out on the highway in an unhurried manner. We traveled nearly alone on the road to Fillievres, and found Jack Cooper, my tail gunner, hiding in a home just as my benefactors had described. It was a joyous occasion indeed of us to see a familiar face in such strange circumstances.

Jack explained that he had bailed out with six others of the crew, including myself, because he could see the six parachutes floating to the ground. He landed near the ball turret gunner, Albert Padilla, who was already covered by a soldier, but instead of halting as the soldier ordered him to do, ran headlong into some nearby woods and was immediately taken over by some French villagers who had witnessed the whole affair.

This home in Fillievres was obviously too small to accommodate the owner and his wife and two children, in addition to the new tenants. Finally, after a rather uncomfortable eight days of such existence, I was abruptly moved to another home two miles away where I would remain until liberated on Sept. 4, 1944 by a Polish manned tank column of the Canadian Army.

Including its basement, my new abode was tri-level and a palace compared to the former abode. It sat off the main road about thirty feet and on an inclined slope. The occupants consisted of a man and wife and an elderly spinster who had formerly taught school. The head of the household, Jean Chetiveaux, an electrician by trade, was himself a liberated prisoner of war now in the employ of the Germans. He was released only because of the usefulness of his skills to the enemy forces. I was his first American tenant.

Jean ran more than an ordinary risk of exposure with his new family member due to the proximity of his home to the living quarters of the local German commander and his staff. They were located diagonally across the front road, a mere 125 yards away in the village headmaster's chateau which had been commandeered earlier by the conquerors on a permanent basis. Every afternoon without fail I could see the officers playing volleyball in the front yard from my easy viewing position in the *(continued on next page)*

## Mid-States Mini-Reunion Set

The Third Annual Mini-Reunion of the Second Air Division Association has been set for the weekend of July 14th, 1985 in Clare, Michigan. The format will be the same as last year's get-together. The Doherty Hotel-Motel complex will act as our host and cater our sit-down prime rib dinner. Our informal program will be directed toward leisure time, lots of conversation, good food, refreshments and fun. Business meeting and combat films Saturday afternoon, banquet dinner and guest speaker Saturday night.

Come one — Come all.

Contact: Al Mohoney (492nd BG)

## Attention

Reunion  
Sept. 5-8, 1985  
McFee, N.J.

### RESERVATIONS GOING FAST.

If you plan to attend, use form on back page of *March Journal* to make your reservation.

If you need a reservation form, write to me as soon as possible.

Evelyn Cohen  
06-410 Delaire Landing Rd.  
Philadelphia, PA 19114  
Tel. (215) 632-3992

### **Mission** (continued from page 17)

house. Although some of the soldiers would call upon Jean at his home at various times for odd jobs, the German forces never realized that an American airman was living under their very noses.

Another quaint aspect of my new home was its nearness to two V-1 flying bomb sites. One was located across the main road about a half mile distant which allowed me to see the actual launchings of these weapons from an upstairs window. The other site was of similar distance but directly behind the house in deep woods. These two lucrative targets were the object of numerous bombing missions by both American and British forces in daylight and at nighttime, the latter affording a sight much more brilliant than a typical Fourth of July fireworks display, consisting of: searchlights frantically crisscrossing the night sky, flares falling to earth to make the target visible, and the closely situated flak booming out in continuous volleys of fire, mingled with the deeper vibrations of bursting bombs as they

shook the earth. Not a recommended means of awakening in the middle of the night from a deep slumber.

An especially heartening piece of news was broken to me by Jean three weeks after I moved into his home; Stanley Baranofsky had been located in a French home about ten miles from my village. He had managed to evade capture because of his earlier evacuation from the plane and was undetected upon reaching the ground. Jean, in a daring mood, arranged a meeting in his home for both Cooper and Baranofsky, and what a meeting and get-together that was! We recounted our individual escape episodes to each other several times and commented upon our hide-away homes and the people who were in charge, and everything of possible interest to make a unique afternoon of the remnants of the Crud Wagon's crew that was down but still not out.

Then the biggest and most welcomed event to date — D Day! The radio was full of details about the Normandy landings which were progressing favorably. Jean

and his household and those few visitors that he trusted with the knowledge of my presence were ecstatic over the news, the most stupendous event for the French since their defeat in 1940. For me it was also a welcome tonic sorely needed to counteract occasional periods of depression about my static existence. Now it was not a matter of when the invasion would take place, but rather of when the armies would reach us. Each day I followed the progress of the allied forces on BBC radio and would attempt to estimate when they would be in new areas under domination. The news continued to improve as they pushed farther into northern France.

September 4th had now arrived with the biggest and sweetest event of my life with the entrance of a tank column into the village and in front of my door, a mere three to four hours behind the retreating German forces. Everyone ran pell-mell out into the road in utter delirium of joy to welcome these liberators with open arms of love. Truly the happiest moment of my life!



## **AIR TRAVEL WILL NEVER BE THE SAME RICK ROKICKI IS RETIRING**

After 39 years of servitude with United Airlines, Rick Rokicki has decided to retire. It should be noted that due to his skill and daring (his sanity was also under scrutiny) United assigned Rick to their #1 route — backyard, to backyard via the Freeway. The many farmers along this route into whose field Rick managed to land a somewhat balky aircraft (Swallow Circa 1927 model) on a daily basis will breath somewhat more easily I'm sure, but the sputtering engine threatening to quit at any moment will be

missed by all. We were very fortunate to have had Rick as our President some years past and we look forward to seeing him increase his activities in the Association in the years to come. The "Swallow"? That will probably be sent to the Smithsonian from whence it came. Let us all join in wishing Rick the best of luck and a happy and fun filled retirement.

ANONYMOUS

(I wouldn't dare sign this!)

# Ivory Soap—A Drag on the Market

by Bob Candler 453rd BG

After completing B-24 Combat Crew Training in early spring 1944, we were sent to Topeka, Kansas where we were to pick up "our" B-24 and fly it over to England. At Topeka we were briefed that we should take along plenty of razor blades, hand soap, and other select items that were supposedly scarce or rationed at our bases in England. In addition, it was suggested that the English girls would do "almost anything" for a bar of IVORY SOAP and that it was considered on a par with nylon stockings as a procurement vehicle. Although I don't think I was prone to overdo things in those young days, I went to the Post Exchange at Topeka and bought a whole case (144 bars) of IVORY SOAP. I must have been out of my mind or having a fantasy thinking that my body could fulfill the contract my brain had concocted. I also bought a full box (144) of Schick ejector blades and some other items I thought would come in handy if I were to spend an infinity in England. No one had the slightest idea how long we would be over there.

We flew to England using the southern route; i.e., down the east coast of South America to Natal, Brazil then across the South Atlantic to Dakar, West Africa. From there we flew north to Marrakech, French Morocco and thence up to Lands End, England and a modification depot near Liverpool. Enroute to Natal we stopped at Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico where I couldn't resist picking up two cases of Old Grandad which sold for roughly \$1.25 per qt. in the Officer's Club. A small keg of thick Puerto Rican rum was also among my acquisitions; however, I was to sell the rum to an NCO who was running a "Cat House" in the fuselage of a crashed B-24 off the end of the runway at Dakar for a 500% profit. I was never big on rum and was willing to sacrifice the rum for the sake of the poor Americans stationed at Dakar but I hung onto the Old Grandad and IVORY SOAP.

When we finally landed at the modification depot outside Liverpool we found out that "our" B-24 was now "their" B-24 and we were stuck on a train that would carry us across the Irish Sea to Northern Ireland for some additional training. Each train transfer was a major logistics effort. In addition to the 2 cases of Old Grandad and the case of IVORY SOAP, I had a B-4 bag stuffed with clothes and a large parachute bag in which we carried our utterly useless leather flying clothes, which we never wore once, a seatpack parachute (hence the name parachute bag), gas mask, etc. Each train change required several trips from one train to another or into and out of the station. I must have been out of my mind to put up with it. I could have drunk or otherwise unloaded the Old

Grandad without any effort and I could have simply left the IVORY SOAP in a station, but OH NO, I intended to reap every benefit those items would provide.

After about 2 weeks in Ireland we were returned to the mainland and scheduled for a series of train changes that would ultimately end up at Attleborough, a town near the Wash where our base was located. At this point you should feel reasonably secure in saying he had finally reached his destination, but that is not entirely correct. We had to carry our "belongings" almost 2 miles from the train station to the base and then to our BOQ (quonset hut) where we would throw the parachute bag up over the blackout entrance and never look at it again. I also put the case of IVORY SOAP up there but kept the Old Grandad under the bed for more ready access. Now throughout my train travels in England I had offered bars of soap to English and Irish girls in return for favors and when I had no takers I attributed it to the fact that there were a lot of other officers traveling the same routes and towns and they probably had IVORY SOAP also.

## The 492nds Last Mission

by Wesley Sheffield (492nd)

The fine historical account of the 492nd Bomb Group in the Fall 1984 *Journal* brought vivid memories to my mind. That trip to Ostend on 7 August 1944 was my 16th mission — and ours was the only plane in the low squadron to return to base.

It was a routine mission in many ways — until it was 'bombs away' over a target just slightly obscured by about three-tenths of cloud cover. Later I wished desperately for more cover! Routine, that is if any mission in the vicinity of Hamburg could be called routine. All in all, our crew went that-a-way three times, and we found no other flak gunners as uncannily accurate as the Hamburg gang. Even in the thickest soup in the fall of '44, we could hear the flak like hail, rattling on the fuselage and leaving its unmistakable marks and tears.

After bombs away on that August 7, the lead plane flew on, straight and level, for what seemed an eternity. It was, for many. We could see the flak tracking the lead squadron — and hear and feel the hits on our own plane. When we landed hours later the ground crew counted more than 200 holes — yet no vital part was hit.

In less than a minute all hell broke loose in the 492nd formation. Direct hits were scored and planes began falling. I was

I still had a full case when I arrived at the base. Each quonset hut housed 8 officers, 4 on each of 2 crews. The crew that was in the hut when we arrived announced to us with a laugh that we were the 13th crew to be in that quonset and all but 2 of the crews had been shot down. Oh well. We selected our bunks and started to unpack. At the far end of the quonset were 2 small chests each having 4 drawers, one for each officer on the crew. Being the first to look at the chest I opened the bottom drawer and got a rather sick feeling when I found it to be full of IVORY SOAP, with a few bars of SWAN included. The next drawer was also full of IVORY SOAP, a third drawer was crammed full of razor blades of every possible make and description, with the fourth drawer being full of cigars and cigarettes which were rationed. The only unusual thing in the entire chest was an entire carton of Fena-Mint, a chewing gum laxative that looked very much like the English Wrigley PK gum.

When I left the base in August 1944 I put a sign on the quonset door "FREE IVORY SOAP. HELP YOURSELF". Not one bar was taken. I put the case of soap back over the blackout entrance for discovery by whoever whenever.

flying the No. 3 spot in the high element in our squadron — an unenviable privilege awarded me again and again by the Squadron C.O., Major Donald Heaton who never forgot that our crew aborted twice before flying its first mission.

Our element lead plane was the first to suffer a direct hit, which blew off part of its left wing and sent it into a steep turning dive. For a few seconds I maintained formation with my element lead, then pulled away just before it blew up.

Knowing there were "bandits" in the area, I turned to rejoin my squadron. There was no squadron to be seen. All ten other planes had disappeared in the bright morning sun, while the high lead squadron had already become just a series of specks in the sky ahead.

I called to Harry Abrams, my navigator, for a heading out of that flak alley and meanwhile headed for the nearest clouds — little enough — and scanned the sky for a group I could tag on to. I found a group and flew a bucket home. Only when we landed, did we discover that we were the only survivors of the 492nd's low squadron.

Within a matter of days, we were reassigned to the 93rd Bomb Group, where my crew became an element lead and a squadron lead before I went into Operations and finished my tour as a command pilot and Assistant Ops Officer.

Evan Jones, my co-pilot, had the last word as usual on that fateful mission, "Well, Shef, you just bounced one more in!"

# Letters



Dear Bill:

Made most of the early missions of 2 AD. Some of these missions had partial escort by Polish and RAF fighters, most had none at all. One mission I remember: Rouen, France, we went with all of 9 airplanes and no fighter escort. The German fighters kicked our tails and we lost 2 airplanes. The missions kept getting longer and harder with still no effective escort. I flew 16 combat missions with the final mission being Kiel, Germany. The Kiel mission was flown low level until a point was reached where we started a climb which was terminated with a level off just prior to the IP. Although on fire, we dropped our bombs on target. We had 2 men killed in action and 3 wounded. The rest, including the wounded bailed out and were made POWs. We were liberated after almost 2 years as POWs. The POW experience was something else again. All ex-POWs can join an organization called Stalag Luft III Ex-Prisoners of War, PO Box 787, Highland Park, IL 60035.

John D. Bledsoe

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Sir:

I was given your name and address by Tony North from Norwich, England. I had written to him asking for assistance for a book I am writing concerning American aircraft that force-landed onto German held territory during the Second World War and consequently some of these that were relatively intact were made available to the Luftwaffe either for evaluation or other 'clandestine' uses.

What I really require are first-hand accounts and reports from surviving airmen and pilots of force-landed aircraft of the 'battle-action' that led them to becoming POWs.

Also there were many reports given by airmen and pilots at the debriefing after missions of 'strange B-24s' homing in returning formations that were all thought to be enemy-operated aircraft trying to infiltrate bomber formations either on incoming aircraft or returning bomber streams. I would very much like to contact any people who could give me any information about these reports and again anybody who has first-hand experience with eye-witness reports.

Perhaps I could put a letter in your quarterly magazine asking for the above mentioned assistance. Also perhaps you might know of somebody else who might be able to help me out in my quest for research material.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Thomas E. Willis  
169 Woodlands Road  
Birmingham B11 4ER England

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

Please include the following in the next *Journal*:

Folded Wings

Norman C. Ellis, 446th Bomb Group  
Norm was co-pilot in my crew.

Appreciate very much the super job you continue to do on the *Journal*. Thanks.

Richard L. Wann

Dear Bill:

May Jean and I be allowed to take up some space in the *Journal* to express our very sincere thanks to everyone in the 2nd Air Division Association for their tremendous kindness, friendship, generosity and warmth of greetings to us at Palm Springs. As always the spirit of the Convention was so wonderful that we felt as if we had "Come Home". Evelyn's organization was just perfect and to be amongst so many friends for those few days was a truly unforgettable experience. We have returned to the U.K. with renewed enthusiasm and vigor for the Memorial Room and all that it stands for. Finally, can we also thank our American hosts who looked after us so wonderfully before and after the Convention. You gave us a visit of a lifetime with memories that will last for ever. God bless you all.

Jean and David Hastings

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

Please send me Roger Freeman's book "The Mighty Eighth War Manual" as advertised in the March *Journal*. My wife tried to get this for me at Christmas but you had to return her check. You are doing a great job. The *Journal* is a great publication and I'm sure that all who read it share my admiration and gratitude to you and all the people who make the 2nd Air Division what it is today. I'm proud to be a part of it.

Cecil C. Gwennap

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

What a pleasure it was, after becoming awake, to peer out of the Hilton Riviera hotel window at the nearby mountain range and to be able to see it all without any obstruction to vision. One could almost reach out and touch the horizon it was that clear.

Needless to say, a good time was had by all attendees at the reunion. There were very few gripes. I don't think that the food could have been much better nor the timing of all the events.

The last count that I had heard, there were over 1100 people in attendance, happy ones too!

The memorial service at March Air Force Base was very impressive and will be remembered by all for a long time to come.

It was a pleasure to see General Jimmy Stewart again at the Saturday night dinner dance.

All in all, it was a great get-together, those that were not there were sorely missed. Harry Orthman, Vern and Bobbie Key and yours truly were in attendance. I heard a lot of kudos from the golfers about how well the golf tournament, led by Harry Orthman, was organized. Maybe you have a permanent job Harry!

On returning home, I had received a beautiful Caterpillar pin and club card from the Irvin parachute people in Canada.

Now I'm off to Hawaii for two weeks of R and R.

Bill Clarey

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

I am also interested in trying to get a copy of the first volume of Freeman's trilogy, namely "The Mighty Eighth", but everywhere I try I have been advised that it is out of stock and/or print. I heard from one source that there may be a second printing this Spring. If you have any information on this matter, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Again I thank you for the fine job you do in this area for the 2ADA as well as in the role of Editor of the *Journal*.

Joseph H. Soder

(ED: Plans call for a re-printing of all three this fall. Watch for announcement in *Journal*).

Dear Bill:

I have just finished reading the September 1984 *Journal*. I'm pleased to see that Mr. Freeman is making another book available in October 1984.

I wish to place my order as a member now, my check is enclosed for the "Mighty Eighth War Manual".

I attended an informal get-together of the 389th fellows on the 8th and 9th of September at T/Sgt. Russell Leslie's place in Denver, Indiana. Here I met my friend Earl Zimmerman. After thirty-nine years it was quite a feeling to sit down and talk and renew our thoughts and experiences from the past.

I explained to Earl about my becoming more involved with the Second Air Division Association and The Eighth Air Force Historical Society, Inc. Earl spoke very highly of you and your great contributions to the success of the *Journal*. I hope to meet you some day, perhaps at one of the reunions.

Bob Mager (389)

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you for the mailing of the membership forms and other material back in July. I see in Fred Thomas' 392nd write up in the September *Journal* that he lists two new members from McMillan's crew — Howard Jennings and Temple Hill — and I believe there are a few more.

We had a wonderful crew reunion in Elmira, NY on July 20, 21, 22. Ten survivors and 10 wives, remarkable after 40 years. I talked up future get-togethers at national reunions or at the mini-reunions — which are a great idea.

Hope all went well at Palm Springs. Sorry to miss the good times. I appreciate all the work you and others put into the Association. Getting the *Journal* and reading it cover to cover is worth the dues money to me. I pass it around to a couple younger history buffs and it is a joy to them to read the real stuff written by real people.

Jack Gallagher

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

I have been doing further research on the story I sent you concerning Jimmy Stewart. Article entitled "Jimmy Stewart's Finest Performance".



(Top L to R): Gebhard, pilot; Knight, navigator; Makin, bombardier; Swetz, engineer; (Bottom L to R): Nally, tail gunner; Shadows, waist gunner; Garrigus, waist gunner; Greeley, radio operator.

Enclosed find photo of crew that flew the mission to Ludwigshaven on Jan. 7, 1944 and an out of focus picture of the principals in the story.

The photo was taken at 2 AD Convention in Palm Springs in October and Jimmy claims to recall the leader being shot down and taking the action noted in the article. I'm sorry the person I asked to take the picture did not focus it because I know it would add to the overall effect.

Hope the article is worthy of publication. George Makin (389th)

P.S. We missed you at the convention. Hope to see you in New Jersey.

Dear Evelyn:

I did receive your kind note some time back. We were perfectly satisfied with the room arrangements at the Spa Hotel. They were cooperative with the shuttle as we needed it. It was quite nice there.

I do apologize for the mixup in our arrival dates. The reservation was made for us to arrive the day before we got there. It was my fault.

The good news is that the enclosed list is the current list of all the men (12 out of 12) who at one time or another were permanently assigned to our crew. I have since seen them all at their homes. Only Brooks, Mulheran and I had been in touch with one another intermittently throughout the last 40 years. We finished our tour in November, 1944 and started splitting up then in England. Most of them we had not seen since leaving England.



We did enjoy the Palm Springs meeting and don't know yet whether we will be in New Jersey next year — we will see? Enclosed also is the original crew picture from Wendoover days in January, 1944.

Bob Sheehan

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Evelyn:

I just received my copy of the Second Air Division *Journal* and I've already read it twice to make sure I didn't miss anything. I am enclosing a self-addressed envelope and would appreciate your sending window decals as I would like to put one on each of my two cars. Thanks.

John J. Sipek

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

The following should be given the widest dissemination among Second Air Division members — particularly those who were in the 489th BG(H).

On June 5, 1944, Lt. Col. Leon Vance, Deputy Commander 489th BG(H), received the Medal of Honor for his heroism on a mission resulting in the ditching of his aircraft in the North Sea.

Les Carter, 4707 Ambrose Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90027, telephone (213) 660-9009 is undertaking an authentic painting of this feat.

He needs authentic information concerning the type aircraft, mission detail, statements of survivors, any pictures, sketches, logs, articles, etc., to assure authenticity. Any information furnished will be carefully handled and returned to sender if desired.

Those having information concerning this mission should communicate directly with Mr. Carter. Les is internationally recognized as one of the outstanding aviation artists today, and will be showing at the Air University later this year.

F. C. Chandler, Jr.  
Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)  
5318 Fairfield West  
Dunwoody, GA 30338  
489th/491st 1944-45

Dear Pete: (Henry, 44th)

Thanks for the info and data you sent me. I have already forwarded my request and dues to Ms. Cohen.

I was one of the original 'cadre' early '41 assigned 44th BG, 67th Sqdn., Tech. Sgt. transferred from 21st Recon., Radio Opr/Mechanic, graduate '39 Chanute Field. We flew B-18's on submarine Patrol out of Miami '39 (Sept.) on 'TDY' at Miami International Airport. Home base was Langley Field. M/Sgt. Simmons and I were flight members usually with Capt. Fitzmaurice. Later, Sgt. Simmons was elevated to Captain. I sure wish I had his address. He was one of the best flight engineers. He and I qualified as gunners at McDill in the nose of a B-17!

Thank God, I was fortunate to be a member of the 67th and 44th Gp. Hdq. B.D. I later was cadre for 492nd Gp. Hdqts. as an inspector of all radio equipment aboard aircraft. There was a difference. That organization did not have the *drive* that we always had in the 44th.

Yes, I'm very interested in availability of addresses 44th Hdqs. and 67 Sqdn., people.

When I returned to the States, I requested assignment to Pacific. However, I got assigned to 'AACS' and sent to Langley! I became NCOIC of all ground 'flight' facilities in '45. I remained AACS until I retired 31 Oct. 50 at Langley. I left my heart in the 44th BG and I am pleased to learn that the 44th is still alive and very active as the 44th Strategic Missile Wing (SAC). The experience made a man of me and gave me the knowledge necessary to do a very good job.

Oh yeah, before I close, Pete we had a Captain Henry, Pilot of B-18's at Langley 1938, 21st Recon. Sqdn. Related? He was #1 officer! One of his specialties was electronics!

Pete, I'm looking forward to a pleasant relation with you all and even a visit or so. I must tell you, I swore when I retired I would never board another airplane of any kind. I've had many close calls and I often reflect back to them and read of so many midair's and the controllers are overloaded, etc. Happy Landings, Pete!

Thomas C. Osmundson 'Ozzie'  
M/Sgt. USAF Ret.  
Communications Technician  
Radio and Radar

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Fred:

Received your letter and I want to thank you for filling me in. Yes I'm taken care of and a member. Hmmm... about myself?? Not really much. Tail gunner on B-24, station up by the wash... shot over Gotha, Germany, February 24, 1944. Prisoner of war for 14 months and 6 days.

Both pilots and radio were killed as they went down with the ship. One waist side gunner chute didn't open up—six of us captured. That's the nine yards of it. I was with the 392nd 577 sqd., our B-24 was named "Poco Loco". I'm starting to get my *Journal* and look forward to the coming issues. Keep up the great work, here's to the "mighty 8th".

Jan Brown

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

Enclosed are "masthead" for 467th BG *Journal* submittals. Please incorporate as you have done for the 446th. Would be of interest to see all groups with a unique identifier.

If this is not suitable for use, let me know immediately and I'll have the artist send original or whatever would be required.

Continuing thanks for your good works in getting out the *Journal* and the pleasure of reading the contents, cover to cover, when received.

Phillip Day

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my check for 1985 dues, plus a little extra for the Memorial.

I am a new member as I just joined this last summer at the reunion in Palm Springs.

Enjoy the *Journal* very much and someday hope to run across a name of someone on the crew, have had no contact with crew members since leaving the service.

Flew 25 missions while in the 458th, started flying there on March 3rd, 1944. Our B-24 called "The Plutocrat" had a large yellow dog painted on the nose. Maybe someone reading this will remember it.

Finished my missions in May of '44 for the 458th and I was transferred to "Foggia" Italy to the 15th Air Force where I flew 25 more missions, then returned to the States.

By the way my rank was S/Sgt. and my position was tail gunner on all of my 50 missions.

The ol B-24 was one fine piece of equipment and got us out of a lot of tough spots.

Paul McMillen  
Box 793  
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$25.00 for the book "Mighty Eighth War Manual".  
Mrs. Richard L. Wann

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I appreciate the check for helping out on the B-24 Display at March Field.

However, I wish to return it in that what little I did is not deserving of it.

I have always felt thankful for what the men and women sacrificed during WWII. What little I was able to do was just a very small way of saying "Thank You".

I understand you have a Second Air Division Memorial in England. I would feel better if you passed it on to them or wherever you feel it would best serve.

Again I appreciate the consideration.

Bob Nightingale

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Bill:

Thanks a million for the nice letter concerning the photo on the cover of War Manual. I shall write Mr. Freeman and ask his assistance.

I enclose my check for \$25 for the Mighty 8th War Manual. I also appreciate your printing my letter. I did not expect to see that done, and already the letters are coming in from all over the country trying to get in touch with an old B24 pilot. I think this is WONDERFUL as it keeps me YOUNG.



I am heading for Florida soon and will get in touch when I come home early in April. I want to write an article or two on a couple of raids (possibly the Rhine crossing and the Napalm drop).

Gee, it is GOOD to have a nice guy like you to talk with, thanks for the courtesy extended me.

Lin Burgess

Dear Bill:

Enclosed please find my small article about a B-24 D from the 389th BG, which was probably shot down by a gunner of this Group.

Unfortunately, I do not have a lot of information. Perhaps a reader might remember this aircraft and be able to give more information.



B-24 of the 389th BG in flight. Nearest camera is *Screaming Mimi*, a B-24 D-120-CO.

We have fine weather here in Switzerland. This is very good indeed, since I have a lot to do in the garden. The 2nd AD Association is very interesting, and I always enjoy the most interesting articles.

Well, Bill, I hope you can publish my story in one of your next issues. Have a nice time and my very best wishes from Switzerland.

Hans-Heiri Stapfer  
Bergstrasse 35  
8810 Horgen/ZH  
Switzerland

Dear Bill:

At the suggestion of Ralph B. Jackson, a member of your organization, I am writing to ask if you will publish a notice about this group in your *Journal*. Although we have been in existence since 1946, we've maintained a low profile until 1984. At that time we decided that enough of us wanted to get together so we planned and publicized a reunion 12-14 April 1985 at Midland, Texas — site of the former "World's Largest Bombardier School".

From 26 contacts in 1946, I am now corresponding with over 1,000 and the list grows daily. In fact, it has almost gotten out of hand. But I am not complaining! In fact, I want more!

For that reason, would you carry the following (or something like it) in an upcoming issue:

**BOMBARDIERS** — Did you know that of the 18,000 (approx.) of you who trained at 14 school sites during 1940-45 there are only 1,500 identified collectively today? How about adding to that number and contacting BOMBARDIERS at Box 254, Eagle Harbor, MI 49951 or call Ned Humphreys at 906/289-4440.

E. C. "Ned" Humphreys, Jr., Founder

Dear Bill:

Can you put a call out in the *Journal* for me? I am starting an Air Force Group Patches collection.

If anyone out there has their old jacket patches of any kind, I would appreciate them. Thank you.

Stephen Lawnicki  
1823 Garnet Court  
Sutherlin, Oregon 97479

Dear Bill:

Would you please publish this letter in the *Journal*. I am looking for any information that is available on a B-24 aircraft named the "Purple Shaft". The plane was assigned to the 846th Bomb Squadron — 489th Bomb Group at Halesworth. I crewed this plane back in 1944. I am sorry I don't have the tail number. I would appreciate any information that can be furnished. Thanking you in advance I remain:

Joseph Chisling  
5727 Sunset Terrace  
Clay, NY 13041

Dear Bill:

I am looking for 3 crew members of my original crew. We all started together in training in Jan. 1944 at March Field, Riverside, Calif. This June five other members and myself met at a motel in Omaha, Neb. for our 1st reunion. There were 10 of us. 6 were there and 1 died on our 10th raid over Germany, 1944. The same raid I was shot up. There are three members I still cannot find. We are going to have another reunion in three years, June of 1987 at Omaha again. I have written, called, and tried everything I can think of. You are my last chance. Is there any way you could help me find these men. Here are their names and last addresses I have from 40 years ago:

Henry F. Fisher, Pasadena, Calif., nose gunner.

John J. Thoma, Albany, New York, waist gunner.

Raymond D. Bass, co-pilot. (Texas or Okla. maybe).

We flew B24's out of Hethel Field, in Engand beginning in June of 1944. We were members of the 389th Bomber Group, 8th Airforce, 2 Division.

Here are the names of the six of us that were at the reunion:

Key R. Caldwell, Pittsburgh, Pa., pilot;  
Strickland J. Holeton, Anaheim, Calif., navigator; John J. McCanna, Collinsville, Ill., waist gunner; John F. O'Neill, Nutting Lake, Mass., radio operator; John F. Kendig, Lancaster, Pa., tail gunner; Arlin E. Neill, Walthill, Ne., flight engineer and top turret gunner.

Arlin Neill  
Box 236  
Walthill, NE 68067  
Phone (402) 846-5608

Dear Bill:

Earl Zimmerman's story "Down Over Berlin" reminded me that June 21, 1944 was a momentous day in my tour with the 702nd Bomb. Sq., 445th Bomb. Gp.(H).

Our crew was awakened about 0100 and told to report to briefing in an hour. We were anxious to make this mission, the same that Earl was on, because the day before on a mission to Politz, Germany I was hit by a small piece of flak. When the target was revealed we had our doubts about our bravery but most of us were determined to find out if we could face those "black walls of flak" again.

Our mission record at this time was four completed and four *aborts*. Not a record to be proud of.

Unfortunately, we aborted this mission at the German coast. Upon landing at base we were immediately summoned to appear before our Squadron C.O., Major Lloyd Martin. The reason given by our pilot for this, our fifth abort, did not satisfy Major Martin and he demoted him on the spot.

The crew requested that I be given the opportunity of becoming the pilot and after a long question and answer session with both the C.O. and Ops. Officer, they agreed to give me a chance. A checkout by Capt. Miller and a couple of mission check rides with Lt. John Queenan were passed in the next few days and we were a new and happy crew.

We, Lt. D.F. Keefe, Navigator, T/Sgt. E. Maynard, S/Sgt. J. Vayo, Sgts. K. Bladwin, M. Odelli, R. James and A. Celloti along with our BAB, KING KONG, finished our tour on Sept. 26, 1944, the day before the Kassel disaster, *without another abort*.

Robert D. Russell  
930 Mission Ave.  
Chula Vista, Calif. 92011

Dear Bill:

Seeking information of Lt. Henry S. Maxfield, B-24 Navigator WWII, author of book "The Survivors".

Forrest S. Clark  
220 Fairmount Ave.  
So. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Dear Bill:

Could you please send me one copy of the "Mighty Eighth War Manual", as per advertisement in the March 1985 issue of the 2nd AD *Journal*. (Enclosed is a Postal Money Order for \$25.00).

I am always amazed at your editorial efforts in producing the *Journal*. I enjoy every issue. As an ex-Korean vintage navigator, I flew with many ex-WWII pilots, navigators and bombardiers. Keep up the excellent work.

A. W. Joensen Assoc.  
208 ME Dept. Prof.  
Iowa State Univ.  
Ames, Iowa 50011

Dear Bill:

Recently I received a letter from Mr. David Stansfield of the British Aviation Archaeological Council (B.A.A.C. for short), and he requests info on a B-24 serial 42-100322 of the 448th BG, 715th B.S. This plane crashed into a hillside at Dunsop Bridge, near Clitheroe, Lancashire on 2 January 1945. It was on a flight to Wharton, and several personnel had hitched a lift, so obviously it wasn't on a combat mission. There were 19 on board when it went down, and 4 were killed in the crash. Others may have died later but details are sketchy. The names of the dead were known, but I was not told. The B.A.A.C. is working on the crash site, and may have come across some personal items. Any information about the crash, or survivors would be greatly appreciated. I have sent a similar letter to Leroy Engdahl (448th Contact), and hope that between your readers, and I, we can get some important info to Dave and help out this interesting project. Thanks for your help!

Dave Dynan  
303 Goode St.  
Burnt Hills, NY 12027

Dear Bill:

One PB4Y-2 Navy Privateer is flying out of Chandler's Arizona Memorial field as a 'slurry' bomber. It is one of few existing Privateers with a B-24 model "D" greenhouse. These pictures were taken Nov. 10-11 '84 at Falcon Field, Mesa, All of these air-



craft appeared at the semi-annual "Warbird Weekend" sponsored by the Confederate Air Force, Arizona Wing.



Rita Hayworth nose art was recently painted on the Arizona Wing's B-25J serial #43-35972. This B-25 actually saw wartime service in Italy while assigned to the 12th Air Force. Anyone interested in contributing toward this B-25's restoration should contact

Hugh R. McLaren  
915 E. Missouri  
Phoenix, AZ 85014

# The 445th Reporting

by Frank DiMola (445th)

The 2nd Air Division is growing at a rapid rate, so much so that more people are interested in attending mini-reunions, no matter where they are being held. This is great. The latest one that was reported to me was the west coast rally. The west coast contingent of the 2nd AD held its 4th Annual Dinner Party in Santa Ana, Calif. on March 2, 1985. Let me tell you, this was one fine party. Good food, good company, good drinks and a heck of a talk by Warren Johnson of the 4th Fighter Group. The evening was capped off with a very interesting film.

Over 200 people came from far and wide, some from San Francisco Bay area, others from Arizona, Washington State, South Dakota, Kentucky and even from the east coast. Old friends were greeted, new friends were welcomed and you would not believe the stories told. The one overpowering reaction one gets from such an event is a realization of how rich and strong the

camaraderie is in our Association. People willingly travel many miles to spend an evening with others who participated in events that took place more than 40 years ago. The 8th Air Force experience was actually but a brief period in our lives, yet it is etched in our memories for ever. The bond between us is indeed unique and to be treasured. Our 1986 dinner mini-reunion is scheduled for March 1, so keep in touch with the committee. The committee was composed of Fred Thomas, our President; Chuck Walker and Dick Boucher, 445th; and Harry Orthman, 492nd. In attendance were: Fred Brown, John Burke, Carlton Kleeman, John Linford, Martinez Davis, Robert Mead, Jack Reed, Terry Sather, Charles Turner, all the way from Kentucky, and Charles Walker. Of course our numbers were increased by wives and several guests.

Other mini-reunions were held in Dallas, Texas and in the mid-west. Don't forget about our 38th Annual Reunion at the Americana, Great Gorge Resort, McAfee, New Jersey. Just a tip, please sign up early because there are no other facilities in the immediate area.

It seems our President, Fred Thomas is

doing a better membership drive for the 445th than Buddy Cross and I. Thanks a lot Fred. He finds most of our ex-comrades on the golf links in the California area. Also that poster that is aboard the Queen Mary is a big help. Remember the first time we went aboard, we got on for nothing and now they want to charge us. The poster was noticed by Floyd C. Oglesby, Mich. and Chuck Loethers, Pa. — Welcome and I do hope to see you in Sept.

The very first thing that a new member does after he joins the Association is to climb up to the attic or down in the basement and dig out all the battle stories, names and addresses of the crew and wonder where they are now. Well, I'll tell you. If you mail all the names and addresses of the fellows to either Buddy Cross or me, we may be able to help you.

I received a very nice letter from Eric Ratcliffe, President of the Norwich Glider Club in Norwich and located on our old base in Tibenham. He is wondering when we will be back and I told him it will be in a couple of years. The last trip to the old base was great, but it took 10 years from my life because my wife, Elizabeth took a flight in one — Amen.



Dear Bill:

Some time ago I received a large batch of B-24 nose-art photos taken at the 3rd S.A.D. at Watton/Griston. There was no information as to which groups the aircraft came from but obviously the odds are that they served with the 2nd A.D.

I would be grateful if you can find space in the *Journal* to publish some in the hope that someone might recognize the aircraft depicted and supply me with information regarding group, squadron and, if possible, serial no.

Tony North  
62, Turner Road  
Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 4HB, England

# THE PX PAGE

## LIBERATOR ALBUM (Vol. 3: The 96th Combat Bomb Wing

by  
Tony North & Mike Bailey

A 48 page photo album, the third of four volumes on the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, containing over 80 high quality photos, many published for the first time, of B-24s of the 458th, 466th and 467th bomb groups.

Full color front cover and center-spread depicting representative aircraft from these Groups, accurately drawn and finely detailed by Mike Bailey.

This is a privately published, limited edition obtainable from Jack Stevens, 3526 Larga Circle, San Diego, CA 92110. Cost for this volume is \$10.00. Send all checks and money orders to Jack Stevens.



Mighty Eighth War Manual



Roger A. Freeman



## MIGHTY EIGHTH WAR MANUAL

Describes the procedures involved in the execution of particular types of operations and how these were amended to meet changing circumstances. Special operational projects and Air Force support facilities are also dealt with in detail. In addition to over 300 photographic illustrations, most published for the first time, the text is supported by many line drawings, including plans of sixty US Eighth Air Force airfields. Specially prepared by Norman Ottaway, these show each airfield as it was laid out during American occupation. While complementary and a companion to the other 'Mighty Eighth' volumes, this is, nevertheless, a completely self-contained book and in no way dependent on the earlier works. "Mighty Eighth War Manual" will prove fascinating to all who have an interest in the

most famous of all American Air Forces and its associations with the United Kingdom during its operations against Hitler's war machine.

**FRONT JACKET:** It is early summer 1944 as Republic P-47C Thunderbolts of the 361st FG climb away from their base at Bottisham, Cambridgeshire on bomber escort.

**TOP REAR JACKET:** Ground crew of the night leaflet squadron at Cheddington receive instructions on revised oxygen systems from Mobile Training Unit expert. B-17F, 42-3181, 'Flak Alley Lil' exhibits night camouflage.

**BOTTOM REAR JACKET:** 'Lion' nosed B-24J of 329 BS, 93rd on the Hardwick perimeter track, May 1945 awaiting return to the USA.

Retail price is \$30.00 but the price to our members is \$25.00. Please send check or money order to Bill Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, MA 01938.

(NOTE: "The Mighty Eighth War Diary" is once again available. Membership price \$25.00).