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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Spring 1988



Roger Freeman

## ***A Red Haired Boy From Idaho***

*On the Elm Rise eighteen acre  
Billy Standers changes gear,  
Drops six furrows in behind him,  
Opens up the big John Deere.  
As the fresh soil turns and crumbles  
Does he wonder, does he know  
Have they told him all or nothing  
Of a red haired boy  
From Idaho.*

*Times when Green Farm was an airfield  
Days the 'Old Uns' call 'the war'  
Came the Yankees with their bombers  
That they named B-24  
Khaki clad with movie accents  
Filled the pubs from Eye to Stow  
Some from Maine and some from Texas  
And a red haired boy  
From Idaho.*

*She was plump but kind of pretty  
And a shade past seventeen  
He had stopped to ask the way to base  
So they walked on Winston Green.  
Her world was filled with wonder  
Was there nothin' he didn't know?  
"Where you bin?" demanded Mother  
"Met a red haired boy  
From Idaho."*

*In the mellow summer evenings  
They would wander hand-in-hand  
As he told her of America  
"It must be God's own land."  
Meadowsweet can hide two lovers  
In the long grass by the mow  
Betty Standers lost to passion  
With a red haired boy  
From Idaho.*

*In the thunder of a dawning  
As the bombers rose to war  
Second off has faltering engines  
Losing speed and climbs no more.  
Shattered, flamed and then inferno  
As the bombs and fuel tanks blow  
Pyre for ten young men of Uncle Sam's  
One, a red haired boy  
From Idaho.*

*Blackened wound on Elm Rise meadow  
Little left of men or plane  
Crater filled and then forgotten  
Scar erased by wind and rain.  
Grief and tears for Betty Standers  
Frightened girl who'll never know  
Marriage vows and great adventure  
With a red haired boy  
From Idaho.*

*Does it move you Billy Standers  
With your auburn hair turned grey  
Working Elm Rise eighteen acres  
As you have for many a day.  
Do you know or do you wonder  
'Bout the patch where crops won't grow?  
Do you ever chance to see a ghost  
Of a red haired boy  
From Idaho?*



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## President's Message

by Carl I. Alexanderson

It seems a bit incongruous, writing the Spring message as the thermometer stands at 18 degrees below zero here in the Hudson Valley. However, I always have a warm feeling when writing to you.

The business of the Second Air Division Association has slowed somewhat in certain respects, no doubt due to the pressure of the holidays. On the other hand, the work and planning goes on apace. The phone calls continue, letters roll in, thoughts are jotted down, notes are made, and EXCOM members are consulted.

The membership continues to grow at a still impressive pace. I myself had the opportunity to recruit nine lost souls recently. In this we rejoice, although we mourn those who have Folded their Wings.

This past October I had the opportunity to attend my first reunion of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, of which I am a member. When I assumed the Presidency of 2AD I promised myself and all those within earshot that I would make an attempt to improve relations between these two fine groups. I initiated a letter to Bob Nolen, the Executive Secretary of the Eighth outlining my feelings. I received in return a most gracious response. Thereafter, through the good offices of Bob and our own Evelyn Cohen, arrangements were made for our accommodations.

We were assigned a Second AD room which served as a focal point and a place to view the exciting tape "The Last Mission." Be assured, this film elicited an excited and inspired response from the scores of B-17 types that dropped in to view it. Many of our own people were in attendance so it seemed like "old times" at a 2ADA reunion. There were, in addition to my wife and me — Evelyn of course, Peter Henry, Milt and Lucille Stokes, Bill Clarey, Pat Perry, Dean Moyer (he lives just down the road), Ross Houston and Vel, Mike Brienza, J.D. Leppert, H.R. Dean, Al Shower, Dick Hogentogler, Bill Davenport, Allan Blue and Roger Freeman. I know I'm going to catch hell for omitting many others. Well such is the price of fame.

The evening of the banquet, Evelyn, Louise and I were invited by President Ben Smith to join in the festivities next to the head table. We were pleased to have the company of Milt Caniff and his wife. During the course of the evening we were graciously introduced to the members by Ben. We also had the pleasure of meeting once again with Lt. Gen. James P. McCarthy, Commander, 8th Air Force. We had been his guest at Barksdale AFB in September when Louise and I attended the wonderful 467th BG reunion in Shreveport, LA. On both occasions I came away with a feeling of comfort and satisfaction, in that we are in good hands, knowing that a gentleman of his caliber is leading an organization of such fame, renown, and above all, competence. I also take solace and PRIDE in the fact that we may have set the standard for these young airmen to follow.

It is also my desire, and will continue to be, to set a standard whereby these two sister organizations who have so much in common and share dual membership which reaches into the hundreds, can in the future continue on a parallel course and share a mutual fraternity — "Lest We Forget."

You will read in this issue, if you haven't already, a featured story by Jim Reeves, about Ann Brusselmans. In conjunction with this, I shall embark upon a survey of the EXCOMM to determine their feelings in regard to this issue. As for myself, I think this modicum of recognition is long overdue.

On sifting through my cluttered desk, I find there are many issues on which I could respond. However, I am sure there are many much more interesting bits and pieces our Editor needs to incorporate into this edition. So in order to ease his burden I shall terminate this column.

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?



## Folded Wings

44th  
Maj. William W. Albert (Ret.)  
Walter L. Summey

93rd  
Larry G. O'Brien

389th  
Walter H. Dawson

392nd  
Ltc. Joseph A. Caruso (Ret.)  
Mary F. Burns — A.M.

445th  
Maj. John C. Woodley (Ret.)  
O.B. Anderson  
John H. Glass

446th  
Kellard C. Bostick  
William M. Woodburn

448th  
Maj. Michael Kuchwara (Ret.)  
Thomas E. Roberts  
Harold J. Weeks  
Edward R. Wellestat

458th  
Raymond J. Livgard  
Robert R. Mattson

467th  
Thomas Manion  
Harold Cedargren  
Thomas Truesdell — A.M.

489th  
Thomas J. Ambrose

491st  
John M. Formon

HDQ  
Molly T. Kelley

3SD  
Aaron Spitzer





## 392nd B.G.

by  
John B. Conrad

As of mid-December 1987, the 392nd BG had 427 regular members. This number does not include honorary, associate and subscribing members. In addition, we welcome new members Francis A. Swee, who was in the 577th BS from July 1944 to May 1945; Harold Bandelier, of Group Headquarters from March 1943 to July 1945; and William X. Davis, Navigator on the Nugent crew in the 579th BS, who completed a tour of 30 missions in May 1944. John E. Barber, son of Ernest H. Barber, is a new associate member, and Peter G. Horner of Leipheim, West Germany, is a new subscribing member.

A WWII veterans history project is being undertaken by the University of Tennessee, creating a national center for the military records of the people who actually fought the battles and supported the war behind the front lines. They will accept and preserve the personal papers, letters, diaries, photos, unit histories and the like, especially from enlisted personnel and junior officers. For more information, write Dr. Charles W. Johnson, 1101 Mc-

Clung Tower, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996, or call 615-974-5421.

**Lest We Forget**, by Myron Keilman. The target on mission #21, 31 December 1943, was the St. Jean D'Angle Airfield, France, 75 miles north of Bordeaux: On this last mission flown New Year's Eve day in 1943, the Group accomplished an excellent bombing task — being judged **the best done by any B-24 unit on this type target to date**. Twenty-seven (27) ships took off with (26) bombing the briefed target, releasing (310) 500# GP bombs. The 577th led the Group which saw seventy-three (73) percent of all weapons impact within 2000 feet. The unit suffered one aircraft loss and (10) crew members MIA and 25-30 enemy fighters were encountered.

Lt. Colburn was the bombardier of the lead squadron and Lt. Zicarelli was the bombardier of the second squadron. It was a long 9:20 hours mission. From 14th Combat Wing: The following message was received from the CG 2D Division: "Congratulations on the splendid performance today of the 14th Combat Wing. The record of the 44th 392 in putting 47 airplanes over the target out of 47 airborne is a glowing tribute to leadership and to the efficiency of combat and maintenance personnel. Also it give me extreme satisfaction to tell you that your bombing today was the finest example of precision bombing yet ac-

complished by the Division. We are proud of all of you. Please pass this message on to Fred Dent and Bull Rendle with my hearty if somewhat selfish wish for continued successes during the new year. (Signed) General Hodges." "Needless to say I am also proud of all of you. General Leon W. Johnson."

The 392nd people in the Sacramento, California area held their annual backyard mini-reunion on October 24th. It was held at the home of Don and Ann Clover, with 36 in attendance. Sam Ralston painted banners for the occasion. We would like to report on all the mini-reunions held in various localities. All readers, please let us know when and where the 392nd gathers. Send any information to John B. Conrad, 2981 Four Pines, Lexington, Kentucky 40502.

The 392nd BGMA fund drive to refurbish our monument at Wendling continues to gain momentum. Two hundred members have contributed over \$50,000 toward a target of \$60,000 for the first construction phase. All those who have not made a donation are urged to do so now. Please make your check payable to 392nd BGMA Memorial Fund, and send it to Gil Bam-bauer, Treasurer, 2032 E. La Madera Drive, Tucson, AZ 85719. Everyone's support is needed to put this project over the top.

## 389th Notes

by Lloyd E. West

### "DO YOU REMEMBER?"

I am sure that over the years since we were in England you have wondered if those who were less fortunate than us, those who lost their lives in combat, are they forgotten? I would assure you they are not.

May I quote from an article which appeared in an English newspaper? This was read by a thoughtful member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. She then sent the article to me.

Quote: "The second Sunday in November here in England is Remembrance Day, when services are held to honor those who gave their lives in armed conflicts. The U.S. bases in England participate in the laying of a remembrance wreath at the war memorials.

"On Nov. 8th a chaplain from RAF Lakenheath read the names of the 17 crew members of two B-24s that had a mid-air collision shortly after take-off from Hethel Nov. 21, 1946. The two 389th Bombardment Group (Heavy) aircraft fell to earth a mere 200 yards from the Carleton Rode Church of England, near Norwich in East Anglia.

"Since 1946 the church has had an American chaplain read the names from a memorial plaque at the front of the church and give the morning service.

"Just thought you might want to know that they still remember 1st Lts. J.E. Rhine and J.W. Safier; 2nd Lts. D.R. Bromer, J.E. Ryles and N.R. Snodgrass; T Sgts.

W.M. Bucher, E.G. Forster, S.H. Smith and H.N. Thompson; and S Sgts. W.D. Brower, J. Heitler, G.V. Hughes, R.W. Krouskup, F.L. Landrum, W.E. Leatherwood, H.W. Looy and W.C. Sawyer and the supreme sacrifice they made for the cause of freedom." End of quote.

While we were in England this past May, our 389th Group held a memorial service at the Carleton Rode Church where this plaque hangs. Frank Vadas placed a wreath in memory of these men. They are not forgotten.

The memorial plaque itself was unveiled in June of 1946 and since then a service of remembrance is held in November each year.

Following our memorial service we were honored at a reception given by members of the parish. This took place in the yard where the parsonage is located. What a beautiful countryside.

One of the parish members had plowed up a blade from a propeller from one of the aircraft. This happened four years ago when he was farming his ground. Those of us who viewed it could still read the trade mark written on it. This blade had been buried some 40 years ago.

Time is rapidly approaching for our reunion in Colorado Springs. Don't forget, folks, you decided we'd pay the expenses of Stuart Main, our English envoy, and his wife to come to the reunion this year. Thus far the total amount of money is not nearly enough to cover their expenses. You can send donations to Frank Vadas or myself toward this fund. Let's make it grow.

## Missives from the 492nd

by Bill Clarey

Hopefully, all of you are aware of the 50th Anniversary of the B-24 to be held in Fort Worth, Texas in 1989. From all the information that I have received, it looks as though it will surpass the B-17 anniversary that was held in Seattle, Washington. If you have not received any information about it, either write to me or to Bob Vickers at 6424 Torreon Drive, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109.

I have also received word that the townspeople of North Pickenham/Swafham are contemplating on building a city gate and possibly will be asking for assistance from us. I have no idea of what it will look like nor how much it will cost. Hopefully, I will have some more information for the next issue of the journal.

Allan Blue has compiled a second edition of "The Fortunes of War." This can be bought from the Liberator Club in San Diego.

I have several 492nd shoulder patches for sale. They are \$6.00 each plus postage. When these are gone, I doubt if Charlie Barrett will have any more made.

At this time I would like to thank Al Mohny and all the other people involved for their concerted effort in establishing our memorial at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The memorial will be there for years to come and our deeds will be etched into the memories of time. You all did a great job.

# The Memorial: A Perspective

by Bud Chamberlain

Webster defines "memorial" as "something that keeps remembrance alive." To me, the operative word here is "alive." How many of us have visited various cities like our nation's capitol and seen the countless lifeless monuments dedicated to obscure people and events. In most cases, their principal function has become that of pigeon roost and absorber of maintenance expezes rather than remembrance. WHY?! Either the justification was ill-conceived in the first place or no one made an effort to keep alive the reason for their existence.

General Kepner illustrated a number of worthy and specific reasons for establishing our memorial. In his 1945 appeal for funds, he said: "This memorial must be a spiritually living thing. The deep and sacred feeling giving birth to this memorial (i.e., our comrades') spirit of youth, hope and desire for a world of decency, freedom and peace must live on — must imbue this memorial with that same sacred spirit dedicated to on-coming generations whose way of life they died to protect. This memorial must be a haven wherein the flame of their principles burns brightly and eternally, wherein the bewildered, stumbling footsteps of succeeding generations can be unerringly placed on the right paths."

General Kepner's remarks drive more to the point of why the sacrifices were made in the first place. A perceived weakness on our part to defend ourselves against aggression contributed to the onset of both World Wars plus a number of conflicts between. Lack of national will, as exemplified by

pacifist/isolationist movements prior to World Wars I and II, the peace movement of the '60s and the apathy and anti-defense stance of many in our nation today, tends to invite mischief on the part of expansionist powers. Unfortunately, the only thing that seems to strengthen that will is shock. Shocks like the U-boat attacks prior to World War I and the 1941 assault on Pearl Harbor seemed to rally us overnight. We have been lucky to recover from these insults to our sovereignty. Because we were able to mobilize our will and, in turn, our industrial might, we defended ourselves successfully. Next time, we may not be so lucky. The handwriting is on the wall.

Already, we see signs of defense expenditure cutbacks in favor of or at least in balance with domestic programs. The excuse is that the federal deficit is too high. But, as a percentage of GNP, defense has consumed less than it did almost 20 years ago when there was no deficit. These cuts alone will not likely eliminate or even reduce the shortfall. They will, however, increase the risk to our national security. The more effectively we convince our fellow citizens that sufficiently strong defenses diminish the ambitions of expansionist powers against us, the more likely it is that we can reduce sacrifices like that of our 6520 ADA comrades who died in combat to protect our freedom.

Many memorials are intended to do this. Few do so as effectively as our unique 2ADA Memorial Room and its growing influence. For years it served well but somewhat passively. Then, interest began

to grow as did financial support. From the initial 20,000 pounds, Association members have brought the amount to 15 times that plus books, tapes and other items which further stimulate interest. Then, an American librarian was hired for six months using British funds. She opened our eyes to improvements and kindled a spark leading to a two-year assignment of Fulbright Scholar Bertha Chandler to the Memorial Room. In less than a year, Bertha markedly raised the interest level among Britains. With great vigor, new generations there are taking an interest in our memorial and what it represents. Now, we are considering a full-time American professional to supervise the memorial and to even further expand its impact. Actions have been taken to broaden interest on the west side of the Atlantic as well. We have, indeed, a true living memorial which is strengthening the people-to-people bonding between two great nations. This has to be a force for good in the world and completely consistent with the basic reasons for the memorial and the purpose of our Association.

2ADA is a "last man" organization. I am certain, though, that most of us would do anything we could to reduce the exposure of our grandchildren to war. Assuring the perpetuity of the Memorial and expanding its impact is a way. It can't hurt. It is already having a positive effect. It has even greater potential. So, let's support the proposition of a full-time American professional at our worthy memorial to assure the eternal voicing of its message.

## Assembly Aircraft 458th Bomb Group

by Bill Griffiths

Numerous mid-air collisions occurred during the Eighth Air Force bombing attacks against Nazi Germany. The heavily laden bombers, with inexperienced crews, had trouble getting into bombing formations due to poor visibility over the North Sea.

So was born the "Assembly Ship." The assembly ship was used to form the bomber groups after take-off. Older, battle weary B-24s, less armament, and repainted to be highly visible served this purpose.



Death of the "First Sergeant." The 458th's first assembly ship. A flare was accidentally discharged within the ship just before take-off.

After formation assembly, they would then leave formation and return to base. Fairly safe duty but these old retired battle wagons often carried large quantities of flares. An errant flare in the cockpit area could be disastrous.



The replacement for the "First Sergeant." A B-24J. John Ingram (Tennessee) and William Linden (Maine) standing alongside.



# Ann Brusselmans Well & Happy

by Jim Reeves, HDQ



Ann Brusselmans and Jim Reeves

Ann Brusselmans helped save more than 225 U.S. and Allied flyers during WWII. She helped run the "Comet Escape Line," an underground railroad that spirited pilots downed in German occupied Belgium back to England, via France. Among those whom she helped were many 2nd Air Division personnel.

Early in this year her health failed her and she needed to come to America to live with her daughter, Yvonne Daley, a resident of Dunedin, Fla. She had tried for six years to get the U.S. government to grant her permanent residence status so that she might come and live with Yvonne. Each time she tried she was told that she didn't fit into one of the State Department's preferred status categories, and hence she might have to wait for up to 10 years to become a resident alien.

When the plight of this good lady became known, many letters from the various veterans organizations were directed to the President asking for immediate assistance for Mrs. Brusselmans. Having received prior information about her status before the news became public in the U.S., as President of the Second Air Division Association, I wrote to Mrs. Reagan in behalf of our 6500 membership and asked for her assistance in behalf of Mrs. Brusselmans.

On January 12th the President phoned Anne to pass the good news that he was invoking a rarely used provision of the law to grant her permanent residency. On the 13th, two U.S. Immigration officials visited her at her home in Liege, Belgium and gave her a "temporary" permanent residency card.

Earlier I had communicated with Mrs.

Brusselmans via telephone and she sent me information about 2nd Air Division personnel whom she had helped. On November 8th I visited this great lady, now 82 years young. With a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eyes she unfolded the facts and statistics on the many American and allied lives that she helped save as an active member of the Comet Escape Line. She shared with me her notes and records of many of those whom she helped. Included in this list were many of our 2nd Air Division personnel. She shared with me about her busy days and nights caring for "her boys." It was necessary that she took her limited income and bought black market food and clothing for those under her care.

I asked her about the danger of her involvement in her activities. She told me 50 people around her were arrested. She showed me a book with several pictures of people who were assisting her that were killed for their involvement in the escape line. Two of them were women who were beheaded.

Upon my arrival at her home I found a group of visitors...in this group was Ralph Leslie of the 389th BG — now a resident of Palm Harbor. I thanked Mrs. Brusselmans on behalf of our 6500 membership of 2ADA for her many acts of kindness. She asked me to express to each of you her love and concern for the continued success of our Association. She stated, "...after all, if it were not for the Americans that I assisted, I would not be in America today."

In deep appreciation to this great lady, please write to her at this address: Mrs. Anne Brusselmans, M.B.E., 1962 Brae Moor Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698.

## The Bombardiers

by a Massachusetts father named Starratt who dedicated this poem to his bombardier son

Bombardiers — what do they do?

Men with hearts — and courage, too.  
Gentle, kind, and loving hearts.

Educated in all the arts.

Men from every walk of life

Join together to end all strife.

God-fearing men in the stratosphere

With oxygen masks and eyes that are clear.

They look through the bombsight —

What do they see?

A city in darkness or a ship at sea.

Not out of hatred do these men fight

But for love of freedom and all that is right.

And when they signal "Bombs away" —

It means death and destruction every day

To those who would destroy our way of life.

That's why these men are in the strife.

With nerves of iron and hearts of steel

They make the Nazis rock and reel,

'Til every city, hamlet and town

In Nazi Germany is mowed down—

On to Japan — the watch word will be

To blast that island out of the sea.

All hail to the rest of the men who fly

But the bombardier must have the eye

To hit the target day or night

And help the rest of the boys who fight.

And when the enemy is crushed and it's clear —

We'll take our hats off to the  
Bombardier!

"Missing in action" the telegram said,  
Missing in action, I know he's not dead;

For God in His mercy had made it quite clear

That he has a place for each  
bombardier,

And for all of the boys — wherever they fight

For the love of our freedom and all that is right.

So mothers and fathers, if that telegram comes,

Remember that God will take care of our sons.

# Headquarters Group

by Mary Frances Elder

How many of you have ever heard of the book called "The 1,000 Day Battle" by James Hoseason? I found it by a rather odd incident when Delos and I attended his 65th Hospital reunion several years ago. I was told it was out of print and therefore not available. However, after mulling this over for some time (as I said, several years — these Southerners are a little slow!) I decided to write the publishers and see what they said. I got the most delightful letter back stating that the book was again in publication and that I could order as many as I wanted. I immediately (this time) sent for one and it arrived very shortly along with a letter from the author, Mr. James Hoseason, who also very kindly inscribed the book for me.

If you really want the history of the 2nd Air Division, write Gillingham Publications, 89 Bridge Road, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR 32 3LT. The cost of the book is 13.95 pounds plus postage, which I have forgotten. Perhaps you can get that information from your local post office. It is well worth it!

I was especially intrigued by the fact that my old boss, Lt. General (then Colonel) Charles B. Westover, was one of the major contributors, along with Maj. Gen. Lester F. Miller, Brig. Gen. Hubert S. Judy, Jr., Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough and others. The maps are marvelous and some of the pictures I am sure you will want to see. Lots of old buddies appear here, I am sure. Unfortunately, he did not include anything about the WACs, but I'll forgive him because he did such a marvelous job on all the rest.

He starts out, "In the beginning..." and goes on from there, covering all the major battles 2AD engaged in, also covering the sorrows and joys of living and fighting in the ETO. There is one picture of 1st Lt.

Leroy J. Engdahl of the 713th Squadron which is a treasure. Leroy, if you don't have this book, you should, just for that picture.

Let me quote a little from Mr. Hoseason's letter: "You and the other Headquarter Division personnel and the units in the field contributed so much as young people in WWII (and were we ever young — the pictures prove it). You gave those vital years and so much to the cause of protecting freedom — and at a high cost to so many of those wonderful young men. I feel enormous pride in your achievements and in having been able to meet so many (but too few!) of you all, and through this book to record just a few records of those time and those achievements." Mr. Hoseason kindly invites all of us to call him any time we are in England. He lives in Beccles, Suffolk. By the way, he has donated two volumes of this book to our library, The American Room of the Norwich Library (O.K., Jordan?)

I feel as though I have been doing a sales pitch, and perhaps I have; however, to get to other things. I am a member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, as many of you are, and they have been sending me names of various people who have joined their association. However, the only one from 2AD is Harold Pistoiese, 3215 — 62nd S.W., Seattle, Wash. 98116. I don't know the Group or anything, except he belongs to 2AD, so somebody ought to claim him. I plan to write him myself and see if I can direct him to the proper VP — or if any of you out there remember him, call or write and welcome him aboard. In fact, any of you in the Seattle area should write or call.

In the very near future I plan to call on some people in various sections of the U.S. to become chairmen of various sections of

the country. Their responsibility will be to send letters to various newspapers in their vicinity (will send you some samples) and to either reply to any inquiries, or send them to me and I will get them to the various VPs whenever possible. If they don't remember their Group designation, I will send to Bill Robertie to publish in the Journal. In any event, certainly we should get *some* headquarters people out of this effort. So, when I call on you, don't let me down.

One more thing — All the other Groups have articles written by various members of their Groups. Believe me, we need some input from all the Headquarters folks out there. Now I know we didn't go on any missions (at least not the flying and fighting kind) but we must have somebody out there who has some good memories of things that happened to them. When did you get to the ETO? What was your job? Did you run into any exciting events during your stay? How did you come home? Did you get to go on the flight over Germany after VE-Day? I didn't, and would like to read about it. Were you ever in London during a bomb raid — what was your reaction to going to the underground for shelter? We need to put these remembrances down in black and white in order to preserve them — remember taking down the radio reports from the bombers returning from a bomb run, and how exciting that was — I didn't do it often enough to write about it, but somebody did — so put it down — just write it as you would tell it — you can tell that's what I do, my punctuation is mostly dots and dashes — so come on, y'all, your VP needs HELP!!!

P.S. Don't forget to register with Evelyn for Colorado Springs — will look forward to seeing all of you there.

## Aviation Cadet Alumni Association

by Harry C. Bradshaw

The Aviation Cadet Alumni Association, which was created less than two years ago, will soon reach a membership of 10,000 former pilot cadets. This non-profit, no-dues Association exists to provide assistance to those seeking to contact former classmates, and judging by the many letters of appreciation received, has attained a degree of success. However, in relation to the tens of thousands who have been graduated from the Air Corps and Air Force pilot training schools, there is still a long way to go. Every name that is added increases the value of this free service. All former pilots who read this and have not yet done so are urged to send their Flight Class, primary, basic and advanced school, to either Harry C. Bradshaw, RFD 1, Newmarket NH 03857, or Bob White, 54 Seton Trail, Ormond Beach, FL 32074.

Both maintain identical information in their identical computers to protect against loss. Under no circumstances will this information be used for commercial purposes. Those providing a stamped envelope will be given a listing of the names in their flight class who have so far responded and may request an update as often as they like. The Aviation Cadet Association is financed by Bradshaw and White and occasional contributions as a tribute to our fellow birdmen. Eventually all the information gathered will be turned over to the Air University archives for inclusion in the Air Force history. For many of us, those early flying days represent a golden period of our lives and the Association provides all of us an opportunity to tap the nostalgia represented by a period that now exists only in our memories.

### RHYMES OF THE TIMES

by Ed Hohman & Roy Myers

#### A PRIVATE'S OPINION

He didn't like the army food,  
'Said it wasn't too delicious;  
The Mess Sarge didn't like his mood,  
Now he's washing all the dishes!





# Last Plane Home to the USA — Or, How to Make a B-24 Flyable with a Bedspring

by Jim Coffey

In early June, 1945, the 467th Bombardment Group prepared to fly almost all its B-24s back to the United States, part of the aerial exodus of England by the Eighth Air Force. Thus it was that on June 6, 1945, I took off in my assigned B-24 ("943"), 790th Bomb Squadron, with my crew of nine and eleven passengers (including "943's" ground-crew) to fly the first leg of the trip, to Valley, Wales, arriving the same day. It was an uneventful trip, but we were destined to remain there ten days.

On June 10th we were cleared for the next phase of the flight plan. We assembled at the flight line early and took off for Reykjavik, Iceland. I signaled Harry Small, my co-pilot, to raise the landing gear but the right landing gear refused to stay up, sliding back down about 70 degrees. We spent the better part of an hour trying to get the gear to stay up but we were not successful in our efforts. A quick conference between "Andy" DeBiasse, our engineer, Al Muller, our navigator, Small and myself resulted in the conclusion that we would never make it to Iceland. Back to Wales, then, with a heavy load of fuel.

As we approached the field, I was instructed to fly a square pattern around the field for something like four hours to burn off gasoline and bring the plane's weight down to an acceptable level. This was nonsense, as far as I was concerned, because I had on occasion landed a B-24 with about the same weight in fuel, plus a full load of bombs! So after flying around the field two or three times, I radioed that we were coming in. I thought, on the final approach, this landing better be good! It was a good one though a little hard.

The next day I checked in with the Maintenance Officer to see how soon the gear could be repaired. He told me that had the gear failed at Rackheath, it could have been repaired within an hour with available parts; however, Valley was Air Transport Command, not Eighth Air Force, and it would take considerable time to get the parts. So we settled in to wait for the part to arrive.

If you flew right on through Valley without layover, here's what you "missed." In addition to the transient Eighth Air Force and American permanent party, Valley was host to some returning British Army veterans from fighting fronts, now quiet, all over the world. But mostly they were very young men; untrained, untried, unbloodied recruits. Harry Small, Al Muller and I one evening fell in with a group of them while walking to the local dance hall. One complained bitterly, to the acute embarrassment of his associates, that in England he could only aspire to the same station in life as his father and grandfather, in contrast to America where he could aspire to a better life. Our arrival at the dance hall averted what had become a tense situation.

Another evening, Harry and I found an attractive seaside pub. We entered shortly before six and found the place filled with British officers. To a man, they stopped drinking and stared at us. The hostility was almost palpable as if to say, "What the hell are you doing here?" We turned to the bar-

maid who slammed down the roll-top barrier to the bar. We were not to be served! I had never been so insulted in my life — nor since (I was 20 at the time). I still do not understand why we were treated so shabbily. My resentment was so strong that 25 years later, on a visit to Wales, I tried to find the place to see what kind of a reception I'd find as an American tourist. I could not find it and somehow it no longer seemed important.

After Harry and I left the bar, we heard sounds of merriment coming from a one-story building on the side of a nearby hill. The sounds were coming from an Australian enlisted men's club so we hung back from entering. Then four or five of them, all tall men, came out, shook hands, and invited us in; we enjoyed the rest of the evening. I will be forever grateful for their kindness and hospitality.

On another occasion, Muller and two of our crew walked to a small Welsh village. Al, always "camera ready," attempted to take a picture of a "typical" Welsh house, but was set upon by a woman brandishing a broom "You G— d— Limey, get the hell off my property!" She had mistaken Al's Ike jacket for a British uniform.) When Al convinced her he was really an American, all was forgiven and the pictures taken.

Each day made us more impatient to start on the long trip home. I visited the Maintenance Officer at his Nissen Hut each day. I asked him on the eighth day what kind of part he was waiting for. "A spring," he said, "to pull the landing gear lock into place, about 'so big.'" I was standing next to a double deck bunk without a mattress. I pointed to the springs: "Like these?" "Yes, it might be worth a try." The spring was installed and did work. Our B-24 was now flyable, thanks to a bedspring.

We took off, despite a rough running No. 3 engine, on June 16 headed for Terceira Island, one of the Azores. Unexpected high winds blew us over the coast of Ireland, but Muller quickly corrected. We passed the "point of no return" and headed toward that speck of land that was our "target."

Don Faford, our radio operator, recalls this flight as "the most difficult leg of the journey as far as navigation was concerned...As radio operator, I was working closely with Al Muller to verify our position by radio. I was able to obtain one, possible two fixes by radio bearings, but we were almost entirely relying on Al. About 200 miles from the Azores, I lowered the trailing wire antenna to increase our radio range and shortly was able to receive the radio beacon from Terceira and by our radio direction finder was able to give Al a radio bearing to the islands. Al appreciated the information; we were all relieved to know that we were not going to miss our mark. I was so excited by all this that I forgot to retrieve the trailing wire and we lost it during landing. However, Maintenance replaced it in a day or two. They must have replaced quite a few."

I remember only two things about the island: the abject poverty of the people and the price scale for a willing woman's favors — 20 "scoots" (Escudos) to the locals, 40 to the British, and 80 to the Americans, presumably on the basis of ability to pay.

(This was hearsay, of course; as transients we were confined to base.)

The flight to Gander, Newfoundland, our longest at 1237 nautical miles was expected to take ten hours but due to changes in forecast weather it took over eleven. On this long flight, passengers and non-flying crew idled away the time in talk, reading, and napping; non-working crew wandered about the plane as desire, all this "activity" amidst the excitement of flying home. On the flight deck, Harry and I took turns flying (mostly auto pilot), Andy monitored fuel consumption and engines, our No. 3 still shaking, Faford exploiting radio signals as available. But it was all work, work, work for Al Muller up front.

Muller recalls "dead reckoning during flight. We flew through a weak front causing changes in original data. A severe bearing correction disconcerted crew and passengers and I had to say repeatedly 'do not alter course' to the accompanying personnel. Every horizon cloud formation, as well as the many icebergs caused the sensation of seeing land — that is, mirages. Thank God that GANDER LF — WYZZ radio station was located by Faford, always alert, and whose radio compass bearing was a great comfort in our final leg. The last hour of flying was a blessing and delight to 20 members of the 790th Squadron." (For the record, the pilot did not doubt Muller's headings.)

We came in across northern Newfoundland, a barren mountainous land that I thought must look like the surface of the moon. I asked Small to land the plane on the longest and widest runway I had ever seen. He did a perfect job! When we all scrambled out of the plane, our crew from the waist congratulated me but I had to confess that Harry had done it. We spent the evening at the Officers' Club, drinking with a "cosmopolitan" collection of transient airmen from various Air Forces who told some fascinating war stories.

That day, June 19th, 1945 was the last time our crew was effectively together for 33 years. At the Second Air Division Association reunion in San Antonio, September 1978, the nine of us who flew home together — Small, Muller, DeBiasse, Faford, Miller, Hayes, Shaut and myself — plus Bob Snyder were reunited after 33 years. (Bob arrived with us at Rackheath only to be denied the opportunity to fly with us. There were no "openings" for bombardiers on non-lead crews.) We were the first complete crew to attend a 2ADA reunion; we remain in touch and see each other as circumstances permit.

Looking back, it did not occur to me that my landing at Bradley Field was the beginning of the end of my Air Force service. We all "knew" we were going on to the war against Japan, but such was not to be. (Harry and I stayed together through Sioux Falls, where I transitioned to the AT-11C/C-45, then on to Hondo, Texas, where we flew B-24s training B-29 engineer students.) I passed through the Separation Center at Fort Sam Houston on September 17, 1945, Harry re-enlisted to complete a 20-year tour as a fighter pilot.



## Open Letter To the 93rd

by Floyd H. Mabee (93rd)

**SOME CHANGES:** I have appointed John O'Grady, 409th Sqdn., 619 Union St., Schenectady, NY 12305, for the 93rd's Assistant Vice President. I am very confident that should anything happen to me, the 93rd would be in good hands. This backup position was recommended by the 2nd Air Division Association. I have also appointed William J. Nelson, 1147 College Park Rd. #13, Summerville, SC 29483, for 329th Squadron Leader. He will replace Jim McMahon, who has resigned this position. I am sorry that Jim resigned; he was a big help as committee member for our memorial in England. Thanks, Jim, sorry you couldn't be with us for the dedication.

**MEMORIAL:** We are coming along well with our project for the memorial for Wright Patterson Air Force Museum. Our chairman, William Doener, has sent me information required for this. I have sent copies to our Assistant VP and Squadron Leaders for their ideas on the wording that we want on the plaque. This information will be passed on to Bill and his committee to iron out the final wording. Because of the costs, I think we had better go for the Memorial Tree and Marker. We have funds left that I noted in your December Journal, but I think we will need more, so any donations will be greatly appreciated. Send your check, made out to the "93rd Bomb Group Memorial Fund," to Lt. Charles J. Weiss, 21 Moran Dr., Woldorf, MD 20601.

**ANOTHER MEMORIAL PENDING:** In the letter section of your fall Journal, I hope you noted the letter directed to members of the 93rd BG from Capt. David R. Kenerley, 93rd Bomb Wing at Castle AFB, CA. I have since received other information about the B-24 they are restoring. I haven't received my December Journal at the time of preparing this Journal, so I don't know if information that Mr. Robertie received from Capt. Kenerley will be published in the December Journal, but Bill told me that he would try to put it in. I also have a letter from Capt. Kenerley that I have asked Bill to put in the letter section of this Journal. Due to the excellent way that M/Sgt. Joseph T. Beach (Ret.) handled our English memorial, I have to ask him to be chairman of the possible mini-reunion dinner get-together to coincide with the roll-out dedication of their B-24. Anyone that would attend this function, please write to M/Sgt. Joseph T. Beach (Ret.), 4129 Galbrath Dr., No. Highland, CA 95660, so that we can determine the amount of interest. We don't know as yet when this will be.

As we have planned, any funds left from our memorial in England would be used towards our proposed memorial at the USAF Air Museum at Akron, Ohio. We also plan on doing the same thing for a donation to the Castle A.F. Museum towards their project of restoring the B-24.

**INFORMATION NEEDED:** Would any of you have known R.K. Locker, 2nd Lt., 409th Sqdn. and the Dec. 19, 1944 incident in which B-24 #42-50597 crashed when a bomb exploded on take-off from Hardwick? If you have any information, please notify Mary Beth Barnard, 73 Western Ave., Sherborn, MA 01770 or notify me. My information shows that this plane was from the 329th Sqdn. and later with the 409th. Tactical targets that day were in the Luxembourg and Ehrang area.

John M. Troughton, 8 Preston Close, Canley, Coventry, CU4 8DF England, would like to hear from anyone that served with the 330th Sqdn that was at USAAF Station No. 455, Oct.-Nov. 1942. He is presently researching the wartime history of Holmsley South airfield, which is 5 miles northeast of Christ Church in the New Forest.

D.J. Wade, 99 Elizabeth Rry Rd., Norwich, Norfolk NRZ 3 QW England, has been doing research into the 8th AF and would like to hear from anyone in the 93rd BG to compile personal accounts from airmen and their ground crews, accounts about missions in their own words or things they can remember in particular about missions. He also would like stories about things that went on both on and around the actual base. He would be grateful and pleased to pay for copies of any photographs of the base or aircrafts and the men that flew them or looked after them.

**INFORMATION:** One of our 93rd members, Charles L. Kline, 825 Udall Rd., West Islip, NY 11795, has completed a painting of three 93rd BG 330th BS bombers in action and also three fighter escorts flying high. He is offering a 13" x 16" color enlargement of his painting for \$10.00 including postage. Charlie was one of the lead navigators on the "RE" "V" aircraft shown in the painting and was on Harry Gruener's crew, who were shot down while flying that plane on Jan. 17, 1945.

**A LONELY 93RD MEMBER:** Harry Belangee Jr., 1308 Linwood, Gingerwood Mobile Ct., Boulder City, Nev. 89005, phone no. (702) 293-4314, was in the 409th Sqdn. Harry isn't too well and would like very much to hear from anyone that knew him.

**93RD ROSTER:** Don't forget, you can purchase an up-to-date 93rd Roster from Frederick A. Strombom, Box 646, Ogema, WI 54459. The cost is \$3.00 for roster plus geographical, or \$2.00 without the geographical listing. Any member of the 2nd ADA may purchase our roster.

**INFORMATION THAT I NEED:** Can anyone tell me the names on the following original 409th planes? Pilot's name included: B-24D #41-23724; pilot 1st Lt. Llewellyn L. Brown. B-24D #41-23748; pilot 1st Lt. David S. Thayer. B-24D #41-23732; pilot 1st Lt. Frank R. Hodges. I'm also looking for the serial numbers for the following B-24s. I believe they are all D-models: "Flying Cock," "Liberty Lass," "Liberty Limited," and "Night Raider."

## Mid-West Mini-Reunion To Be Held, Fall 1988

by Wilbur Stites

The mid-west region of the Second Air Division Association will hold a mini-reunion Sept. 30 thru Oct. 2, 1988 at the Experimental Aircraft Association complex at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The mid-west region includes the states of Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri and Minnesota.

The EAA will be the focal point for most of the reunion activities. This is a beautiful facility with outstanding aircraft and flight related features, including the largest private aircraft museum in the world. The main building incorporates a banquet room where the mini-reunion banquet will be held on Saturday night.

Attendees at the reunion will be housed in the Pioneer Inn. The Pioneer covers an entire island just offshore from the city of Oshkosh, connected to the mainland by bridge. The Pioneer is a true luxury hotel with a gift shop, pool, lawn and deck recreational facilities, two elegant bar-rooms, and guest rooms that are the ultimate in accommodations. The setting, located as it is on an island on Lake Winnebago, one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world, is spectacular.

A highlight of the reunion will be luncheon on Friday on the "Valley Queen" paddleboat, with live entertainment. The ship accommodates 300 passengers with glass enclosed lower deck and canopied seating on the upper deck.

The program for the reunion will include registration from noon to 5 p.m. on Friday at the Pioneer Inn with an informal get-together in the Governor's Suite of the Pioneer following dinner. Saturday's events will include a business meeting from 9 to 10:30 a.m.; luncheon cruise on the Valley Queen from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; events at EAA from 2 to 4:30 p.m., including tour of the museum, video and feature film presentations, live air show with parachutists, warbird flyers and more; and cocktails and banquet from 6:30 to 10 p.m. in the EAA banquet room. Sunday will be breakfast and departure.

Costs will be \$53 single and \$58 double for lodging at the Pioneer, \$19 for the luncheon cruise on the Valley Queen, and a token fee of \$2 (needed to conform with insurance liability requirements) for use of the EAA facilities. The Pioneer and Valley Queen rates are both special low rates they are offering as a courtesy to us. The Pioneer is also providing complimentary meeting room facilities and the Governor's Suite for our use as a hospitality lounge. The banquet meal will be catered by the Pioneer with a cost in the range of \$10 to \$15.

Reunion committee members are Wilbur Stites of Black Earth, Wis., and Robert Victor of Milwaukee, both of the 453rd Group. For more information contact Stites at 9334 Kahl Rd., Black Earth, WI 53515 (608-767-2625) or Victor at 3863 N. 98th St., Milwaukee, WI 53222 (414-461-9059).



# Tora Tora Tupelo

by Bob Mallick

Man, I hate growing old. I don't like the alternative, either. I'm gradually going to plastic city like the rest of you gaffers. A plastic lens inserted in my left eye, plastic teeth, and then my glasses. Yessir, I'm a real Bionic Man. Do you think that flying right seat in a B-24 for 21 missions aged me? Maybe it was the food? Maybe the English girls wore me out prematurely? Whatever the hell it was, I know that time has chewed on me some, and at age 64 spit me out onto a small ranch in Arkansas. The beef steers, dogs and cats and the wife eat me out of pension checks as fast as they arrive. Two table gardens each year require work that can kink my back and put cramps where I never had them before, yet we all eat like kings and I am happy. Good memories warm my old heart and bod and bring me warmth and some contentment so let's check out some of them.

I completed flight training on May 23rd of 1944 and was with a combat Bomb Group, the 453rd, by late December to fly 21 missions and two trolley runs over Germany. It was high adventure, 20,000 feet high, and was hard work! Hour after hour formation flying was grueling with all the corrections and re-corrections it took to make the old bucket of bolts respond and pay attention to control movements. The unpredictable English weather put more fear into me than enemy gunfire ever did. The damp, dark, murky moisture-laden pre-dawn take-offs never appealed to me, but was a job to be done. Some mornings the runway lights were not too discernable and as we fought for speed rumbling along, both of us were on the rudder pedals, me with my head twisted out the side window praying that the DG was set and working well. Icy cold January mornings found ground crews up on the wings in flickering lights sweeping them with buckets of Killfrost alcohol and straw brooms. These type things gave me a full "pucker factor" and I really sweat the thoughts of unseen prop wash that hit and rocked the ship to make it even more sluggish and slow on climb-out. Combat flying in a war zone had something for everyone. Lots of apprehension and fears diverted to me! (Some of these memories ain't so good, maybe).

BUT: Flight training was pure fun and enjoyment and I love to remember and write of it. No way did I enjoy combat flying. My own observation of the Consolidated B-24 was that it was a sturdy aircraft. In a previous story when I intimated that I was not in love with the soggy old bitch, I received some very agitated phone calls, so I am notifying Robertie not to disclose my number again. Anyhow: I trained with very brave and confident young men and received my wings before my 21st birthday. I have always been proud of that. The dangers of mechanical failures, bad weather and poor judgment we all discounted and paid no attention to. Inexperience was eliminated by flying long and hard in the trainers. Our various aircraft had good and bad characteristics in flight. The Stearman was a regal delight to fly with

so much wing surface. Light and quick it rode the air as a proud eagle does. Gave a wonderful feeling to the seat of your pants and the feeling of inexpressible, irrepressible joy in the air. I sometimes used to scream and holler out into the windstream, I felt so great flying that wonderful bird. Yet, it was as treacherous as a fickle girlfriend in a crosswind and could run out from in under you to ground loop in a flash of upset speed and a 360 degree dust cloud so fast your head spun with it. Impossible to catch up with and control. I groundlooped twice and attended a Board of Inquiry both times at Americus, Georgia, Southern Field. First time with my instructor, Odo G. Valentine, and we concocted a story that the Board accepted. Had to take an eye check afterward. Got full credits second time solo and I wiggled and squirmed like a bacon strip in a hot skillet till they cleared me.

The interim between WWI and WWII was only 23 years when any landing you could walk away from was a good one in fabric covered airplanes. Some of the Jennys back then had curved skids under the wing tips to absorb rips, breaks and tears from groundloops and I fervently wished I could have some installed. My story really begins now — so, bear with me, I am a long-winded rascal, at times. (Ed. Note: *You'll get no argument from me!!*)

One clear day in 1944 I really buzz-dragged Tupelo, Mississippi. I went right down their main street with the most powerful all-metal Army ship that I had flown. Prop in low pitch, engine thundering with all of the nosies a Navy Banshee jet could make years later. Telegraph pole level. I don't know how many messed their pants that day nor how many heart attacks occurred but I got credit for 3 fender bender auto accidents! I felt sorry for the old folks who thought the Japs had attacked them but this is the tale:

The Vultee Basic Trainer #13 was a strong and powerful aircraft. All metal, in most cases, a 450 HP engine could turn up a storm and came to a heart-warming satisfying mean roar at full throttle. We loved it. It handled smoothly and had adjustable prop pitch and our first radios for communication. The fixed gear may have detracted some from airspeed but we weren't bothered by it. It was a sophisticated new airplane for us and big transition from light fabric covered ships. Real serious training began now including instruments and night flying and some cadets washed out. Some few volunteered out and we felt they had been using the Corps for a dodge to avoid combat. It wasn't all fun and games anymore. Do any of you old airplane drivers remember that some of the BT-13s came from the factory with the semi-monocoque construction? Quite a contrast to approach an assigned plane and find a wooden plywood tail empennage and a plate stating "Not for Aerobatics." We assumed that the aluminum sheets were going to combat warbirds and wood to the trainers. Who

knows? I did loop and slow roll these but never spun one. The BT-13 could wind into a tight spin with all the shake, rattle and roll you needed. Someone had properly named it "The Vibrator." We flew our vibrators in those days. Times have changed. The airplane would protest loudly in a spin with creaks and groans and hard shuddering while dropping like a rock or chunk of lead and the canopy rattled loudly and tried its damndest to come off. All of this combined noise and screwy motion gave weird sensations as you stared down at a crazily spinning world below hunting for your reference point. If you were sharp and fast on recovery, popping the stick real hard when opposite rudder stopped the spin, you could whang your instructor's head sharply against the back canopy and grin like a Cheshire Cat up front. I never felt more like an army pilot than when I climbed up on the 13's shiny wing root and tossed my chute into the front office. The array of instruments was impressive and only the gas gauges were hard to read at night. They were tucked way down in the cavernous belly of the booger. It stuck to a tarmac runway like a glue drop when it settled in so smoothly and I don't ever recall bouncing one in. A broken timing gear once forced me to diddle squat in a corn and cotton field in Mississippi but that's another story. If a man can be said to be in love with a chunk of metal and thousands of rivets, I was in love with this sturdy beast. I flew it without any conscious effort and was beginning to become a pilot at Greenwood, Mississippi.

Flying low was a no-no at any time, and dragging, buzzing or flat hatting over low objects was a ticket to dismissal from the Corps but some cadets couldn't resist it. I will never admit to much of it but turning a young kid loose in control of thundering mayhem and screaming roaring power with that engine throbbing mightily, who could resist laying out some of that power onto the ground below. There were not too many Caspar Milquetoasts around me. The running panorama of the earth's contours fled so swiftly below your wings. The ground was a patchwork blur of green and brown fields with buildings and objects streaming past underneath that an exhilarating feeling pumped through your veins mixed with an adrenalin high. Hell, folks, it was FUN, FUN, FUN — I have ridden the Harley Davidson motorcycles full wide open on straight roads but could never regain the feel and thrill of buzzing. I feel sorry for all the California Angels and/or hippie types who ride bikes as they ain't seen nothin'!

We organized one day with maps and charts and general hubbub in our ready room and began drawing lines on maps for a triangular solo cross-country with intervals between take-off, so following another chap was taboo. Into the wild blue yonder on figures, charts and your own brand of confidence. I mentioned it was getting tougher, didn't I? We did check out each other's charts and compass headings and I

(continued on page 10)

## Tora Tora Tupelo (continued from page 9)

inked the three legs onto the back of my hand. Very lucky, as the gum band broke later and dumped my maps down into the beast's belly where I could not retrieve them airborne. I wonder where the name "Joe Balls" came from? We were going east to some little town, thence north over Tupelo, Mississippi to Meridian, and a long leg home to Greenwood for chow and coffee. But, Tupelo and Meridian both had railroads that came merging into town from the northeast and we were firmly advised not to confuse the towns.

I adjusted the seat for max comfort, took off and trimmed the airplane for an enjoyable flight in the pretty sunlight and with a vast scenic view droned through the Southern skies. Contentment sat in and it was a piece of cake. It was a thrill to hit the first town and see all the outlying homes appear and then buildings and business sections come toward me from the horizon. Smack on schedule and on course. Circled it, came back over center on the north leg. A slight headwind picked up and slowed my progress, threw my timing back slightly, and made me uneasy as I came to Tupelo. I was ahead of schedule for Meridian but was thrown off by all the others radioing their numbers in to ground control. I feverishly scanned the ground for the airfield they were calling to. It would have been to my

benefit not to have the radio set crackling that day.

Pardner, you guessed it. I decided to identify the town below me. And, did it with a flourish typical of a young smart aleck. Kilroy was coming! I swung out right over a highway that led to the center of the town, throttled back and began to drop altitude fast. Made a curving sweep bank toward town and I began skimming the roadway, increased to full power and plunked into full low prop pitch for power. I really blew down the main street at tops of the light poles and way too fast. The awful thunder and scream was muted behind me but some could be heard from sound bounce off the buildings. Hot Dam — I could see drug store signs and theater marquees but no names. I was as bewildered and upset as the populace. Never landed on a main street before or swept by one that fast. Screaming out and over the small city a tight right turn brought me back toward it about 6 blocks over, and to a cluster of corrugated iron buildings, painted on the roof in block letter proclaiming the proud name Tupelo. Pulled out around climbing again to the north and completed the flight. But, on the way back the enormity of what I had done, taking an expensive army plane onto an unsuspecting American town and blowing shingles off their buildings and homes

took a toll on me too. I hadn't messed my pants nor had a cardiac arrest, but was close to both as I imagined the response from powers that be.

Good thing landing in the BT-13 were a cakewalk for us. Roll that big cowl and engine down at the runway, dump full flap with a hand crank and she rode a pretty path to flare out touch down. I would steal one today from Dayton, Ohio if gasoline were affordable.

Unhooked my chute in the ready room and tossed it into a bin. Walked to Captain Van Zandt's door and knocked. Adjutant 1st Lieut. McClung opened it and gazed levelly at me. I was protecting my butt as my chute did, but reporting the incident. "Sir, I dragged Tupelo today, for reference."

"O.K.," he said quietly and slammed the door so hard in my face that I felt a breeze and feared for the paneling. It was the only noise I heard from the buzz job, but later Van Zandt braced me against a wall until I sweat my shadow on it for some minor infraction. It was one hell of a good buzz job, though. I spent three varied and spotted years with the old Army Air Force and the good times outweighed the bad ones for great memories. If any of you old airplane drivers ever get to the museum at Dayton and a BT-13 is missing from its slot, come on down to Arkansas and I'll give it back.

I need another beer now.

## A Green, White and Yellow Radar Tale

by Charlie Freudenthal

*The following is an extract from an article called "Radar in a B-24 Group" published in the official magazine "Radar" in February 1945. It was then classified "Confidential."*

Only lead aircraft of the 489th had Gee when Lt. John T. Watson opened shop for the radar section in May (1944). By August the mechanics had installed a set in every plane. With the push into France and the subsequent death of many Jerry jamming stations, the Gee fixes were able to take the navigators farther and farther toward German targets.

On one of these missions, Lt. Bob Johnson was getting such good reception that he extended his lattice lines an inch beyond the printed borders. "I knew the fixes wouldn't be as accurate with the interpolated lines," he said, "but it was 10/10ths below and my fixes hit the course right on the button."

When the Pathfinder Squadron joined the Group in July, the Radar Section was ready for them with a PFF maintenance crew, headed by Lt. Donald J. Swett. Although testing was conducted with only one accurate volt-ohmmeter the first month, Lt. Swett, his crew chief S/Sgt. Lloyd

DeVane and the PFF mechanics turned in a very pretty first-month maintenance record; the Mickey aircraft were 92% operational through each of the month's missions. Average for the entire 8th AF would probably run about 85% operational over the target.

With the arrival of more test equipment, the PFF mechanics were able to get even better results. At the time the Group was called home, Mickey ships had run up a total of 52 consecutive operational sorties without an equipment failure.

Excellent maintenance led to better than average results. Mickey operators of the 489th were among the first to successfully use the radar echo of a definite target area in a city for a Mean Point of Impact. Less and less did they have to unload with the center of the city as the briefed MPI.

In August the PFF planes led the 2nd Division to an oil refinery at Schulau, near Hamburg, and laid most of their bombs within 2000 feet of the target. Another refinery was almost completely destroyed when the Group carried the ball for the 20th Combat Wing in a PFF attack on synthetic oil plants at Gelsenkirchen, in the north of the Ruhr. Just before the invasion of

Marseilles, the 489th flew from England to join the 15th AF up from the Mediterranean; they bombed Lyon-Brun with a PFF lead.

At Trier on August 26, Mickey picked up the target at 50 miles; drift was killed from that point. As the Group closed in, it looked like an H2X job, and the bombardier got his readings from the Mickey operator, clutched in and set up the bombsight as usual. Then clouds pulled away for about 30 seconds over the target; the bombardier dropped visually, slanting the demos right in the barrel.

Two weeks before the 489th went off, its Mickey was given a good test on two missions flown the same day. Two squadrons pinpointed the Mittelland canal through 10/10th clouds and another squadron made an H2X attack on a synthetic oil plant in the Ruhr. With the canal, the airmen were aiming for a lariline 3¼ miles long that was being used as an east-west waterway linking the Ruhr steel cities with the Baltic.

While the Group was Mickey-led from July on, it wasn't until early October that it was supplied with RCM protection against enemy fire control radar. Tunable equipment to go into use for the 489th.



# The Rough Edges

by Ken Stevens

## MISSION 250 BEGINS

*This story was written by Lt. Hubert Cripe in 1944 while a prisoner of war. The story was written on a book of blank paper furnished to the POW's by the Y.M.C.A.*

*By now the ink is a little faded and the paper beginning to yellow. But when you talk to Hubert, you will find the memory as vivid today as it was when he touched his pen to the paper.*

\*\*\*\*\*

The time of this story beginning is 0230 hours on March 6th at a bomber base "Somewhere in England."

A G.I. orderly is sleepily making his way down the wet and muddy walk that leads past a row of Neisson Huts where combat crews are sleeping.

Already there are sounds of activity on the base. A plane is being tested for a sour mag that drops 100 R.P.M. It's supposed to be fixed at 50 R.P.M. but some crew chief is off the ball and it got worse.

The orderly opens the door of one of the huts, turns on the light, and calls "Lt. Cripe?"

"Huh," comes the sleepy answer.

"Breakfast at 3 o'clock, briefing at 4."

He leaves at this and goes on to call other crews.

Lt. Cripe, that's me, got up at this and shivered as the cold night struck him. I called my co-pilot, Russ Anderson, and my navigator, Lt. Dallacqua. Now I know how my father felt when he called me and my brother on a cold winter morning, only more so.

Well, I got them up with lots of grumbling and cuss words. We put on our helmets, oxygen masks, coveralls, and parachute harness in a C-3 bag, dressed and went to breakfast of powdered eggs and hot cakes.

Groups of men were grouped around the stove speculating on the target. However trucks were waiting to take the crews to briefing so we cut it short and loaded up.

Immediately on arriving at the briefing room we drew our electric suits and put them on. Then we went in to briefing. On the far end of the room was a large map of England and the continent. The room soon filled and Major Hubbard directed the route he put on the map.

A hush settled over the room as 2 S2 men thumbtacked a thin sheet of plexiglass in such a way that a red crayon line on the sheet disclosed our route. Groans went up over the room as the red line stopped at — BERLIN!

Major Hubbard demanded order and called the roll. I was given another bombardier as my own Lt. had pleurisy and was unable to go. Capt. Foster was to go with me but nobody woke him so I was given Lt. Dineen, the regular bombardier on Lt. Hart's crew.

Destiny had a queer twist for Falla and Fay and an entirely different one for Dineen and 2 other members of Hart's crew.

Major Hubbard continued and assigned ships, told gas load, bomb load, and call signs.

S-2 took over then and the first words they said were "Gentlemen, OUR target for today is Berlin."

Then the officer described our target, an electrical plant on the south side of Berlin. Then he continued that if we were unable to get back to England to head for Sweden. "If you are forced down in Holland or Belgium your chances of contacting the underground are pretty good. However, no such luck in Germany. Good luck, gentlemen."

Next came the weather officer who described what kind of weather to expect. The briefing officers had been up all night preparing this mission and with a few final remarks Maj. Hubbard dismissed us.

Back to the equipment room we went, drew parachutes, mine was a new back pack, and the Mae Wests that were to prove the factor to cheat death.

The equipment I wore was long underwear, blue bunny electric suit, coveralls, electric gloves and shoes, fleece lined boots, helmet with oxygen mask attached, Mae West, and finally the parachute.

I remember I left a short coat, pink pants, green shirt, and my cap in my C-3 bag in the dressing room. Past experience had taught me to take along a winter jacket as the electric suit might not work. Thus equipped we went outside, loaded our equipment and ourselves on a truck and went out to our hardstand.

The gas truck had just finished topping off our tanks after pre-flight.

"You'll have 2700 gal. of gas," Maj. Hubbard had said and the crew chief was seeing we had just that. Dawn had not come yet and the lights were on inside the plane. As I crawled into the bomb bay to put my equipment in the cockpit I noticed the bombs. Eggs for Jerry — 10 of them — 600 pounders, too. S2 must have wanted the place bombed good.

I rejoined the crew who were checking the guns, ammo and turrets. I was tense and Russ and I walked away from the plane to have a last cigarette.

"She'll be a rough one today, huh," said Russ.

"Yeah," I said, wondering if it would be like the mission 2 days before when we got as far as Helgoland and were forced back on account of weather. Well, I vowed, today would be different. We'd blast that place wide open, I told myself.

Ten minutes before starting engines time we (the crew) had a final pep talk and boarded the plane. Russ read through the check list and the engineer started the Put-put. The clock on the instrument panel had come to engine starting time as Russ snapped on the switches and said "Starting No. 3."

## SCARY TAKEOFF

The starting motor gave a low whine and increased. "Mesh No. 3." "Meshing 3" came the answer and the big prop started slowly turning.

The 1200 HP engines coughed, caught,

blew out a cloud of blue smoke and burst into life. In such a manner the other 3 engines were started.

After satisfying ourselves the engines were thoroughly warm, we waited for taxiing time. Already the lead bomber had taxied past our hardstand and the others were following in order.

We were flying off Lt. Witzel's wing and when I saw him begin to move I released the brakes, increased the R.P.M. and slowly made our way to the taxi strip.

By the time we had taxied half way to the end of the active runway, the lead plane was taking off. He was airborne before the end of the runway and other planes followed in order.

They all showed evidence of their heavy load — 6000 lbs. of bombs plus 2700 gal. gas plus ten men and ammunition for 10 machine guns, a total of nearly 35 tons.

We stopped at the run up area and went through the take-off check list: 20 degree flap, Hi RPM (2700), manifold pressure 47 inches of mercury. We taxied to the opposite side of the runway Lt. Witzel used to escape his prop wash and held our brakes awaiting the green light from control. Hatches closed, cowl flaps closed, auto rich, brakes set, 25" mercury.

There's the green light and here comes the white knuckles. Brakes released and we're rolling — Throttles wide open and 4800 Pratt & Whitney Horses beller their song.

Full military power — we get 49" mercury maximum from the ram effect. Sgt. Garrett, replacement engineer stood between me and Russ and like Cool Hand Luke, he called calmly the air speed. 60-65-70-80 — Come on baby, come on, we're already past half the runway length — 90-95 — she's getting lighter — keep that nose wheel down, don't let her fly off yet. 100-105 — back pressure on the wheel — 110-120 and we're in the air just over the end of the runway.

"Gear up! Gear up!" I screamed. Why does it seem I'm the only white knuckled guy aboard?

Russ calmly answered "Gear coming up." And the massive gear swung out and upward.

Use brakes to stop the spin of the wheels or they will be just like a gyro. Yeah, we sure got a load of baggage. We can scarcely climb but we are gaining. Five minutes of full maximum military power are the limit and Russ lowered manifold pressure and RPM and milked up the flaps. Our speed increased and we started our climb.

Have you ever made a takeoff for a bombing mission? If not, you have to start a climbing turn almost as soon as your wheels are up. If you don't you will be miles away from the formation.

We started turning almost as soon as our wheels were off the runway. By turning inside of Witzel we soon caught up with him and assumed our position off his right wing. He had already assumed his position in the action and the plane that took off behind us got into position off his left wing.

Our section got into a semblance of a formation and closed up.

Lt. Crockett, leading the section of 12 ships led us up to the first section. Our position was No. 2 in the hi right element — The Purple Heart element.

After our group had formed we started looking for the other 2 groups in our wing — the 389th and 445th. All the B-24s are in the second division and after much maneuvering in banks, rolling in prop wash, and racing engines the entire division was formed.

Planes seemed to be everywhere.

This was a maximum effort and every plane that would fly in the 8th Air Force was up. Far ahead of us were the B-17s. They started earlier. High above were more B-17s. Time was marching on. The Air Force was formed and there was work to do. The Air Force started climbing.

As the shores of England moved by underneath my left wing I thought "Well, here's No. 8."

### BOMBS AWAY

At 12,000 ft. Russ and I put on our oxygen masks and at 15,000 ft. I ordered the crew to put theirs on. It was going to be a long raid and a long time on oxygen so save all you can!

The choppy, cold North Sea was beneath us now. We seemed to be standing still but the air speed indicator read 165.

After what seemed hours the coast of Holland came into sight. Enemy occupied territory! Little did I know I would be on Holland soil in a very few hours.

The engineer had finished transferring gas out of the Tokyo tanks and was back at his top turret searching the sky for enemy fighters. High above us were many single contrails. Fighters! Maybe they are our own. Sure enough. As they got closer the wing and tail positively identified them as P-47s. If any enemy fighters were present they kept away from us while we had fighter protection.

We were well inland now and Spike, the navigator, called up and said we would be over the German border in 7 minutes. Well, so far, so good. No flak yet.

The gunners were keeping a line of talk going over the interphone. For myself, I was comfortable. Electric suit O.K. Oxygen mask O.K. Plane O.K. except No. 3 is getting pretty warm.

Suddenly out of nowhere dark smudges of black smoke appeared in the group ahead of us.

Flak!

Hope they leave us alone.

I didn't see any apparent damage but by then we were in it. It wasn't too accurate though and we flew on unhindered.

Our route took us out of most of the flak areas and we flew on seeing occasionally light flak and many of our own fighters which had changed to P-38s. We'll change again before the target to P-51s.

We were well over Germany by now and Spike called again to tell me we would change course for the I.P. in 15 minutes. Well, so far this had to be a milk run. I

would have been plumb happy only we were 250 miles inside Germany.

We changed course for the I.P. all right but 10 minutes later Witzel suddenly pulled out of the formation. Well, being out of formation 100 miles from Berlin is like slitting your own throat but I followed him. He was definitely in trouble. And sure enough — he feathered No. 3. What to do? Why didn't the dumb fool try to stay with the formation? But no, he's going home. ?!\*%?!\*!!

Well, I've got to catch the formation or my goose will be cooked. I gave her full throttle and caught my group just after they had passed the I.P. but I got the wrong section! I was in the first one and my own was behind me. Well, I'll stay here.

Ahead of us was the target. Berlin, here we come. Jerry had the welcome mat turned upside down and inside the door. Over the target was the most concentrated flak barrage I have ever seen. It was almost a solid black cloud with red bursts of exploding shells. We could see it 50 miles off and it filled me with dread. Right then I preferred fighters to flak.

We kept approaching our target, the lead plane using the bomb sight and making corrections. Our bomb bays were open and we were going to drop our eggs when the lead plane did. Suddenly we were in the flak. It was everywhere. When you can hear it, it is too close — and I heard plenty. Spent pieces of flak bounced off our ship like BBs. A burst directly to one side rocked the ship. Boy, a hit in our bomb bay and we've had it.

There go the bombs! Instantly the bombardier hits his bomb release. They're off. After what seemed ages we are out of the flak and the bomb bays closed. Our section isn't without damage. Whoever was flying No. 2 on Stock has a bad gas leak in the bomb bay. Flak got a gas line or tank. It was Crockett and I learned he ran out of gas and ditched.

### WE'RE HIT

We were now going home and I was very glad that we were through the flak and damage. The only apparent damage I could see was a tiny flak hole the size of a dime just in front of the wind screen.

Immediately after releasing our load I noticed the manifold temperatures started lowering, a good sign as we could close the cowl flaps. The formation was pretty ragged but it got better as we started letting down to 14,000 ft., the altitude on the return leg.

I tried to get into a position but was chased out by other planes so rather than brush wings I let them have it until I finally got on the left wing of Lt. Tobin who had one engine feathered. We didn't know then that was a mistake as he started lagging behind. Flak was negligible and neither Russ nor I saw enemy fighters.

Things were going too well. Sporadic conversations were coming over the interphone so I let Russ fly and I tuned in the radio to fighter-bomber frequency. Enemy fighters were around. As the waves were full of frantic calls to our fighters to come

to their aid, I glanced around. Our formation was quite a ways ahead of us and we were letting ourselves wide open for attack!

We were in the Dummer Lake area where lots of enemy fighters were concentrated. Should I leave Tobin, chance getting to the formation, or try to give the stricken Tobin what protection we could? The jerries settled that question. One minute all as tranquil, the next I heard an explosion in our ship!

We were under attack and we had been hit! Almost immediately I saw a large gaping hole appear in the trailing edge of Tobin's left wing as a 20mm shell exploded. The attack was from the rear.

I jerked my head to the left and looked out the side window. There was one of our attackers! He was making a graceful left bank and the black crosses on the wing were plainly visible.

Why don't the waist gunners get him? He's a sitting duck! I got on the radio and called for fighters. A cool Texas drawl came back to "don't get excited, sonny, poppa's coming." Almost immediately two P-47s appeared and chased the ME 109. I didn't look to see if they got them as more pressing business was at hand.

Tobin evidently had had it. A figure appeared in his waist window and bailed out. Then my engineer called from the top turret and said we were on fire, left wing. I looked out. Sure enough, flame was coming out of a 20mm hole that had punctured the tanks. If the engineer hadn't left about 20 gallons of gas in there when he transferred, the fumes would have exploded, undoubtedly blowing our wing off.

However, just now the gas was burning. Should we or shouldn't we bail now? It looks bad. Maybe we can slip out the flames. We tried but no avail.

Meanwhile we were nearing the Holland border. My decision was try to ditch in the North Sea. That was a bad one. Trying to ditch a twenty-four is bad enough without it being on fire. The radio operator, as soon as he heard my decision, started sending S.O.S. on his radio. The cockpit was filled with gas fumes so he cracked the bomb bay doors. Russ took off his oxygen mask and suggested smoking a cigarette as we probably wouldn't get any for awhile. I ordered him not to and to get ready to bail out. Over the interphone I ordered the crew to stand by to bail out as we might not reach the North Sea.

### AND SEVEN MEN DIED

Then I started losing altitude. At 10,000 ft. we entered a cloud and the flames mounted higher. We weren't going to make it! I unfastened my belt, took off my mask and clamped down on the alarm bell, the signal to bail out.

Spike's face appeared in the astrodome. He grinned, waved and vanished. Dinneen had bailed out before him through the nose wheel door. Russ climbed out of his seat and went back to the bomb bay. I tried putting the ship on Automatic Pilot but it wouldn't work. To hell with it, I'm leaving. I crawled out, walked through the radio



room and saw Russ on the catwalk fastening his Mae West. I thought everyone had left her. Russ and I shook hands and he jumped. I saw his hand on the ripcord and with just a little bit of fear I stepped off the catwalk into two miles of space.

My first sensation was a 170 mph slip stream hitting me and — quiet. I felt no sensation of falling. My last glimpse of the plane was flame all over the left wing and fast getting to the fuselage.

I must have been on my back when I saw her. I grabbed for the ring and yanked. Instantly there came a loud report as the nylon caught the wind, followed by a hard jerk that I hardly noticed, then — silence. I didn't even seem to be falling; instead I seemed to be going up! I was in a cloud bank and didn't get to see the ship crash. However, I heard it.

When I floated out of the cloud I looked below. Water. It was the Zuider Zee and a piece of wreckage was still burning on the surface. I looked up and counted the chutes. All I could see were seven including my own. I'll never know what happened to the other three. On the water below were objects I took to be fishing boats. The surface was smooth so I couldn't tell how far from the water I was. The leg strap of my chute was hurting me but it had just skinned my leg. Probably too loose.

Suddenly the water seemed close and I tried to unfasten my chute and slip out but I was too late. I hit the water with a splash. Boy was it cold! I went under and came up

blubbling. Treading water I tried to unfasten my chute but I couldn't get hold of the snaps. Then I tried to jerk the cord to inflate my Mae West. I missed. I tried again and missed.

God must have heard my silent prayer because on my next try I got it and yanked. Instantly the tiny cylinder filled with carbon dioxide inflated one side of the Mae West and kept my head above water. I rested. Then I unfastened my chute which was tangled around one leg.

Russ had landed about 100 yards from me and he was about all in, too. One of the fishing boats had pulled alongside him and taken him on board by the time I had swum to the side of the boat. The Dutchmen on the boat hauled me aboard, a dripping, cold, half drowned man who was very thankful to be alive.

Once aboard, Russ and I shook hands and almost bawled to each other. The fishermen were very kind and while we were stripping off our wet clothes they asked us, "Drink?" Nothing bashful about us, we said yes, expecting maybe some Schnapps, but no, it was water! We only had about half the Zuider Zee inside us and they wanted to know if we wanted water. However, they finished taking our clothes off and put us to bed. They would have been very helpful in getting us back to England, I think, but a German harbor patrol launch pulled alongside and took us on board. In the cabin was Spike. We three were the only survivors of Crew 44.

## NOVEMBER 22, 1980

Now at long last I pick up the pen and try to put thoughts into words. The ordeal is over. God has been merciful to me — a sinner. I am yet in the land of the living and am breathing the sweet breath of life. Thank you, God, I shall never forget how you saved my life. My body is not in an unmarked grave on foreign soil. March 6, 1944, will always be an especial anniversary for me. I am even aware now of the fate of my comrades. I have information the bodies of all seven men were washed ashore in the Amsterdam area and were buried. God, may you be as merciful to their souls as you have been to me. German records that I am aware of mentioned the battle damage to the plane which crashed in the Zuider Zee. I assume parts of it were recovered.

## JANUARY 16, 1981

Ah, my fallen comrades, you whose life Has been snuffed in the futility of strife. Yea, your songs are unsung, and your children unborn.

We pray for your departed souls and await the resurrection morn.

We who are yet alive salute your valor And commend you to your final resting place.

## Traveling — Courtesy: U. S. Agency

by Joe Taddonio

When I was inducted in Sept. '42, I was asked what I would like most to do. "Further my education and travel," I answered! The "Agent" obligingly planned the best way to accommodate me. As to education, I was sent to Radio School, Gunnery School and assigned to a means of fulfilling my travel wishes — a B-24!?

From Kansas, in a new Pink modified B-24D (ball turret), in August 1943 we flew to Labrador, Iceland, Scotland, England, Marrakech, Algiers, Tripoli, Cairo and Ishmalia where British personnel removed our toilet, luggage racks, de-icer boots and armorplate. Apprehensive I was, but just think of the countries yet to visit! Back we went to Libya and the 9th Bomber Command (376th Grp.) to live in tents, 110 degrees, and scorpions. My adventurous expectations were aroused.

Travel we did — to places like Greece, the Aegean Islands and Italy. I was so excited (scared), I almost ruined my clothing. We were warmly greeted with sky rockets and aircraft! There were 36 to 48 of us from two Groups and, to make it more interesting, we made runs in threes. Sometimes Spitfires would meet us returning.

On to more places, requested by Dolittle, to Tunisia (12th AAF) for trips to France, Italy, Greece and Austria (13 hrs. to an ME factory) twice with 50 B-17s using all the 100 Heavies in the Med. Theatre. I managed

ed to show my displeasure (credited) to an ME 109 — one of over 120 E.A.s!

"Move on to Italy (15th AAF)," they said, "Easier to visit other countries like Bulgaria, the Balkans and Germany." Oh, those beautiful Alps! The 8th was to meet us over Augsburg (ME factory) but failed to show up. 48 of us had the entire reception committee of over 100 to ourselves! We were escorted in to a point, left to go on alone and picked up upon return. What a sight: P-38s going, reception committee coming!

Alas, one day (Dec. 28), 17 of us went to northern Italy where 80 to 90 reception aircraft allowed only 7 of us to return to base!

Time to move on again; so off to Tunis,

Oran, Casablanca, Prestwick and finally to Hardwick (8th AAF 93rd Grp., Feb. '44). Trips followed to France, Germany (Big B twice, Little B, Munich Fredrickshafen) and even Switzerland (Apr. 1, '44) — unplanned, of course!

Tired (petrified) of these trips was I (22 in Med. and 17 from Hardwick), so a final trip on June 8th to France and on I went to Metfield (391st) in July — but not for long; moving on after a big BANG (ammo depot blew up) to North Pickenham in August. In September, I returned to my starting point, the U.S.A. In July '45, they cancelled my travel contract!

I travel still, but somehow it just isn't the same anymore!



"Gee, Chuck — I bet you c'n hardly wait to meet your dear, close friend from the war years in lil' ol' Norfolk."



by Jeff Gregory

The New Year is upon us, and the job of making the 467th the best Group it can be continues.

First, let me express my appreciation to Dave Swearingen who kindly offered to fill in for me by writing the "poop" in the previous issue of the Journal. I, in turn, was able to complete a long-planned trip to the West Coast.

It has been decided to hold a 467th get-together two days before the opening of the 2nd ADA reunion in Colorado Springs. This will not be a formal meeting, but rather a "laugh and scratch" session among old and new friends. It will also afford those attending an opportunity to make known their thoughts and observations to the Board of Directors. Be sure to arrange with Evelyn (not me) your requirements for additional nights at the hotel. We intend to convene at poolside at 9:00 a.m. on June 21st.

Al Shower suggested that a painting of the "Witch" be presented to the Air Force Academy during the reunion at Colorado Springs. The problem of finishing a suitable painting; shipping, etc., seemed almost insurmountable within a five month time frame. However, a 467th vet, Fred Janson, who lives in Hemet, California, has donated his personal Mike Bailey painting of the "Witch" for presentation to the Air Force Academy — an answer to a prayer — and a most appreciated and gracious gesture. If present plans come to fruition, the presentation will take place on June 22nd.

As many of you remember, the 467th presented to the village of Rackheath a roster, group history, and roll of honor at our Norwich reunion in May. I recently received a letter from David Hastings stating that it has been decided to add a room on the community center/church, in order to properly house and display these gifts and other memorabilia. This room will be dedicated to the 467th and would also be utilized as a vestry for the Rev. Benians. The cost of the project will be about 3,000 pounds. This is the sort of thing to which we would prefer to contribute. I'm sure our English friends will appreciate any help we can give them. Your board will be in contact to discuss a suitable donation, and bring their recommendations to you in Colorado Springs.

Also, keep in mind the excellent thought of Phil Day on providing a paved walkway from the gates (contributed by the Jim Coffee crew) to the door of the Community Center.

We must take into account the unfavorable rate of exchange at this time, particularly when it comes to adopting a program in England. Also, we must bear in mind additional projects which might require our participation in the future.

I was pleased to learn, a few days ago, that Rackheath had been selected for the construction of a new sports arena. This conjures up several mental images. I can even see the entire 2nd Air Division Association descending upon our village. Let's see, that would make it 1990-91, wouldn't it!!!

Membership is lagging!!! The 467th ranks 8th in 2nd Air Division Association membership and I can't visualize the 467th ranking eighth in anything! We must attack this problem. More about this at the convention in June.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

At this writing, Joe Dzenowagis is planning to continue his important video taping project in Colorado Springs. Scheduling of those individual taping sessions is a problem. Anyone wishing to be included in these videotape interviews, please contact Joe NOW! (It will help him with his scheduling). Much of the taping will probably be done on Wednesday, June 22nd. Please contact Joe as soon as possible. His name and address is: Joe Dzenowagis, 4397 S. Okemos Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

To those who ordered 467th caps while at the Shreveport reunion: All caps ordered have been shipped. If you have not forwarded your check in the amount of \$5.00 to me, please do so ASAP. I can't give the surplus to the "Poop from Group" fund until I have a surplus! Send your check today, please. Phil needs the money. Thanks to those who got their money in promptly. Also, thanks to many of you who send holiday wishes and greetings to Terry and myself. We appreciated all the good wishes and thoughtfulness and we, in turn, wish all of you good health and prosperity in 1988.

See you in Colorado Springs.

## NOTICE #3465 (we never quit!)

For the past 20 odd years, we have been trying to get across to our membership who to write to when they have a question pertaining to membership or to the Journal. Undaunted, we try again.

If your question pertains to membership or reunion related matters, you write to Evelyn Cohen (address on page 2). When you have a question pertaining to the Journal, you write to me, Bill Robertie (address also on page 2).

Writing to anyone else on these items will simply delay your receiving a reply. So make it easy on yourself (and us) and follow the above guide.

Thanks for your cooperation.

— Bill Robertie

**LIVING  
L•O•N•G  
is the  
BEST  
REVENGE**

## 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



# The 448th Speaks

by LeRoy Engdahl

We are now in a new year and many of us look back into the past and think of our childhood, or friends, joys and sadness and maybe ask ourselves many "what ifs." Then we give thanks to our Lord for all our many blessings and mainly for our still being here.

I'm sure there are many of our 448th members who do not know who was responsible for the beginning of the 448th Bomb Group Association. Well, it was Kenneth Englebrecht of 204A Archie St., Granville, IL 95209.

In 1973 Ken had done some personal searching for former veterans who had served with the 448th at Seething, England for the purpose of holding a reunion and organizing an association. Someone who was a member of the 2nd Air Division Association (then unknown to us) heard of Ken's efforts and told him about the 2nd ADA and invited him and those he had contacted to join the 2nd ADA at their reunion to be held at the Antlers Hotel at Colorado Springs in June 1973.

Ken accepted and notified those he had contacted and about 25 former 448th showed up at that 1973 reunion. Ken served two terms as our newly formed 448th Bomb Group Association President.

Ken was succeeded by Joseph "Joe" Michalczyk, now deceased. Joe served until 1983 when his health began failing. In 1983 you elected me as your Group VP and have honored me by keeping me on since.

Our membership has grown from that 25 in 1973 to now over 600 counting Associate Members, who for the most part are widows of our deceased veterans. We welcome them and are very proud to have our widows to join and participate with us in ALL our activities.

How many of you are aware that two of our former 448th Veterans stayed in the service and became Generals? Hubert S. Judy (deceased) who will be remembered as our first Group Executive Officer as a Lt. Col. later became a Brigadier General. His wife, Mae, is an Associate Member.

Lester F. Miller, who served in capacities as Group Operations Officer, Group Air Executive Officer, and served as our last Group C/O before returning to the States, stayed in service and had an outstanding career, retiring as Major General.

How many of our 448th members are aware that we had an officer who served as a Navigator with the 448th after January 1945? He returned to the States and got his pilot's wings, was the top jet ace of the Korean War and was killed while serving as a test pilot at Edwards Air Force Base. His name was Joe McConnel and McConnel AFB in Kansas is named in his honor.

We want to recognize all our members who flew more than one combat tour, including B-24s and fighters. Also, we want our members to know a little about our four Executive Committee members. I have asked our Executive Committee members Cater Lee, Robert "Bob" Harper, George DuPont, and Richard Kennedy, each for a brief profile on themselves as well as those who flew more than one tour. Please let me know and give me their name and address if you know anyone who did. The more than one tour is to include enlisted as well as officer personnel.

Based on the order of responses we have received, the first profile on an Executive Committee member will be on Richard Kennedy of Malvern, PA and for more than one combat tour on Richard Henderson of Midland, Texas.

Richard Kennedy was a T/Sgt. Radio Operator on Replacement Crew No. 45, piloted by Lt. Lloyd H. Haddock. He completed 35 missions from June 27, 1944 to November 9, 1944.

Dick first became aware of the 2nd AD Association in 1983 and has been very active physically and financially ever since. He is always reminding me if there is anything he can do to help in any way to just let him know.

Dick was born Nov. 23, 1921 at Cohoes, New York and attended Siena College, Loudenville, New York. He is married to Bobbie, who is just as dedicated to our 448th and 2nd AD interest as Dick.

In December 1945 Dick became an inspector with the New York Fire Insurance Rating Organization, Albany, New York District. In 1954 he became District Manager, Albany. In 1957 he became Ass't Manager headquartered in New York City. In 1967 he became Ass't Executive Manager Middle Dept. Association of Fire Underwriters for Pennsylvania and Delaware. In 1972 he became President (owner) of Middle Department Inspection Agency, Inc. to the present date. His company has offices in several cities in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Dick reminded me when he made the big financial plunge he put everything he had into it, including Bobbie's diamond ring. It all

worked out very well for Dick and Bobbie and I am happy to have a gentleman such as Richard Kennedy on my Executive Committee.

Pilot Richard Henderson of the 713th Squadron was a member of the original 448th Group and was a personal acquaintance of mine at Seething as I was also a pilot in the 713th along with him.

Richard was born Dec. 4, 1921 at Longview, Texas. He enlisted in the Air Force in May 1942 as an Aviation Cadet and reported to Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas and was sent to the West Coast Training Command, graduating from Luke Field, Arizona Class 43G.

He trained in B-24s with the 448th at Boise, Idaho; Wendover, Utah; and Sioux City, Iowa. He flew the southern route through South America and Africa to England, landing on Dec. 4, 1943 on his 22nd birthday.

He was pilot on Crew #33, 713th Squadron and completed his 30th mission in May, 1944.

He transferred to the 352nd Fighter Group stationed at Bodney Airfield, England, where he flew 68 combat missions in a P-51 Mustang, mostly as an escort for our bombers over Europe. Later he was transferred to Y-29 Airfield in Belgium and flew during the "Battle of the Bulge." He shot down two German fighters on Dec. 27, 1944 in the area around Bonn, Germany. He finished his tour in fighters in January 1945 and returned to the United States stationed at Las Vegas and was honorably discharged in December 1946.

Richard continued in aviation and was a pilot for oil companies for 12 years before starting his own company "Rich-Air Co." located at the Midland, Texas Regional Airport. After 28 years, he is still in business and he is still flying.

Dick, the 448th is happy and pleased to recognize a gentleman such as you who gave more than asked of you, and Americans owe a lot to people such as you. Thanks for all you did.

The next two 448th men to be featured with a brief profile will be Robert "Bob" Harper (Executive Committee) and Col. Doug Skaggs (USAF-Ret.)

Many of our 448th members who have asked where they could get a copy of James Hooseason's book, *The 1000 Day Battle*, will be happy to learn that a shipment of 100 hardbound copies have recently been received at the Wright Patterson Air Force Museum. I phoned them last week confirming what I have been told.

If you are interested in a copy of this excellent book which features the 448th Bomb Group, write to the Wright Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio 45432, Attention: Book Store. The cost is \$23.00.

Several of our members have wanted one of the attractive 448th caps but for one reason or another have missed out. You can now purchase one from Ben Johnson, 3990 15th St., Port Arthur, Texas 77642. These caps are Air Force blue with yellow front with a picture of a B-24 in top center and below in large letters is "448th B.G." On each side in blue is the 2nd AD emblem. The price is \$6.00 each and includes packaging and postage.

I have a good supply of attractive 8th Air Force lapel pins at \$4.00 each; also silver plated B-24 lapel pins at \$7.00; also pewter B-24J tie tacs at \$6.00; also ladies silver plated B-24 charms at \$7.00 each; and last, ladies silver plated B-24 earrings at \$12.00 per pair. (Specify for pierced or non-pierced ears). Send orders for these items to me at 1785 Wexford Drive, Vidor, Texas 77662.

Cater Lee still wants you to send him your name, duty assignment with the 448th, dates you were at Seething and your squadron. Cater is compiling rosters by squadrons which will be useful at our group reunions. Cater's address is P.O. Box 850, Foley, AL 36536.

Remember, if you wish to attend our 448th Group Reunion at Harlingen, Texas next October 6-9 during the annual "Confederate Air Show" featuring aircraft of WWII plus modern jets, please let me know and I will send you the particulars, hotel, events, costs, etc.

Also, if you wish to attend a two-day 448th Group Reunion immediately prior to the 2nd AD Reunion at Colorado Springs on June 21-22, please let me know and I'll send you the particulars.

Cater Lee, Richard Kennedy and I will be in Fort Worth, Texas from January 29-31 to participate in a "Work Planning" session for the May 17-21, 1989 giant celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the world famous B-24 Liberator. I have already asked for 100 rooms for our 448th Group where we will hold a Group Reunion in conjunction with this outstanding celebration. Already 24 B-24 Groups from all Air Forces and Combat Theaters are committed. Mark your calendars now — May 17-21, 1989. More later. Thanks for reading.

# Aviation Pioneer Honored on an Anniversary

by Michael H. Stines



Brig. Gen. Harris  
circa 1920

Sixty-five years ago a young Air Force lieutenant made an indelible mark in history when he jumped from his crippled monoplane and safely floated to earth wearing a free-fall parachute.

It was the first time a free-fall parachute had been used to save a pilot's life.

About 80 persons gathered yesterday at the Camp Edwards activity center to honor retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Harold R. Harris of Two Ponds Road, Falmouth, Mass. The luncheon in his honor was hosted by the 102nd Fighter Interceptor Wing of the Massachusetts Air National Guard.

General Harris was accompanied by his son, Harold R. Harris Jr., his daughter, Alta Mae Stevens, an aide and his personal secretary.

"We're here to honor an individual," 102nd commander Col. Donald W. Shepperd said as he welcomed guests to the luncheon.

"Without pioneers and men willing to take chances like General Harris, we would not have the F-15 and certainly not be getting it at Otis," Colonel Shepperd said, referring to the new McDonnell-Douglas fighter aircraft being assigned to the fighter squadron by the Air Force.

Recalling the historic parachute jump, Colonel Shepperd explained that then Lieutenant Harris, as chief of the flight test branch, was flying a new monoplane out of McCook Field in Dayton, Ohio. The plane went out of control, and he was forced to jump using an untested free-fall parachute. He landed without injury in a grape arbor.

According to Richard Switlik Sr., president of the Switlik Parachute Company of Trenton, NJ, which made the parachute used by General Harris, the general reported the only problem he encountered during the emergency was a "tear in the best pair of pants I had."

Following General Harris's jump on Oct. 20, 1920, the Caterpillar Club was formed. The club is made up of pilots and aircrews who have used a parachute to save their lives. The club now has more than 60,000 members, according to Mr. Switlik.

"We do handle the records of the Caterpillar Club and will continue to do so," Mr. Switlik said. "It's a great organization."

General Harris learned to fly in 1917 while in Italy. As a test pilot, he participated in the early development of high altitude aviation, pressurized aircraft and instrument flight.

Rejoining the Army Air Corps just before the outbreak of World War II, General Harris helped organize the Air Transport Command and served as chief of staff for the command.

By the end of the war, he had been promoted to brigadier general. After the war General Harris served as an executive with Pan American Airways, American Overseas and Northwest Orient airlines.

As an aviator, General Harris holds 11 world records and 16 national records.

He retired in 1965 and lived in New Canaan, Conn., until 1978 when he moved to Falmouth, where he lives with his son and daughter.

Among those honoring General Harris yesterday afternoon was a classmate of his at Los Angeles High School. Although

Gen. James Doolittle could not attend the ceremony, he sent his congratulations to the general.

Vice President Bush also sent a congratulatory telegram that was read by Dr. Paul Pifer, flight surgeon for the Caterpillar Club.

"Your display of courage sixty-five years ago serves as an example for us to follow in our daily lives," Mr. Bush wrote, noting he also became a member of the Caterpillar Club after jumping from a crippled aircraft in World War II.

After receiving several plaques and certificates and a framed picture of the F-15 Eagle from dignitaries at the luncheon, General Harris spoke to his guests.

"I'm not sure you folks are interested in the history presented to you today," the general said. "If you believe any of it, it's your fault."

After briefly reviewing the history of parachutes and safety devices in aircraft, General Harris said, "I can't thank Colonel Shepperd and his associates, all the lovely people who sent the messages, enough. I assure you that I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart."

Following the luncheon, guests toured the airfield and were shown the F-106 Delta Dart now flown by the unit and the F-15 that the squadron will be using next year.



**LONGTIME FRIENDS** — Dr. Paul W. Pifer of Covington stands with longtime friend, retired Air Force Brigadier Gen. Harold R. Harris, following a reception in the general's honor at Falmouth, Mass. Harris became the first member of the Caterpillar Club when he jumped from his crippled monoplane 65 years ago and safely floated to earth wearing a free-fall parachute.



# **458th Bomb Group**

by Rick Rokicki

**MEMORIAL:** Many thanks to those who have written and expressed their kind words and good will regarding our Memorial Dedication/Reunion in Dayton, Ohio. Duke Trivette, Bill Jameson and I were quite relieved that after all bills were paid, we had almost \$70.00 left over. Trivette closed out our bank account and sent that balance to me. That amount now resides in a bank envelope, waiting for dispersal, a beneficial purpose to start another project. In any case, be advised that it never hurt to have both a lawyer and accountant on the Committee!



Just a few of the 267 who attended the 458th Memorial Dedication in Dayton's Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum.

Because of space, I did not mention the following in my last column. Several awards were given, the first of which was to Bob Sellers, by Gen. Isbell. It was an Air Force award of Meritorious Service for the work that Bob did in pioneering a practical Radar Instrument Landing System at Horsham St. Faith. No need to remind you what the weather could be like on your return trip whether it be fog or just plain darkness. Ceil and I received a citation for our efforts regarding the growth of the 458th, also from the General. I was happy to present the following to Bill Jameson, a pewter B-24 desk model, for getting the finances together. A plaque was awarded to Duke Trivette for handling all the work involved in the memorial, the accommodations and without whom such a memorable reunion could not have happened. For those of you who recall that in the December 1985 Journal I mentioned giving an award to whoever supplied me with the most names of potential new 458th members. This was an altimeter clock and was given to Duke & Doris Trivette for the 1986-87 period with a total of 41 names. Of that number, 34 became members and I'm still working on the remaining seven!

**MEMBERSHIP:** As of mid-January, our roster shows 579 members, plus the 12 Associate Members. A goal of 600 is well within our reach before the June reunion. I thank those of you who have taken the time to write names and addresses of those you know who were in your crews. I need more ground people, and those who were attached to support duties. Again, without the help I've been receiving, we would not have our numbers where they are today. I will have a new print-out available again which will cost \$3.00 to cover the Xerox and mailing charges. Sheet size is on computer size sheets (11 x 15), printed on both sides. When we published the 1986 Second Air Division Association Roster, the 458th had 442 listings. Many changes have taken place, more than 46 so far, for various reasons, so you can see what the new 458th Group Roster will show. This is a good time to bring your records up to date.

**458TH BOMB GROUP HISTORY:** As many of you know, George Reynolds has had two publications of our history. The first was published in 1974, blue hardback cover containing 64 pages. The second issued publication was in 1979 and was done in a cream colored hardback with a vertical stabilizer with our red and white tail. This issue contained 72 pages. Both publications were sell-outs, and the thing to note is that in 1974 the 458th had less than 150



members, while in 1979, just slightly over 200 members. Each publication consisted of 400 copies. Over the years, I've had many requests for information as to where a copy could be found. These requests were funneled to George, who in turn had a reply that included the phrase "out of print." Several members at the Memorial Dedication pressed me to bring up the subject of another printing. It became apparent that just about everyone there wanted a copy if there was to be another book published. I called George Reynolds and asked about the feasibility of another book. He said several things would have to be determined before he would decide. First, he no longer was in a position to finance the cost again, since it was now at least 2-3 times more expensive than previous costs he had in 1979. Second, more new information and photos would be necessary. I assured him that we now had a larger number of people who would be responsive to that need. Third, it would take at least a year to compile and ready such a book, if the membership was in favor and could supply the financing, photos, etc.

The third publication of the 458th HISTORY should have approximately 100 pages, at least 2 of them in color. The total number of books to be printed would be from 5-600, more if possible, depending on the money we would be able to raise. The cost is somewhere near \$6,000. Once again, we must appeal to the membership if this is to happen. My original thought was to appeal to those who could afford it, a sum of \$250 or increments (500, 750, 1,000, etc). My feeling was that there might be 24 members who would be willing to invest that sum. However, we wouldn't discount any lesser sums if offered. It comes down to a pledge from our members that they can and will support this effort. There seems to be very little doubt that your pledge money will be returned once the book is on the market. The cost per volume depends upon how much money is pledged, the number of pages, etc. In order to be able to judge the Group desires, please let me know if you can help financially, with previously unpublished photos, or other information not found in either of the last two books. **DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY.** All we need now is an idea of whether this effort is a practical way of getting the book published. If there isn't sufficient financial support, we will not pursue it any further. It is most important that you let me know if you can pledge any amount and to do so as soon as possible. Write or call me: Rick Rokicki, 365 Mae Road, Glen Burnie, MD 21061. Tel. 301-766-1034.

**SQUADRON INSIGNIA:** I have just received the final two Squadron Insignia patches. I had my two, 753rd & 754th to begin with and had a difficult time in finding the 752nd and 755th insignias. Bill Case advised me that Gerry Allen had a 755th jacket patch and I requested Gerry to loan it to me for some photo work. He sent it along and I appreciated his promptness. The 752nd insignia was a bit more difficult in locating. I went through my files to find who was in the squadron and was only able to come up with 22 positive names. I wrote to all expressing my needs and in very short order, Dario DeJulio called and said he was sending his A-2 jacket patch in the next day's mail. Again, the photo work was done and the patch returned. Will have the patches in the next Journal. I received a number of letters and calls saying they had never heard or seen individual squadron patches. Well, it's true, fellows, a full color print of actual squadron insignias (not an artist's conception) will be included in the 458th History mentioned above and also a copy of these photos will be sent to the Second Air Division restaurant mentioned in President Carl Alexanderson's column, page 16 of the Winter '87-'88 issue of the Journal.

Hope to see a record-breaking number of 458th types in Colorado Springs!

# The Story of a Combat Mission and a POW Experience

*Narrated by Richard T. Witton, Wallace Croxford, Walter Conneely, and A. Edward Wilen. Written by R. Mitchell Steen, former editor of the Valley Independent of Monessen, Pennsylvania.*

"Sweet are the uses of adversity; which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, means yet a precious jewel in his head."

William Shakespeare was not even aware of an event known as World War II when he penned those words for the second act of "As You Like It," but his thoughts were as applicable in the 1940s as they were in the 1600s.

So many thousands of U.S. fighting men — at sea, on the ground and in the air — came face to face with adversity often and were the better for it.

It has been said that "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." That was also true of American fighting men, some of them just boys when they left American soil, but wise beyond years upon return.

Many of those valuable lessons were learned the hard way, but in such a way that they became etched in their minds in vivid fashion, never to be forgotten as they lay dormant only to surface during other adversities to be faced in post-war years.

Those lessons provided most with fundamentals to lead into productive and meaningful careers. They became one of the few pluses of war.

Looking back is not the easiest thing to do. Add 43 or 44 more years and the task becomes even more formidable.

But that's what survivors of a fated U.S. bombing mission over Germany did recently. Comparing notes of that day — March 8, 1944 — four members of that 10-man crew jogged each other's memories of just exactly what happened the day they were shot down just prior to a bombing run on a complex of airplane factories near Brunswick, Germany.

The four — Richard T. Witton (pilot); Wallace Croxford (co-pilot); Walter Conneely (bombardier) and A.E. (Abe) Wilen (navigator) — discovered some interesting facts of that day while attending a reunion in Dayton, Ohio.

"At the time you didn't have time to reflect on what was going on," Witton says. "You just had to do what you had to do. Thinking about it had to come later."

Much of the thinking took place in prisoner-of-war camps during the final year of that war, even though further reflection shows that individual survival also occupied their minds.

"We had been trained for such an eventuality," Wilen recalls, "but we never thought we would have to put that training to use. Thank God we had the training because that saved our lives."

Not all crew members were as fortunate. Two of the plane's engineers — Roy Pryor and Manuel Ramirez — were killed while

manning waist guns, while Walter Spencer, manning the tail gun, was blasted from his turret.

Wade Prince was in the belly turret; Joe LeBouef was in the top turret, while Donald Holloway was radio operator.

It was the spring of 1944. The people of occupied countries of Europe were waiting for D-Day. American plane crews were expendable because there were replacements — the Germans had few.

Bomber crews were told at briefings to knock out as many German fighters as possible.

"We want to blast the Luftwaffe out of the sky before D-Day," the briefings went.

There was little to suspect of what was to take place the next day when the crew of Consolidated Mess gathered for a briefing the night before on May 7, 1944. That briefing, as usual, was conducted by Major Jimmy Stewart, the group's operation officer, the same Jimmy Stewart who went on to become a general as well as one of the most respected movie stars of all time.

"It was a warm, slightly overcast day when we all scrambled to our planes about 6 a.m. on the morning of the 8th," Witton recalls. "We were all disappointed when we had to switch bombers because our plane (654) was out of service, but we attached little significance to that."

"That switch forced us to be late on takeoff, also compelling us to catch up with our group and take our place in formation," Witton says.

Twenty-seven aircraft of the 453rd Bomb Group participated in that day's raid — this crew's 17th such mission. It left the English coast at Great Yarmouth about 8 a.m. at 15,000 feet, then proceeded to climb to 27,000 feet. Bombs were to be dropped about 10:30 a.m.

But just before passing the initial point, the formation was attacked by waves of Focke Wolfe 190s and Messerschmitt 109s, firing machine gun bullets and 20 millimeter shells.

Not only was it a fateful day for those 10 crew members, it was fateful for the entire 453rd, which before that day and that bombing raid was over, would go down in history as the day the 453rd had its greatest losses. Some 110 airmen went down that day along with 11 planes.

More interestingly, that day (May 8, 1944) was exactly one month prior to the most massive land attack ever to have begun in Europe — another step which led to the defeat of the once mighty German war machine.

All crew members had their own thoughts of what took place that day, but it wasn't until 40 years later at a reunion at the Air Force Museum, that the real "facts" surfaced. And they surfaced from one who wasn't even a member of that crew.

"We were badly shot up during the ongo-

ing passes by Luftwaffe fighters," Witton says. "German fighters, coming from everywhere, attacked our 25 bombers that day. Two of our own bombers had previously aborted the mission."

Despite heavy damage and fires, we were able to maintain position until being rammed by a German fighter as witnessed by then Capt. Andy Low (later to become a major general) who was flying lead on this mission and who believed the German pilot was dead at the controls as he came through the formation.

"None of us knew what really happened that day," Wilen recalls.

This crew had been together for a long time. It started out in Boise, Idaho, went to Pocatello, Idaho, then to March Field and Hamilton Field, both in California. It was together through 16 previous bombing missions. Eight of that 10-man crew ended up in POW camps until they were liberated one year later. The two other crew members were killed during this attack.

The flight was relatively normal, despite the switch in planes, until just before reaching the initial point and then all hell seemed to break loose. Almost from nowhere those German fighters swooped in for the kill.

Tail gunner Spencer was blown out of his turret and badly shot up, eventually to die in the Veterans Administration Hospital from these wounds. Nose guns were frozen, one of the two popping off sporadically. By this time only the top turret was operating at full capacity.

"We lost two engines on the first pass, during which Pryor and Ramirez, both manning waist guns, were killed," Witton remembers. "One of our engines was on fire, the other disabled, forcing us to drift left as our formation turned right, all the while decelerating and losing power."

"I looked around, trying to hold control, to assess damage," Witton continued. "There was some damage in the waist area and the armor plate was gone on Croxford's (co-pilot) side. This stripped us of oxygen."

"At this point, Wilen (navigator) looked up at the co-pilot and saw his side of the plane shot out," Witton said. "Our instrument panel was shot out, our bombs had already been salvoed when we were first hit and I sounded the alarm."

"I ordered everyone to bail out," Witton added. "I also pushed the button to destroy the Speery bombsight and noticed Croxford was groggy from shell shock. I put my foot in Croxford's back and shoved him out the bomb bay, then followed him after seeing that everyone else was out of the plane."

"I had difficulty in getting out," Conneely recalled. "I couldn't find the chest chute, then dove out the nose wheel door, not taking time to disconnect oxygen, electric heat line and radio cord. After seeing fire and smelling smoke, I jumped."



Croxford does not recall leaving the plane, but awakened from his shock upon feeling the rushing air as he plummeted toward the ground.

"I recall passing through the cloud cover and then pulling the cord on my chute," Croxford continued. "I landed in a small pine tree, buried my chute, then started walking down a lane."

"I was taken into custody by a local civilian with a gun who later turned me over to Luftwaffe officers," Croxford recalls. Witton's first attempt to pull his chute cord was not successful, but he clawed at it until it billowed out above him.

"I was attacked by two German fighters, but they both missed, all the while trying to slip the chute, but it was out of control," Witton remembers.

"I made it down without being hit by those flying bullets," Witton said, "landing in a pine tree, breaking a branch and tumbling to the ground. I scooped up my chute and immediately was taken into custody by three or four Luftwaffe soldiers on bicycles, along with several civilians. Everyone was shouting at each other but finally the soldiers took me into custody and forced me to ride the handle bars to a nearby air base."

"My first reaction in leaving the plane was how cold it was," Conneely recalls. "Because of our altitude it was 30 degrees below zero. My chest chute would not open because I was leaning on it, but finally I got it open. I too was strafed by a fighter plane, so I tried to climb up the chute, the chute was swinging wildly," Conneely continued. "When I got straightened out, I landed in a high tree. It took some time for me to get out of the tree and when I got to the ground, several German soldiers were waiting, taking me to a barn where other captured Americans were located."

Witton remembers well his experiences that day.

"When I saw the smoke and part of the cockpit blown away, I knew we were in trouble. When the word came to bail out, I hurriedly buckled on a chest chute," he said.

"I turned to see what Conneely was doing, saw he could get out and then dove head first out the nose wheel door," Wilen recalls.

"I counted to 10 twice going down," Wilen recalls. "I knew the jump altitude was about 21,000 feet, well above oxygen altitude. My chute opened and looking down, I saw civilians with guns in hand zeroing in on me. I landed in a plowed field, hid my chute and kept low in a ditch until the armed civilians came close, then stood up with my hands raised in the air. They asked me where my chute was and they dug it up. One of the civilians, pointing a gun at me, demanded my fur-lined boots covering my heated felt boots. I was marched into a small town and turned over to the town's mayor (burgomeister) who was wearing a uniform and a spiked helmet, of World War I vintage."

What followed is still another story, but what were the feelings of those four crew members?

Witton recalls being concerned about keeping the plane in the air, as well as the welfare of his crew. He also wondered about whether the men would get out if the ship had to be abandoned.

Croxford recalls an apprehension of the unknown. What would happen next?

Conneely said he didn't have time to think. He was too busy firing the nose gun and sensed fear while looking for a chute, all the while seeing flames and smelling gas.

Witton admits to the same fear, noting the destroyed cockpit, the flames, the smoke. It wasn't changed until he heard the command to bail out that his reactions changed and he knew what had to be done.

Some 43 years later, with a year of POW experience behind him, Witton says one thing stands out in his memory. That was when he saw American soldiers hanging from lamp posts while he was being led through German villages.

Luckily, one of those crew members — Wilen — did not have to depend on memory for some of those experiences. He chanced on a "paper" he had written in longhand as part of an English class assignment while seeking a degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1946.

Witton's experience that morning when his plane was shot down, in addition to days spent in that POW camp, were still fresh when he put them on paper.

Let's share some of that "report."

"Moving so swiftly the pace of events that morning left me completely dazed. This excitement was the result of an attack on our bomb group. Several minutes before the attack, I had seen our own escort planes protecting the formation."

"When our pilot called out, 'Planes ahead,' I casually remarked 'friendly aircraft.' The bursts from our guns and the bursting of shells around us told me they were not 'friendly,' but German. I became flustered trying to work my charts and instruments, while watching the enemy planes diving into our formation."

"With a computer and a pencil as my only defensive weapons, I felt helpless and afraid as I waited. For what, I did not know, but I had a premonition that something would happen soon."

"Above the tumult in the air and in the plane, I heard the pilot cry, 'We're hit, salvo the bombs!' I pushed aside my maps and equipment to open the bomb-bay doors. The doors would not budge."

"I screamed into my microphone for the engineer to help. As I struggled with the lever, a cold sweat broke out on my hands and forehead. Finally, the radioman came to my assistance and pried open the doors, shouting that the engineer had been killed."

"I pulled the salvo lever, dropped the bombs and called out 'Bombs Away!' By this time my heart was beating wildly and my mind was in a whirl. My eyes were roving from the engines to the instruments,

then to my parachute. I was listening intently for the slightest sound over my earphones.

"Never before had I been so afraid, quivering and shaking like a naked child in the cold. Two of our engines were on fire and we were rapidly losing altitude. As I waited, images of my loved ones back home came to mind."

"Then came the order: 'Start bailing out!' With my thoughts far away I buckled on my chute, pulled off my earphones and oxygen mask and instinctively dove out of the plane. As I drifted toward earth I silently prayed to once again see those loved ones that had passed through my mind."

"That first night in captivity I spent in solitary confinement in the dungeon of an old German castle."

"A prisoner's life as I found it to be was miserable. From all I had read, war prisoners were to get plenty of food — but the vegetables we received, we grew ourselves in gardens we planted. We were permitted to keep a small part of the crop. The ground was sandy and dry, the few scallions we did grow were tasteless and not worth planting."

"To vary the diet and provide warmth in winter, the Germans fed prisoners hot soup made from nourishing meat and vegetables," so said the POW bulletins. My barley and bean soup had meat of a sort in it — not 'nourishing' meat, but long white worms and round black beetles which sickened my stomach."

"I ate the soup to satisfy the gnawing hunger pains in my already shrunken stomach."

"Living from day to day, we avidly followed the news and progress of the allied armies. Americans moving toward us from the west were our hope during the summer and early fall. After the snows of winter came, we turned to the Russians for salvation."

"In the middle of January, they started moving from the east. As they drew closer to our camp in Silesia, rumors of a forced march to escape the advancing Russians spread throughout the camp. Then with Russian tanks within 50 miles of us, the order came to march."

"It was a bitter cold night with the moon faintly glimmering over the ankle-deep snow through which I fearfully trudged. I dared not think of faltering as I recalled the warning: 'Anyone who falls out will be shot!'"

"I did not know what lay ahead but I was determined to keep pace. Marching alongside the column of ragged Americans were armed German guards, many with large police dogs on leashes."

"Those ferocious looking wolf-dogs alone were enough to terrify my already frightened mind. Every hour we halted. These rest periods, instead of helping, were our most dangerous obstacles."

"Losing sight of everything but our weariness, we dropped our heavy packs and stretched out on the cold, uninviting snow."

As we rested, our thin-blooded bodies chilled rapidly and fewer and fewer got up to continue the march.

"We weren't suffering alone. Guards dropped out from frozen feet or numbed bodies, chilled by temperatures of 18 below. Even the dogs suffered.

"Soon, I was no longer on a forced march deep in Germany. Guards were no longer formidable or frightening with their dogs and bayonets. I was no longer afraid.

"Rapidly falling snow covered the marching column in a misty blanket of white. I was moving along in a nightmare, a horrible unrealistic dream. My tired, aching legs moved forward, instinctively following blurred forms ahead.

"Time was boundless and the road seemed without end. The pack I carried began to feel like the weight of the world. Yet I no longer had fear. I trudged along wearily unable to think or feel.

"My arms and hands I could see as I passed them between my eyes and the slowly moving dark figures ahead. When would this end? I did not care and yet I did. I did not expect to drop out, but I was curious about what we would find at our destination.

"Would there be another sleepless day of misery in the cold snow or would there be shelter and warmth? No, I was no longer afraid, as I began to feel drowsy and warm and oh so tired, so tired and sleepy. I had to keep moving, keep moving now. Sleep, I hoped, would come later.

"I dimly recalled fighting to stay awake, to stave off drowsiness that I knew would lead to eternal sleep.

"Then in the distance there was a vague impression of a town and a brick factory building, of rains and thawing weather.

"I spent two days in that warm factory where a hard concrete floor felt like a feather bed.

"The rest of the trip was made in good weather and uneventfully. After two months at Nuremberg, the Nazi shrine, we marched south in April to avoid advancing American forces. Our final destination and confinement was in Moosburg, just a few short miles from the infamous concentration camp at Dachau.

"It was there I awaited 'liberation,' a day that for 12 long months I had hoped and prayed for, a day that I thought would never be a reality.

"But that day did come — April 29, 1945 — the most eventful day of my life.

"Our first indication that Americans were near was the whizzing of their bullets. Instinctively we ran for the slit trenches and as I did, I heard screaming of agony from prisoners too slow in reaching shelter.

"Another fear arose, a fear of being killed with freedom so near.

"Following the pause in the small gun fire, came the screeching of cannon shells, whose explosions among the wooden barracks further terrified me. As I crouched low to avoid the flying debris and the waves

of air they generated, I began quivering and shaking once again. My heart again beat rapidly.

"I begged for help, anything to stop this agony. All at once, as if in answer to a prayers, I heard the cheers and shouting. I looked up slowly, puzzled by this sudden change, and as I did, I saw a band of German storm troopers attempting to bar the advance of eight brown tanks coming over a ridge close by.

"When I saw the white stars on the sides of those tanks, I cried without shame. Forgetting my previous fears, I joined the jumping and screaming men.

"When the fighting ended, we were overwhelmed by emotions that had been pent up during that long imprisonment. The first sign was given by an old Frenchman who trembled in his anger and desire for revenge.

"He shook his fist at the Germans and moved his other hand across his throat in a knife-like motion, shrieking 'couteau, couteau.' After calming down, some dashed for food and began greedily devouring as much as their shrunken stomachs would hold.

"Others, hunting for souvenirs, tore out the boards from the sides of the barracks, cut up the bedding and even tried to tear clothing off backs. In the middle of this turmoil, another cheer was raised, much louder than the first.

"When I saw the cause of it, I joined the roaring crowd with all the fervor I possessed. Over the church steeple in nearby Moosburg flew 'Old Glory.' It's a moment I will carry vividly to my grave.

"After the initial effect wore off, the full realization that I was once again free settled in. This was 'Liberation Day,' the prospect of which had given me the hope and courage to survive.

"Every stirring moment of my liberation and every dark moment of my imprisonment lives with me as vividly today as it did during that unforgettable year from May 8, 1944 to April 29, 1945."

This is the story of survival — an original crew of the 453rd Bomb Group — who survived 16 combat missions over Germany, survived being shot down and parachuting to safety, survived a year of prisoner of war camps, forced marches, hunger, bombings and strafings by our own American and allied planes — who survived over 40 years since then and to be able to come together, reminisce and relive those experiences and memories that had faded with time.

**SPRING**  
is in the air



## Your B-24 Over Over Norwich



Same B-24 with 458th Bomb Group tail colors, 754th Squadron code letters, "Briney Marlin" nose art, fuselage & wing "star and bar" insignia.

For those of you who don't wish to spend a lot of money to have a painting done of your aircraft, you now have an opportunity to have it done for about \$40.00. As my photograph shows, it's "Briney Marlin" over the city of Norwich. The aircraft tail colors (red with white vertical stripe), squadron code letters (Z5), nose art, etc. were handpainted over the lithograph by Mike Bailey, well-known Norwich artist. The lithograph is approximately 13" by 17" with a B-24 super-imposed over a "black and white" photo of the city of Norwich. Actually, the black and white is really several shades of gray and comes out very well when dry-mounted and matted. My print is in a frame sized 20" by 24" (inside measurement) and looks great!

A company called Double A Marketing, 1 Silver Road, Norwich, NR1 1UB, Norfolk, England, operated by two fellows whose first names are "Allen" (here's where the Double A comes in) contracted Mike Bailey to do the custom artwork on individual orders. All you need to do is supply (1) Bomb Group; (2) Squadron Code Letters; (3) Photo or drawing of Nose Art. Mike has very good knowledge of most 2AD aircraft, but it wouldn't hurt to be as descriptive, especially colors, as possible.

If you have any questions, you should contact Double A Marketing at the above address. Please do not forget the postage and mailing tube costs which were \$4.80 several months ago, but I would guess that \$5.00 would be sufficient. I have advised Double A Marketing that a small percentage of any profits made as a result of this advertising, be sent to Dean Moyer, Treasurer of the Second Air Division Association. If you have any further questions that you feel I might be able to answer, you can call me at 301-766-1034. I know that this is a limited production, so if you are even the least bit interested, don't hesitate to contact them and reserve one of the lithographs for yourself. In my judgement, a terrific value!

RICK ROKICKI  
458th BG V.P.



# Notes From and About the 466th

by E.W. Nothstein



Artie's '87 Mission

The Christmas season is over but I want to share this with you. My wife and I received a card and letter from Joyce and Ted Clarke of Norwich, England. Those of you who attended our reunion in Norwich will remember our guide at Attlebridge. They sent their wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of the 466th members and their families. The people at Attlebridge — Jenny Staff at the control tower and Kathy Thompson, who lives in the old HQ building also wish to be remembered.

Ted has allowed me to give all of you his address and phone number and states that he is always available to help anyone returning to Norwich for a visit. His address is: Mr. E.D. Clarke, 16 Darrell Place, Norwich, Norfolk NR5 8QW, England. Phone: 0603-502-326.

I have taken the liberty of asking Ted for a brief history of Attlebridge, from its beginning as an RAF base, through WWII, to its present state as a turkey farm. This will be shared in a future issue of the Journal.

I am looking forward to seeing you at Colorado Springs in June. I expect to see a notice in this issue about it. By the time this Journal arrives there won't be any time to waste to make your plans and get your reservations in. You'd better hurry!

I'd like to welcome the new members to our group. These are people who have joined since June 1987: Verl D. Anderson, Abilene, Kansas; William Barron, Mission, Texas; Richard S. Carroll, Mannford, Oklahoma; John D. Howard, Houston, Texas; William K. Lee, Tuscon, Arizona; Gerald E. Mickel, Indianapolis, Indiana; Errett D. Miller, High Point, North

Carolina; Earl R. Smith, St. Petersburg, Florida; Joseph C. Tedesco, Atco, New Jersey; Thomas Tighe, Newburgh, New York; George E. Williams, Pueblo, Colorado. If anyone wishes to contact these members, write for complete addresses.

The following was sent to us from Arthur Sessa of Yonkers, New York. Anyone else wishing to share experiences or memories, please send them along to me.

The war was finally over and everyone was going home. We, who were all so close, vowed to "stay in touch" or "get together soon." Houston, Seattle, San Diego, Chicago, and New York were still a long way apart in those days. Our good intentions about getting together were unfortunately all too soon put aside. For many of us it was back to school, then a wife, and invariably children.

Names, events and places were neatly filed away in some dark recesses of my mind, soon to be obscured by the new names and events which took their place.

I really didn't know about the Second Air Division Association until many years later. Several letters and holiday cards from our pilot, Pappy Daniels, sparked my interest. My wife and I, with more time to ourselves now that the children were grown, decided to see what these reunions were all about. We went to Cambridge, Mass. for our first one and we had a great time (New England boiled dinner notwithstanding). The exciting part for me was that very slowly some of those lost names and experiences started to come back into view. Digging deeper, I remembered things that I thought I had forgotten.

Since requests for material for the newsletters are always being made, I finally can think of something I can share. It's still a little fuzzy in my mind but basically correct...It's a description of my first mission with the 466th.

The truck pulled up into the old WAF site and dumped us out — a new replacement crew eager to get to work. We were assigned to a quonset hut and a mad scramble for bunks, preferably near the stove, ensued. We soon settled down, introduced ourselves to the other inhabitants and proceeded to lounge on the bunks nearest to the stove. Lesson No. 1 — never pick a bunk too close to the stove. All of us were complaining about the penetrating damp English weather and especially about the lack of heat coming from the stove. We suggested adding a few lumps of coke to the meager fire. Coke, for our uninformed readers, is a by-product of coal but more akin to stone. It would produce heat if it could ever be ignited. It was probably invented by an Englishman. Quite possibly the same one who invented driving on the left side of the road.

We were advised by the old hands that the coke was rationed and that our bucket was almost empty. If we wanted more heat, then we, as the new crew, would have to go on a mission — a coke run — to the supply dump. This was a fenced-in area well protected by barbed wire. I forget how the volunteers were selected but as soon as it was dark, we were off. A 90° turn at the I.P. and the target was looming in front of us. Well, it was all over almost before it began. The bucket was filled and we were headed for home. No flak or enemy opposition. Our return was greeted with great enthusiasm and soon we were all warm again.

First mission — no losses — a real milk run!!!

## NOTICE

It was decided at the Executive Committee this past year that the publication of the Journal be listed as being Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. This in no way changes the publication dates. It simply gives us more latitude if an issue is late due to something we have no control over as was the case with the December issue this past year.

In that instance, Evelyn could not get the firm commitments she needed for various items pertaining to the reunion this coming June and we had to wait on the printing of that particular issue.

The publication dates remain the same as being the first day of the month in which a particular issue is due. Beyond that date all issues are at the tender mercy of the Post Office and in many areas that 'service' is abominable. Unfortunately there is nothing we can do about that — we've tried.

— Bill Robertie

# Hethel Highlights

by Earl Zimmerman

On 21, November 1944, I was quartered in the 565th area with the ground troops at Hethel. T/Sgt. Harold Thompson, my engineer, and I were used as spares after our crew got split up after a few assorted crashes and a side trip to Turkey on the way back from Ploesti. I heard the CQ wake up Tom, he borrowed my jacket and told me he was scheduled to fly. I woke up a few hours later after hearing a loud "BOOM" and learned at breakfast that two of our planes had collided and Tom had been killed. Two days later I attended a funeral at the American Cemetery in Cambridge; we buried seventeen of the lads in the same grave.

During our 40th reunion in Norwich, on 25 May 1987, two buses full of Sky Scorpions, visited Hethel and a small church at Carleton Rode where a small memorial hangs on a wall commemorating the 17 lads killed over their parish in 1944. After a short service by Reverend G.R. Wood we were all invited to tea on the lawn of the rectory next door. Lo and behold there was a blade of a prop on the lawn. Mr. Allan Wright, the owner, advised that after plowing over the same ground for over forty years he dug up the prop in 1983. No doubt it was from one of the planes involved in the 1944 mid-air collision.

While viewing the prop and discussing the choice of goodies on hand made by the ladies of the parish, Mrs. Sylvia Blackburn of Great Green, Bunwell, mentioned that she was present during the mid-air and saw one airman land in a beet field. Jack Mercer, one of our lads, volunteered that he knew the name of the survivor, Peter Ferdinand. After arriving home I found Peter living in the same town as listed in the blue book of 1945. He writes that there were two survivors of the mid-air, his bombardier, William T. Martin, Jr., and himself. And that, on his very next mission he was shot down over the Bulge and he and Robert Ball were the only survivors of Lt. Price's crew. How many of you have had to hit the silk twice? Bill Martin has also written and is anxious to join up.



Robert Ball and Pete Ferdinand



Carleton Rode Church, Norfolk, England, 1985

After the reunion I returned to Carleton Rode and had a long talk with Reverend Wood. He advised that the church is to be renovated and repairs made to some of the windows. To make a long story short, I volunteered to make a stained glass window for the church if I could get the lads of the 389th to donate the necessary. Lloyd West was consulted and he agreed that it would be a fine memorial to the 389th. Aaron Schultz, P.O. Box 18, High Point, NC 27261, has agreed to act as project officer for the window. Several designs have already been received from interested parties but the final design will have to be submitted to Rev. Wood for his approval. So far I plan to use wheel engraved beveled glass for the border which will show examples of the local crops, wheat, etc., and perhaps horse chestnuts, whatever research determines; a B-24; the 8th AF insignia and am asking for a little help from you artists out there.

In the photo under the second arch from the left, near the memorial, the middle light is to be replaced by our stained glass design.

Rev. Wood said the Chancel was built in the 1200s, the nave about 100 years later and the paintings and wood screen are about the same time.

I estimate that it will take about one year from this date to installing the window in the Carleton Rode church. I hope to use the facilities of the U.S. Air Force in transporting the window to England, having Space Available benefits.

The cost of the materials should run about \$2,000 and it will be my pleasure, in remembrance of Tom, to donate my labor. So now is our chance for a lasting memorial to the 389th, what could be more fitting than a stained glass window. So, get out your checkbook now and send your contribution to Aaron Schultz, his address above. I will keep you posted on developments. For those of you who have requested to correspond with persons in the vicinity of Carleton Rode, Rev. Wood is asking his troops for pen pals. Anyone wishing to participate, please send me your name and address and we will match you with a pen pal.



# Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck

By Milton R. Stokes

Wow! What a great morning it is outside our door. The digital clock at our bedside read 4:53 as I awakened. It was dark, the rain splattered down the spouts hitting the tin roof with a rush heard even under the covers as I attempted to obliterate the obnoxious sounds of such a rude awakening. It was morning again. I said my usual "Thank you, Lord, for all your blessings..." I couldn't enumerate them all because I was in a rush to finish my report to you, my most persistent task makers. Bill Robertie, our editor, had written to say that he had to have our contribution by the 20th of January. Of course most of the information that was needed was all on my desk in a confusion of untidy disarray. The "Journal" had arrived a day before; I had not had all the time I needed and would have liked to have had before making the next report to you. So I called Bill, rather I asked Lucille, my wife, to call, and she talked to Hazel Robertie. (You see, we go right to the top to get things done.) Hazel said okay and extended the submission time one more day.

January is a poor time to rush any task you must do well. The snow and cold weather place a blanket on all our movements and ambitions. We just don't function as we should, especially when one is not so young anymore. Whoops, I promised Lucille I'd make no more reference to old age. So we fight gamely on. All of us have problems but we try to put them aside lest they so encumber our labors that the task becomes impossible. January has been a buster this year; more snow and cold than we have had for years. Ice on our long farm lane shut us in for days. We don't fight it anymore. We wait until the sun comes out, warms things up, then we call the neighbors and ask, "When are you going to plow the lane?" We still have beef cattle that must be fed every day. So when it snows they need more hay to keep warm; the job seems unending. But I love those cattle. They depend on me so I must do my job and take good care of them. So you understand why I keep them. One must get up early to do the work, you can't shirk the job — you are driven to do it. In the final analysis, those cattle do more good for me than I do for them. So if you need exercise, need some place to spend your money other than at a resort, buy some land and cattle. You might get really lucky, as Moose Allen did, and find gas and oil under your land. It wasn't that easy, was it, Moose?

And we get letters — lots of them! Burton Baker of Afton, Minnesota wrote to the 8th Air Force Historical Society asking for information on his old group and when we will have our next reunion. He was a pilot in the 732nd squadron and completed 30 missions. He got a membership application; hope he joins up! Just hoping on my part won't to do the job, through.

We need a new letter summarizing the things we have done as a group, as a division in the 40 plus years. The application briefly states the facts, but most of our applicants want to know about their Old Buddies; those that worked with them on the line, in the air, or wherever their duties lay. It really takes a lot of time to convince them that they are needed, wanted, and missed in the organization. I continue to be amazed by the fact that more Old Buddies have never heard of our veteran organization, the 2nd Air Division Association. So we all keep trying. I shall write a new application letter for our Old Buddies who may apply in the future. Indeed, we have received six such requests in the last week. If they go directly to Evelyn Cohen, she sends the application out promptly, but a great many of our applicants come from the 8th Air Force Historical Society which leads me to believe that at the present they are doing a better job than we of the 2nd ADA in recruiting new members.

I know that Rick Rokicki has been doing a bang up job for the 458th Bomb Group. He has passed the 453rd in members. I admire his skill in shaking some old prospects into joining up. The letters he wrote were direct and to the point. It worked; they have added just under one hundred new members in the last year. I don't know the exact amount and can't stop to phone him right now, but I will. I would also like to believe that the addition of a computer to his arsenal of weapons to contact members has given him an advantage that is not readily available to the majority of group vice presidents. God bless you, Rick. You saw an opportunity and grasped it. You have a great helper with your wife Ceil by your side. How could you miss? Please tell me, how did you wrangle a space as big as twelve square feet for your concrete pad at Dayton? We were given and told to utilize a pad much smaller. Note to our 453rd members: Please read Rick Rokicki's last article in the issue of Winter 1987-88. Maybe you can be inspired, as I am, to work harder and more effectively.

Wayne DeCou wrote in the last "Journal" of a scrubbed mission led by a Major Trevor. I liked Wayne's memory joggers; such as, his

sister was a major movie actress, Claire Trevor, and his co-pilot was named Austin Frost (good name for an iced up mission). We are glad you wrote, Wayne. Robertie needs all of our input. He likes letters that do not require too much proofreading and no mistakes, if possible. He says he doesn't like travelogues. But I would like to know who Major Trevor was. What squadron? What was his job? I can't remember him and I know I should. Can you help? Also, I can't find Major Trevor's or co-pilot Frost's name on the roll of the 453rd Bomb Group. Would you try to locate both of these men for membership in the 453rd? This would help us catch up with the 458th Bomb Group. Thank you, Wayne!

We got some good news on Jim Munsey's daughter, Carol Gean Elliott. She acknowledged my letter and tells me she hasn't forgotten us. She says she can't wait to meet all her "foster dads" at the reunion in June at Colorado Springs. I wonder how many of the 453rd men wrote to her. I know of at least five. For those of you who don't know of whom I'm writing, it was a long running quest to find Carol Gean. You see, her father was quite a hero to us, the men of the 453rd that he left behind. The story is much too long to relate here, so see me in Colorado and I'll tell the whole story.

We heard from Dan and Muriel Reading last night. The high waves and winds along the Pacific coast were working overtime on homes along the shore. Dan has one right smack on the beach at Oceanside, California. The news cameras showed the 20 feet high breakers hitting the shore and the damage they can do. Dan and Muriel were okay. They had just arrived home from a warm vacation via boat along the Atlantic coast off South America.

Frank Kyle writes that he and Frank Fluharty have put the finishing touches on the slide presentation that he showed the group at the Dayton reunion last year. I don't think I thanked Kyle enough for what he has done and is still doing. When he is finished, he hopes to have a video tape that will be a visual history of our group; written, narrated and produced by 453rd personnel. He adds, "the only group to do so." So put me down for the first copy of the tape, Frank. Is my credit good? If you want one, you can write to Francis X. Kyle, 12 Auburn Street, Reading, MA 01867. Don't forget to send a cash deposit to hold your tape for delivery. I'm sure your check will help Frank to finance some of the expenses for this promotion.

It is still early in the year 1988 and Evelyn Cohen advises that she has forty-three people from the 453rd and their spouses (that makes 86) who will attend in Colorado Springs in June. So, 453rd Bunchered Buddies, as I write this, it may be too late to get a bed. But send your money and reservations to Evelyn now just in case there are some rooms left. Hope to see you there!

Frank Lewis of Dublin, Georgia, writes, "...on the mission of November 26, 1944, the 491st Bomb Group replaced the 453rd Bomb Group on this mission to Misburg Oil Refinery with losses as follows: 389th-1 plane, 445th-5 planes, 491st-16 planes. The 453rd Bomb Group flew with the 14 C.B.W. to Bielfield..." (This date we lost Conrad's crew on take-off crash at Kenninghall, England). Lewis wants to know if any of the 453rd people know why the change was made. I have searched my limited resources, and they give no indication of a reason. The general order that was transmitted to the 491st Bomb Group by General Kepner outlining the mission gives no reason for the substitution. The Mighty Eighth War Diary by Roger Freeman sheds no light on this mission beyond that which is given above. Can you help?

We have a notice from December, 1987, of the death of Sol Greenberg from R.F. Atkins. Sol lived in New York City when he died. I have no information other than the above.

On the return from the Hamm, Germany raid of April 22, 1944, when Jim Munsey's ship crash landed just off shore at Southwold, Suffolk, I had reported that the formation made a 360° turn and wondered why. This information was picked off the crash report of April 22, 1944. "Only Lt. Munsey made the 360 so he could make a run for home but a few thousand feet below the group." This last information came from Ralph McClure who survived the crash.

Wilbur Stites writes of the mid-west mini-reunion to be held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin on September 30 thru October 2, 1988. The mid-west region includes the states of Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri and Kentucky. Wilbur speaks well of the cooperation the group is getting from the Experimental Aircraft Association. So any of you in the above-mentioned states should write to Wilbur and plan to attend.

We will bring this report to a close now. I appreciate hearing from all of you and hope this keeps you up to date. Looking forward to seeing all you Old Buddies in Colorado Springs in June!

# Memories and Voices of Another Time - IN SEARCH OF PEACE

by M.D. Benarcik



A box with Glen Miller records and autographs by men in the 735th Squadron, 453rd Bomb Group

Monday, May 25, 1987, at the memorial service at Old Buckenham Air Base:

She brought forward a paper carton with signatures of names of men in the 735th Squadron, 453rd Bomb Group stationed at Old Buckenham during WW II. In the box were 78 rpm records of their time, "In the Mood," "Tuxedo Junction," "The Jersey Bounce," and "Pennsylvania 6 5000." She

found them in the barn when she purchased their home 4 years ago.

After the services, a buffet luncheon was served (not catered) by people from miles around. Each contributed their "specialty" and pride in cooking, in baking...and they have the young set wait on the tables...a touching scene, for to them they were honoring their heroes.

She approached me to announce that she wanted to share her "find" with someone that would understand its meaning.

About 2 years ago we purchased an old farmhouse. And like all young couples, the order is to remodel the kitchen, then another room and another. In the meantime, the barn, which in turn would be converted to a garage, had the last priority.

One day, she said, "I went up the ladder to the hay loft, and sorted out things. Among one was a box...a cardboard box...about 4" x 12" x 12." It was heavy. May I show you my find? It is part of history of your time, I believe."

The box contained 78 rpm records, of Glenn Miller era: "Tuxedo Junction," "In the Mood," etc. After blowing off the accumulation of dust of 40 some years, she discovered autographs of names on all sides of the box, names of men, where they were from. They were names of men we recognized, stationed at the airbase until 1945 and the war's end. And we must assume, they at one time were used in the clubhouse as part of their nostalgic tunes and entertainment, and probably left them with someone to enjoy (maybe someone

that would have done the laundry for him).

We took some close-up shots of the signatures. Many of the names were still decipherable, and representative of a good cross section in the states. When I returned, I promised her, we would ask the editor of our Journal to tell the story and list the names with hopes that some of the men may recognize their contribution to her "find" and an heirloom.

She was proud to offer her "find" to our archives and library in nearby Norwich, the Memorial Library left by the Americans after the war, and is part of our legacy, by providing the facilities in the Central Library in East Anglia.

If any of the names are recognized, we hope a response may add to the other side of the "find" the story behind the significance of the signatures. It could make for an excellent human interest and a contribution to the history of that time.

Here are some of the names and autographs that appear on that box: S/Sgt Al Graham, Rye NY; S/Sgt Byron Dean, Tulsa, OK; S/Sgt Benny Bensh, Cedar Rapids, IA; T/Sgt Eddie Conway, Cleveland, OH; T/Sgt Johnny Gober, Atlanta, GA; Sgt. Robert Lee Greene, Erie, PA; T/Sgt Bob Slobody, Baltimore, MD; T/Sgt Peter Fuibert, Louisville, KY; T/Sgt Frank D. Fairchild, OH; S/Sgt Wm H. McCoy, New Philadelphia, OH; Robert C. Jacobs, Danforth OH; Harry Kildone, Flint, Michigan; David H. Schroeder, Box 484, Brewster, OH; H.D. Demley, Marietta, GA; Sgt. Dick Burke, TX.

## Advice to Troops Helped Goodwill

They were strangers in a strange country — divided by a common language.

For the Americans coming to Britain to add their weight to the European war effort, it was certainly more than just a question of fighting alongside their allies. They had to get to know them as well.

And the American high command were anxious that their boys didn't stick their size nines right into it.

Norman Brooks, of The Street, Old Costessey, has collected a great deal of American memorabilia from those old days — including a Betty Grable-type model made from old perspex, and a whole series of books from Der Fuehrer, Hitler's rise to power "condensed for wartime reading" to Bob Hope's story of his trip abroad, "I Never Left Home."

But one of the most fascinating, brought in by George Buckenham, of Neville Close, Sprowston, was a book called "A Short Guide to Great Britain."

The Americans visiting Norwich again will probably remember it with a warm smile on their faces.

For a start, the average American was warned not to disregard the national anthem being played at the end of a show. "The British consider it bad form not to stand at attention, even if it means missing the last bus. If you are in a hurry, leave before the national anthem is played. That's considered all right."

They were told the British were reserved but friendly, not given to back-slapping and shy about showing their affections. "But once they get to like you they make the best friends in the world."

And there were guidelines for making those friends. In a pub, they were told to wait to be asked to join in a darts game and if beaten, stand aside and let someone else play. And in making friends with British soldiers, the whole process would be slowed up by "swiping his girl, and not appreciating what his army has been up against."

Servicemen were warned that, if asked in for a meal, they shouldn't tuck in.

"If you are invited into a British home and the host exhorts you to 'eat up —

there's plenty on the table,' go easy. It may be the family's rations for a whole week spread out to show their hospitality."

Remembering that Britain was a country rationed through war was a general warning. Americans were told not to brag about life back home or complain about the state of things this side of the Atlantic.

In a summary list of do's and don'ts, they were also told not to make fun of the British accent; to avoid comments on the British Government or politics (the book says the British public may openly criticise the country's politics but won't take too kindly to Americans adding their two-cents worth); not to come up with wisecracks about Americans winning the First World War, and NEVER criticise the King and Queen.

The book finishes with an extract from a book to the British called, "Meet the Americans" which called for goodwill and respect to their allies.

As typified by the American servicemen visiting Norfolk again this week, it was a sentiment taken to heart by both nations.



# BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP  
by  
William F. Davenport



Here we go again, spreading more about the benefits of the 2AD, as it is your correspondent's intention to use his space in the 2AD Journal for the edification of those who were not fortunate enough to have been selected to the elite outfit the 446th Bomb Group, also known as the Bungay Buckaroos.

We continue to try to publish only those items of general interest and utilize our own publication, Beach Bell Echo, for our own private stuff.

I believe in the last issue we covered what the 446th was, and where and when the great job was done by this outstanding unit.

In this issue we would like to give you one of those great news stories of the war years. Every man assigned to the 446th automatically bows his head and says a word of thanks when the name "Ronnie" is mentioned. Come to think of it, President Reagan also goes by this — to us 446ers a familiar name.

Well anyway, in January 1945 the following appeared in your home town newspapers. Since most of us missed it, I feel it is worth repeating again to establish some of the values that enabled us to produce the "Right Stuff."

**AN EIGHTH FORCE LIBERATOR STATION, ENGLAND**  
— "Ronnie" is a Liberator with silver splotches shining through where the camouflage paint has been chipped away by flak, bullets and time. Her history dates back to Denver, Colorado, when the 446th Bomb Group was training for what has since taken place — when "Ronnie" had neither distinction nor name, and long before she had completed 103 combat missions.

The story of this plane is both inspiring and tragic. Staff Sergeant Ronald Gannon of Zanesville, Ohio was a waist gunner on the model crew of his squadron. He was a tall, good-looking boy and a crack shot. Then, before the group came overseas, something happened to him. His coordination was gone. Finally Ronnie Gannon went to the hospital and there he died of the same obscure disease that claimed the life of the baseball star, Lou Gehrig.

The crew and the pilot named the plane "Ronnie" for Ronnie Gannon. Soon they crossed the Atlantic to England. It is strange that the big bomber seemed to follow the tragic pattern of its namesake. "Ronnie" was sent out on four missions, and never once did she reach the target. She would start out strong, and then return with trouble in her engines.

They transferred "Ronnie" to another squadron, and it was considered that she was good riddance.

Master Sergeant Michael Zyne of Birmingham, Alabama, is a crew chief and his is an indeterminate nature. His ground crew, a perfect complement for him, have a mild complaint against him, but it is a complaint that causes them to grin while they are talking about it. "Why," they say, "do you know what Zyne does just about every day of the week? He gets us to finish whatever needs doing on our plane as soon as possible. We figure we are through for the night, but it doesn't usually work out that way. Zyne walks over to the crew chief and asks him, please, isn't there something we can help him with on his plane since we don't have anything to do. Then we get to work on this other plane — Zyne, too, — just like it was ours."

Probably it is this way that Zyne has which brought him the assignment to "Ronnie." The mechanics worked on "Ronnie." They were infinitely patient. Sergeant Zyne knew that the men who placed "Ronnie" in his care believed they had handed him a lemon. He had seen lemons before, and he knew there was no satisfactory way to deal with them. There is a quality that Sergeant Zyne says makes for "good planes in general" and the first thing he did was to determine that "Ronnie" apparently had this quality. It seems that some planes are slow while others are fast, and that some never have trouble with their wiring while others do. A great many planes are forever in the shop with their hydraulic systems foiled, and other planes never have to stop because of defects in this particular. It is not a thing that is visible, yet it is a matter of structure. It is an inexplicable peculiarity that decides whether a plane is good or bad — a potential champion or a lemon. In addition to this, even though many of these planes have all of those attributes in minimum quantities, only a few have them to overflowing.

On January 5, 1944, Sergeant Zyne told the engineering officer that "Ronnie" was ready to make her first try with her new squadron. The mission that day was against Kiel, and "Ronnie" reached her target, dropped her bombs, and returned home. The pilot said that she was the fastest plane in the group in straight-and-level flight, but that she was truly phenomenal in a climb. They would back her against any Lib in the Eighth Air Force in a test of either of these virtues. Bombardiers like their planes steady, and "Ronnie" was steady. The gunners liked all of these things, and they added another that might not occur to everybody. High altitude flight is attended by cold, and they found "Ronnie" warmer than other planes.

Finally, when "Ronnie" had completed 79 consecutive missions, she became champion of the Libs in the European Theater of Operations. On her eightieth mission, she was compelled to turn back due to internal failure in her engines. All this time she was becoming old as fighting planes go. Her next mission following her first turnback took "Ronnie" to Cologne and she ran smoothly again.

Sergeant Zyne says, that in all, counting both operational and practice missions he estimates that around 60 pilots and co-pilots have handled "Ronnie's" controls. The plane knows what trouble is. She has flown tail-end Charlie and Purple Heart corner more than any other plane in the group, and she has been rocked by flak and fighters. She has had her nose turned back like a fender over the top of her fuselage. When this happened "Ronnie" was scarcely a step away from the nearest salvage heap, but Sergeant Zyne and the engineering officer out-talked the airplane inspector.

Sergeant Zyne's ground crew is composed of Staff Sergeant Alvin L. Bowen of Hurdland, Missouri; Sergeant Emil T. Anderson of Turtle Lake, North Dakota and Corporal Bennie Bekke of Reynolds, North Dakota. These men have done what Sergeant Zyne believes good mechanics always do. "Somebody asked me what I believed was the surest sign of a good mechanic," Sergeant Zyne said. "And I don't know the answer to a question like that. It seems silly to say that he's got to be interested, or some such truck, because that goes without saying. That's the very least a good mechanic can start with. You've got to be born with the knack, sure — but some people never know it. After a man is known to have both of these things, then he's got a good start toward being a good mechanic. It's a case of hard work and always looking for trouble all over the plane; and hoping you don't find it. With my crew, twenty-five hour checks and fifty-hour checks aren't half enough. We check every day without fail. "Ronnie" has electronic superchargers on her that we salvaged from another bomber named "Oklahoma Gal." This is a factory job — or was then — and this is the first job like that, so far as we know, done by a plane's ground crew. In all we have installed six or seven superchargers, but "Ronnie" still has one that the factory gave her. We have changed thirteen engines — and I can't keep track of all the bomb bay doors we have had shot off over the target, but we have had to put on a lot of these. When the nose section was wrecked, we found a plane named "Old Faithful" that was ready for discard and took all the way from the bomb bay to the tip of the nose and put this on our plane. From the old nose of "Ronnie" we tore the skin away that had her name on it, and plastered this to her new nose. "Ronnie" has new elevators and once "Ronnie" ground-looped on landing — through no fault of her own — and so we had to replace her landing gear."

A year to the day after "Ronnie" began her record run she failed to return to home base. "Ronnie" had been forced down in France and would never fly again. This was her 103rd mission. The news was false. There was no crash landing, and all that was wrong was a little internal trouble in one of her engines. Sergeant Zyne says, "That plane is really old now. There's no getting away from that. Some of the crews are beginning to say 'that's an old jigger now, and we don't want any truck with her.'"

It is odd to recall what a gunner had said about her only the day before. It brings to mind the comments made when "Ronnie" was only a fledgling. "That's the warmest plane in the group, and none can best her for speed or tie her for climbing."

On June 15, 1945 "Ronnie" left Flixton piloted by Lt. Col. Schmidt, 446th Group Commander, for home and de-activation.

Yes, "Ronnie" completed her final mission with honor when she again safely delivered her crew to Bradley Field, CT.

Ronnie, we are proud to have been a part of your heritage.

We will be meeting to honor "Ronnie" and others in Omaha, Nebraska on June 18-20, 1988.

Keep tuned to Beach Bell.

## Reference: Vol. 26, No. 4 "April 21, 1944: 1700 Hours"

Baldy C. Avery (564 Sq. 389 Bm. Gr.)

The article referred to a raid on the marshalling yards in Hamm, Germany. That day I was flying as pilot in "Chumbly" in a Pathfinder plane from the 564 Sq. 389 Bm. Gr. leading, I believe, the 2 Wing. A Lt. Col. from some other Group was riding as co-pilot; Nolan Gershenzon and Ken Dougherty, navigators; Orland Hasselbach and Noel Fain, bombardiers; Ralph Moore, engineer; Cliff Syverud, radio operator; Ralph Jacobson, Bob Zimmerman, Bing Sipes, Walt Chamberlin, as gunners. Our regular co-pilot, John Lawson, was flying in the waist along with the gunners. A lucky 13 in all.

Bomber Command was going to try something different - take off later in the day and return at night. (During my time they never tried it again.) I do not have the statistics on the raid but it is conceivable that they lost as many planes over England as they did over the target.

We approached the target with Lt. Hasselbach flying the plane on automatic pilot from the bombsight. It was a nice sunny afternoon and the German ground gunners were right on target. They weren't picking out a particular plane to shoot at, it was a question of what engine to knock out. Our plane was hit several times by flak and Hasselbach had a difficult time keeping the plane on course. Suddenly the bombsight was hit (miraculously missing Hasselbach) at the same time as our No. 3 engine. I turned off the auto-pilot immediately but we still lost a few thousand feet as well as the

Group we were leading. We feathered No. 3 and, suddenly, there we were all alone over enemy territory. It was a helluva lonesome feeling.

Fortunately there were no enemy fighters around and way off in the distance I spotted a formation of bombers heading west. We struggled up to catch them and it turned out they were B-17s returning home. They realized our predicament and a couple of the planes spread out and we snuck in. The 17s closed in again and there we were - surrounded by friends with an awful lot of gun power. Staying with the Forts flying at a much lower air speed than we were, proved quite a challenge on three engines, but we did it.

It was getting dark as we approached England and I was a little apprehensive of the whole situation since I had not landed at night since way back in Scribner Neb. where I trained with our original Group, the 445th. And to make matters worse our navigational equipment had been damaged so we were, so to speak, searching for our home field at Hethel.

I don't remember how our navigator, Ken Dougherty, found the field but he did and I made a wide 360 degree turn and prepared to drag it in. All around us there were huge white flasks and balls of flame. With all the bombers flying around in the dark I just supposed that they were running into each other. This made up my mind to get on the ground as soon as possible. I reached down and hit the toggle switch to

make certain the landing lights worked. They did, so I immediately turned them off and concentrated on making a safe landing.

At the proper time I called for the lights. The Colonel reached down for the switch and then informed me that they did not work. Although five minutes before they had worked, I was too busy to check it out and, with the hits we had sustained, I thought perhaps it was a reasonable possibility, that, in fact, they did not work. I sure did not want to have to go around and come in again so I stared out into the darkness looking for the runway. No lights on the plane - only a few smoke pots identifying the edges of the runway - one engine out - and hoping the tires had not been hit and the brakes worked.

They say I greased it in. By that time I was too numb to remember. As we turned off I reached down and hit the toggle switch for the lights - they worked. But the fact they we did not turn them on may have been a blessing for it turned out that enemy planes had followed us back and were shooting the planes down as they turned on their landing lights. We did, of course, lose some planes by collision with each other.

We were very fortunate. I went to the flight line the next morning and the crew chief had counted about ninety holes in Chumbly. Our crew would not agree with Bill Griffith's article that "the evening was no different than any other night in England". Who says 13 isn't lucky??

## "The World Gets Smaller" or "The Story of a 453rd Penny"

as told by Mike Benarcik (453rd)

Bob Bieck writes: "I only wish that I could see something of the World". Only now have I finally retired after some 45 years in Aviation (2 years with the RAF, 28 years with USAF, and 15 years with De Havilland Aircraft and Piper. I think I now have enough hours to solo!"

He says, he is neither fish nor fowl, you see, I am, and I am not, a member of the original 453rd cadre. I joined the group two days before your departure from March Field to staging at Hamilton Field. I had been at March Field for some 6 months assigned to the Los Angeles Fighter Wing but on duty with the 7th Tow Target Squadron based at March. I thought, there's got to be a better way than being shot at by trainee gunners over the firing range. I detested my work.

One day I walked into Colonel Joe Miller's office unannounced, and told him I wanted to join his group. He seemed dumbfounded. Only a few minutes before he had two officers before him who were pleading to be excused from the move to go overseas. They were denied. Ironically, 3 months later, I was given one of those crews as my own. We became one of the group pathfinders.

Subsequently, I was transferred from the 732nd to the 733rd and made squadron operations officer to replace Capt. Andy Boreske who had been lost over the Saar Basin. Colonel Joe Miller was lost earlier.

The world is indeed small. While serving in Talara, Peru, with an Air Mission fighter detachment, Joe Miller landed at my air base.

Three weeks later I joined him with his mission in Quito Ecuador. We shared a house together for the remainder of our tour. He was ordered directly to Madrid, Spain as the U. S. Air Attache. I hated to see him go.

On completion of my tour I was ordered directly to Prague, Czechoslovakia, as Assistant Air Attache. In slightly less than a year's time I got into hot water with the Czech Security Services. I was denounced as a spy and ordered from the country. On arriving at my headquarters in Wiesbaden, I was to report to Madrid, Spain. Once again I was under the command of Joe Miller. Amazing!

I later served as the Air Attache to Indo China and to Algeria. While serving as Director of Intelligence in Turkey, I was the next door neighbor of a guy named Andy Low. It is a small world.

Following retirement from the service, I became the Washington representative for the de Havilland Aircraft of Canada. Would you believe that my legal counsel was none other than Ramsay Potts? I like de Havilland very much, but they were forced to close their Washington offices, and I did not want to leave the country again even though it was just to Toronto.

I joined Piper as their Manager for International Corporate Sales. I handled only the Cheyenne Turboprops. I placed 187 of them in 44 countries, demonstrated in 65 countries and visited 96.

"I only wish that I could see something of the World!"

Excerpts from Bob Bieck's letter to Mike Benarcik... with permission)



# The 445th Bomb Group Reporting

by Frank DiMola

I have received many good comments about our beautiful war memorial that was dedicated in our visit to Tibenham Air Base in May 1987. In a short time we were able to raise a partial amount in covering our initial coverage. The memorial expense was covered by the donation of only 82 members out of 455 in our group. I will try to contact those who have not made any contribution. Besides the purchase of the memorial, we are making an effort to help the Norfolk Glider Club to purchase the Tibenham Airdrome and to pay off a part of their mortgage. This will further secure the future of the Norfolk Glider Club. If you wish to purchase 25 square yards of the airdrome, please donate \$80.00. If you wish to donate a lesser amount, please do so. It will all help the fund. Make the contribution check out to "The 445th BG Memorial Fund."

The Association is not going to publish a division roster any longer because of frequent change and the high cost of these published issues. It will be left up to the group vice presidents to publish and update their own rosters. I have made an updated roster as of 1/15/88. It consists of 24 pages and it has a nice face cover of our memorial. Anyone interested in getting a copy, please send me a check for \$5.00 to cover printing and postage.

Elizabeth and I wish to thank the members that sent so many holiday cards. Very thoughtful of you all. If I were to

answer them all, I would still be writing — many thanks to all.

The daughter of Betty and Carl Marino made a visit to Norwich and with the help of Tony North and a cab driver they went to Tibenham Air Base. She and her girlfriend were emotionally moved at the site of the memorial. Just the thought of having her father stationed on this air base was a thought of freedom. More and more we seem to hear about our children asking about what their fathers did during WWII. They can further look into the past by joining the Heritage League of the Second Air Division.

As you know, we had a mini-reunion in September 1987 at Dearborn, Ohio, just outside of Dayton. It was held with that other group — the 453rd. It was nicely arranged with the help of Ginger Stokes Brubaker, her dad, Milton, and Andy Low. The turnout was very well attended, about 250 people. We were honored with the presence of David Hastings who did such a remarkable job in helping to make the 40th reunion in Norwich such a success. He once again helped Dave Patterson to fly his aircraft to the reunion.

The Santa Ana Air Base Wing is trying to locate personnel trained at this base. If you were a cadet on the base, please contact Santa Ana Air Base Wing, P.O. Box 1764, Costa Mesa, Calif. 92628. A reunion is planned for March 19 this year at the Orange Coast College, which is located on

the old base.

I received a most interesting letter from the Collings Foundation, located in Stow, Mass., about this group of men who have purchased a B-24J S/N 44-44052 and work is underway to restore this aircraft. At this time the B-24 is about one-third completed. They need help — financial help — to complete the restoration and make it flyable. A letter may be published in this issue listing what they need. If every B-24 crewman would just send \$410.00 they could get the job one. Just a breakdown of some of the costs: oxygen bottles \$40.00, radio \$50.00, ammo boxes \$100.00, instruments \$100.00, dedicated crew position \$500.00. This is where you can leave the ultimate heritage, your position named after you.

This project, sponsored by the Collings Foundation (a non-profit 501C3 foundation) is estimated to cost \$600,000 plus thousands of volunteer hours. So if you are in the area or have a spare weekend, call 617-568-8924 and make a date to help.

The cassette tape that was made up about the 40th reunion in Norwich is really making the rounds. Anyone still wanting to hear about the events that took place, let me know. Speaking about tapes, the Norwich library is still looking to get tapes about your experience in your tour in England during WWII. Why not sit down for a moment and just review your combat or ground history into the tape and send it to Tony North at the library?

## Refreshing Refreshing Old Memories

by Raymond J. Gasperi

We were both pilots in the 8th Air Force, 2nd Air Division, 491st Bomb Group, 852nd Bomb Squadron. In November 1987 Gene Scamahorn wrote to me referring to an entry in his diary:

"October 2, 1944 — We got off on a late start but the mission was not a long one. We went in over the Zuider Zee, met a little flak over the coast and a lot over the target area at Hamm. We dropped incendiaries and 500 lb. GPs on the R.R. marshalling yard. Target was visual and we did a good job. Landed early and took off for London on a three day pass. While we were on pass Lt. Ray Gasperi and crew flew our ship and crashed. A total wreck according to reports. Gasperi and crew all OK." (What happened?)

On October 2, 1944, I flew my first mission as co-pilot with another crew. We were in the No. 4 position and I do remember the flak over the target at Hamm.

On October 3, 1944, we flew our first mission as a crew to Gaggeneau. We were in the No. 6 position and had a good strike in clear weather. Upon returning just over the coast of England near Ipswich, the squadron dropped down to about 800 ft. and we were headed for home. It was then

my engineer, who had come down out of the upper turret, asked if it would be alright if he leveled off the tanks. Assuming he knew what he was doing, I said OK! We had been making great time and the crew was happy to have completed their first mission; some were even singing on the intercom. Then it happened; we lost power on three engines. I goosed the throttles; no response except for the left outboard, which while dropping down and back of the formation, pulled us away to the right. I quickly looked down and spotted 2 or 3 air bases within sight. Picking out the closest and longest runway, I started a landing approach. We lined up perfectly with the runway and we dropped the flaps. Then we saw a plane approaching for a landing from the other direction. Then I remembered the double red flare in the vari-pistol (the take-off abort signal) and yelled at the radio operator to shoot it off. The other plane must have seen it as he did veer off and we flared out for the touchdown. I then gave the engines one last full throttle but only the left outboard responded and pulled us off the line with the runway to the right. I pulled the throttles back and re-aligned the

plane parallel with the runway and we settled in. We had landed in the grass and as I applied the brakes we came to an abrupt stop. It was then I realized we hadn't dropped the gear. After we got out we realized the soft grassy landing was the best thing that could have happened as we didn't create sparks so there was no fire. We also noticed that we had landed down wind!!!

The nose and tail gunners were still in their turrets and the navigator was in his compartment. Remember our orders "not to put guns away until after landing."

Well, when I went back to check the valves, I noted the pointer on three of them were on "Engine to By-Pass." The left outboard was on "Tank to Engine." I guess he missed the correct setting "Tank to Engine to By-Pass."

So that's what happened to Ballot "S" for Sugar (It's been my recollection that was the ID of the plane). One must remember we were at 800 ft. and you know how fast the B-24 drops without power; I estimated the lapsed time to be less than 1 or 2 minutes. We were extremely fortunate not to have gotten a scratch, but then, looking back, we had 17 more missions to fly.

# Don't Hang It Up Yet . . .

by C. W. 'Bill' Getz, 491st Bomb Group and 2nd Scouting Force

You may be upset by the time you finish reading this article. If you persist, don't blame me!

I know this fellow, Jim, at the local athletic club. The club is a place where the healthy, well-developed bodies of the young can be found among the older generation with their sagging chests and flabby arms, turkey necks, the arthritic aches and pains. But at least we're out there trying. I'm not complaining. I swim a mile every day, six days a week. Not bad for sixty-three. Thank you, Lord. But my main point is I have a chance to meet a lot of interesting folks, young and old. Jim is one of them.

One day not too long ago, I saw Jim at the club, and he was in unusual high spirits. Something to do with landing a job. Well, nothing unusual about a new job since I hear a lot of the members talking about changing jobs, getting jobs, losing jobs, griping about jobs, retiring from jobs. The usual locker room chit-chat.

For example, one young Charles Atlas type that I know by the name of Bud told me he was out of a job because of a back injury. He was waiting for his attorney to extract money from his former employer for the alleged injury. You should see that guy lift weights!

Another friend, a little older than Bud, but younger than me, was back to work after an early retirement. Couldn't make ends meet, but he is only 48!

My friend Jim — actually his full name is James William Froude — seemed bursting with enthusiasm this particular morning. I told him how glad I was that he was working, and asked him about the job. He said that he had mailed in an application for a job opening he had heard about. "Janitor?" I asked, but I was only kidding. "Clerk? Used car salesman?" I kept probing.

Lower your eyebrows, friend, they don't advertise for bank presidents in the classifieds, you know, so I wasn't being too insulting. I'm a lousy guesser anyway. But really, a used car salesman doesn't look much different than a bank president — in a jockstrap.

Jim's new job jolted me, to say the least. It was unexpected. But I have to back up before you can understand why Jim would take a job like this one.

Jim is a New Jersey native, born in Jersey City. No Joisy accent, however. He had an early interest in flying, and that, typically, got him into building model airplanes and reading all the favorite aviation magazines. Like a lot of kids, he thought flying would be a fun career.

This went on until college, but the closest he got to flying for the first two years was his models and magazines. He was not the brightest fellow in the calculus class at Dartmouth, and Jim was afraid that his aviation career was on hold, if not stopped. An aeronautical engineering degree was not in the cards.

Jim's eyes may have been on the sky and his head in the clouds, but those clouds were war clouds gathering rapidly over Europe. Our Congress was slow to catch on. So what's new? Despite an isolationist Congress, this country began a small effort in 1940 to build up its armed forces. The military services, ground, sea and air, were woefully unprepared, and the small United States Army Air Corps was still flying cloth-covered, two-winged pursuit planes, mounting two .30 caliber machine guns. And they had few of those old crates, that we now think of with nostalgia. Ah, the P-12E.

Bombers were just as scarce and mostly obsolete, except for the new and few Boeing B-17s that Benny Folio had been able to squeeze out of Congress back in 1935.

Aircrews were even scarcer. So the government started offering scholarships to young college men who agreed to learn to fly. Jim got the absolute last scholarship offered by Dartmouth. The program was called the Civilian Pilot Training Program, or CPTP to the initiated. Training was sporadic. That was in 1941.

I didn't say that my friend Jim was a young guy, did I? But he was in January 1943 when he got his silver wings and gold bars. After Pearl Harbor, the Army had taken over the CPTP program, and Jim had finished his training in the Air Corps.

Class 43-A makes Jim my upperclassman by six "uppers." I graduated with the Class of 43-G. Jim was assigned to the Winged Warriors of Wilmington (Delaware), the Second Ferry Group of the



Jim Froude in cockpit of the C-60 Caribou

Air Transport Command, forerunner of today's Military Airlift Command. When I joined the group in late 1945, it was called the Second Foreign Transport Group. Everything changes but coincidences, and Jim and I shared a few in our careers.

With the Ferry Group (ah, come on fellows, not THAT kind!) Jim was flying a military airplane and delivering aircraft. In May of 1943, the young 2nd looney was flying co-pilot in a C-60 on a ferry flight from Wilmington to the factory to pick up new aircraft for delivery. And of course, you all know what a C-60 is, right? Their cargo was aircrew. The pilot was a First Lieutenant by the name of Barry Goldwater. Now you have heard of him, I hope.

Jim must have screwed up somewhere. He suddenly found himself yanked off of the cushy continental flying to begin flights over *The Hump*. Jim flew that scenic route over the Himalayas to supply the American and Chinese Nationalist forces in China. Two hundred trips to be exact. He must have liked the scenery.

He made Captain in March, 1945, two months before leaving the CBI.

Jim left the service at the end of the war, "And the next day I regretted it," he reports. He missed flying, and could ill-afford his own. He joined the New Jersey National Guard in 1948. He screwed up again!

The Guard was mobilized for the Korean War on March 1, 1951. In January of 1952 he was on his way to Korea, assigned to the *Lamplighters*, a C-47 *Gooney Bird* outfit. They got their name from their mission, dropping flares to light up the target for approaching bombers. Even the North Koreans were smart enough to figure out that all you had to do to stop the bombing mission was to shoot down those dumb guys in the low and slow Goonies. Fun assignment.

Then Jim's career took a twist. The *Lamplighters* were assigned to the 45th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. Jim was made a maintenance officer with the 45th on loan to the *Lamplighters*. But when the *Lamplighters* were moved to K-16, Seoul City Airport, Jim stayed behind with the 45th. The 45th flew F-51s, the reconnaissance version of the famous WWII fighter. Jim became an instant fighter pilot.

By the end of the Korean *police action*, Jim had flown 37 fighter sorties in addition to his *Lamplighter* missions, and a couple of B-26 bomber missions thrown in for good measure.

In 1953, Jim was assigned as an Assistant Professor of Air Sciences and Tactics (ROTC) at the University of New Hampshire. His nearly



four years there gave him the opportunity to work on his masters degree in Sociology (he is a sociable guy).

Professor Jim's academic career was followed by three plus years at Craig Field, Alabama as Chief of the Maintenance Flight Test Section. Then back to Korea.

This time he was attached as a military advisor to the South Korean Air Force, helping them establish a maintenance test pilot school and training program. Then things really got bad.

Jim was sentenced to two years flying a desk at Fuchu, Japan. That was between 1961 and 1963. Fuchu was an obscure little base down the road from Tachikawa Air Base, about 18 miles outside of Tokyo. No airfield at Fuchu. Don't say it, fellows, I know what you're thinking. And Fuchu on you too.

In 1963, my health club friend found himself at George Air Force Base, California, again in flight test maintenance — this time with the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing.

But now Jim was back in jets. The Phantom F-4 to be exact. And you guessed it. Another screw up! The 8th Fighter Wing, the famous and mighty *Wolfpack*, was sent to Southeast Asia. Jim was working on his third war.

The *Wolfpack* could boast of many famous pilots including Chapie James and Robin Olds. Jim was Chief of Flight Test and Quality Control. He is credited with 120 combat missions over Southeast Asia!

In December of 1968 he returned to George AFB, and retired from the Air Force in February, 1967 — and promptly returned to Southeast Asia! In response to a classified ad for pilots. The guy's crazy!

Jim flew the DHC-4, Caribou as a civilian for the Pacific Architects & Engineers, who had a contract with the Army to set up bases. The Army had lost their Caribous to the Air Force, so this was the Army's way of getting around the problem. Good Lord, General, don't ask the Air Force for help — and they probably wouldn't have given it to you anyway.

After eighteen months of this nonsense, and having married a young lady of Philippine heritage, Jim moved to the Philippines where he flew civilian photo-mapping flights in DC-3s, B-25s, C-45s and B-26s. He also became a corporate pilot flying a Bonanza and Travelaire. Who remembers the Travelaire?

This all started in 1968, and you know what this guy does? He ferries a P-51 solo from the United States mainland to the Philippines for a private party! He landed in Manila on his fiftieth birthday. As

far as he knows, this was a first (not the birthday, dummy, pay attention). Didn't I tell you this guy was nuts?

Jim was a real flying fool in those days. He flew oil drilling teams all over southeast Asia in Lockheed Lodestars — the C-60, fellows. Now you know. Also in the Ventura, another rare bird with the AF designation of B-34. And finally, in 1975, Jim became Chief Pilot for Philippine-based Oasis Airlines flying DC-3s and the old Curtis C-46, the largest twin reciprocating-engine plane ever built.

Jim wasn't finished yet. In 1977, he went to work for the well-known movie producer, Francis Ford Coppola, flying a BAC-1-11, similar to a DC-9, while the movie *Apocalypse Now* was being made. After completion of the movie, Jim finally headed home for the mainland. That was in 1977.

The only job he could get at the time was flying AeroCommanders between the San Jose and Denver with Pacific Aero, a contractor for Federal Express, but that finally folded when Federal Express got their own planes.

It was getting tougher. For five years Jim flew as an air taxi pilot, flying less and less. His thoughts were, *My flying days are over, after 13,000 hours. I don't know how to do anything but fly!* Well, Jim, everything comes to an end sometime. Nobody promised it would be easy. And you've had your share.

But apparently Jim's working days weren't over. At least he didn't want them to be. He wasn't the kind to sit around and become a couch potato. And that is why he responded to that rumor about a job in Sacramento.

Which reminds me. That new job of his. **Well, James William Froude was hired as a captain of a scheduled airline at sixty-seven years of age!** Now you know why he was so enthusiastic when he told me he had a new job.

Jim is flying the DHC-4 Caribou again for Union Flights of Sacramento. He started with a scheduled cargo run between San Francisco International Airport and Sacramento, but lately has been flying to other destinations as well. His co-pilot is 24! But Jim can't claim to be the oldest pilot in the company. There's one who is 72!

There's a message here, fellows. And as I warned you at the beginning, this is where you may get upset. Get off your duff and go for it. You can do it. Do what? Anything you make up your mind to do within physical reason. Age is NOT the barrier. There is still a lot of life left to live. **Don't hang it up yet!**



C-60 Caribou

# About the Memorial

by Jordan R. Uttal

The Governors' meeting held 3 November 1987 in Norwich covered a lot of ground and I feel the following matters should be of interest to our membership.

**Memorial Room Refurbishment:** The architect, Tom Nash, submitted final cost estimates, and authorization to proceed was given. Work is due to start in February or March after final approval from the county architect is obtained.

**Memorial Aide:** The hours for Tony North were extended, effective 1 November 1987 from three days per week to four. It is anticipated that by late spring his time in the Memorial Room will be further extended as his training by Bertha Chandler intensifies. I am pleased to report that I have received numerous favorable comments from members who have visited our 2AD Memorial Room relative to the helpfulness and cordiality extended by both Bertha and Tony.

**Further Extension of Memorial Room Offerings:** Through the generosity of the Joseph Dzenowagis family and their colleagues in the 467th Bomb Group, I was honored to present to the Memorial Room seven two-hour videotapes of interviews with 35 of our members made at our 39th Convention at St. Charles, Ill. in July 1986. They were received with acclaim by the Governors and the Librarians as the start of a collection of oral history videotapes available for viewing by students and the public at large in the Norwich area.

This marks an important growth step in the value of our Memorial to present and future visitors to the Memorial Room. What started as a reading room for books on Americana has grown over the years with the addition of magazines and periodicals about the U.S., followed by the addition of a growing collection of audiotapes of the recollections of our personnel about their time in England, and now, with the changing of times and progress in the communications arts, we are into videotapes.

A special viewing monitor which will accept American video cycles has been purchased by the Trust for the Memorial Room, and we now have another opportunity for further donations to the Memorial. One member has already presented a videotape of his home city, San Diego, California. We will welcome donations of videotapes featuring any area of the country from our members.

However, in order to avoid duplication, it is requested that before you send them you write to the Librarian or to me to determine whether the material is acceptable. As with book donations, each videotape will be identified with a special label to show the donor and the person or group in whose memory the tape is donated.

**And Now, The American Librarian Project:** As a result of the survey conducted among the members of our Executive Committee and all the Group VPs, I was able to report to the Governors that there was a favorable attitude toward the project subject to certain reservations. One of those reservations was that we had not had time to obtain a consensus from our members. (I am disappointed at the small number of expressions received from you in response to my request in the September Journal. They still are needed and will be very welcome). The Governors understood fully that our decision will take time, at least until after our Colorado Springs Convention. However, they are still strongly of the opinion that an American presence is necessary. Since June they have been working to secure cooperation from the Fulbright Commission, the Hubert Humphrey Institute, the Norfolk County Council, the University of East Anglia, and private Norwich charities. However, it is my personal feeling that the major contribution will have to come from the 2nd Air Division Association and the type and extent of the contributions they may get over there is dependent, in a way, on our results.

**Finally:** Bertha Chandler is working hard to set in motion ongoing projects which will make the Memorial Room of the 2nd Air Division the effective permanent reminder of the sacrifices and the efforts of the Division, and the permanent bridge between us and the people of East Anglia that we want it to be. As of November 3rd she had ordered over \$6,000.00 worth of new volumes, and they were arriving every day. The Room is fresher looking already, and the process will continue.

Our new member of the Board of Governors, Dr. Ronald Clifton, the new Cultural Attache at the American Embassy, is more than favorably impressed with what has been achieved so far. I feel that we can count on his continued interest and his intention to express an American point of view whenever needed. I had hoped to have a "bio" from him for this issue and I will keep trying to obtain one for the next.

Warm greetings to you all, and special thanks to those of you who included personal expressions with your Holiday Greetings. May 1988 be a great year for all of us!!!

## A poem courtesy of Lt. K. E. Bailey

Submitted by Dave Patterson (445th)

*We are told the poem below was composed and read by an Air Force captain at his court martial. He had refused to fly a B-24. My flight engineer, Charlie Cooper, sent it to me. I thought you all would like it!*

They sat in state, the heroes in the vaulted halls of fame,  
In proud and scornful silence, for each had made his name  
On fields of storied battle, on many a bloody sea;  
Though forged in fire, or carved in mire, each deed is history.

There was little Davy Crockett, and the martyr, Nathan Hale;  
And the rebel line that fell in Shenandoah's bloody vale.  
There was Grant, who knew brief glory but died another way;  
And others known to time alone, but each had had his day.

There was on each haunted visage a deep, forbidding gloom,  
And each gaze upon a stranger who had shambled in the room.  
In his left hand was a check list, in his right an R.B.I.  
His face was worn, his clothes were torn, his flight cap was awry.

The first to speak was Caesar, by virtue of this age,  
And the finger that he pointed was trembling with his rage.  
"What right have ye, brash youngster, with these gallant men of yore?"

And the man replied, though not with pride, "I flew a B-24."

"It was out on the plains of Kansas, in the land that God forgot,  
Where the winter winds are piercing, and the summer suns are hot.

We were young and brave and hopeful, fresh from ten-day leaves,  
Though somehow we knew, and the feeling grew, they were really our last reprieve.

For there's a sort of maniac madness in the supercharger's whine,  
As you hear the ice cubes tinkling in the turbo balance line;

And the runway strips are narrow, but the snowbanks - they are wide;  
While the crash trucks say, in a mournful way, that you're on your final ride.

The nose-gear rocks and trembles, for it's held with bailing wire;  
And the wings are filled with thermite to make a hotter fire.  
The camouflage is peeling off - it lends an added luster,  
While the pitot head is filled with lead to help the load adjuster.

The bomb bay doors are rusted, and they close with a ghastly shriek;  
And the plexiglass is smeared with some forgotten oil leak.  
The oleo struts are twisted, the wheels are not quite round,  
And the bulk-heads thin (Ford builds with tin) admit the slightest sound.

You taxi out on the runway, 'mid the groans of the tortured gear,  
And you feel the check riders' practiced teeth gnawing your tender rear.  
The co-pilot dozing on the right, in a liquor-laden coma,  
Mingles his breath, like the kiss of death, with the put-put's foul aroma.

So it's off in the overcast yonder, though number one is missing;  
And the hydraulic fluid escaping, sets up a gentle hissing;  
The compass dial is spinning in a way that brooks no stopping,  
And row by row, the fuses blow with an intermittent popping.

It was named the "Liberator" by a low and twisted mind,  
But men who come to Liberal, no freedom ever find;  
There is no hope, no sunny ray, to dry their tears of sorrow,  
For those who land, and still can stand, fly the goddam things tomorrow."

The stranger's voice was silent, a tear shone in his eye,  
And from all his honored audience arose a ghastly sigh.  
Great Caesar rose up to him with pity on his face,  
And bowing low, he turned to show the stranger to his place.

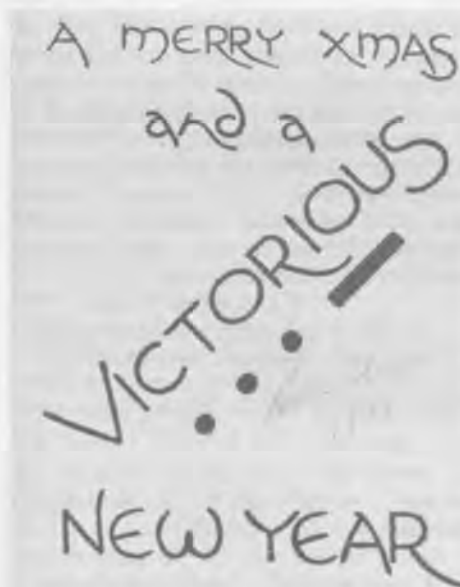


# Letters



Dear Bill,

44 years ago I sent the original of this greeting to friends and relatives in the U.S.A.



I thought it appropriate on this timely anniversary to duplicate and share this colorful and hopeful message with my friends in both the UK and US.

Don Chase

+ + + +

Dear Bill,

I should like to express my sincere appreciation for the many greetings and messages received from members of the Association over the Christmas period. There were far too many for me to respond to individually.

It is very gratifying to know that I have met so many people during the past year who I can now call friends and I hope I shall meet many more during 1988.

Tony North  
Library Aide  
2nd AD Memorial Room  
62, Turner Road  
Norwich, Norfolk  
NR2 4HB  
England

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

I must tell you how much I enjoy getting the Journal. I've been reading the Journal for four years. When the mail person delivers my copy, I'm so interested in the contents that I read it cover to cover.

As a result of a number of stories on the Duneburg Raid, April 7, 1945 which appeared in the Journal, I have several new and continuing correspondents I did not know during the war years. Via the same route, I was reunited with a lost friend, Roy "Andy" Anderson by letter and telephone call.

Andy was in one of "five Libs tumbled from the sky" over Rouen, France when B-17s dumped on them, April 14, 1945. This was a classic milk run — with no flak and no fighters. He was pinned in a spinning piece of wreckage consisting of the nose and section of the wing with four engines. The gas tanks or bomb bay exploded, blowing him out through the roof of the cockpit. He said he was picking pieces of plexiglass out of his head for the next six weeks.

Kenneth D. Jones  
1013 Thomas Street  
Janesville, WI 53545

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Dear Bill:

Thanks for your letter concerning the 2nd Journal. I knew it would happen. The day after I mailed your card the Journal arrived.

The article on the back page about the Privateer PB4Y-2 was especially interesting to me. Just a few days before I had a conversation with my barber, a Naval Aviator, about this plane. He was confusing it with the Coronado PB2Y-1. I didn't want to correct him and found I had the information in 2 books at home.

A day or so after that one of our neighbors stopped in for a visit. Her husband was a Seabe. She had flown from the Philippines to Guam on a Privateer.

Thanks again for your letter.

Charles L. Wingo  
764 Samuel Chase Lane  
West Melbourne, FL 32904

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Dear Bill,

I came across this picture of "Lemon Drop" in, of all places, the photographic library at the RAF Museum at Hendon. It was new to me so I ordered a copy for you in case you haven't seen it before.

I've been trying to find some additional data on Art Cullen's B-24 so I can proceed with his painting, but unfortunately all my efforts have fallen on stoney ground.

So long now — give my love to Hazel.

Mike Bailey  
91 Waterworks Road  
Norwich, Norfolk  
NR2 4DB  
England

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Dear Sirs:

Earlier this year I had the pleasure to correspond with Louis Pennow of the 8th AF Memorial Museum here in England. I think he's also associated with the 388th BG/3rd AD... Anyway, he provided me with your address.

I was seeking info on my two uncles who were in bomber units over here in WWII: Sgt. Charles V. Cooke and F/O Richard L. Cooke.

Since then I have learned about the first. He was a B-17 gunman for the 305th BG flying from Chelveston and was killed in action August 24, 1944. But the second still eludes me.

Richard, or Bob as he was known, was a bombardier-navigator, graduating Sept. 1944 and coming to England in December that year. I believe his unit was actually flying from France. In early 1945 he was wounded on his base, losing an eye when a shell exploded. He returned to the States in April 1945.

Since I am stationed in England until June 1988, I was interested in learning where in England my uncle Bob might have been. He might have only passed thru here on his way to France or gone with his unit.

So my main question is, do you have an indexed history of the 8th or 9th Air Force casualties that would list him, F/O Richard Lyle Cooke, and identify what unit he was with?

It feels a bit odd writing to you in a town named Ipswich. I am living in Ipswich also! But the English city in Suffolk in East Anglia. I'm stationed at RAF Bentwaters, about 17 miles from Ipswich where I live with my family.

M/Sgt. Thomas Cooke  
81 AGS - PSC Box 2812  
APO NY 09755-5369

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Dear Bill,

Talk about being at "the right place at the right time," we really did it this time. Early this year I had a phone call from our pilot, Ed Miller of NC, who was visiting our navigator Cecil Wells in Texas — the first time I had heard from either since 1945. Things jelled quickly after that and plans were made for our crew reunion in Dayton the weekend of Sept. 18 thru the 22nd. In addition to the reunion of 6 of our crew members, the U.S. Air Force was celebrating their 40th Anniversary for 3 days, our 453rd Bomb Group was having their reunion with Milt Stokes in command, and the new Holiday Inn had their grand opening on Sunday with champagne and hors d'oeuvres that wouldn't quit. You couldn't have planned it any better, and we picked up 3 or 4 of our crew as members to the 453rd.

As part of Erritt (Ed) Miller's crew we went over to England in Jan. '45 on the Queen Mary, flew 16 missions, and flew back in "Damifino" (as we later transferred to the 466th) in June '45.

It was a very joyous occasion for our first time get-together since '45 with 6 of our crew in attendance, 2 not able to attend. Our co-pilot Wm. A. Moody passed away recently, and one we haven't been able to locate, Edward F. Gallagher Jr. We sure could use some help in locating him and getting him back into our formation.

Time has changed all of us in appearance, but mannerisms and characteristics seem to prevail in all of us. I think if we had about a 2 week refresher course, we could take that "Spirit of Notre Dame," "Crow's Nest," "B.T.O.," "Damifino" or the "Flying Dutchman" down that runway and still clear that fence at the end of it, as we had to every time back in '45.



If you have room for this letter and picture for the Journal, from left to right: Odo Oliva, flight engineer; Erritt D. Miller, pilot; William F. Vicray, tail gunner; Mark W. Solt, radio operator; Richard S. Carroll, Jr., bombardier; Cecil M. Wells, navigator - Retired Colonel 27 years.

Our goal — attend the next reunion in England!

Odo Oliva  
375 Caledonia St.  
Lockport, NY 14094

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Dear Mr. Robertie:

It has been a long time since we braved the long guns, the enemy aircraft, the bad weather, and the equipment that was the very best for that day and time; still it had its inadequacies. Many memories still return and we only have God to thank that the scars are growing dimmer yearly.

There has been some comment on nose art, so I resurrected this old snapshot of the "Eager One." We of Captain Saunders' crew flew it at least once. It finally suffered enough major air frame damage that it suffered the indignity of being cannibalized.

Captain Saunders crew was composed of Lt. Wallace Keith Grimes, co-pilot; Lt. Joseph Nathan, navigator; T/Sgt. John Royski, engineer; S/Sgt. Gilbert A. Matthias, radio; S/Sgt. Irvin Alvey, left gun; Warren E. Lutin, rt. gun; S/Sgt. Patrick J. Terranova, tail; and Bob Eldridge, nose.

Another plane we flew in was the "Rabbie-Duck" which was shot up so bad over Koln that we had to put down in Leige, Belgium, which our maps showed to still be in German hands.

Two other pictures which I enclose was of a German fighter's damage to a 448th BG planes near the very last of the war. The story told to me was that the tail gunner survived the cannon blast which destroyed his turret. He climbed out and before he could open the canvas curtain to the waist a second cannon burst killed both gunners there. The tail gunner then proceeded to take the left waist gun and knock down the German pilot.

The picture shows me but I was not in this plane.

Hope this information helps someone. I could use some information on the Wilhelmshaven raid. I believe it was March 30, 1945 with special bombs attached to rockets.

Robert F. Eldridge Sr.  
812 So. Forest  
Independence, MO 64052  
816-461-2742

Dear Bill,

I have written so many letters lately that I cannot remember if I wrote to you or not. (Unfortunately I did not keep copies for my reference.) Please forgive me if I am repeating.

I am a new member of the 2nd ADA — a "lost soul," as you call us.

I am inquiring to see if there are still copies available of the book "Mighty Eighth War Manual." If so, please send me a copy. My check for \$25 is enclosed.

What is the difference between this book and "The Mighty Eighth War Diary?" I may want that one also if it is significantly different.

Also, I have been trying to find out if copies are still available of prints of a painting of "Witchcraft," the 467th BG B-24. It was mentioned on page 35 of the 1987 Fall Edition of the 2nd ADA Journal. The letter was to you from a Jim Coffey. Can you give me a name and address of someone who can help me on this? Thank you for whatever help you may offer.

Theodore M. Wheeler  
17 Rockrimmon, Box 25  
Kingston, NH 03848

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Dear Bill:

I noted that in the fall '87 issue an Ed Becker from the 453rd bomb group was in attendance at the Norwich reunion.

An Ed Becker was the navigator on my B-24 crew in the 453rd and I have not heard of him since 1945 when we came back.

I'd be interested in knowing his present address so I could contact him to see if it is the same Ed Becker I flew with.

Marvis T. Hogen  
Dept. of Agriculture  
Office of the Secretary  
Anderson Building  
Pierre, SD 57501

+ + + +



Dear Editor,

I was born on 25 June 1939. Soon afterwards, the Second World War was declared. My mother assures me that the two incidents are entirely unrelated. I've led an incident packed life — some of the highlights are as follows.

Served in Royal Navy from 1956 until 1966. Visited Norfolk, Virginia and New York for international naval review in 1957. During the Vietnam War the Brits had a war of their own out in the Far East. This was when President Soekarno of Indonesia said that he'd help the "domino theory" and "collapse" Malaya, etc. by invading it and causing a general state of war. I served on H.M.S. "Bulwark" which was one of Britain's first commando helicopter carriers. We saw action in Borneo, Brunie, Sarawak, etc. Later in the commission, I was captured by the Communist Chinese Army, near Hong Kong, and held by them on a tiny island for a short time. My life seemed to be one series of adventures. In civilian life I owned an antiques/furniture shop in Portland, Dorset and a motorcycle shop in London.

More recently I've spent a year working in a Christian charity shop in Scotland. Then I moved onto a deserted island where I lived alone for six months with a dog and two hens so that I could write a children's adventure story book. The Scottish stint now finished, I'm living in Norwich, Norfolk, and because I'm a writer and a poet, I recently visited the city library. Imagine my joy when I discovered this fantastic collection of American literature. I was bowled over with surprise and delight. I read about the 6,000 brave men from America who'd died that Brits like me could be free from the Nazi oppression that was sweeping across Europe. I read, in the front of one of the books how the book had been donated by the next of kin of some young American. I was quite a profound moment for me; it brought back what few memories I have of wartime England. I'd like to thank all those who gave their lives. I'd like to thank their mates who gave unstintingly of their dollars to assemble this unique memorial to their fellow comrades. I'd like to thank the folk who keep it all together. Thank you all.

If you can use this brief note in your newsletter, please do so. I'll reply to any letters I might receive — on a personal basis. Again thank you and best wishes.

Bill Jones  
16 Cedar Road  
Norwich, Norfolk  
U.K.

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To: Wm. G. Robertie:

First of all I would like to say that I feel the last issue of the Journal is one of the better ones.

William, if possible would you send me a couple of copies of the last Journal. They have been asked for by prospective new members. Thanks.

Lloyd E. West, 389th  
Box 256  
Rush Center, KS 67575

Dear Floyd (Mabee) and the Members of the 93rd Bomb Group:

It certainly is a pleasure to hear that your trip to England and the reunion all went well. I'm sure that everyone enjoyed all the activities. I'm pleased that the activities at Norwich castle were thoroughly enjoyed. Our men enjoyed their trip, the flight being very smooth and the weather so nice. They especially enjoyed the castle activities. I'm sorry they couldn't attend the dedication at Hardwich but they had a flying commitment. The trip was surely worth the effort.



The T-shirt "Project Liberator" represents our efforts to restore the B-24 for museum display. I'm glad you liked it. Please inquire with the other veterans if they, too, would like one. It would help the financial support of restoring the B-24. The project has slowed some due to lack of technical help and finances. We sorely need to know how the aircraft was configured and painted. Any assistance will be appreciated. Visits would be especially helpful and even photos would aid in the reconstruction. The major pieces are all attached except for the wing tips and the engines, which were recently returned to us refurbished.

Thank you for the information on George S. Brown. The plan is to restore it in his honor. Any comments or suggestions are appreciated. It would help if the veterans supported this idea by writing to the Director, Castle Air Museum, Castle AFB, CA 95342.

Would you consider holding a reunion at Castle for the 93rd to coincide with the dedication of the B-24? Of course the subject to the completion of the B-24. Would the veterans support this idea? Thank you for all your help.

David R. Kenerley  
Capt., USAF  
93 BMW/DOVT  
Castle AFB, CA  
95342-5000

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Dear Bill,

With your kind permission I'd like to reprint from your Fall issue the front page from the 11 year old girl.

Your Journal is great. Wish my people would allow more \$ but all I hear is that I'm always over budget.

How come we don't see any P-38s in your logo? We were sure there and didn't envy you one bit.

Jack Ilfrey  
50 Ridge Drive  
New Braunfels, TX 78130

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Bill:

Your most kind words about CROSSHAIRS (do every bit of it by myself!) have earned you permission to run the poems...I, too, thought they were very good also!

Speaking of good (excellent) publications, please accept my kudos for an outstandingly done Journal!

E.C. "Ned" Humphreys  
Bombardiers Inc.  
Founder & Exec. Director

(Ed.: If any of you Bombardiers want to get in touch with Ned his address is Box 254, Eagle Harbor, MI 49951.)

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Dear Evelyn,

Just thought I would drop you a line to give you an up-date on events that have taken place with me recently. I have been the recipient of exciting and good news. I guess after 43 years things have happened to me that I never thought would be a reality. Members of my crew contacted me and a few of them even went to England and visited our base at North Pick. I am speaking of Harold McMahon, Bill Williams, Eddie Albers and — Johnson (can't recall your first name, sorry). I even received a call recently from Martin Cookerow who I haven't been in touch with since 1944. Unfortunately I am physically and medically incapable to have been able to join them on their N. Pick trip.

They all made contact with Tony Wallace at N. Pick whom I just found about and they said he made their trip perfect. They all agree he is a remarkable person. I would also like to mention the memorial plaque and monument at N. Pick and the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio paying tribute to the 492nd and 491st BGs. A thousand cheers to all you guys that were responsible for this.

A few of the crew members I have mentioned above have also been in contact with Allan Blue, author of the book "The Fortunes of War." It's amazing how he has also come into the picture after so many years. I now have his address and will write him requesting his revised (new text) on the book. "Over and Out..."

Bob Mantel  
492nd BG, 856th Sqdn.

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Dear Bill,

I would appreciate very much your putting the following in the next Journal:

To all crews who had the good fortune to have been sent to Keythorpe Hall in Leicester, England for R & R. I found one of the wonderful Red Cross ladies who made our short stay so beautiful. Her name was Sis Harriman, now Mrs. Sis Harriman Devlin and now living at 2404 So. Dunbar Ave., Melbourne, FL 32901. She said she'd like to hear from you fellows. Thank you very much.

John G. Koepper  
45 A. Leonard Way  
Chatham, MA 02633

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

Having driven nothing more complicated than a worn out mule prior to WWII, I entered the aviation cadet program. My goal was to learn how to fly one of those machines. In primary training 5 of the six cadets assigned to Mr. Babin, the instructor, were washed out, which left me to carry on. Mr. Babin's last words were that I would have joined the ranks of the washouts if there was anyone left.

Finally made it all the way to Old Buck with only a few minor mishaps. Upon arrival we were assigned the aircraft mentioned in the last issue of the Journal ("Hard To Get.") Could there have been two B-24s by the same name or was the 392nd BG able to pawn off their dog to the 453rd for some reason? To make a long story short, we flew "Hard To Get" on three or four practice missions and not once were we able to land with all four fans turning.

D Day was our first mission and guess what we were assigned — "Hard To Get." The navigator, Leo Mooney, even invited the chaplain to say the blessing over the crew and plane.

I'm still not sure if I chickened out or deliberately taxied the plane off the hardstand and buried it over the axel in the mud. Col. Sullivan and Col. Stewart were out immediately to see what the problem was. After noticing I was shaking in my boots (hadn't seen Lt.'s up close before) they decided to delay the butt chewing until after the mission and assigned Little Nancy to us and we flew Little Nancy to complete all our missions.

"Hard To Get" had a couple other new crews but not once did it make it across the Channel to my knowledge. The last crew to fly "Hard To Get" left it up in the air and came back to Old Buck by bus.

That picture and name sure brought back some bad memories.

John Kassab, 453rd  
6421 Pinehurst Run  
Mobile, Ala. 36608

P.S. Anyone have any knowledge of radio operator Durward Johnson? He is the only one of my crew I can't find. He originally came from near Kansas City Mo. or Ka.

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

Thanks for your note and permission to use the front cover of the September issue of the Journal. I will not need the negative but thanks for the offer. Feel free to use anything out of our K.C.R.

Seems to me we did most of our work with the first Division flying B-17s, but I do remember one day escorting a large wing of 24s where from my cockpit in the P-38 I counted 14 going down at one time. I said to myself, "What the hell is this all about?" 140 men going down at one time.

Most younger people today don't understand at all. Your Journal is great.

Jack Ilfrey  
Kings Cliffe Assoc.

(Ed.: You're right, Jack. Your Group was attached to the 1st Division. But many thanks for your free lancing to help us every so often.)

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

Sid Schapiro's article on Captain Gilbert reminded me of an example of his flying ability. I was a member of the 93rd Flying Control team and was on duty at the time of the incident.

Coming back to Hardwick after a practice mission Gilbert advised me that the right main tire was flat; apparently blown on takeoff. I asked if he would rather go on to Woodbridge with their 12,000 runway but he opted to land at Hardwick. Fortunately there was no other traffic, so after alerting the crash crew, I cleared him to land.

Well, he brought that B-24 in and touched down as light as a feather. The aircraft remained on the nose wheel and left main gear until virtually all forward speed was lost. He then eased the right wing down and slowly scraped along to a stop. The crowd that had gathered in the tower burst into a round of applause for a job well done.

Sorry that I was a month late visiting Norwich and missed the reunion but did get out for one last look at Hardwick. I hope to see you at Colorado Springs this June. I was with the 93rd from Barksdale through VE Day.

Paul "PC" London  
5600 E. Mexico Ave.  
Denver, CO 80224

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

The article in the recent Journal about Ken Gilbert and his 75 missions certainly brought back many memories. I worked in 409 Squadron operations and remember Capt. Gilbert quite well. I had also expected to see Col. Therman Brown in Melbourne, Florida last winter but could not make it.

Capt. Gilbert's remarkable feat brings to mind a very dear friend of mine. T/Sgt. Edward Sczesny flew 64 missions with the 409th. After completing 25 missions with his regular crew he flew with many different crews, filling in where needed as engineer, gunner, photographer, etc.

I was in the 409th since its inception as the 17th Recon. Sqdn. at Barksdale Field, LA through VE Day and I am quite confident that Ken Gilbert and Ed Sczesny must be Nos. 1 & 2 in number of missions flown, at least in the 409th. Ed and I were from Jersey City, NJ and saw a great deal of each other til he died suddenly a few years ago.



Enclosed are some pictures of Ed and a clipping from a Jersey City newspaper. Perhaps you might wish to incorporate it into the next edition of the Journal. If so, I will see that his family gets a copy.

Best of luck in your endeavors on behalf of us in the 2nd AD. You all certainly deserve many plaudits.

Donald F. Hanlon

+ + + +

Dear Pete,

Thank you so very much for allowing me to use the tapes for an extended period. They were well received, more so by guys and dolls our age (as opposed to the younger generation). However, some of the younger bunch did remark such as, "We didn't know it was like that." Or, as my youngest (28) said after seeing Vicksburg Military Park, "...a better appreciation about what went on." I do appreciate your interest and indulgence.

One of the most beautiful nights I've ever seen was in England — Chorley, I think — in 1944 on Christmas Eve. Another 8th Air Force member and I walked into town, approximately one month after I finished my 31 missions. It was not extremely cold and there was a large moon and a light snow falling. Over on the Continent, the guns were still blazing, but we knew it wouldn't be too long until many Christmases would be spent in peace.

I think of those days often although I was not involved for very long — three and one-half years in service, ten months in England.

I look forward to meeting you in Colorado Springs in June of 1988 if it so happens.

Gene Young, 458th  
Rte. 3, Box 18  
Cleveland, OK 74020

+ + + +



Dear Pete (Henry),

Once again I have the duty to be the bearer of sad news as I report to you the death of squadron mate and friend, Charlie Deurell, on the twenty-first of November at his home in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Charlie had a long battle of many years with heart trouble to which he finally succumbed. He was never a member of the 2nd Air Division Association. His precarious health situation would not allow him to participate as he would have liked and he would look to me to keep him informed as his interest would warrant.

I pass this on to you in the hope that through your vehicle in the Journal those friends of Charlie's will be informed of his passing and afford them the opportunity to pause for a moment of reflection and honor his memory.

Charlie began his military career with the R.C.A.F. and transferred to the U.S.A.A.F. thence to the forty-fourth about November of 1943 when we returned from our second sojourn to North Africa.

I was fortunate in that Charlie and I were roommates and a close bond of friendship developed between us. His indomitable spirit, engaging smile and hearty disposition made many friends for Charlie. To be near him would surely buoy the spirits of many so far from home and loved ones during the trying circumstances of the times. I shall never forget him.

I hope that you and yours are well and that Virginia and I will be able to see you again at the next reunion. Keep up the good work, Pete. You are the glue that holds the group together.

Charles E. Cary  
5442 Bonanza Drive  
Huntington Beach CA  
92649

+ + + +

Dear Bill,

On Wednesday, July 4, 1990 Westover Air Force Base will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary. I know that a great many of our members trained there in '43, '44 for OTU. Therefore I think it would be a great time and place to have our 2nd AD reunion on that occasion. In addition it would be an opportunity for those in the East to attend one of our reunions.

The Base Commander is Thomas G. Hargis, Lt. Col. USAFR, Westover AFB, Mass. 01022-5000. I spoke with him in November at the N.E. Regional CAP Conference, and the Air Force is anxious to have as many veterans as possible attend the anniversary.

On July 10th our crew had a reunion in Kansas City and a great time was had by all. All ten men made it, along with nine wives. Hopefully all will be able to make it to Colorado in June.

Don Nell, 453rd  
263 Curtis Street  
Southington, CT 06489

+ + + +

Dear Bill,

Last month I visited Dave Davies who was the RAF liaison officer for the 44th Bomb Group at Shipdham for about a year and who served with one or two other Second Air Division groups as well. Dave did not know about the association. I have asked Evelyn Cohen to add Dave to the association roster for a year, my compliments. Dave is still interested in the groups he served with and in Americans he knew.

If it would be appropriate, I suggest that you include a note in one of the upcoming bulletins that Dave has become a member. His address is: D.I. Davies; 1 Marine Court, Connaught Road; Seaford, Sussex, BN 25 2PX; England.

Ralph Lipper  
405 Bluemont Circle  
Manhattan, KS 66502

+ + + +

Dear Evelyn:

You folks are doing a grand job with the 2nd AD Assn. The Journal with its accounts of air adventures amazes me in that men can recall events that occurred over 40 years ago. They make for good reading.

My group was based at Rackheath. My squadron was the 788th until it became the 859 Bomb Sq (Prov) and we found ourselves part of the carpetbagger operation.

I didn't understand what we were doing at the time. I didn't know what our function was until years later.

Don Geery

+ + + +

Hello Bill,

I want to offer compliments, plaudits and congratulations of the belated December Journal issue. It was an example of professional format and composition. Rather neatly done and we thoroughly enjoyed the issue. Looked and felt like a book and very rewarding to read and re-read. Like a good wine you become better with age, or should I have couched this in different terms? (*Couch this in any terms you wish, but thanks anyway.*—Ed.)

Bob Mallick  
453rd BG

+ + + +

Hi Bill!

My article you published in the December Journal had a surprising result. It didn't take very long for Jackson Granholm (458th Group Navigator) to send me a letter. He was familiar with that night in April. He had even included it in one of his manuscripts. He is sending me a copy and maybe now I'll "know the rest of the story!"

Hope this finds you and yours enjoying the good things of life!

William Griffiths  
R.R. 8 Box 225  
Marietta, OH 45750

Dear Mr. Robertie:

We have been trying to trace down a gentleman by the name of Paul Meyer. (Resume enclosed). Luckily we have been given your name and your publication's address. Would you please publish Paul's story in your 2nd Air Divn. publication? (and any other paper). Maybe Mr. Meyer will read it and get in touch with us.

If we were lucky enough that Paul will see this, he could get in touch with us directly or thru your paper.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sebastien Minaberry  
7932 Stine Road  
Bakersfield, CA 93313  
(805) 834-1326

**Story of Paul Meyer (or Mayer)  
as Martin Gastenaga remembers  
World War II, 1944**

About the first week of March, 1944, a young man clothed with an old faded suit came to this old man working in the field of Esterencuby, Basses Pyrenees, France. He does not speak Basque nor French. Who can he be?? (During the war everybody was very suspicious about any strange looking person).

Somehow the man explains that he is an American pilot that was in a mission over France. His airplane has been wrecked (probably shot down) and he is afraid of the Germans. Paul is in the Pyrenees mountains, he has a map and he knows that his best bet is to try to cross the border over to Spain.

Will the Gastenaga family help him? It is extremely risky to do so. But faith in God is very strong in this family. "God will be there." Indeed, God was there.

After taking the man to the house, they feed him and send him to bed for the night. The next day or so, Martin, the oldest boy of the family, about 23, will help this young man, about 24, to pass the high mountains of the Pyrenees. They pack food and beverages and off they go.

There is snow in the mountains and they encounter some difficulties but Martin knows his way. They make it to Spain. Now everything is fine.

After spending the night together, they have to say goodbye. Paul gives his wrist watch and some British currency to Martin.

Oh yes! Martin has a safe trip home.

Note 1: After the war was over, the Gastenaga family received a letter from Paul (or maybe the army) but not knowing how to read it, gave it to somebody for translation and never received the letter back.

Note 2: Martin, who is well, would do anything to see Paul again. He has a brother, sister and daughter living in San Francisco, and other relatives also. We would all be overjoyed if Paul is alive and we could meet him! We hope it's going to be "a dream come true."

Note 3: After the war a lot of young people came to America from the Pyrenees.

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# The Book Shelf



**CARPETCHAGGERS: America's Secret War in Europe**, by Ben Parnell. One of this nation's best-kept secrets of World War II were the CARPETCHAGGERS, code name for a joint venture of the OSS, America's newly organized espionage unit, and the Eighth Air Force.

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