



Vol. 32, No. 2

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Summer 1993

30th Anniversary 1963-1993 Second Air Division Memorial Room

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President's Message

by John B. Conrad



In April, you should have received a brochure from Turner Publishing Company requesting your biography of 150 words and, if available, a "then" picture and a "now" picture for inclusion in the history to be written about the 2nd Air Division. The brochure includes sample biographies to be used as a guide in writing your biography and an order form to order books at this time, if desired. The brochure also clearly states that you do not have to order a book to enter your biography.

The brochure carried a deadline date of May 31, which we are pleased to advise has been extended a month. The history of the 2nd Air Division is a history of its people. If the book doesn't include yours, it won't be complete. This book will include the history of the 2nd Air Division's combat wings, bomb and fighter groups, squadrons and attached units; the history of the Memorial Library and the Association, photographs, maps, war stories, charts, and, as noted above, biographies of those who served. So if you haven't sent in your biography, DO IT NOW. If you have misplaced your brochure and need another, contact your Group Vice President, or call Turner Publishing at (502) 443-0121.

Regional reunions and dinners appear to be doing well this year. The first Florida Reunion Dinner was held February 7 at the Clarion Hotel near Orlando. It was enthusiastically supported, with nearly 300 in attendance. The attendees re-elected the same Reunion Committee, headed by Cochairmen Lawrence Gilbert and Clifford Peterson (both 392nd BG), to plan next year's reunion.

The Philadelphia Area Reunion is not being held this year, but plans being considered for next year contemplate holding a midday Reunion Luncheon and program in lieu of the traditional evening dinner. This would make it convenient for attendees to come and go without staying overnight, as so many do when attending the evening dinner.

The 12th Annual Southern California Reunion Dinner was held at the El Toro Marine Air Station Officers Club on February 27, well attended by 250 persons. The Arrangements Committee was composed of J. Fred Thomas (392nd BG), Chairman; Richard Boucher (445th); Harry Orthman (492nd); Charles Walker (445th); and Charles McBride (448th).

The 9th Annual Southwest Regional Reunion Dinner was held at the Marriott Park Central Hotel in Dallas on March 27, with attendance reported at 187. John Sanders (HQ) served as chairman of the committee, composed of Geoff Gregory (467th BG); Gerry Merket (466th); David Nathanson (HQ); Paul Surbaugh (489th); and Jordan Uttal (HQ).

The 10th Annual Midwest Regional Reunion was held at Holiday Inn East, Springfield, Illinois, May 26-27. This is a two night, three day reunion which began in 1984 as a one evening reunion dinner. Chairman of this year's Arrangements Committee was Willis (Bill) Kirkton (467th BG). Up to 300 attend this reunion.

Regional reunions could become a way of life for many of our members. No great distance is involved in traveling to the reunion site. The drain on stamina and purse is less with the shorter stay. Yet the fellowship is there to be enjoyed by all who attend.

The more successful reunions are those scheduled to be held at a date and place which does not crowd the date set for the 2nd ADA annual reunion. Regional reunions may be organized by three or four members or more who pick a date and place, and establish one fixed price to cover the cost of the dinner and meeting rooms, program, mailings and incidentals. If you live in an area not now covered in a regional reunion, give some thought to organizing one. You and others will probably enjoy it.

The Heritage League

by Billy Sheely Johnson, Heritage League President

Greetings from the Heritage League Executive Committee! We are very appreciative of the positive response received from numerous members of the Second Air Division Association upon receipt of Issue #10 of the *Heritage Herald*, published in January 1993 by our new Vice President of Communications, Mary Beth Barnard. Congratulations are indeed in order for a job very well done! As we have said before, it is for you and your fallen comrades that the League exists; therefore, your words of encouragement provide the fuel for our continued pursuit of recognition and respect for your contributions to the quality of our lives.

Early in 1993, an extensive public relations campaign was launched in an effort to make the general public more aware of the League's existence. More interest has been generated and membership is beginning to increase. The previously mentioned promotional brochures will be placed in museums this summer.

Guidelines for the essay contest were outlined and published in the January 1993 issue of the *Heritage Herald*. The contest is underway...for those of you who don't receive the *Heritage Herald*, please request from me a copy of the essay guidelines so that your relative can participate. Encourage participation; both medals and savings bonds will be awarded for winners from each age group.

Our hopes for establishing a tribute to you within the 8th Air Force Heritage Center still seems to be on hold, because the center's becoming a reality continues to be in question. We'll keep you posted when we know which direction this effort is definitely going to take. We look forward to meeting with 2ADA members in November at Hilton Head. Best regards from your Heritage League.

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As You Read Your Journal

Your Group Report.....
The page to which most of us automatically turn. Our Group VPs do a great job.

Preserving the Images and Memories of the 2nd Air Division.....4
The Military VideoHistory Project, a series of videotapes compiled by the Dzenowagis family, preserves the memory and history of the Second Air Division through personal interviews and archival footage.

Regional Reunions Galore! ... 5, 11, 22
Recaps of recent area 2ADA reunions in Texas, Southern California, and Florida will have you vowing not to miss the next one.

Reflections of Willow Run.....23
Henry Ford's Willow Run completed more B-24s than any other aircraft manufacturing plant during WWII, turning out one plane every hour at the height of production.

Prelude to a Mission.....27
John Archer reminds us all that, often times, the anticipation, waiting, and preparation for the next mission were the most difficult and stressful times for many airmen.

Enjoy your Journal. It's good reading!

Cover Design Concept: Hazel V. Robertie, AM, 44th BG. Consultant: Jordan R. Uttal, Honorary President, 2ADA.

Vice President's Message

by Floyd H. Mabee



I would like to extend my congratulations to the 392nd Bomb Group and to Col. Lawrence G. Gilbert, Ret. for the outstanding planning and publicity for the February 7, 1993 Florida Reunion, with an attendance of around 300. All of the workers also did an outstanding job. They prepared all of the hors d'oeuvres and snacks, and kept all the trays and plates refilled in the Hospitality Room. This was all topped off with the excellent dinner and program. The 93rd topped the 392nd BG in attendance by a couple. A regional reunion in this area has been needed for a long time. The 93rd, for example, has a

Florida resident membership that is topped only by California.

I was very sorry that I had to decline J. Fred Thomas' invitation to attend the Southern California Reunion Dinner at El Toro that was held February 27th. I sure wish that I could go to all of these mini-reunions, as I know that I'm expected to attend. I'm sorry, but I just can't make them all. I had already accepted the invitation of W.H. Kirkton to attend the Midwest Area 2ADA Reunion at Springfield, IL, May 26 & 27; and then rush back to New Jersey to get ready to attend the 2ADA Executive Committee Meeting in Norwich, England to be held June 11th through the 18th.

Dot and I will have moved back to our New Jersey address by the time you read this. I'm sure not looking forward to all of the work involved after leaving our home vacant for six months!

Due to the Second Air Division Association being a "last man" organization, it won't be too many more years that we will still be active and able to hold our yearly reunions. In the future, it is recommended that our associate members consider the option of joining our auxiliary of the 2ADA, the Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division (USAAF). This is just something for our associate members to consider and think about. There will be more on this subject in future issues of the JOURNAL.

* * * * *

Floyd's travel plans have been altered by another heart attack. We're hopeful for a quick recovery, Floyd. — Editor

Preserving the Images and Memories of the 2nd Air Division: The Military VideoHistory Project

Submitted by Jordan Uttal, Honorary President, 2ADA

In 1985, Joe Dzenowagis, former 467th BG navigator, attended his first 2ADA Convention in Macafee, NJ where he reunited with members of his old Group, met their families, and heard stories about their war experiences. At the following convention, in St. Charles, Illinois, Joe arrived with his wife Helen, son Joe, and daughter Joan; and with the endorsement of the Executive Committee, they brought a broadcast quality camera, ready to capture those stories and other material to preserve for history the images and memories of the 2AD.

Since 1986, the Dzenowagis family, through its Military VideoHistory project, has conducted over 300 interviews at 2ADA Conventions at St. Charles, Norwich 1987, Colorado Springs 1988, Hilton Head 1989, Norwich 1990 and Dearborn 1991; as well as area reunions in Shreveport, LA; Fort Worth, TX; and Bad Hersfeld, Germany. Interviews have included both air crew and ground personnel from almost every Bombardment Group, family members and citizens of England and Germany.

Interviews are made available to families for family histories. Excerpts of interviews and archival footage are used to create documentaries. Several of the 13 documentaries produced have been shown on public television over the last few years. Copies of all interviews and all documentaries are donated by the Dzenowagis family to the 2AD Memorial Room. Proceeds from the sale of these videos help support the continuation of the project, with proceeds over cost to be donated to the Memorial Room.

There are a number of videos still in various stages of production. Release dates will be announced in future editions of the JOURNAL. Meanwhile, last October at Las Vegas, the Executive Committee suggested that the videos available be publicized in a future edition of the JOURNAL, and we are pleased to describe them for you as follows.

This is your chance to preserve for your families the essence and flavor of your contribution to the successful American prosecution of the War to Preserve Democracy 1942-1945. To order any of tapes listed on this page, please send a check for tape cost plus \$2.50 postage to: **Joseph G. Dzenowagis, 4397 S. Okemos Road, Okemos, MI 48864.** All tapes are VHS.

IMAGES OF THE 2ND AIR DIVISION

Taken from seven existing documentaries and three documentaries in production, a collage of images and memories of 2nd Air Division veterans reaffirm the principles and values that make our country great.

50 minutes \$49.50

FACES OF THE 2ND AIR DIVISION

A varied and interesting portrayal of airmen and ground personnel where the close-up reality of war and its lasting effects can be seen on their faces as they tell their stories. Nominated for an Emmy Award.

55 minutes \$39.50

EIGHT CANDLES FOR REMEMBRANCE

The 2nd Air Division return in 1987 to English friends and bitter-sweet memories at air bases in East Anglia, including the re-dedication of purpose at the American Cemetery at Madingley to comrades-in-arms who fought and fell. Exceptional coverage of an exceptional reunion.

60 minutes and 13 minute postscript \$49.50

MEMORIES OF WAR

Where the bomb runs are taken and the battles fought yet once again for all to see and try to imagine.

30 minutes \$19.50

AMERICAN PATRIOT SERIES

High interest interviews that perpetuate the unchanging qualities of the American patriot who serves his country with honor and distinction. Thus far the Series includes:

THE STORY OF THE MEMORIAL ROOM AS TOLD BY JORDAN R. UTTAL

An absorbing account of the development and future of the Memorial Room by an articulate leader and founding father of the 2nd Air Division Association.

35 minutes \$19.50

RAMSAY D. POTTS, MAJ. GEN. RET.

Air combat leader, bomb group commander, military strategist, veteran of many air battles and campaigns and a highly decorated airman, recalls his involvement in the events of the war.

1 hour 53 minutes \$49.50

JOHN A. BROOKS, BRIG. GEN. RET.

Completed nearly three combat tours in Europe and Africa, flying both heavy bombers and fighters. Developed and commanded the 2AD special Scouting Force of P-51s that helped save the lives of many combat airmen.

72 minutes \$49.50

KETTERINGHAM HALL, HEADQUARTERS, 2ND AIR DIVISION, NORFOLK, ENGLAND, WWII

Yesterday and today. Once the proud home of landed English gentry. Once the nerve center for the 14 Bomber and 5 Fighter Groups of the 2AD. Today the home base of Team Lotus, Ltd., the world-famous car-racing group. In 1990, four former Headquarters staff recall the hectic war years there and Team Lotus offers a brief look at the Hall today.

49 minutes \$49.50

WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS

The equal rights and career opportunities that women in the armed forces enjoy today can be credited in large part to the efforts of the women who served overseas in the 2AD.

30 minutes \$49.50

LIBRARIANS OF THE 2ND AD MEMORIAL ROOM

Colin Sleath, Phyllis DuBois and Tony North reflect on the strengths and value of the 2AD Memorial Room, the living legacy of the 2ADA to their comrades who never returned.

35 minutes \$39.50

THE 467TH BG FAMILY REUNION ALBUM

The special relationship that develops among men who face danger together continues today as they enjoy being together again at a weekend of family fun in Louisiana.

1 hour 20 minutes \$49.50

GERMAN PILOTS

Three Luftwaffe pilots explain the tactics of the surprise attack on the 445th on the Kassel Mission of Sept. 27, 1944 that ended in the loss of 30 out of 35 Liberators. With English translation.

76 minutes \$49.50

AN INTERVIEW WITH WALTER HASSENPFUG, GERMAN HISTORIAN AND CITIZEN

As a 12-year-old boy, Walter Hassenpflug of Bad Hersfeld, Germany was a witness to the 445th BG tragedy on the Kassel Mission of Sept. 27, 1944 and a youthful captor of one of the enemy. He gives a vivid account of what the war was like for him and the people of Bad Hersfeld.

48 minutes \$49.50

The 9th Annual 2ADA Southwest Area Dinner Reunion

by John Sanders (HQ), Dinner Chairman



John Sanders
welcomes the attendees



Jordan Uttal
conducts Candle Lighting



Geoff Gregory (467th)
M.C.



Moose Allen (453rd)
holding forth.



Ray Krottinger,
pilot of Diamond Lil

Our 2ADA President, John Conrad, has encouraged me to report on our very successful Southwest Area Dinner Reunion, held 27 March 1993 in Dallas at the Marriott Hotel, LBJ Freeway near Coit Road.

This year's event was the largest in our history with 182 people present. The attendees came from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. We had representation from all 14 Bombardment Groups, 56th Fighter Group, and 2AD Headquarters. Two current Group VPs, Ralph Elliott (467th) from Arizona, and Bill Beasley (492nd) from Colorado, attended with their wives. Norma Beasley, incidentally, is the 2ADA Director of Correspondence Services. It was great to see them all.

The program was as follows: Opening of the Hospitality Room at noon (complete with memorabilia, soft drinks and snacks, it was filled with eager visitors most of the

afternoon)... Opening of Cash Bar at 4:30 (also well patronized)... Opening of Dining Room at 6:00 PM... Welcome by Chairman (John Sanders)... Eight Candles for Remembrance Candle Lighting (Jordan Uttal)... Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation (Dave Nathanson)... Excellent dinner with choice of three entrees... Post-dinner Chairman's introduction of the M.C. for the evening (Geoff Gregory)... Remarks and quips by Moose Allen.

We were delighted to have with us three members of the Confederate Air Force Diamond Lil crew who flew to Norwich last year: Ray Krottinger, pilot; his wife Starr, observer; and Dave Kjell, senior engineer and his wife who did not make the flight. We heard from Ray and Dave. They emphasized the great reception they and the plane had from the British, and were most impressed by our 2AD Memorial.

On behalf of John Conrad and the Association, Jordan Uttal presented our gift of appreciation to the CAF, a check in the amount of \$1,000.00 which was received with stunned surprise and great gratitude. Following the dinner, a special videotape made by David Hastings, member of the Board of Governors and active crew member on the flight, was presented to the audience. "The Flight of the Diamond Lil" was well received, and the tape is being sent to Pete Henry for inclusion in the 2ADA Video Film Rental Library.

The attendees' reaction to the whole program was so favorable that we are arranging for the 1994 Southwest Dinner to be held again at the Marriott in Dallas... date to be announced later. Y'all come, ya heah???



Lighting of 8th Candle: Joe Sonnenreich (467th), O.D. Johnson (458th), and Tommy Thompson (466th)



Presentation of check to Dave Kjell, Starr Krottinger and Ray Krottinger

Happy Warrior Happenings

by Willis H. "Bill" Beasley



HAPPY WARRIOR SUBSCRIPTION

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who responded to my article in the last issue of the Happy Warrior regarding contributions to the newsletter. For those members who wish to receive the Happy Warrior but may have a financial problem, please drop me a note.

The articles and pictures you have sent to me are tremendous. Bear with me, and I will get them all in the Happy Warrior.

TRAIPSINGS AND TRAVEL

Sorry we couldn't make the Florida reunion dinner; however, John Fabrizio wrote to me and sent some pictures. Jake and Helen Mink, John and Pia Fabrizio, John and Joan Patterson, Charles and Kay Messmer of the 492nd BG, all members of the Don Miller crew, got together for a great time.



El Toro

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REUNION DINNER

Bill & Norma Beasley, Bill & Maxine Clarey, Gene & Renie Gossett, Carl & Verla Johnson, Robert & Pat Mattson, Harry & Sally Orthman, (Guests) Bennie & Keith Boillot, George Procnari, Bill & Kitty Riggle, (Guests) Pat & Gary Turnbeau, Willie & Molly Sparks, John & Joanna Tracey, and Tom & Mary Anne Nelson were in attendance at El Toro on February 27. We met Pat and Bob Mattson in San Diego on Thursday and went sightseeing. On Saturday we drove to El Toro, where we met the Clareys. The banquet at the El Toro Marine Base, sadly, may be the last one at the location if this base is closed as scheduled. We have been fortunate to have been able to attend four times.

Bennie Boillot, the guest of the Orthmans, was honored for her service to the Association in setting up the dinners. She was retiring after 25 years.

SOUTHWEST REUNION DINNER

Norma and I attended the reunion dinner in Dallas on March 27. We had a great time. Jim McCrory, Jim McCrory Jr., Joyce Rorak, and Norma and I represented the 492nd BG. I was honored to be asked to participate in the candle-lighting ceremony. After dinner we watched the video of the Return to England of the "Diamond Lil." We extended our trip two days and were able to have lunch and visit with Jordan Uttal. I was sorry that the 492nd BG members who live in Dallas didn't make it.

I had looked forward to meeting some of you. Bob and Dorothy Cash called to say they wished they could be there, but they got a special deal on a cruise through the Panama Canal. How lucky can you get!

MEMORIAL SERVICE AT CAMBRIDGE AMERICAN CEMETERY MAY 17

Keith Thomas was contacted to purchase and lay a wreath in memory of the 492nd Bomb Group on this date.

GROUND PERSONNEL AND GROUP HEADQUARTERS

Just Found — J.H. Raifsnnyder (referred to me by Frank DiMola) and John J. Chambers, former 857th BS members who were transferred to the 490th Bomb Group, 850th BS.

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION BOOK PROJECT

Details for this project can be found in the Spring 1993 issue of the JOURNAL (page 31) and in the March/April issue of the Happy Warrior. I urge all 492nd members to participate. You are not obligated to purchase the book, and what a way to document what you did during World War II and up to now.

492ND BG P.X.

Barney Edwards tells me he has been selling lots of caps. They are \$8.50, red with black lettering. Order from Barney, P.O. Box 576, Loris, SC 25969.

If you want a 492nd Blazer Badge (\$20.00), gold wire on blue felt background, order from Col. H. Harding Isaacson, 7 East 85th St., Apt. 5C, New York, NY 10028.

If you want a Tail Fin Badge (\$2.00), Happy Warrior Patch (\$6.50), or Happy Warrior Pin (\$4.00), order from Bill Beasley, 1525 South Garfield Street, Denver, CO 80210-3022.

WWII BOMBERS

The B-17 is commemorated in numerous ways and touted by the media and authors as the only bomber that did anything in WWII.

There were 18,188 B-24s built. There were 11,000 B-25s built. There were 7,385 A-20s and 2,446 Douglas B-26s or 9,831 Douglas bombers of similar design built. There were 8,685 B-17s built. There were 5,157 Martin B-26s and 3,970 B-29s.

Almost as many B-24s were lost to accident, weather and combat as there were B-17s made. The percentage of B-17s lost was comparable to B-24s lost.

All USAAF aircraft in WWII played their role. (Rand McNally Encyclopedia of Military Aircraft 1914-1980 by Enzo Angelucci — Military Press, NY 1983 was the source of numbers and information.)

The Liberator "Diamond Lil" Story Goes On and On...

by David J. Hastings
Vice Chairman, The Memorial Trust
of the 2nd Air Division USAAF

The 50th Anniversary Year of the American Air Force's arrival in England may be over, but the emotion aroused by the return of the B-24A/LB-30 Liberator "Diamond Lil" of the Confederate Air Force still continues; and I thought you would like to know some more details, as the whole project really sums up the deep affection that all of us hold for you.

As many of you know, we made a wide screen audio/visual show of the trans-Atlantic flight and the project, including your Memorial Room in Norwich and the Trust. This was premiered last September at the Norwich Sport Village and we hired the 400-seat Central Arena. The showing was a complete sell-out, and we had to repeat it for two more nights at the Village before the demand eased. Each night the audience ended up in tears — such was the feeling this flight had generated. The bookings then started to pour in from all parts of Norfolk, and I have averaged two nights a week since then, with bookings now being made for 1994!

One week in December I showed the film five nights running, and even I began to wilt by the time Saturday arrived. Just a few examples for you: Bungay Community Hall was packed out with people turned away, Seething was standing room only at the Village Hall, Salhouse Village Hall packed out, Tibenham Norfolk Gliding Club room full to capacity, Shipdham hotel lounge packed with standing room only, Norwich airport lounge filled to capacity, Rackheath church hall full, and so it goes on. We go to Clubs, Aviation Groups, Old People's Clubs, W.I. Rotary, Round Table and Local Societies, and I have never seen a film command so much interest. We have also just made a video of the project, and this has sold out in just four weeks.

This all goes to show that after fifty years, the feeling for you all is just as great as it ever was. The other good news is that at each showing we do ask for a donation to your unique Memorial Room here in Norwich, for the Capital Fund which is the one that actually runs your Memorial. I am glad to report that so far we have now raised over 1500 pounds, and by the time we reach the end of the year I will not be surprised if we have reached the 3000 mark. The other added bonus is the increased awareness of your Memorial which the film generated, and we can never thank the Confederate Air Force and the "Diamond Lil" crew enough for answering the plea of the Memorial Trust when the "All American cancelled out. They certainly made the TRIBUTE TO YOU complete in the 50th Anniversary Year.



Open Letter To the 93rd

by Paul Steichen

PLOESTI REMEMBERED BY THE 93RD

I received this letter recently from Veleria L. Chambers of Dayton, Ohio: "With the 50th Anniversary of Tidal Wave, have you received any word that there will be a central main reunion involving the other B-24 groups, 389th, 44th, 376th, and 98th, that the public (me, for instance) could discreetly observe — meaning in *no way or means* to interfere or disturb any activities, ceremonies or meetings? Just to say that I possibly stood five feet away from the shadow of Col. John (Killer) Kane and Col. Leon Johnson (Wow!!). And possibly purchase any photos, books or other Ploesti, August 1, 1943 mission items that might be for sale. Anything you can share on the above matters would be deeply appreciated. Thank you very much, and God Bless."

Our answer to Veleria is that she would be cordially welcome to attend the festivities at the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio on Sunday, August 1 at 11:00 a.m.; and we thank her for the recognition of all the brave men involved. **Bill Doerner** is chairman of the 93rd delegation to the Dayton program, and can be contacted at 620 W. Highland Road, Sagamore Hills, Ohio 44067, phone (216) 467-5461. Bill had one of the "best seats in the house" at Ploesti. He was tail gunner on "Ready and Willing."

Listed below are the names of the other 93rd veterans of Ploesti who are members of the 2ADA. If anyone has been left out, please forgive me and let me know so that I can correct my mistake in the next JOURNAL.

93rd Veterans of Ploesti: John R. Roche, Hal E. Bilyeu, Ralph L. Carroll, Frank V. Durante, Walter T. Stewart, Ramsay D. Potts, Louis Smith, John H. Sherman, Milton Teltser, Richard L. Wilkinson, Edwin C. Baker, Granville E. Meseke, Charles T. Merrill, Edward Regan, Miles R. League, E.W. Dawley, Andrew J. Miller, Raymond A. Wolf, Thomas G. Gilbert, William G. Anderson, Woodroe H. Stokes, Guy P. Chaney, Ray Russell, Russell D. Demont, George G. Everhart, Floyd H. Mabee, Adam J. Hastak, Leigh A. Claflin, Roy G. Martin, Dr. Luther S. Bird, James W. Reid, George H. Kelly, L.L. Brown, Homer L. Moran, Charles A. Hoffman, William L. Culin, Edward E. Weir, Alva J. Geron, John B. Weiss, Howard R. Hinchman, Charles A. Reed.

BITS AND PIECES OF PROP-WASH:

Our member Fred Strombom and his wife Inez have faithfully continued to provide us with a first-class membership roster, with sections listed by state and also alphabetically with name and address. It is in booklet form and updated frequently. Price is \$5. Their address is: Box 646, Ogema, WI 54459. If you have one of these booklets you can check out which of your buddies are members and which are not. If you have

addresses of any who are not shown as members, I would appreciate your letting me know about them so that I can contact them, or better still, I would appreciate your getting in touch with them. With the advent (hopefully in July) of our new NEWSLETTER, their membership will be even more valuable. . . **Squadron Emblem Patches Again Available:** Due to the many requests, we now have what we hope is a bountiful supply for the 409th, 328th, 329th, and 330th Squadrons. The price is \$4.75 each, postage prepaid. Also we have **93rd Cap Front Patches** at \$3.75 each. Please send your check to me at 2227A Ruhland Avenue, Redondo Beach, CA 90278. **Lapel Button:** A very attractive lapel button has been furnished me by Ed Wagner, 409th, who completed his missions July 1944 with Charles Forth's crew. It is white with blue lettering imprinted: "Second Air Division, Squadron Number _____, 93rd Bomb Group, Hardwick." Price is \$1.25 per button and can be purchased by sending your request to Ed at 711 North 3, Arkansas City, KS 67005. Please supply squadron number with your order. . . **93rd Member Sought:** We have a request from a lady in Long Stratton, near the Hardwick base. She is seeking to contact a 93rd member with only the information that he was known by the nickname of "Casky" and may have the Christian name Carl. If you have any idea as to whom this might be, or if you are Casky, please contact me or advise him that he may contact Madge H. Paul, 43, Norwich Road, Long Stratton, Norwich, Norfolk NR15 2PX 4. 2.93, England. Telephone: Long Stratton 31602.



Jean and David Woodrow, owners of 93rd land and buildings, with their granddaughter Hannah. Base C.O.'s remodeled wartime home in background.

WE WON THE BIG PRIZE AT THE FLORIDA REGIONAL REUNION:

Registration figures showed that our group had the highest number of members present. This was the first time in the history of 2ADA regional meetings that this honor has been bestowed upon us. In addition, our members won three of the four door prizes: Sophie Johnson \$50, Cal Davidson \$20, and Betty Wilson \$20. We had 57 registered; the host group (392nd, whose Lawrence Gilbert

chaired the meeting in a very capable manner) had 47 present, followed by the 389th who counted 34. Space does not permit listing all names here, but we had members present from Ohio, Michigan, California, New York, New Jersey, Nebraska, Georgia, and of course Florida.

The morning following the February 7 affair, we had our own meeting which was very well attended. Spirited discussions took place on six subjects of prime interest: the dump site controversy at Hardwick; promotion efforts on Cal Stewart's new book, *Ted's Travelling Circus*; the 2nd Air Division Memorial Room in Norwich; our part in the Dayton 50th anniversary of Ploesti raid; does the 93rd need a NEWSLETTER; and what we can do to help development of David Woodrow's museum at Hardwick base.

David & Jean Woodrow had planned to attend the Orlando meeting as part of their trip to the States. They sent the following letter to me with regrets that they had to cancel their long-awaited trip: "Congratulations on your becoming President, 93rd Bomb Group. I'm sure you will do a very good job, as did your predecessor. We were looking forward to meeting you all, as we were coming for a two-week holiday, but lo and behold the public inquiry that we have gained against the proposed refuse tip on the airfield started this week, and my time appearing on it will be on February 8, 9 when I shall be speaking on the historical position of the site and therefore defending the veterans' views. So at this particular time, thought my duty remained here. I have many supporting letters from you all which will be helpful. Many local residents will be fighting the proposal on many different issues, so let's hope we win through. The end report goes back to London, so the result will not be known for some time. Remember us to all the 93rd boys at the convention. . . Kind regards to you all. . . David & Jean."

NEW MEMBERS:

Alford S. Clark, Harry M. Gloss Jr., W.G. Row, Charles J. Carroll, David F. Devol, Jerome M. Stedman, Hearol R. Veteto, George N. Alexander, Richard H. Belter, Robert O. Bochek, Michael L. Morgan, LTC John A. Marx, Russell L. Morgan, George A. Gross, George D. Baker.

NEWSLETTER STATUS UPDATE:

It won't be long now! I hope to have the first issue of the 93rd's new newsletter to all the members in July. Don't know the name yet and will welcome suggestions. Considered so far: *Hardwick Herald*; *Ball of Fire Quarterly Express*; *Thar She Blows Breeze*; *Topcroft Swan Sentinel*. There has been 100% support from the members who have been contacted. It is not an inexpensive undertaking. Costs of mailings, set-up and printing are substantial. The plan is to depend on voluntary contributions, which has worked out well with other groups who already have newsletters of their own. Volunteers are needed who have backgrounds and expertise in writing, and certainly we must depend on all of you to send in stories, pictures, etc. I will appreciate any and all advice and suggestions.

Yanks in Britain

by Cpl. Edmund Antrobus

Reprinted from YANK, The Army Weekly
April 13, 1945

ENGLAND — On January 16, 1st Lt. Albert J. Novik of Tarrytown, N.Y., dived from the flight deck of his fuel-less Liberator headfirst through the bomb bay and saved his life. His leap gave him enough speed to clear the plane while it was still gliding.

On February 16, a month later to the day, he had to bail out again and tried to maneuver a second time. But the plane nose-dived before he could make it, throwing him up against a ceiling, where he stuck, looking down at a fire sweeping through the fuselage and thinking that at any moment he would be dead.

This was the climax of four and a half bad hours for Lt. Novik. He had been flying with a squadron in the 392nd Bomb Group when, a few seconds after dropping his bombs, another Liberator in a higher formation had moved in on top to obtain a more compact bomb pattern. It came too close and dropped six bombs through Novik's left rudder.

Minus a huge chunk of its tail assembly, Novik's Liberator dropped 500 feet, becoming so nose-heavy that it took all of Novik's strength at the wheel to keep it from diving.

Novik, however, decided to continue over the target so that he could stay in formation as protection against enemy fighters. In this way he managed to struggle back to England, but was unable to land because clouds had closed in over the home base and emergency landing fields. Together with the rest of his group, Novik was ordered to go back and land in France. Realizing that his ship would never make it, he decided to land in England if he could.

It was getting harder and harder to hold the ship in the air. Novik was under a tremendous strain, and the back of his neck was ridged like a weight-lifter's. "It was a good thing," says the navigator, F/O Wade Hampton, of Toronto, Ont., "that we had a strong, as well as a good, pilot."

For two hours they looked for a suitable field but all were fogged in, and at last they decided to head towards The Wash and bail out.

It was a painful decision. The ship had flown 70 missions without an abort. Everyone knew it was in fine mechanical condition; the fact that it could fly without a left rudder was proof of that. Someone recalled that the crew chief, S/Sgt. Eugene S. Goldsby of Los Angeles, was up for an award for the way he'd taken care of his ship.

The gunners bailed out first, then the navigator, radio operator and engineer.

After that Novik climbed out of his seat while the co-pilot, 1st Lt. Jack H. Graves of Birmingham, Ala., hung on the controls. Then, standing, Novik took over, holding the plane steady while Graves jumped. The elevator trim tabs, which normally keep the



(Above) The crippled Liberator which Lt. Albert J. Novik of Tarrytown, N.Y. (right) kept aloft four and a half hours while fog obscured landing fields.

plane in level flight, were not working, and the automatic pilot could not be used because the slight shake it would cause when it went into control would probably be enough to crash the plane. Novik found that even a 10 degree turn made the ship shudder as if its tail were breaking.

When the co-pilot hit the silk, Novik gave him 30 seconds to clear the ship and then prepared to jump from the flight deck through the bomb bay, as he had done a month previously. But the second he let go of the wheel, the plane dived like a Thunderbolt. Novik was thrown against the ceiling and pinned there while the plane dived 7,000 feet.

"My first impulse," Novik said, "was to try and beat my way out through the fuselage. I thumped with the sides of my fists, but the air pressure was so strong it was an effort even to move my arms. It was the sensation you have in a dream when you are running from something and your feet get bogged down in quicksand."

Dying did not occur to him — just then. "And yet," he says, "just about this time a guy gets very religious. You start praying to something super-human because you know nothing human can help you."

It was fire that made Novik give up hope. Spread-eagled against the ceiling, he saw flames sucked in from a burning engine, spread through the fuselage, and fan up towards him as if he were on a spit, being grilled alive. At that moment he lost his fear because he no longer thought he was going to live. He smelt his hair being singed. He felt, as he now put it, "eccentric and carefree." He was not delirious or suffering pain.

Then, suddenly, he was dropped from the ceiling as a wing, or something, came off, changing the direction of the plane. He began to claw his way through the fire up to the bomb bay. He says he didn't feel that he was escaping from death, but from death in a particularly violent form.

Somehow he dragged himself to the bomb bay and fell through, and just as he cleared the bomber it exploded over his



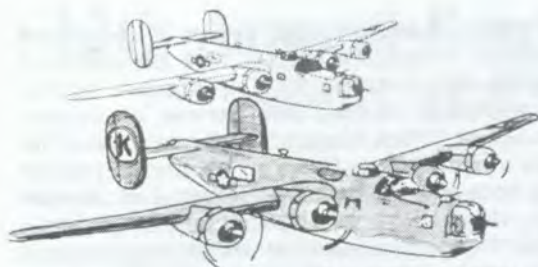
head. He pulled his rip cord but only two feet of chute came out. He pulled again, this time with both hands, and the chute opened. He was now about 700 feet from the ground.

Looking up, Novik saw burning pieces of the plane floating down like enormous flaming leaves. He put a hand to one eye and when he took it away it was covered with blood. He thought he had lost the eye, but that did not seem important. All around him burning debris was falling, great chunks of it catching up with him and passing within a few feet of his parachute.

But, looking down, Novik saw that the real danger was on the ground, for parts of the burning plane had landed on the spot he was headed for. Only by luck he landed in a tree, which saved him from being roasted in the wreckage of the plane.

Men have been hurt more turning over in bed than Novik was during his seemingly interminable brush with death. His face had been burned and his hair singed, and it was the hand he put to his eye, and not the eye itself, that had been cut. As a matter of fact, his fingers hurt more than anything else; they were numb for three days after from straining on the wheel during the four and a half hours he had struggled to keep his plane in the air.

All in all, it had been a happier landing than the one Novik had made a month before. On that occasion two of his men had jumped through the nose wheel hatch, hit something, and been killed. This time they all landed safely and were in good condition to stand by when the colonel presented Novik with the DFC.

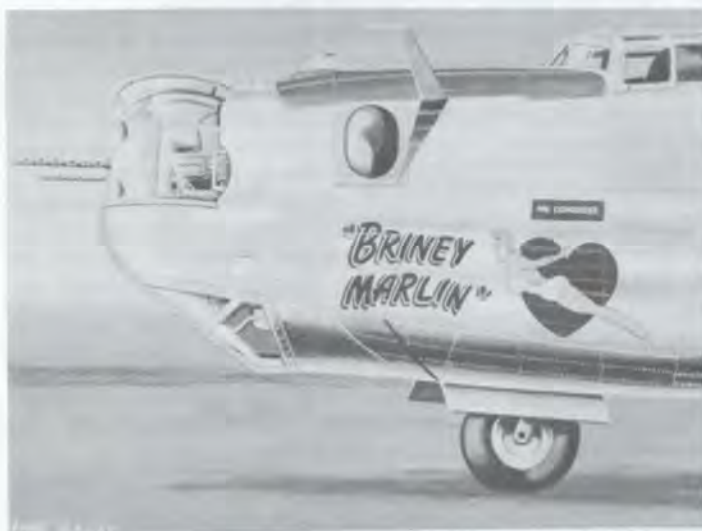


458th Bomb Group

by Rick Rokicki

HILTON HEAD ISLAND: The 2ADA 46th Annual Convention at Hilton Head Island will be held November 4-6. Hope that those who intend to go have already sent in their \$50.00 per person deposit. Our last reunion there was a complete sell-out, so don't delay. I've been involved in plans for our Group to go on a river-boat ride on our "free day" on November 5th. Boat leaves Shelter Cove Marina at 0945 and includes a lunch stop at Cafe Europa in Harbor Town Lighthouse. Cost is \$42.00 per person, which is quite reasonable when you compare it to any Mississippi River boat cost. Boat returns at 1515 and you'll have enough time to get ready for the Cocktail Party and Group Mini-Reunion Dinner. If you're interested, look for more information from Evelyn Cohen. When we talked last, she would have more specifics and how to reserve space. I think it's a great idea, and I'm sure many from the other Groups will also be on board.

INSIGNIA: Still have a few 458th blazer insignia left at this writing. If you desire one, let me know. Cost is \$10.00, but do not send any money. I will bill you with the mailing. If there is further demand, I may have to order another limited supply. Just two of the 752nd Squadron patches remain; all others are sold out (\$9.50). Recently received a new supply of 8th AF shoulder patches for those of you who have purchased the new A-2 jackets. Cost is \$4.00 each.



458th Bomb Group's "Briney Marlin." Painting by Mike Bailey.

Check the nose art painting by Mike Bailey. Actual painting size is 10 x 12 inches when matted and framed by your local frame shop. If you have a favorite nose art you'd like to have done, why not drop Mike Bailey a note regarding your particular choice and check costs. Here's Mike Bailey's address: **91 Waterworks Road, Norwich NR2 4DB, England.** Also, received additional order forms for the 27 x 40 inch poster which I ran out of as mentioned in previous JOURNAL. The poster mailing address has changed and I will send you one upon request. Cost remains at \$15.50 and includes surface mailing. The poster shows all 14 Bomb Groups in their WWII colors.

MEMBERSHIP: We're just barely holding our own; still over 750, but not making much headway. Again, I solicit your help by requesting you to send me any names you might have that may be potential members. Col. "Pappy" Dwyer just sent me three names

that I didn't have and I sent my "recruiting kit" out to them. We added three new members: **George Parks GA, Richard Sharp AL,** and **Maurice Bittler CO.** I received Dick Sharp's name and address from our dear friend **Tony North** of Norwich. Have been notified of two of our members who have made their "last flight," **Ted Urbano** and **Julian Friedman.** Ted was the one who designed the 752nd Squadron insignia which shows an eagle carrying a 500 pounder in its talons. Have sent Group condolences to their families.

ELUSIVE 458th REUNION: Neither **Duke Trivette** nor I have received any great demand to have another Group Reunion at or near Wright-Patterson Air Museum. Just about a dozen of you have written, and I will say that their general feeling was very enthusiastic about holding one in 1994. Perhaps if we get more support, we will set it up. In any case, I will send you all a personal mailing when the decision is made. Let's face it, I just had another birthday a few days ago; I know that there are limits as to how long it can be if we are to have "one last Group reunion." Both Duke and I serve at your pleasure in this, so don't hesitate to offer any suggestions, help or otherwise. Again, **Duke Trivette's** address is: **1791 Utica Drive, Dayton, OH 45439.** Mine appears on page 2 under the masthead.

None of the Group Vice Presidents have received their "drop lists" as of this date. Evelyn has decided to allow one more JOURNAL to be sent before she sends me all names of those who have not renewed their membership. At that time, I personally send that member a letter, and in many cases, it's then we find that one or more have passed on. However if you are the one who has not sent in your 1993 dues, this is the last copy of the JOURNAL you will receive.

TURNER'S 2AD "BOOK IN PROGRESS": You've all seen the ad in the last JOURNAL regarding the Turner Publishing Co. and the book they are publishing for our members. Please send them a "bio" on yourself of 150 words or so and it will be used along with the two photos you'd like to see in print. No obligation, you don't have to buy the book, but I'll bet you'll be sorry if you don't. I've seen several books they've done, and they were all well researched and certainly worth the cost. If you are a recent new member (possibly in the last six months or so), you may not have been on Turner's mailing list. If you have not received word from them and want an order form with a sheet for your biography, write to me and I will send one your way.



New Plaque Available

(continued on page 10)

458th Bomb Group (continued from page 9)

NEW PLAQUE AVAILABLE: (Please see photo on page 9):

A short time ago, I had an option to buy some 9 x 12 walnut finished plaques that have a routed 5 x 7 inch section with a flush plexiglass cover. The plaque photo shown has a 16 plane formation of B-24s of the 458th Bomb Group. Photo is in black and white and could be any group of the 2AD. The engraved plate is satin brass (or if you prefer, black enamel with silver engraving). Comes with airman's wings of your choice, or an 8th AF cloisonne or 2½ inch pewter B-24 in "near profile," for ground crew. Plate size is 3½ x 7 inches and would include name, rank, duty, Group, Squadron or attached unit, dates in E.T.O.; and flight crews should show number of missions, if shot down, where and when, etc. Here's the best part: cost is only \$39.50 plus \$4.50 for shipping and handling. My personal guarantee you will like it, or your money back, no questions! All profits go to the Memorial Library Funding and will be sent to Jordan Uttal.

I have only a limited supply of 50 of these units; doubt if there will be more after these are gone. Should you desire to have any service ribbons, the cost will be extra. Please let me hear from you as soon as possible and I will have to abide by "first come, first served." If you have a favorite 5 x 7 photo you'd rather use than the flight formation, send it along and I'll use it instead, no extra charge. Now, if you don't have any WWII memento to leave to your children or grandchildren, this would make a perfect gift. Again, only 50 units remain at this price.

Thanks, Guys

Submitted by Dave Patterson (445th)

All of us who were B-24 air crew members respected and admired the guys back at the bases who kept us alive and flying, the ground people of all types. I know this feeling permeated every flight crew (especially when the missions got "hot"!)

The poem below, although about a fighter group's ground crew and crew chief, tells it like we all felt about our B-24 non-flying people. It is from the 20th Fighter Group Association's Journal, *King's Cliffe Remembered*.

CREW CHIEF MAC

by Ken Lashbrook

You may laud your medals bright when you're in the bar at night
and the curvy waitress brings them cold with foam,
But when you're combat flying and the ship is truly trying,
it's the ground crewmen that really bring you home.
In England's foggy clime, where I used to spend my time
serving with Pursuit attached to SAC,
Of all the fighting crew, the finest man I knew
was our good old, grinning, grunting, crew chief Mac.
It was Mac, Mac, Mac, with the cold rain running down his back.
To my engine give a listen; got to make another mission,
So change the plugs and hurry, will you, Mac?

With the engine's final cough he would have the cowl off,
searching for trouble in the maze.
With hands a painful blister, he could find the trouble, mister,
and get the Merlin firing back in phase.
He could fire the guns in, too, and rig the ship so true,
to hit a target wasn't hard, you see.

Working long into the night to make her fly just right,
his one reward... a thumbs-up sign from me.
It was Mac, Mac, Mac, get some belts of ammo for this hack.
Jerry's up today and we've got to earn our pay,
So reload 'em on the double, will you, Mac?

I shant forget the day we zoomed into the fray,
when a Focke Wulf latched himself upon my tail.
Though dive and twist and turn, I was soon to learn
my acrobatics were to no avail.

"DOWN WIND LEG": Letter from M. Venner of Switzerland requested color photos of squadron insignia. Sent him photos of ours and he plans to publish a book showing all insignia he receives from all Bomb & Fighter Groups. Luc Vervoot of Belgium requested information on "Flack Magnet;" I referred copies of his letter to some crew members. Tony North reports that his planned eye operation has been postponed to a later time. Col. Howard "Howie" Slayton, who is shown with his crew in front of "Arise My Love and Come With Me," advises that this was not his normal aircraft, that their regular ship was "Little Lambsy Divey," but that it was out-of-service the day that photo was taken, and the publicity photos became world known. Gene Plankey, 4446 Cordell Drive, Roanoke, VA 24018 would like to get in touch with any crew members who flew "Here I Go Again." Lou Freiberg is one of the big contributors to the planned WWII type tower planned for construction at Wright-Patterson. Wasn't it a great story that Jim Graham did on "The Caravan"? Dana Winters' story in the last JOURNAL (Spring '93) was well done also. Now that we've had a good start, why not submit your article? Will have a limited number of 458th BG rosters printed in time for summer distribution. Cost is \$4.50 postpaid. Received a pretty good number of letters and cards from 458th members who responded to my request for info of their service time in ETO, a short "bio" I can put on a 3 x 5 card. Also, I would like to have your home phone number and wife's name. If you consider that we have over 750 members, but my "cards" only have information for less than 100, you'll know what I mean. That's about it for this trip, but remember, "Keep the nose up in the turns."

With one chance to stay alive, I rolled into a dive
and pushed the throttle forward thru the "gate."
She had speed to go, if the engine didn't blow,
Mechanic's skill did then control my fate.

So, I wear my ribbons proud and tell my stories loud,
describing smoking guns and bursting flak,
But the man not in the story, the one deserving glory,
is good, old, grinning, grunting, crew chief Mac.
It was Mac, Mac, Mac, the man that kept him flying there
and back.
Though I've overworked and cursed him,
By the mortal one who nursed him, he's a better man than I am;
Crew Chief Mac.

Ken Lashbrook has never forgotten the long dirty hours that his three man ground crew spent keeping his P-51 "Lil Doll" in the air over France and Germany in WWII. The Crew Chief is still the forgotten hero of the Air Force. Ken Lashbrook received ten Air Medals and flew 63 bomber escort and low level missions in his P-51D, call letters CL-T.

Las Vegas Golf Tournament Final Report

Harry Orthman of the 492nd Bomb Group has not previously been recognized for the contribution he made to the success of this tournament. As co-chairman of this event, Harry was responsible for coordinating with Nellis AFB authorities and the golf course personnel.

We wouldn't have had a successful tournament without your good efforts, Harry!

After all the bills were paid and final accounts balanced, the 1992 Golf Committee closed the books on the tourney by sending a check in the amount of \$182.26 to the 1993 tournament chairman, Pete Henry. It is our sincere hope that following the good example set in Las Vegas and with the boost of \$182.26, the 1993 Tournament will be the best ever.

— Chuck Walker

12th Annual Southern California Reunion Dinner Held at El Toro... Walker Roasted

by J. Fred Thomas (392nd)

Over 250 congenial and fun-loving members and guests of the 2ADA gathered at the El Toro MCAS Officers' Club on February 27 for another evening of remembrance and camaraderie. This was the eleventh since the first was held and 65 members attended in 1982. This was the eighth consecutive year that the reunion has been held at the excellent facilities afforded by El Toro MCAS. Among the attendees were quite a number of first-timers and Heritage League members. Again, the banquet hall was fittingly decorated, and Mark Hoage presented another of his outstanding displays of WWII memorabilia. Also, Bob McGuire of the Liberator Club had a table of Liberator books and B-24 souvenirs. This writer, arbitrarily chosen as chairman of the event, served as emcee for the evening.

Dinner was preceded by welcoming remarks to all hands, with a special welcome to Chief of Staff El Toro MCAS, Col. J.W. Robbins and Chaplain Dudley Johnson, who were accompanied by their charming wives, Linda and Elizabeth. A sharply uniformed Color Guard performed the Presentation of the Colors with the audience standing and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, which was led by our Norma Beasley (2ADA Director of Correspondence). That ceremony was followed by a pertinent and fitting invocation by Chaplain Johnson. Col. Robbins, in his usual friendly and impressive manner, closed the pre-dinner program with a most hearty and inspiring welcome to our party.

A dinner of breast of chicken California with all the trimmings and beverages was served well prepared and as scheduled. From the amount of friendly and good humored conversation heard during the meal, it appeared that our guests were enjoying the occasion.

After dinner, although he had a well typed script, the emcee got his "tang all tongued up" and his script became a can of snakes. Soon the script was abandoned and the emcee was on the wing. Luckily, he had a friendly and forgiving audience. One way or another, a lot of laughter was provoked. In a short while things fell into place, and most went as planned. However, one important item was overlooked and will be addressed here first off. It was intended that our dinner committee and their wives would stand and be recognized. They would have been: Harry and Sally Orthman, Dick and Val Boucher, Chuck Walker, and Charles and Agnes McBride. Limited space keeps us from listing all the work done by the committee, but you can imagine the failure without them. The ladies got another ration of praise for the great job done at the reservation tables. Otherwise, a number of our long-time friends and supporters were introduced, the venerable Col. Al Shower being the first. Joining us at the table marked VIP, along with Col. & Mrs. Robbins and Chaplain &

Mrs. Johnson, were Col. Dick Butler and his dear wife, Ardith. Both are long-time supporters of our 2ADA program. Also, we had the pleasure of the company of Steve Miller, son of our all-time favorite and unforgettable Big Band leader, Glenn Miller. Bob McGuire, Liberator Club, was thanked for his support.

Harry and Sally Orthman brought special guests, Mrs. Bennie and Mr. Boillot. Bennie served a full career as Secretary to Commanding Officers... Western Area Air Bases and El Toro MCAS. She eased the way for thirty-two Commanding Officers; twenty-seven were General Officers who wore a total of forty-three stars. Practically all of those officers attended Bennie's recent retirement party. Further, and important to us, Bennie has been of great help to our committees who have organized our eight dinners at El Toro.

We had the greatest support ever from Past Presidents, current Vice Presidents, and Past Vice Presidents of 2ADA. Past Presidents who attended were: Bud Chamberlain, Frank DiMola, and yours truly. Current Vice Presidents were: Paul Steichen (93rd), Oak Mackey (392nd), Gene Hartley (389th), Wilbur Clingan (453rd), Chuck Walker (445th), Hap Chandler (491st), Bill Beasley (492nd), and Mel Culross (Ass't VP, 467th). Also, Dick Peterson, Custodial Officer 2ADA Display; Past Executive VP and past VP 492nd BG, Bill Clarey; and Past VP 467th BG, Jack Stevens were with us. The support of all those men and their wives, especially Frank and Elizabeth DiMola who came from Arizona; Oak and Maxine Mackey who came from Mesa, AZ; and Hap Chandler who came all the way from Dunwoody, GA is truly appreciated. Oh yes, and

Bill and Maxine Clarey who came down from the Bay area.

In the planning stage, the committee couldn't agree on entertainment for the evening. The affordable wasn't acceptable; the acceptable wasn't affordable. Chuck Walker smarted off to the chairman, "Why don't you make one of your famous speeches?" That did it. Any entertainment would be a "Roast of Chuck Walker." It started with the fact that Chuck and Maxine are moving to Dallas. He says it's on account of a daughter, a grandson, and a home there; but it's really because he wants to get closer to Arkansas so as to be able to drive over for a seven course meal. What's an Arkansas seven course meal, you ask? One stewed possum and a six pack. And so it went for about twenty minutes. Jokes about his golfing, his longevity, etc., etc. A few jokes about the military, old folks, politicians and lawyers were thrown in. The emcee endangers no real comedian, but some amusement seemed to be afforded. Whether they laughed at the jokes or whether they were laughing at the emcee, one now has a greater respect for comedians making their living before the public.

The evening's program was concluded by the drawing of several attractive door prizes made up by Chuck Walker's son, Charles, Jr. A further story is that Charles is about the only thing Chuck ever got right. Anyway, the winners were pleased, and the non-winners yelled, "Shake 'em up!" Further during the conclusion, all hands were advised that a new reunion committee would take over for future So. Cal. reunions. We wish them all success, and we urge you to support them as you have us.



Chuck Walker (left) and Fred Thomas at So. Cal. Reunion Dinner, February 27, 1993.

The 448th Speaks

by Cater Lee

By the time this article is read, the 448th will be getting ready to attend our eleventh consecutive group reunion at Bellevue (Seattle) Washington, July 1-4, 1993.

Tour visits will include a visit with lunch at the Officers' Mess at McChord AFB near Tacoma, a tour of the city of Seattle with visits to the famous Pike's Place Market, the Space Needle, and Boeing's huge aircraft factory at Everett. Our reunion hotel is the lovely Hyatt Regency in Bellevue, just across the lake from Seattle.

Although Boeing made that *other* airplane that flew with our B-24 Liberators on bombing missions over Germany and occupied Europe in WWII, it is the world's largest supplier of commercial aircraft and has been a vital part of the state's economy for many years.

Many of our group will arrive early and stay around afterwards to visit the many attractions in the beautiful Northwestern United States, as well as Victoria and Vancouver, Canada, before returning to their respective homes.

Some of our 2nd Air Division veterans who attended the 2ADA reunion at Hilton Head Island a few years back will remember that a brave and courageous Belgian lady, responsible for hiding American and British airmen who were shot down over Belgium, was recognized for her heroic actions during WWII. Her name is Anne Brusselmans. She is in her late eighties and makes her home at 1962 Braemoor Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698.

Her daughter, Yvonne Daley, has written a book for her entitled *Mission Accomplished*, which reveals the many frightening experiences she encountered during those days of German occupation, with more than one hundred pictures of American and British airmen she saved from capture. This book explains the problems she had, not only with hiding nearly two hundred downed airmen, but managing for enough food and medical attention for those injured to keep them alive and safe. This was absolutely an amazing feat.

For her heroism and courage, Mrs. Brusselmans has been awarded the highest tributes from all allied governments, including the Medal of Freedom with Silver Palm from Harry Truman.

The book includes an article about a first sergeant of the 712th Squadron of the 448th who volunteered for one mission so he would have something to tell his grandchildren. This mission was on the first daylight raid over Berlin, and the sergeant was shot down but managed to make it to Belgium where Anne Brusselmans took care of him until allied soldiers relieved Belgium of its German visitors.

The cost of the book *Mission Accomplished* is \$16.00 plus \$2.00 for mailing expenses. This is not a Hollywood version, but the real thing of actual day to day

survival. Had she been caught it would have meant immediate execution. What a brave and wonderful lady!

The 448th has a veteran pilot from Mott, North Dakota whom we think probably has in more flying hours, with the possible exception of those who went into the airlines, than any other veteran who served as a pilot in the 2nd A.D.

He is Elmer Homelvig. After returning to the States in June of 1945 and delivering a B-24 to Bradley Field, he went home on a 30 day leave. From there to Sioux Falls, South Dakota for just three days and then on to Roswell, New Mexico for B-29 training. When the war ended, he was given the option of continuing his B-29 training or accepting a discharge, and he opted for the latter.

During the winters of 1945 and 1946 he flew for a rancher in Bowman, North Dakota, hunting coyotes and fox for the bounty and furs. He had a 65 H.P. Taylorcraft, and says he got initiated into flying an underpowered and overloaded light plane in the winter on wheels and skis. He also did a little studying and got his flight instructor's license. For the next year he gave flight instruction and did some charter work.

In 1947 he moved to Hot Springs, South Dakota and worked at various jobs. In 1949 he started working for the Veterans Administration in Hot Springs until 1954.

In 1952, however, he had saved up enough money to buy his first airplane, a four seat Cessna 170.

He made a deal with the manager of the hospital to transfer patients to other veterans' hospitals and could take his annual leave while he was away.

In 1954 he quit his job at the hospital, took over the management of the Hot Springs Airport, and started flying full time doing charter work as well as flight instruction, etc.

In 1958 he started spraying crops and moved to Mott, North Dakota, where he has been ever since. Along with the spraying, he has been doing contract flying for the North Dakota Game and Fish Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Animal Damage Control.

Elmer has owned a number of light single and twin engine airplanes and taught quite a few people how to fly, as well as having done a lot of charter flying. He decided about ten years ago that spraying crops was a young man's game and quit, but he still does some census work for the state.

He says he quit counting his flying hours when he passed 35,000. He says he still enjoys flying and hopes to continue for a while yet.

We think this is an amazing story of one of our 2nd A.D. pilots and would love to hear from our readers.

For our 448th veterans' information, I have ordered 200 more of our group patches with plastic holders and clip. These will be available by our reunion time, and sell for \$5.00 plus four stamps for mailing expense. I have also ordered 200 pens with the yellow and black checkerboard and tail assembly; these sell for \$5.00 plus four stamps for mailing as well.

For any of our 448th vets who wish to buy a 448th cap for themselves or a friend or relative, contact Ben Johnson at 3990 15th Street, Port Arthur, TX 77642. These caps are blue with a yellow front with a B-24 across the top, and small 2nd A.D. - 8th Air Force emblems on both sides of the 448th Bomb Group in the middle. The cost is \$6.00 plus three stamps for mailing.

Also available is a similar cap which has your individual squadron number on it; same price plus three stamps. Send orders for these 448th caps to Charles W. Bonner at 750 East Oak Hill Road, Porter, IN 46304. Charles also has the very attractive blue T-shirts which have a large B-24 across the top middle with the 8th Air Force emblem on each side and poop on our group's first and last mission, etc. Cost is \$10.00 plus \$2.00 shipping expense. These are eye catchers and a bargain.

For any 2nd A.D. vet, the following are available in stock. B-24 pewter tie tacs \$6.00; smaller attractive silver plated B-24 lapel pins \$7.00; same B-24 but as a ladies charm also \$7.00; silver plated B-24 as ladies earrings at \$12.00 a pair — specify for pierced ears or screw type. Also the 8th Air Force lapel pin at \$4.00 and small U.S. Flag lapel pin at \$4.00. Please send order and three stamps to Leroy Engdahl at 1785 Wexford Drive, Vidon, TX 77662.

Remember, if you haven't yet sent in your \$10.00 voluntary donation to our 448th Bomb Group Association, please send it to Cater Lee, P.O. Box 850, Foley, AL 36536.



The First Time I Flew a B-24

by Edward G. Schwarm (HQ)

I arrived in the U.K. in the early summer of 1944 as a replacement engineering officer. Prior to that I had completed engineering officer training at Boca Raton and Yale, and then completed the B-24 engineering and mechanics' course at the Convair plant in San Diego where we studied the B-24 machinery and systems in detail. I then spent several months in E.O. training at Tarrant Field (now Carswell AFB), a B-24 transition base at that time. There I had plenty of opportunity to pre-flight, taxi, and fly as engineer on the Libs during the training flights. I became very familiar with the airplane, but (and this is crucial), I never had the opportunity to touch the controls of one of them in flight, as there were always transition students to occupy the right seat. Indeed, my flying experience was, at that time, very limited; about 20 hours in 60 horsepower light planes and five hours in an L-5 with one of the instructors at Tarrant.

Upon arrival in the U.K., I was initially assigned to Lt. Col. Hughel's division engineering office at 2nd AD Headquarters and worked on several special projects. One bright sunny morning, always ebullient Bobby Norsen bounced into the office and asked me if I wanted to go flying. As I have always loved to fly (and it shows), I heartily accepted his offer. We drove over to Hethel where there was a battle-ready B-24J waiting for us. It was quite an impressive sight with everything on it but bombs, quite a step up from the stripped battle-weary D's I knew in the transition school. It became obvious that just the two of us were going flying that day when the crew chief stepped down and wished us a pleasant trip. With the props already pulled through and the put-put running, my knowledge of the machine paid off handsomely. Sitting in the right seat, I started the engines and responded flawlessly to the checklist as we went through the pre-flight checkout. Bobby, with his usual happy smile, taxied out, got take-off clearance, and rolled down the runway and up into the wide blue. With wheels and flaps up and engines at easy climb power, I settled back to enjoy the airplane ride in the incredibly still, smooth air.

Things were to change rapidly, however. Bobby trimmed her perfectly, then motioned me to take it. I gingerly placed my hands on the wheel (the first time ever, remember) and feet on the pedals. I did nothing — the monster was flying itself. Bobby asked me to take it up to 5,000 feet and stay close to the field. He then opened his safety belt (they called them that at that time), slid back his seat, got out of his seat, and said over his shoulder as he left the flight deck, "I like to ride in the nose, myself." He was gone, and I was alone. And was I ever alone. I never saw such an empty left seat or such long wings. Next, Bobby was up in the front turret swinging it all around, tracking the several airplanes up there with us. I hoped they knew how to get out

of my way, because I still hadn't applied any pressure to the wheel or rudder pedals.

We were rapidly getting away from the field, doing about 160 mph indicated. Recalling Bobby's second request before he departed, something had to be done, and very soon. A 180 to the left was in order. It isn't easy to see out back to the left from the right seat, but I did my best. Then came the test. Remembering flying the Taylorcraft, the only plane I had flown with a wheel, I gently applied left wheel, left rudder, and a bit of back pressure. By golly, it worked. That huge long right wing started to rise. I neutralized at about 15 degrees bank, although it felt like 45. The nose kept nicely moving across the horizon to the left. As I approached 180 degrees, opposite pressure rolled it out and I continued the climb. I was beginning to gain a bit of comfort and confidence, but now a new crisis was forming. I was reaching 5,000 feet, and would have to reduce power and re-trim. Fortunately, I had watched the older boys do this at Tarrant, so I proceeded to roll in a little nose-down trim to get level flight. I throttled back to 30 inches and set rpm to 2100. My memory was working well. I had watched the boys synchronize by strobing the outboard through the inboard props, and that worked real well.

Wow, here I was in level flight at 5,000 feet (plus or minus a few hundred), with a 180 degree turn and a power reduction as my total experience in a B-24. At age 21, ultra-conservatism was not one of my faults, so I was beginning to feel pretty good about it. Bobby showed no indication of returning; his turret was still searching the sky. I began to feel the Lib out by doing some slow S turns, went a ways and did another 180. Coming back I did a few short climbing and diving turns. Things were going just great.

This continued for about an hour before Bobby Norsen returned with his usual cheerful smile and took over. He made the approach, greased it onto the runway and taxied in, while I performed my duties as the flight engineer/now experienced co-pilot. I shut down the engines and we headed back towards Ketteringham Hall. It was I who had the big grin on my face now. Although we got to know each other quite well as time went on, and I flew with him a number of times subsequently, I never had the nerve to tell Major Norsen about that first flight together. Now you know, Bobby.

To complete the record, I went on to become a civilian after WWII, an electronics engineer, and got my commercial pilot's license. While working as a flight simulator designer and engineering manager at Link Aviation, I owned several small planes, flew other people's big ones, and even checked out in the T-37 twin jet trainer. I flew a Stearman with a 450 horse Pratt and Whitney in it last summer. Gee, it felt good.



by Ralph Elliott

The Kissimmee Convention of the 467th Bomb Group (H) Association will be history by the time you read this, but it promises to be a good one, with around 250 people attending and 53 of them also going to Nassau on the Norwegian Cruise Line's M/S WESTWARD following the convention.

It appears, at this time, that the next convention will be in the fall of 1994, with the destination yet to be decided but probably in the midwest somewhere. Once my name got on the Convention & Visitors Bureau lists as the 467th Coordinator, the stream of mail became unending, and there are lots of great locations to choose from. Information from St. Paul, Minnesota even included personally addressed letters from the Governor, the mayor of St. Paul, and several hotel general managers. Aren't computers wonderful???

The number of people asking where they can find a copy of Alan Healy's history, "THE 467TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP, September 1943 - June 1945" has reached the point where discussions are underway about commissioning a fourth reprinting of the book.

Alan Healy was the group intelligence officer who, along with several other group personnel, put the book together during time spent at Davis-Monthan Air Base after the group's return from England. Healy had it privately published for the first time in 1947. The book would not be updated because of the cost and work of doing a revision, but the intent would be to include an addendum listing the names of ALL personnel attached to Rackheath (Station 145), including Red Cross personnel and all KIA/MIA personnel. Phillip Day and Vincent La Russa are currently working to update that list, and any input can be sent to Phil (see the POOP letterhead for his address), along with any questions about the list.

Paul Hatten is working on getting a supply of 467th Group and Squadron patches for sale to the membership. He has found a source, and a decision to proceed will probably come out of the Kissimmee convention — look for information in POOP. I also have had two letters from England from fellows working to get squadron insignia and histories for all of the groups in the 96th Bomb Wing. I don't have a history for any of the squadron insignia yet. I would appreciate hearing from you if you happen to have that information, or send it to Phil to put in POOP.

I had a call in April from Peter G. Duin of Humboldt, Iowa, who had just found the 467th after 45 years. Our membership list increases daily, but you can help by tracking down your Rackheath buddies and sending Phil or me their names and addresses.

Next stop after Kissimmee is the Second Air Division Association Convention, November 4-7 at Hilton Head, SC. We'll see you there.

The 445th Reporting

by Chuck Walker

I hope that you all took the time to read the Spring 1993 JOURNAL. Those who did enjoyed several articles authored by 445thers: Fred Becchetti (702nd) on handling of his G.I. Issue .45; Ed Wanner (700th) recounted a hair-raising return to Tibenham as a result of flak damage; Dave Patterson (701st) wrote a commentary on veterans organizations; and lastly, I do hope you read "The 445th Reporting" by your faithful servant (?), me. Why don't some of the rest of you follow these examples and submit an article yourself? Believe me, our esteemed Editor, Bill Robertie, will clean up your offering until it looks like a real pro wrote it. Try it, you'll like it!

Our annual Southern California 2ADA Dinner was a great success. Although total attendance fell off a bit this year, the twenty-three 445thers in attendance had a very good time. (It has been rumored that the lower attendance could possibly have been attributed to a rumor that Fred Thomas (392nd), this year's M.C., was planning to sing and dance for the crowd. Fortunately, the other committee members were able to dissuade him, and thus saved the day.)

You are encouraged to attend regional 2ADA dinners held in your area. Watch the JOURNAL for dates and locations — you will enjoy yourself, as it's a great opportunity to meet other 2ADAers living in your area.

Let's all extend a hearty welcome to the following new members: **Brian Alberghini**, Rochester, NY, (the fifth Alberghini to join the ranks of the Association); **Frank Hofmeister**, Sebewaing, MI; **Robert Jacobs**, Emerson, NJ; **Richard Ramp**, Bradenton, FL; **Prescott Coleman**, Portland, OR; **James Wilson**, Yarmouth, MA (associate member — his brother **Calvin H. Wilson** was a member of **Tom Sears'** crew that was shot down 23 March 45 over Munster, Ger.); and **Veronica (Ronnie) Orzechowski**, Providence, RI. Ronnie's late husband Henry (who folded his wings in Dec. 91) was a good personal friend and had contributed several articles to the JOURNAL. It's good to have you back with the 2ADA again, Ronnie.

Some time ago I listed an address in the JOURNAL for the **American Order of the French Croix de Guerre**, and that address has since become outdated as they have moved to a new location. The new address to which 445thers may direct their inquiries concerning membership in the Order and questions regarding availability of the Diploma is: **141 East 44th Street, Suite 604, New York, NY 10017**. Steven Kovach, president, reports that some correspondence sent to the old address has been forwarded by the Postal Service, but he is fearful that some may have been returned to senders as "unforwardable." So, if you "shot and missed" using the old address — try again using the new one.

By the way, thanks to Ray Pytel, I have a good supply of applications for anyone interested. To be eligible, you must have served with the 445th at any time between Dec. 11, 1943 and Feb. 1, 1945. It's a beautiful diploma that would look great on your den wall (even better on your living room wall, if you can con your wife into it), so write for an application if interested.

Here is the plan for 445th activities at the 2ADA reunion at Hilton Head in November. A hospitality suite, similar to the one we enjoyed at Las Vegas, is planned where we can leave our memorabilia, pictures, albums,



Members of Bernard Fishman crew (703rd) who attended the Las Vegas Reunion. (l-r): Jack Magee, Elmer Fischer, Ben Schlosser, Bill Tierney, Hobert Bowley, Marv Sawyer. This 445th crew had the most members present at this reunion.

etc. throughout the reunion. The suite will have a TV with VCR for showing your videotapes and will offer some light refreshments. It will be manned by a 445th volunteer while open. So, bring your "goodies" and share them with all of us. A 445th representative will be on hand at the main reunion registration desk to advise members of the location and hours of operation of the hospitality suite, as well as to provide information regarding our 445th goings-on.

Friday, November 5th has been set aside exclusively for Group activities, culminating with the 445th Group Dinner that evening. I'm not familiar with the Hilton Head area, so please advise me ASAP of ideas and suggestions for tours, visits or other activities 445thers would enjoy participating in on the 5th. If you prefer just hanging around the hotel and hospitality suite visiting with old friends, say so as a guide to our planning — this is your day and we want to make it as enjoyable for you as possible. All of the 445th prize winning sandbaggers will be expected to be on hand to defend their titles at the reunion golf tournament on November 4th, and as the reunion schedule indicates, early birds can register on the 3rd.

Associate member Richard Carlisle (you may recall that he and his mother attended the Dearborn reunion in 1991), is asking members for information about his dad, Capt. T.C. Carlisle (703rd), who arrived at Tibenham around 16-17 June 1944. His father was already a senior pilot, having served in the Army Air Corps in Panama in the mid-1930s. He and his crew were lost over Dessau on 16 August 1944. If you remember T.C. and can help Richard, please contact Richard Carlisle, 4707 West Lovers Lane, Dallas, TX 75209.

I recently heard from a Richard M. Johnson who says he flew with the 445th, heard about the 2ADA in a veterans magazine and wants to know more about our Memorial Library Room. Richard says, "We're out here on a 50 acre farm — 26 miles due south of Breezewood, PA on the PA turnpike." I have responded to his letter; however, if you happen to be passing in that vicinity, give him a ring.

Charles Painter sent us Jim Dobson's

(702nd) address in Houston and suggested we send him a membership application. Some of you good folks in the Houston area might give Jim a call. His address is 11159 River-view Way.

Interestingly, I have received several inquiries from folks in Europe interested in obtaining information about B-24s that crashed in their area. Too often the information provided is too sketchy to do much with. An exception is a letter from Dominique Van Den Broucke of Belgium, who has tracked and corresponded with most members of three 445th crews, all shot down near her home. Dominique has already published a book about U.S. planes shot down in her area, and is continuing her research. She would now like to correspond with members of the 445th who knew the planes and crews and might provide pictures taken at Tibenham for publication in her next book. Look for her letter in the "Letters" section of this JOURNAL.

Phyllis DuBois writes that she has been informed of the 445th's generous donation to the Memorial Library in honor of Lt/Gen. Robert Terrill. Phyllis has not yet selected appropriate books, but will keep us informed.

The late Gerry Rodenbaugh's son-in-law wrote to inform me that I had misunderstood the spelling of his name; it is "Peepers." I apologize, Del. He generously enclosed a picture of Gerry and of the "Bunnie" on its first mission and another taken upon completion of its 31st mission. Thank you, Del. He had recently visited the real Bunnie and she had donated the pictures. Please extend our best wishes to Bunnie.

Marcy Brandt-Coben asks for help in finding some of her father's colleagues. Her dad, Capt. Leo Brandt, was the engineering officer with the 701st from Wendover, UT on, and she would like very much to learn more about his wartime experiences with the 445th. Please contact her at 7005 Candleberry Ct., Fort Worth, TX 76133.

There are many more letters I wish I had time to recognize, but unfortunately, neither time nor space permit. As you can see, I'm not yet in Texas but still working the problem. Take good care of yourselves, and I hope to see many of you at Hilton Head!

U.K. Memories

by Thomas A. Nelson (453rd, 492nd, 467th)

Editor's Note: Following is the continuation, as promised, of this article which began on page 15 of the Spring 1993 JOURNAL. Thomas A. Nelson's selection of random anecdotes of military life in England, December 1943 — July 1945, left off there with comments on the air raid sirens and the V-1 pilotless flying bomb.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, German scientists and engineers are working diligently at Peenemunde to apply American basic rocket-science knowledge, which our government has ignored, toward the development of long-range ballistic missiles. The outcome, late in the war, is the V-2. We in the ranks are blissfully unaware of the existence of such a weapon as we break for lunch in the mess hall one sunny day. About two-thirds of the way through eating, we are startled by a loud explosion outside which shakes the building, showering dust from the rafters onto the remains of our meals. We rush out to find a crater in the ground in an open area. No one is hurt, and there is no structure near the hole. There was no air raid siren, no noise of a V-1. Everyone is baffled until at a later date news of the V-2 becomes

public. We have the dubious distinction of being among the first to experience the receiving end of a V-2 before they are aimed at London.

The Air Force maintains specialized training facilities at various locations in the U.K. I attend an automatic-flight-control equipment course at a base near Blackpool. Toward the end of the sessions, the instructor informs the class that a short course will follow on the C-1, auto-pilot, formation-stick installation. I request orders to remain for the auto-pilot instruction, and approval is granted.

A side benefit is a free evening between courses to take the train into Blackpool. This is a famous seaside resort on the Irish Sea with trams (streetcars), built to resemble boats, locomotives, etc., running along the shore. The main attractions are the extensive entertainment pavilions. One pays a single entrance fee to use the amusement rides and other amenities. The pavilion I enter includes a large dance hall with a live orchestra. Couples are enjoying dancing, but many unescorted young ladies are standing by. As I walk around the perimeter of the dance floor, I notice some of

the same faces, always only a few feet away. Obviously, they want to be asked to dance, but they are not so bold as to do the asking. Etiquette survives!

General Patton's tanks are racing across France, and ground supplies of fuel cannot keep up with them. The Air Force comes to the rescue. The B-24's bomb bays are fitted with special tanks to carry the 80-octane gasoline needed. The aircraft I fly with on one of these delivery missions roars down the runway, the overflow fuel streaming from the wing tanks, too close to the outboard engines for comfort.

Once airborne, the cargo flight over the North Sea and into France is uneventful. The delivery point is St. Quentin. Returning to England is another matter. Our radio goes out. We become temporarily lost above the clouds, perilously close to the area where British anti-aircraft gunners shoot first and ask questions later. Not to worry; our navigator puts us on course back to East Anglia, and all's well that ends well.

After V-E Day, May 8, 1945, the bombardment groups prepare for a return to the U.S., and our U.K. experiences come to an end.

Reflections (Looking Back on the Lighter Side)

by Bill McCracken (389th)

In late April or early May 1945, after returning to base from a lead crew practice training mission, I unhappily learned that I was to serve as a bastion of protection to the fighting warriors of the 389th. I had been assigned to guard duty on the midnight to dawn shift of the outer perimeter of the base, a duty for which I had no experience, except the qualifications of a radio operator-gunner. Had the guys on the base known that it was I who had been entrusted to be their guardian angel that night, they, like me, would not have been able to get a wink of sleep.

Over these past fifty years my memory is not the best and at times is somewhat hazy, but as I recall, my story goes something like this:

One of the base MPs drove me in his jeep out to a sandbagged dug-out where there was some type of water-cooled anti-aircraft weapon that I had never before seen and which was entirely unfamiliar to me. He gave me five minutes of crammed instructions on its operation, wished me luck, and bid me farewell. The night was pitch black...here was an all-alone 20-year-old Junior Airman serving as the last bulwark of defense against the whole German Luftwaffe should it decide that "tonight is the night." Armed with my Colt 45, my pocket knife, my flashlight, and of course this mighty water-cooled whatever weapon, I dug in (John Wayne-like), and prepared

to defend my air base and my comrade warriors.

This opening part of my story really has little to do with the "rest of the story" (a la Paul Harvey) except perhaps to explain and maybe justify my resultant problems that followed.

When I returned to my barracks after an exhausting, sleepless 28 to 30 hours or so, I tumbled into my upper bunk around 8:00 a.m., clad only in my government issued long johns, which actually was the dress of the day for all good retiring airmen. Having just dropped off to dreamland in my bunk next to the front door, I was rudely awakened by a loud "Ten hut!" Startled, I thought, "Who in the hell could be so inconsiderate as to arouse this brave all-night protector of Hethel Aerodrome and its inhabitants?!" I was soon to learn. It was none other than our Squadron Commander, Major Bently Kern, pulling a surprise barracks inspection. What to do...well, I calmly got down from my bunk and stood there very foolishly in my long johns, what else? Well, emphatically, I'll tell you what else...Major Kern wasn't the least bit impressed with my lackadaisical attitude. In fact, he was quite disturbed to say the least. He wanted to know why I was still in the sack at such an ungodly hour. Still half asleep, I proceeded to tell him in a nonchalant manner, my legitimate reason, but before I could get the words out of my

mouth, he ungraciously shouted, "HIT A BRACE MISTER!" Then he said to his accompanying orderly, "Sergeant, PUT THIS MAN ON REPORT." He proceeded on through the barracks with his inspection, while the Sergeant obtained my name, rank and serial number. As they departed and as the Sergeant followed Major Kern out the door, he looked back at me, winked, and whispered to me, "Forget it, Mac." Those three words (Clint Eastwood style), "made my day!"

Nothing more was said or done until one day, I believe it was May 11th, after I had previously flown two low-level trolley missions over Germany showing WACs and ground personnel the damage done by our air raids, I was ordered to report to Major Kern, whereupon he advised that I was to serve as his radio operator on a trolley mission that he was commanding that day. Well, well, well; although I might not have been a very capable "Dug Out Gunner," I sorta felt that I was a pretty good radio operator. I was happy to be his radio operator on that mission...nothing was mentioned, but could it possibly be that he was considering this duty to be my punishment for that unhappy day of inspection? Little did he know that I enjoyed this duty. Was this just luck...or...WAS JUSTICE FINALLY BEING SERVED?

P.S., Major Kern: If you should happen to read this... "And Now You Know The Rest Of The Story."



by H.C. 'Pete' Henry

The 44th Bomb Group Tower Association received two letters from David Walters, Clerk to the Parish Council of the Shipdham Parish, the second of which is the most significant. With regard to the use of a disused chapel at the Village Burial Ground as a 44th BG Museum by the 44th Heritage Memorial Group, he writes as follows:

"After January's Council meeting, the Museum Subcommittee met to consider whether the project was a live one or not. They had sought a great deal of advice from the Norfolk Museum Service and, reluctantly, came to the conclusion that they had to recommend no further action.

"The reasons really fall into two categories. Firstly, the cost of bringing the building up to standard, and then the ongoing cost of maintaining it to a standard suitable for preserving memorabilia. Secondly, the people problem. In a recent Village Appraisal, a fairly large proportion of respondents supported the *idea* of a museum, but, when it came to the crunch, volunteers were thin on the ground.

"We are now canvassing the village for ideas as to how this small building might be used. It is in the cards that, if there are no constructive thoughts and no buyer could be found, it might be demolished. I am sorry to be so negative, but it is best that you should know the situation.

"Maurice Woods has shown me his copy of the The Fighting 44th Logbook for Winter 1992 and we are a little concerned at some of the comments found on pages 7 & 8 concerning the museum. I refer to column 2, paragraph 2 on page 7 and columns 1 & 3 on page 8. In view of this letter, you may wish to put the record straight in the next issue of your impressive publication."

From the Logbook — Winter 1992, page 7: "Some attempts were being made for safety or esthetic reasons to restore one or two for possible use." And from page 8, Shipdham Museum Report: "Please be aware that the proposed civic museum that is being developed and organized in Shipdham, Norfolk will be operated, controlled, staffed and financed by the members of the Shipdham Parish Council and related Shipdham civic organizations." And, "Mr. and Mrs. Lee Aston have also made the same generous offer to provide a similar plaque to be installed on an outside wall of the new Shipdham Village Museum which is under development and should be open for business in 1993."

Also in the 44th HMG Logbook, Summer 1992, the 1993 Reunion and 50th Anniver-

sary Celebration of the "Low Level" Mission to Ploesti was announced as the final large reunion of the 44th. (Three more Logbooks are planned — May 1993, December 1993, and the last one in 1994 or 1995.) You are probably all aware that this will take place 29 July — 1 August at the Holiday Inn, Exit 44 on I-75 in Dayton, Ohio. There will be no General Business Meeting and no Squadron Dinners as in the past. Saturday, 31 July, will offer a full day at the Air Force Museum, with the evening free for dinner on your own. The 68th Squadron plans dinner and a business meeting on their return from the museum. We are hoping to make some arrangement to join them during or right after their business meeting for the purpose of allowing the "rank and file" members to discuss the future of the 44th Bomb Group.

Continuing Lee Astin's article, "Shipdham Tower Rededicated" (please see 2ADA JOURNAL, Spring 1993, page 12), Lee writes, "The point of this recounting is that a group of voluntary local Englishmen started their own museum years ago on the Shipdham Airfield to preserve the history and to honor the 44th BG's stay there. They are enthusiastic supporters of Americans, of America's flying war veterans, and in particular, the men of the 44th BG. They have already created a base memorial and museum to the 44th BG. Their work was, and still is, a labor of love; done cheerfully and voluntarily, and without recompense. Is that museum work to be abandoned for a site in the village?" (This no longer seems to be a consideration — see the first few paragraphs of this article.)

Lee's article continues for several pages, but space does not permit printing all of it. The main purpose of his story seems to be summed up in one paragraph: "In fairness to all concerned, the matter of locating a museum for the preservation of the war activities of the 44th BG, that is, either to be located at (1) the Control Tower on the Shipdham Air Base, or (2) a building located in the village of Shipdham, should be submitted for a vote to the membership of the 44th BG, inclusive of English members. It certainly should not be a decision of a few directors of the 44th HMG."

Two more requests from Forrest Clark (67th Sq.). He would like information about emergency landing strips in use during WWII in the vicinity of The Wash and Cromer in Norfolk. And he'd like to hear from anyone who flew missions on 16 and 18 Nov 43 to Norwegian targets, any Group, any Squadron. Write to Forrest S. Clark, 703 Duffer Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34759.

Lloyd West sent a note in March advising that there will also be a 50th anniversary

celebration of the Ploesti Mission at Liberal, Kansas. If any 44thers are interested in going to that one instead of to Dayton, drop Lloyd a line at Box 256, Rush Center, KS 67575. Lloyd (389th BG) said the Liberal affair will be held 30 Sept to 2 October. (Another reunion conflict — 8th Air Force Historical Society is holding their annual reunion 28 Sept to 4 October.)

E. Ralph Rundell (458th BG) is collecting "combat experience" stories which have been published in the 2ADA JOURNAL during the past 46 years. If your story appeared in the JOURNAL, please send him a Xerox copy. If you have photographs, either send glossy black and white prints or negatives. They will be copied and returned. Send to: E. Ralph Rundell, 307 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601.

We have finally found someone to write the 66th Squadron history. Steve Adams and Martin Bowman have started working on it, and I've sent my bombardier Al Jones' diary to get them started. They would appreciate any diaries, stories, photographs, etc. that 66th members can send to them. Mail them to: Steve Adams, 28 Bassingham Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 2QT, England.

Everyone should have received a brochure requesting a personal biography for the 2ADA 8th Air Force History Book to be published by the Turner Publishing Company in Paducah, KY. Whether or not you decide to purchase the finished product, we urge all of you to send a short biography to Turner to be included for posterity. The brochure indicates a deadline of 31 May 93, but this has been extended. If you have misplaced your brochure and/or have any questions, feel free to drop me a line (address on page 2 of this JOURNAL).

Word was received from Joseph Sadt, Albuquerque, NM, that my engineer, Winfield E. Ward (67/66 Sq.) passed away about two years ago. (Last correspondence from him was a Christmas card in 1990.) That leaves four living members of my original crew plus one, whereabouts unknown. H.W. "Russ" Russell (68 Sq.) advised that Don Hart (68 Sq.) died 18 Jan 93. Will Lundy sent word that Donald F. Eslocher (67 Sq.) was killed on his 75th birthday. He went out with his brother to celebrate his birthday, decided to take a safer way home and was hit by another car. The 68th Squadron Newsletter lists the following "Folded Wings" from that Squadron: Lt. Col. Wm. R. (Bob) Austin, 27 Jan 93; Don Hart, 18 Jan 93; and Michael Balazovich, 1 Mar 93. Our sincere condolences to all their families.

“Flashbacks”

by Donald I. Parcels (453rd)

The “flashbacks” are there, but the details of dates and events have become obscured with the passage of close to fifty years. The ability to provide the “color” along with my recollections is not my strong suit, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the experiences I encountered during my 25 missions honestly pale in comparison to the frightful and horrendous experiences endured by so many other airmen. Now that I have given you all of the “disclaimers,” I will try to recall some memories in the hopes that someone may be able to put me on the trail of some of my crew members whom I have not been able to locate. *(Editor's Note: Please look for Don's letter and crew pictures in the "Letters" section of this issue).*

Over ten years ago I made a nostalgic trip to England in hopes of showing my wife my former air base of the 453rd Bomb Group at Old Buckenham, and to search for the “Flak Shack” where I had gone for R & R.

From the time we stepped off the train at Attleborough, we were given a royal welcome by the station master and all the folks in the local pub, where he had directed us to go. From there we were given an escorted tour of the deteriorated and overgrown air base. This became a very emotional experience for me as I stood at the end of the runway where I had taken off and landed so many times years and years ago. The flashbacks after so many years were amazingly vivid. After returning to London and several days later as we traveled throughout Cornwall and Devon, I was able to find the “Flak Shack” where I had spent an idyllic week of R & R. The country estate called Knightshays Court, which had been loaned to the Air Force and operated by the Red Cross, was located in Tiverton. It was being restored to the way it was during the war and had been included on the Heritage Registry. I remember how enjoyable it was to get into casual clothes and spend time at the skeet range, playing a unique English game similar to volleyball, playing bridge and having real nice Red Cross girls for partners. The happy hour was always enjoyable just before having a delicious dinner which was served in an elegant oak paneled dining room. Perhaps the aerial view shown here of this elegant estate will bring back memories to some of the others who also spent happy days away from the perils of war.

One of the “flashbacks” that came to mind as I stood at the end of the runway on my return to “Old Buck” was a mission to provide sorely needed support to the ground forces during the horrendous Battle of the Bulge. Weather conditions during December 1944 were the worst they could



Knightshays Court, Tiverton, Devon

possibly be. Because of the continual sleet and thick fog, all of the bases in England were closed in. Two days before Christmas, the sleet and miserable fog abated and a maximum effort came down from Headquarters. We had a 5 a.m. wake up call, as our Group was apparently leading the entire bomber stream and making a deep penetration into Germany. I'll never forget the sight as we dropped our bombs and turned from the target to head back to base. As far as the eye could see in that crystal clear sky were the B-24s slightly below the B-17s stretching what appeared to be all the way back to England. The contrails streaming from the bombers made a magnificent picture. As we crossed the North Sea and approached Great Yarmouth in the late afternoon, the bombers were still coming — but now the sky was being filled with Lancasters and Halifaxes of the RAF. What a tremendous effort and what a gigantic Christmas present for Hitler.

Another “flashback” was the recall of a mission that had elements of horror, disaster, and a godsend. January '45 the Battle of the Bulge was still raging. The miserable winter weather with rainy, foggy conditions plagued most of the bomber bases in East Anglia; however, on January 13th we had a mission to Rudesheim on the Rhine River. The early morning was icy cold, wet drizzle and thick fog coming across the base in waves. With visibility no

more than 150 feet and sometimes less, we anticipated the mission would be scrubbed, but that was not to be. We were number 3 to take off. O.K. Long (pilot) told me to guide on the edge of the runway, tap on the rudder if need be, and he went on to instruments for takeoff. Our engineer, Dallas Noffsinger, called out the airspeed. O.K. did a super job, and we lifted off the runway not knowing how much runway we had left. As we climbed to join the formation, we received the radio message that the two following planes had tragically crashed on takeoff and the base was closed down.

We joined up with another group and became a six plane squadron with the Remagen bridge as our target. Our bombardier, Seth Haywood, had a visual view for the drop. After bombs away, as we left the target, our tail gunner Freiberg let out an excited shout over the intercom saying we had a direct hit! The miserable fog had lifted by the time we landed at “Old Buck,” and during interrogation we reported our success. Two days later we had the word: “The Remagen bridge was still standing.” Seth told me he had been chided royally for having missed the bridge. Weeks later, when the 1st Army was able to use the Remagen bridge (the only bridge available to cross the Rhine), Seth received many accolades for having missed the bridge! The survival of the Remagen bridge was in fact a godsend for the ground forces.



392nd B.G.

by Oak Mackey

You can always tell when your Group VP is a little short on material for his report. He brings out the membership names and numbers. As of March 7, 1993, the 392nd BG had 494 members in the Second Air Division Association. In 1992 and so far in 1993, we have signed in 18 new members. They are: Fred Jones; John E. Largen; George Trigilio; Arthur Crafton, Jr.; Morris J. Keith; Joseph L. Gaffey; Leo Brown; Richard H. Hoffman; Robert S. Gardner; John E. Buecheler; William D. Heller; Patrick S. McEvoy (reinstated); Edward Supko (reinstated); John T. Carroll; George C. Schutze; Carl B. Glover; Albert Lester; and Harry D. Hall. If you see someone here you know and want their address, write me (address on page 2), or call (602) 641-3033. Regrettably, we have had 11 drop-outs in the same time frame, either at their request or for non-payment of dues. Some time ago, Jim Goar, Editor of the *392nd BGMA News*, sent me a list of 392nd BG members who were not also members in the 2nd ADA. I sent out 64 membership application forms to these folks recently, and expect many of them will join us soon in the 2nd ADA. If any of you know of, or learn of, anyone who is eligible for 2nd ADA membership, please send me their names and addresses. They will get a nice letter and membership application form PDQ.

When I visited the Pima Air Museum in Tucson in 1979, it was a collection of about fifty airplanes sitting out on the desert. The administration building was a mobile home, and a World War II barracks served as a storage shed. They had bought their B-24J from the Indian Air Force in 1969; the desert heat had turned all the plexiglass a milky white and it still had the Indian Air Force markings. Since moving to Arizona last year, I heard there were vast improvements at the museum; so in March, Maxine and I drove down to Tucson. After lunch with Gil and Martha Bambauer, Gil and I drove out to

the museum. The ladies preferred to go shopping. There is now a large administration building/workshops, and another building for a gift shop, a coffee shop, and the ticket counter. The B-24 no longer sits in the desert sun; it is in a brand new hangar, 140' x 200', about 27,000 square feet, all steel and concrete construction and virtually fire-proof. The doors in each end of the hangar are too small to get the B-24 through, so it was placed in the hangar before one end was finished. This was not an oversight; it was purposely done so some future administration could not very well sell the B-24 unless they tore the hangar end open. Therefore, that B-24 will be there for an eternity. It is in beautiful condition now; all the milky plexiglass has been replaced, it has been renovated and polished, all the guns are in place; all that's missing is the bomb-sight. It sits center stage as you enter the hangar, for it is the main attraction.

Also in the hangar are a North American B-52, a Douglas A-26, a Douglas C-47, a Beechcraft AT-11, and a Cessna Bobcat (Bamboo Bomber). These airplanes are likewise completely refurbished and polished to a beautiful condition. There are now a total of 190 airplanes and helicopters on display outside, some rather famous ones. There is an SR-71 Lockheed Blackbird (over 2000 MPH), there are three B-52s, the Lockheed Constellation "Columbine" which was President Eisenhower's airplane, and a Douglas DC-6 which was President Kennedy's airplane. There is a very rare Boeing Stratoliner; TWA owned five of them just prior to World War II when production was halted. It is essentially a B-17 with an airliner fuselage; it carried 40 some passengers and it was the first pressurized airliner. By the way, the serial number on the B-24J is 44-44175, for those of you who may have records of such things. If you ever go to Tucson, do yourself a favor and stop at the Pima Air Museum. Admission is \$5.00 for adults; \$4.00 for us senior citizens. Oh yes, there is a B-17 there, and it is in its own hangar. There are definite plans to build a hangar for the B-29.

The ever-alert and always diligent navigator of our crew, Brad Eaton, sent me a clipping from the March 2, 1993 *Wall Street Journal*. The article was about how lifestyles are a' changing even in rural England, and

many of the pubs are closing. It tells of Ivan Barker, a local farmer, riding his pre-war Raleigh into Beeston for a pint at the Ploughshare into a stiff headwind. "That's awright, it'll be at me back on the way home when I need it," he says. After 500 years or so, the Ploughshare has closed. If you go to the old air base from whence the 392nd flew, you can no longer stop at the Ploughshare for an 'alf & 'alf. It's a pity. A century ago, Beeston had 469 people and there were three pubs; plus two grocers, a draper, a blacksmith and a wheelwright. Today, the population is about the same; no pub, and one small store. The 15th century church shares a vicar with six other villages. Most Sundays, only a dozen or so show up for services. The Beeston school may close soon; there are just 38 students. Progress does not always mean improvement.

For three years in a row, Maxine and I have attended the Southern California Dinner at the El Toro Marine Base in Irvine, CA. Each of these affairs is always better than the previous one. Do not pass up an opportunity to go next year — it is always held on the last Saturday in February. There were 28 attendees from the 392nd BG this year, and a good, good time was enjoyed by all.

Richard H. Hoffman was a crew member on the Nicholson crew of the 579th Squadron in the fall of 1943. They were shot down by flak on the mission to Munster on November 5, 1943. All the crew managed to bail out and were immediately captured. Dick lived the rest of the war in Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria. While there, he kept a diary of "shoot-down" stories related to him by other inmates. Here are some examples:

Date: 4/4/43. Target: Paris Area. Type AC: B-17. Crew Member: Ray Turner, Stalag 17B, 3rd Alto Sax in the POW band, providing much needed entertainment for the other POWs. "Had a little fighter trouble over Gay Paree April 4, 1943. After a little spinning my tail section left the rest of the ship, so I thought I'd better get the hell out, and you know the rest. All the best for the future."

Date 7/28/43. Target: Kassel. Type AC: B-17 "Sky Queen." Crewman: T/Sgt. Howard J. Adams. "On July 28, 1943, the B-17 'Sky Queen' started on a mission to Kassel, Germany and was shot down by fighters. Our pilot was killed and the co-pilot lost control of the aircraft. All on board were killed except for the radio man and me."

Date 4/10/44. Target: Berlin. Type AC: ?? Crew Member: Paul Caskey, Vocalist, Stalag 17 Band. "Mine was a recent day in comparison to all you fellows, but April 10, 1944 was a day I'll remember. We did drop our eggs on 'Big B' anyhow and the flak ruined our ship. I'm lucky enough not to have a scratch, and the same for the rest of the crew. I have enjoyed working with you, and if you are ever out Omaha way be sure to drop in. We'll have a brew. Lots of luck."

Dick Hoffman has sent me a lot of material like the examples above, and you will read more in future reports.

Do not forget the big convention November 4-7, 1993 at Hilton Head, SC, Hyatt Regency Hotel. You can find more information about this 2ADA function in the Spring 1993 JOURNAL, pp 35-36. Hope to see you there!



B-24J at the Pima Air Museum, Tucson, Arizona (photograph taken in 1979).

A Memorable Night at Hethel

by Allen "Jack" Nye (HQ)

In addition to being the Division Radar Officer of the 2nd Air Division, I was one of the communications staff duty officers who served in the division operations room on a rotating basis during air operations. To help "keep in touch," I had installed a short wave radio receiver in my quarters which I usually kept tuned to 4495 KHz, a USAF emergency guard frequency for all aircraft and control towers.

One evening during the spring of 1944, about dusk, I entered my quarters, turned on the radio, and heard words like "Bandits, Bandits," "Mayday," and "Continue to Circle." So I trotted over to the division operations room to find out what was happening. In brief, some German aircraft, probably the radar-equipped night fighter version of the JU-88, had infiltrated with B-24s of the 389th Bomb Group which were returning from a "two-a-day" mission to France, and they were firing at B-24s in their landing pattern.

One of the damaged B-24s which was in a landing attempt barely missed the Hethel control tower, crashed into the group's consolidated radar maintenance building, and burned. There were casualties among both aircrew and ground personnel.

I don't have the details on everything that happened at Hethel that evening, so I am writing only what I recall of the radar aspects.

Sudden loss of the radar maintenance capability created a serious problem, because the 564th Bomb Squadron of the 389th Bomb Group was the 2nd Air Division's only pathfinder unit equipped with H2X (Mickey) bomb-nav. equipment. Twelve H2X-equipped B-24H aircraft had been received in mid-March, accompanied by a group of radar navigators and radar mechanics who had just graduated from the 8th Air Force's first H2X class at Alconbury base.

Our other pathfinder unit at the time was the 329th Bomb Squadron of the 93rd Bomb Group, which was equipped with British G-H bombing equipment. The G-H was extremely accurate compared with the H2X, but its use was limited to about 200 miles range because it operated in conjunction with land-based beacons in England. (The first operational use of G-H by the 8th Air Force was in an attack led by the 329th Squadron on a V-1 buzz-bomb site in France in January 1944.) Thus, the 564th Squadron was the unit which the division depended upon to lead the division for bombing through the overcast over Germany and for H2X-aided visual bombing everywhere.

To return to the narrative of that night: I resisted the urge to call for a jeep and go to Hethel; their consolidated group radar maintenance

organization led by Captain Albert Hyllass was top notch. The division's duty operations officer and I set about doing our staff work. We advised the 8th Air Force war room of the radar maintenance situation at Hethel, and said we would keep them informed. Upon inquiry to the 389th Group, we learned that Hyllass and his people were working to set up a temporary facility in the first floor of the control tower. We asked the 389th for a report on whether any of the H2X aircraft had crashed, or been damaged, or had been diverted to other bases.

The division had been alerted for operations on the following day. Major General Kepner came into the operations room for an update. Since I was not the communications duty officer that night, when he departed I called the motor pool to reserve a jeep for the morning and departed.

On the following day Sgt. Fishoff dropped me at the Hethel control tower at about 0830. Ground power units were humming next to the building. I walked toward the flight line, and behold, there were Lt. General James H. Doolittle and another officer, also in flying clothes, descending from the base operations jeep.

As I approached the small assembling group, Gen. Doolittle was saying (approximately), "The B-24s did a marvelous job yesterday on those rocket sites. The British are very grateful. Now show me your radar maintenance situation." Someone responded, "They are set up in the control tower, sir." The general strode off in that direction, and the others followed.

The pressures upon General Doolittle in early 1944 after only a few months in his 8th Air Force job were immense. After one year and a half of the American heavy bomber presence in England, General Arnold wanted some proof that high altitude daylight bombing results were worth our losses over Germany. General Eisenhower wanted the destruction of a vast array of pre-invasion targets in France. The British wanted our heavy bombers given a priority assignment to attack V weapon targets, of which over 100 had been identified, although fighter-bombers were more effective for that purpose. All efforts had been handicapped by bad weather.

In such circumstances, a general may go into the field looking for malfeasance while hoping that he may also find some heroes. In his surprise visit to the 389th Bomb Group, General Doolittle found some heroes.

2ADA Video Library Update

Five new tapes have been added to your rental library. To rent these tapes or any others from your 2ADA video library, please contact Pete Henry at the address below. New tapes are:

PLOESTI! B-24 AT WAR — SERIES II

(Excerpt from *The Air Force Story*). Famous low level and subsequent high level raids on Ploesti oil refineries in Romania. AND *B-24's Get Back* to home base after being severely damaged by flak and enemy fighters. PLUS *1986 Reunion* of Ploesti participants. (This part will be of particular interest to 44th Bomb Group Ploesti veterans.) AND *B-24 - The Forgotten Bomber* from PBS cable program "For Veterans Only."

B-24s AT WAR — SERIES II

The Mission - 44th Bomb Group mission under command of Col. Leon Johnson. AND *Report from the Aleutians* showing B-24s, P-38s, and P-39s taking off on heavily water covered runways, plus Battle of Dutch Harbor including camera action taken from inside a B-24. (*The Mission* also on 2ADA tape.)

FLYING THE BOMBERS — B-24 LIBERATOR

"King of the Skies" B-24 flew in 20 European countries, Australia, China and "over the hump" from India. PLUS *Preflight Inspection* AND *How to Fly the B-24*. (These last two subjects are also seen on 2ADA tape XII.)

THE B-24 STORY

The Willow Run Story (may also be seen on 2ADA tape XII) showing one B-24 being built every 55 minutes. AND *The Global B-24* in action from Europe through the Pacific, into India and "over the hump." PLUS *Air Siege - Ploesti*, around the clock air strikes at Ploesti including rare captured Nazi film showing havoc dealt to the German war machine.

DIAMOND LIL — FLIGHT ACROSS ATLANTIC AND TOUR OF NORWICH

Tape prepared by David Hastings, who flew in this B-24 from Texas to England and visited various 2ADA bases during the summer of '92. (Refer to cover article, 2ADA JOURNAL, Fall 1992.) Other details of tape not available as this goes to press. One tape will be available for rent from the 2ADA library and we are awaiting word about copies available for purchase.

The charge for renting these five tapes will be \$5.00 each, and they will be sent via first class mail with the request that you return them the same way as soon as possible. A complete listing of all other available tapes appears in the Spring 1993 JOURNAL, page 16.

H.C. "Pete" Henry
164-B Portland Lane
Jamesburg, NJ 08831

BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP
by
Marvin H. Speidel



Here it is June, and with it the approach of Summer. That means that November and the 2nd ADA Convention at Hilton Head are just five short months away. If you have not yet made your reservations with Evelyn Cohen, you had better get hopping. *Tempus fugit*...and you know what they say about time and the tides. Speaking of Hilton Head, and remembering what a good time we had there last time, I, with the help of Joe Soder, am planning a luncheon cruise to Daufuskie Island as part of the festivities on November 5th, which has been set aside as Group Activities Day. In order to finalize arrangements for such a cruise, it is necessary to guarantee a minimum of 30 persons. Cost of this separate 446th Bomb Group activity is not included in the 2nd ADA convention fees to be sent to Evelyn; therefore, I am asking for an immediate response from those "Buckaroos" attending the Hilton Head gathering with payment of \$38.00 per person so that I can lock this up. Please send checks ASAP, payable to Marvin Speidel, 708 Dianne Court, Rahway, NJ 07065, and thanks. If a 30 person minimum is not reached, all moneys will be refunded. Do it now so as not to be left out.

Daufuskie is a small island (3 miles by 5 miles) just south of Hilton Head, with only dirt roads, no streetlights, and few vehicles. About 90 residents comprise the permanent population that lives with the remnants of a culture that has survived for 200 years. Their economy is based on agriculture and seafood, and they still speak with traces of a unique Creole language called Gullah. Our private boat will take us cruising down Broad Creek, past some of Hilton Head's magnificent homes, providing a chance to see dolphins and colorful wading birds. Lunch on board is included, consisting of homemade chicken salad on a bed of lettuce and tomatoes, seasonal fruit salad, homemade corn bread with honey and butter, iced tea and gooey brownies. Upon arrival at Daufuskie Island, we will have a guided tour of this unique barrier island down old plantation roads, past beautiful marshlands, and with time to explore its secluded beach. We will return in plenty of time to wash up and dress for the Group Dinner in the evening, which is included in the convention costs.

Does anyone remember Dottie Minnick and Erna Sittler of the American Red Cross, who saw to it that we always had sandwiches and coffee at the debriefings after missions? Does anyone remember that they also baked little pies filled with jams of some kind, with the names spelled out with strips of dough for each member of a crew as they finished up? I recall that either Dottie or Erna was from the Kansas City area and, in that our navigator Gene Darr was also from there, when we approached our last mission he told her that we would not be happy with those measly little pies. When Charles Irwin (pilot), George Harris (waist gunner), and I (engineer/top turret) finished before the rest of our crew on August 27th, 1944, we came back to Flixton to find chocolate cakes waiting with our names on little cards. I still have the card with my name on it these 49 years later, and I can still read their signatures on my "Short Snorter." Does anyone else have a story about Dottie and Erna, or better yet, does anyone know anything of what became of them or where they might be now?

From Harold E. Brewer of Lakemore, Ohio comes more information about "White Lit'nin," which was mentioned in the Winter JOURNAL. Seems that Harold was an assistant line chief until the 705th Squadron got so many planes that he was assigned to one as its crew chief. He named the plane "White Lit'nin" because it was the first one received without camouflage, and the name meant really strong like Kentucky moonshine. He further reports that the plane had a radar dome in the ball turret well instead of a turret and that, while it was severely damaged several times, all the crews that flew her survived without being hit except for a co-pilot (name unknown) who was nicked under the eye from flak coming in under

the windshield, for which he received the Purple Heart. On one mission, damage to the nose wheel tire and the instruments was so bad that the crew that day landed at Bournemouth with its five mile runway; and Col. Cutcher, with Harold, a co-pilot named Hoven and a Sgt. Zois retrieved her later.

Herewith, a plea for help. Our crew flew several missions on some ten other planes before being assigned a newly arrived, non-camouflaged J with a painting of Donald Duck running as a halfback with a 50 caliber under his arm instead of a football, but with no name. We called it "Dodgin' Don" among ourselves, but the name was never painted on. Does anyone remember that plane, especially those who were in Squadron 706, and did anyone out there fly in it after we finished up at the end of August, 1944? With records being incomplete, the "Bits and Pieces" project of the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation lists it as serial number 42-94859 and that it crashed in France on June 12th, 1944 — WHOOPS! We were still flying "Dodgin' Don" in August, 1944. Our 446th BG History has a picture of "Dodgin' Don" on page 183 and also relates the story of #42-94859 (Squadron 705) on pages 118 to 123 under the title of "The Death of F for Fox," as a no name plane with an open shark's mouth painted on the nose that was shot down over France on June 12th, 1944 with the loss of five crew members KIA and the evasion from capture by four others while one became a POW. So much for the accuracy of records.

Richard J. Ghore of Warren, Ohio shares a letter received from Bertha Chandler in 1987 thanking him for the donation of the missions book, "A Tour of Duty in the ETO, Flying in a B-24 Liberator" to the archive collection of the 2nd AD Memorial Room at the Norwich Central Library. She tells of the value of such accounts to local high school students doing projects on the 2nd Air Division. Might be food for thought for some of the rest of us. Dick has offered to share some of the book's stories with us, and I am using his miscellaneous notes here and saving some mission reports for future issues. Dick's story:

"One mission in January 1944 was aborted due to mechanical failure. Upon takeoff Pilot McKeny and Co-Pilot Lyell discovered problems with one or more engines. As we neared the British coast McKeny realized that he could not gain altitude. Flying at an altitude of 200 to 300 feet, he ordered the bombs dropped to lighten the load. I released the bombs as soon as we were over water. Fortunately, the British ships below were not hit. McKeny then turned the B-24 and we returned to base safely — but not without sweat. On the eve of February 20, 1944, after a hearty meal of "K" rations cooked on the barracks potbellied stove, Navigator Richards and Bombardier Ghore decided to make an infrequent visit to the Officers' Club. Our crew was not scheduled to fly the next day, nor were we on standby or alert, so we did not have to be concerned about one too many or getting back late. We made our way on this pitch black night to the Officers' Club. After a few cognacs at the bar, we joined in a discussion with several other officers. Airing gripes is probably a more accurate description; I remember that all agreed that the officers were not receiving their full liquor rations. At closing time we headed back, lugging three bottles of cognac in the pitch black fog, and — you guessed it, of course. The Navigator knows a short cut. It was the blind leading the blind until a barbed wire fence zapped us. We then played the game of getting through the fence while holding three bottles of cognac. After much slipping, sliding, and falling in the mud, we finally made it. We entered our barracks around 3:00 a.m. and must have made some noise, because we were immediately the targets of a lot of name-calling and shoe-throwing. We hit the sack and blanked out. At 4:30 a.m. we were rudely awakened and informed that a last minute change had put us on the schedule for the day's mission. So, we stumbled into our clothing and struggled through breakfast and briefings for the mission — Gotha — a long one. We boarded our ship, 'Lazy Lou,' and felt much better after we were up and on oxygen. We retired early that night, and NEVER again stayed to close the Officers' Club bar."

Shutting down the Smith Corona here with the hope that I'll get to see a lot of you at both the 446th BG Reunion in Denver in October and at the 2nd ADA Convention at Hilton Head in November.

Flame Leap

by Wilbur L. Clingan

Good day to you and yours! I have another opportunity to visit with you and am happy to do so. I'll begin by asking you for a donation and hope that doesn't spoil your day.

Perhaps you read the letter in the last Newsletter from R. Cross, Head Teacher at Old Buck Primary School, in which he appeals to us for help. What I propose is that this be strictly a voluntary effort on your part, and ask that each of us who can and who is willing to send a check in the amount of \$10.00 to Frank Thomas. On your check, note that it is for the Old Buck school fund. Should you not be able to send \$10.00, send an amount you can afford, and if you want to send more than \$10.00, that would be most welcome. Please do it today so that Frank can respond to the appeal. Do not delay! Frank's address is 118 Lakeview Drive, Carlinville, IL 62626. If enough of us respond, we can contribute a significant amount and continue our close ties with Old Buck. Please?

And now, I shall ask for another contribution. This one does not involve money. Time passes, memories fade, and our ranks are growing thinner. Some of us propose to gather your remembrances and come up with a compendium of tales from Old Buck. It is not intended to compete with either *Liberator Men of Old Buck* nor with *In Search of Peace*. It could not do so; these

are classics. What is intended is for each of you to make known your own stories, your assignment, with whom you served. Willie Wilson is responsible for this, and it strikes me as an excellent idea which deserves our full support. This information would then be compiled and put together so that each of us would benefit from your own account of your time at Old Buck. We especially encourage those who were not air crew members to participate. Were it not for non-flying personnel, those who did fly would never have survived. As soon as you have written your check to Frank for the school, start on this project. More will be made known about this at Spokane and at Hilton Head, but you don't have to wait. Mail your contribution to me and/or Willie Wilson, 18951 Castlebay Lane, Northridge, CA 91326.

WELCOME! New members include: **James Mollo**, Richmond, IN; **George Wigfield**, Port St. Lucie, FL; **Melvin Foster**, Farmington Hills, MI; **Elmer Lincoln**, Reading, MA; **Duke Thurman**, Austin, TX; **Bernard La Mantia**, Delmont, PA; **David Hamlin**, Royal Oak, MI; and **Peter Poulas**, Maplewood, NJ. Regrettably, we have lost: **Frank Krakowski**, **Eugene O'Leary**, **Harry Stein**, **Ira Riggs**, **John Black**, and **H.C. Giambruno**.

Remember? In October 1944, Major Don Heaton and his 732nd (I think)

Squadron were cited by Gen. Wm. Kepner for flying 82 consecutive combat missions without the loss of an aircraft or crew member. In Sept. 1944, 92% of the 453rd airborne A/C attacked enemy targets — 80% of these were primary targets. In July '44, the 2nd CW sent 112 Libs to Gotha, Germany. Maj. Webster was command pilot for the 48 planes sent from the 453rd. Forty-five planes of ours attacked — three had aborted; no planes were lost and results were excellent. And S/Sgt. G. McCarty was our first crew member to complete his tour of duty (734th Squadron). He had two enemy A/C to his credit.

What crew sang "That Good Old Mountain Dew" just before takeoff? "Okie" Colvin wants to know. He thinks they flew "Becoming Back."

On April 22, 1944, near Edegem, Belgium, A/C #42-64490 went down while returning from a mission. If you have any knowledge of this incident, Luc Vervoort would like to hear from you. Write him at Berkenlaan, B 2520 Ranst, Belgium.

Phooey! I still have a couple of comments, but they'll have to wait. Now go write a check to Frank Thomas (if you agree), and then start on your tales of Old Buck. Diana and I look forward to meeting with you at Hilton Head. Reminder: Are you certain you have paid both your 2ADA and 453rd BG dues?

Poker, Anyone?

by Roy Hoelke (389th)

It was a great time in my young life. My combat tour was over and I was going home for Christmas!

Earlier in the week we had enjoyed a delightful Thanksgiving feast and a service held in the same church that the Pilgrim fathers used just before embarking on the Mayflower to sail to that new Plymouth in the New World.

After the usual "hurrying and waiting," we were sent to a railroad station where we boarded the train which was to take us to Southampton and our waiting ship. Headed home! It was all we could think of. All in a matter of a couple of weeks from our combat experience. Home to western Montana, blue skies, roaring Blue Creek and that magnificent super roaring Clark fork of the Columbia River!

I was completely separated from my own crew and didn't even see any other bombardiers traveling in our group.

Six of us entered a first class compartment similar to the ones that Sherlock Holmes and Watson used in those old movies which we can still see on TV.

Suddenly I realized that I was trapped in that compartment with five rough, tough and mean looking fighter pilots, all of whom had also completed their combat tours. They were a rollicking, happy lot and

it was contagious.

A rough bunch indeed — and with me locked in the compartment with no means of escape! No corridors in this coach!

We rode quietly for the most part and watched the drizzly scenery and the soggy sad looking towns as we passed by.

I'm sure that we were all thinking of home and Christmas, congratulating ourselves on our wonderful luck. I had my folks and wife and daughter Jeanie to come back home to.

Suddenly someone sighed and said, "Let's play a bit of poker!" I was happy enough just to be looking out of the window, but for some reason was amazed to hear myself say, "I can't play poker. I always lose. The officers in our crew always played hearts and I always won at that." In my oral rapture I continued, "We always played for a shilling per hand." Wow! Was that me that said that? I couldn't believe it. I rarely talk, but boy I talked too much this time!

I soon wished I was elsewhere when one sly pilot snarled, "Let's play some kinda cards." "Let's play hearts," another voice said, as a deck of cards appeared and I heard some expert shuffling sounds. An even rougher sounding voice snapped, "Let's play for a shilling a hand!"

Whoo Boy! Hoelke, you dummy, you've done it now!

One of the seat pads was flopped across my knees and shillings were anted. Now — for the honor of the heavy bombers and for the bombardiers — I HAD TO WIN!

Everything became a blur. I won that first hand, and also the following seven or so. The silence was overpowering. A hostile anti-bombardier feeling pervaded the air and even the onlookers said nothing. If the train had been a bit quieter, I'm sure that I could have heard each of them breathing.

A frustrated and strained voice finally said, "The hell with it!" The cards disappeared and the seat cushion was replaced.

We rode the rest of the way in utter silence. I finally stopped perspiring and as soon as the train stopped, I fled as far away from those five guys as I could.

Wow! What a stupid thing to have said. It was unbelievable. I consoled myself by thinking that it was an uncharacteristic thing for me to do. I rarely talk very much, but quite obviously I sometimes talk about the very wrong things! But although I'm as careful as I can be (?) I still find myself saying things that I should never be saying, perhaps never even be thinking!

I do have terrific hindsight, however. Oops, I did it again!!

466th Bomb Group

by E.W. "Bill" Nothstein

As I write this, in April, membership drops are currently the subject of notes from Evelyn Cohen. To review membership activity in 1992, we had 21 new members, 10 drops (at their request or for non-payment of dues), and 7 deceased. In 1993, thus far, I have sent letters and applications to twenty potential members. Of that number, I have gained only two, one regular member and one associate member. I would like to encourage all of you to help in the continuing search for friends, old or new, who have not yet joined our ranks. Our present membership in the 466th is 425, including associates.

Another request for information has been received by me. George McLean (93rd BG) is doing a history on the B-24 aircraft "What's Cookin' Doc?" This A/C was assigned to the 466th from June 1944 through the end of hostilities. It was one of the A/C that returned to the U.S. Anything you can add to the list of accomplishments of "Doc" may be sent to George McLean at P.O. Box 73675, Metairie, LA 70033-3675.

All of you should have received an information booklet on the 2nd Air Division history book being prepared by Turner Publishing Company. I have seen samples of the company's work, and they are very well done. One sample that I saw was on the 98th Bomb Group/Wing, with which I served for nine years. Mr. Turner was kind enough to allow me to keep it, and I have been able to read about the people and places involved

with the Wing. Turner's books are of the same high quality as John Woolnough's *Attlebridge Diaries*. It would be tremendous if all of you were to send in your biographies for publication. I should think that it would also be acceptable for an associate member to submit a biography of a husband or father. If you read the booklet, don't be dismayed by the deadline — it has been extended. This book is not intended to be about flyers only. The 2nd Air Division was composed of ground support as well as air crews; everyone contributed to the mission. I was a tail gunner who went along for the ride and never fired a shot in anger.

Charlie Herbst's diary continues below with missions 8, 9 and 10:

BRUNSWICK, MAY 4, 1944

Jamaica? is taking us back to that airfield and try and mess it all up again. Seems they are pretty persistent in rebuilding this plant. From all reports our bombardiers didn't do such a good job the first time, so back we go. The trip was fairly quiet except that the Luftwaffe came up and flew between us and a group of "Forts," trying to make up their minds which ones they would attack. They finally turned into the "Forts" and we breathed just that much easier. The "Forts" gave them a good battle, but lost a few and of course took their toll of the fighters. The "Forts" kept right on going to Berlin and did a good job. At the target we ran into

plenty of flak, but came through with only a few holes which did very little damage. The target was covered with smoke from the bombs of the groups that were ahead so that we could not see our bomb hits.

OSNABRUCK, MAY 7, 1944

We were supposed to go back to that town of Brunswick, but because of the weather we turned back a little short and hit this industrial city. It was a large railroad center and made parts for the Panzer divisions. When the navigator told us where we were headed, we expected a lot of flak. The target turned out to be fairly easy. Maybe we caught them with their pants down by changing our target at the last minute. Seems it is getting to be a habit to come into this area of Germany.

BRUNSWICK, MAY 8, 1944

Going back to that city again, not for the airfield but some heavy industry on the other side of town. We never got to the target area because of trouble with #1 engine. The prop ran away (no control so it overspeeds and becomes dangerous when it exceeds 3,000 rpm), so we had to feather it. We tried to keep up in formation, but the old girl couldn't take it with a full load of bombs. We finally turned back by ourselves, and all of us had to be twice as alert, for that is what the Jerries look for as they are usually pretty easy meat. When we landed back at the base, we found that something had cut the prop governor line.

Florida Mini-Reunion Maxi-Success

by Edward S. Schwartz (392nd)

The inaugural "Florida Regional Reunion" in February brought together members and guests totaling 300. The one-day affair was convened at the splendid Clarion Plaza Hotel in Orlando, and many attendees took advantage of the attractive hotel rate offered by staying several days, taking in the many renowned tourist attractions in the area.

The reunion-day festivities began at 1:00 PM in the spacious "Hospitality Room." A designated meeting area in the room was assigned to each Group in the Division to facilitate the meeting of fellow Group members. The impressive array of refreshments caused many to come early and stay late.

A social hour preceded the 7:00 PM dinner. A full course sit-down dinner featuring prime rib of beef was served. The program, emceed by Lawrence Gilbert, opened with an inspirational invocation by Joe Whittaker, followed by introductory welcoming remarks by our Association President, John Conrad.

The first speaker, Col. Charles McAllister, a sprightly 97-year-young "Honored Guest," told of his experiences in pilot training at Kelly Field in the early days of the U.S. Air Service when it was a part of the Signal Corps. Not one of his more pleasurable experiences was a mid-air collision with a cadet named Charles A. Lindbergh. Both

parachuted to safety and went on to more illustrious futures. The audience was as impressed with this gentleman's present-day lucidity and vigor as with his past experiences.

The next speaker, retired Brig. Gen. John Brooks, riveted the attention of the members with his description of the activities of the 2nd Air Division Scouting Force which he headed. Gen. Brooks, an original member and Group Operations Officer of the 389th Bomb Group and a Ploesti vet, helped organize the Scouting Force. Their mission was to precede the bomber stream by 30 to 40 minutes and report enroute and target weather to the bomber formation leader. The Scouting Force, ex-bomber pilots and fighter pilots flying P-51s, typically dispatched four to eight aircraft on a mission. On one sortie, Gen. Brooks bagged two (the leader and his wingman), had one probable and one damaged. His wingman destroyed three. The enemy fighter formation was demoralized and their attempted attack on the bomber fleet was broken up. For his daring action, Gen. Brooks was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award for valor in combat.

The last speaker was Tom Reilly, who supervised the restoration of the B-24 "All

American." Tom absorbed the audience in describing the many difficulties encountered in transforming a staggering pile of bits and pieces to the present mint-condition flyable aircraft. The All American was on display at a nearby airport during the reunion.

The absorbing program was brought to a close with the lusty singing of "God Bless America" by the assemblage. The Arranging Committee, taking a page from Hollywood's book, has started planning "Florida Reunion II" for February '94. Stay tuned!

446th Bomb Group 50th Anniversary Reunion

The 446th Bomb Group (B-24), Bungay, England, will hold its 50th Anniversary Reunion October 6-10, 1993 at the Marriott SE (I-25 & E. Hampden Avenue), Denver, Colorado. For further information, please contact Reunion Chairman:

Frank Bigos
13382 Wheeler Place
Santa Ana, CA 92705
Tel. (714) 832-2829

Reflections of Willow Run

by George A. Reynolds (458th)

Consolidated Aircraft Corp. began building B-24s in 1939. By '40 they were still at it in the same manner — slowly, with “bugs.” One of the more notable glitches was the nose gear.

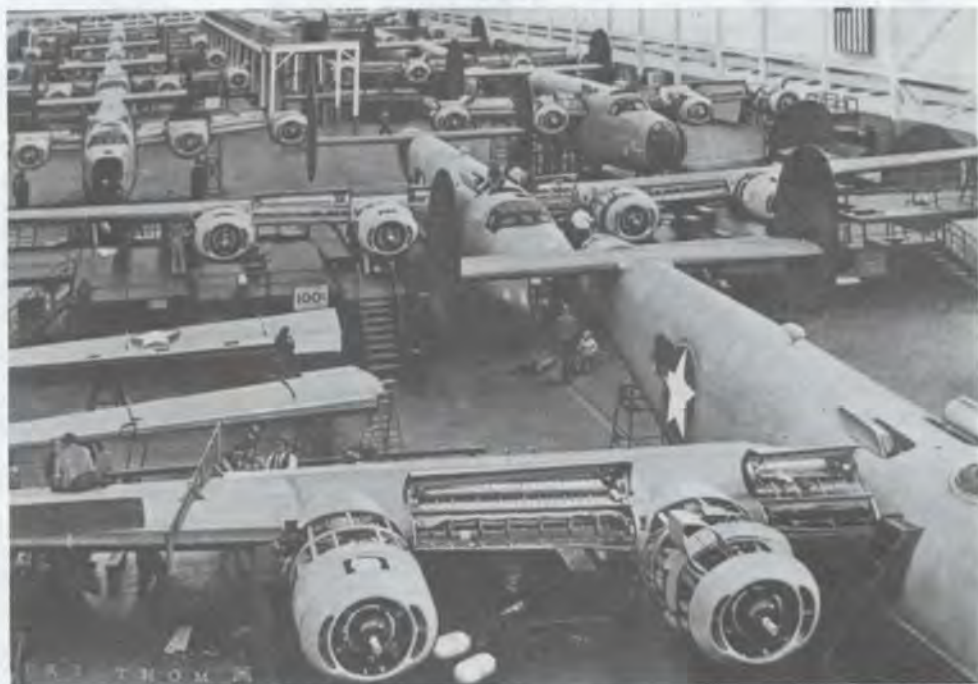
Ford Motor Co. was awarded a contract to manufacture a redesigned nosewheel assembly about the same time as troops began singing, “Good-bye, Dear, I’ll Be Back In A Year.” And the War Department was clamoring for more output from Consolidated, but to no avail. Henry Ford boasted that he could build the nosewheel with a completed B-24 attached every hour of the day using his auto assembly line technique.

Uncle Sam told him to hop to it. Henry did — later! In the spring of '41, Ford began his project 30 miles west of Detroit in a soybean field with a skimpy creek called Willow Run trickling through it. When completed in '42, the L-shape, 4.7 million square-foot building was known as “the most enormous room in man’s history.” It housed an assembly line more than a mile long, 136 conveyors, 29 miles of craneways, and 18 miles of monorails. To assemble the 1.2 million B-24 parts, two lines began where bulkheads and longerons were formed and attached to the inner wing panels/landing gear and rolled onto the lines. All components and the skin were installed down to the outer wing panels “on the move.” Then the lines merged into a single one. Last came the outer wing panels, and a completed Lib was towed outside ready to fly. Supposedly, 20,000 man-hours of assembly had been reduced to one hour of construction time.

However, a utopia had not quite arrived. The planes were being built with costly, long-lasting, hard steel dies normally used to make autos, rather than the soft dies used in aircraft production. The latter were easier to amend for design changes, and during the first production year 600 alterations were necessitated by complaints and comments from crews flying the new bomber. And in many quarters, interested bystanders were calling the undertaking “willit run.”

Henry had other problems as well before turning out a B-24 hourly. Ypsilanti, a town of 12,000 residents, was the closest to Willow Run, and didn’t have housing to meet the demands of 42,000 new workers (at its peak). Oftentimes, a single family dwelling housed as many as four families. Thus labor turnover continued to muddle things until Uncle Sam came in and built temporary housing for 14,000 workers. Then 15,000 women from the Midwest and South responded to recruiting for a more stable workforce.

By '43 Ford was still faring about like Consolidated and built only 230 B-24s. And



Robert Thom’s painting of the Willow Run assembly line is on display at the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum. Note the dwarf under the tail of the first aircraft and several “Rosies” as the outer wing panels are attached to complete another Liberator. Photo courtesy Michigan Bell Co.

neither could keep pace with required changes. Another “fix” occurred, with modification centers opening in cities like St. Paul, MN; Birmingham, AL; Dallas, TX; Oklahoma City, OK; Topeka, KS; Tucson, AZ; and Honolulu, HI.

Ford wasn’t about to give up on his boast, however. Other changes were needed and made. Another recruiting drive was launched. This time the call was for dwarfs. The little people could enter cramped areas not accessible to normal size workers. They “bucked” rivets from the backside with a metal bar in wing assemblies and close quarters of the fuselage, and installed insulation around fuel cells in the wing to reduce the risk of fire from flak. They could do inspections first-hand much faster to assure quality control since they were in closer proximity to the workpiece. Subsequent estimates indicate that the dwarfs reduced production time by at least 25 percent.

In late '44 Henry’s boast became a reality as a B-24 rolled off the line every hour of the day. Earlier, two H models well known to the 2nd Air Division left these portals to make their niche in aviation history. “Witchcraft” with the 467th BG completed 131 missions, and “Final Approach” of the 458th BG flew 123 sorties. Both of these completed more than 100 missions without an abort.

The call to cease production of Libs at

Willow Run came when number 8,685 — the “Henry Ford,” naturally — was completed 28 June 45. Consolidated had built 7,800 ships at San Diego and Ft. Worth. Douglas and North American produced about 1,000 each for a grand total of 19,000, (all versions including the PB4Y2) — more than any other type aircraft in the U.S. inventory.

After it was all over but the cheering, Willow Run reverted to a much quieter entity as an automotive transmission plant. Then Kaiser-Frazer bought the facility to build their “bombs” until '52. GM took it over next and has continued to build auto transmissions there until the present. Although Willow Run is a Michigan historical landmark officially, the plant’s fate is very much in doubt.

It seems a pity for what was once the world’s largest factory, or as Charles Lindbergh called it, “a sort of Grand Canyon of the mechanized world,” to simply fade away. For here, there was an unprecedented achievement in producing aircraft during some of the darkest days in U.S. history. Not before and certainly not since could this have been accomplished. But equally as sad, however: From the thousands of B-24s built for WWII, only 11 remain in existence.

Portions of this article were taken from an item published in the Detroit Free Press, December, 1988 and used by permission.



389th Green Dragon Flares

by Gene Hartley

BENGHAZI REVISITED

389th Bomb Group airplanes formed for a mission on flares being fired from a B-24 named the GREEN DRAGON. This Green Dragon (column) will fire flares from the past, present, and future for your interest, information, and nostalgia. If you have information or questions for this column, don't hesitate to write.

In the Winter JOURNAL, I solicited memories from men who spent time in North Africa. The response was terrific. A majority of this column, therefore, is devoted to flares from those memories.

FLARES FROM THE FLIGHT TO NORTH AFRICA

An interesting quote: "The planners for Tidal Wave must have needed more bombers in a hurry, so they sent bombers and air crews over without the maintenance personnel which was following on the Queen Mary." This quote must refer to the first 389th B-24s arriving in England (probably from Lowry). Due to this shortage of manpower, two maintenance men for each plane were detached from the 44th BG and "temporarily" assigned to the 389th. These men remained with the Group from their Hethel departure until they returned from the desert.

The 389th flew from Hethel to Portreath, near Land's End, England on July 1, 1943. In addition to the ten man crews, each plane carried maintenance people and their tools and equipment. On July 2, they were some ten hours in the air as they flew on to Oran, Algeria. The route carried them out to longitude ten degrees west, then southward to Portugal, and from there eastward through the Strait of Gibraltar to Oran. Many of the crews reported their first look at flak as they made their way through the Strait. The next day, another nine hours to Benghazi, searching from the air for a place to land. They located a couple of graders smoothing off the desert, and came on in.

FLARES FROM THE STRIP

And a strip is all that it was. The base consisted of one runway cut out of the Libyan desert. Outside of a mess tent, there was absolutely nothing there. Choking heat, high temperatures, heavy dust, a great place to go camping.



B-24 landing on desert

FLARES FROM THE LIVING QUARTERS

Sleeping quarters. Upon arriving you were issued a canvas folding cot, two GI blankets, a mattress cover (no mattress), and a mosquito netting. You teamed up with three other guys to put up a four man

tent and move in. For some, the first few nights were spent in the open on the desert. There were not enough tents available.

Slit trenches were dug around all tents. They were necessary to jump into in case of a raid. Many fell into them at night, as the nights in Africa were like, DARK.

One gunner, an adventurous soul, somehow came up with a bicycle which he rode each evening to the shower. He once ventured to Benghazi. Coming back late at night, he could not find his tent. He yelled for a tentmate, and twenty responded. He visited half the tents in the area before he found a home.

FLARES FROM THE MESS HALL

The mess was in one huge tent, catering to all ranks. You were served in your mess kit. Some of the delicacies included powdered eggs, spam, dehydrated potatoes, mutton, canned veggies, and canned fruit cocktail. One could wash it down with warm powdered lemonade. The bread may have been baked on the premises. It was a favorite food, as the cooks had tables around the outside of the tent with plenty of jam and peanut butter. All food was served with a little sand in it.

Everyone washed his own utensils in three barrels of water outside the eating area. The first barrel was soapy, and the other two were to rinse with. After a few washings, all three barrels looked the same. The last guys to eat might better let their gear go unwashed.



A favorite pastime after the evening meal was to fashion some kind of paddle, and get into the contest of swatting locusts. They flew around the mess tent in hordes at sunset. You could hear the SPLATS of the locusts hitting the paddles all over the place, and the heavy swingers counting, 101, 102, etc., etc. It is doubtful that anyone knows who might have held the record.

To make things more exciting for the diners, some GI, as he was leaving the mess tent, would kick a tent stake, which resulted in hundreds of locusts, clinging to the underside of the tent, becoming dislodged and falling into mess kits.

An old story: You can tell a rookie from an old timer by the way he acts when confronted with locusts in the mess kit. The rookie will stop eating, get up, and leave the mess tent. A short timer will remove the locusts and continue eating. The old timer cannot eat until he has a few in his mess kit, and will on occasion throw a few in his food so he feels at home.

FLARES FROM THE LATRINE(S)

The latrines were made from 55 gallon drums cut in half, and provided with a wooden seat and hinged cover made from crate lumber. To clean them, seats and covers were removed. Oil was added and ignited. When the fire burned out and there was time to cool, the seats and cover were added, and all was ready for the next day's use. It was not uncommon to look out over the desert from your tent and see many men, all ranks, contemplating their future from the top of a fifty gallon can. (As one of our contributors wrote, "Have Mercy!")

(continued on page 25)

389th Green Dragon Flares (continued from page 24)

FLARES FROM THE MEDICS

The latrines, regardless of their design, were essential. So many came down with some form of dysentery. The medics provided us with "lister bags" for safe drinking water. A "lister bag" was a bag of rubberized fabric to contain treated water. It was suspended from a tripod in the middle of the tent and had several push button taps around the base of the bag. Much chlorine was added to the water. It tasted awful. After the sun came up, it was hot enough to shave.

FLARES IN RELIEF

The only way we could get cold water or ice was to fill empty metal ammo boxes with water, load them in bomb bays, and go for a "training flight" over 20,000 feet with bomb bay doors cracked open. After an hour or so, we would have our ice. On occasion, the cook would load up a B-24 with cases of fruit juice to take aloft for ice cold drinks.

The call goes out, heading for the beach; all bathers get with the program. You ride a few miles to the beach, have a few hours splashing around, and return to the base to line up for chow and more locust bashing. That night, you can't sleep, the salt tightens up your skin, you itch and wonder from where all the fleas have come. The next day, another call for the beach, but only one guy goes.



Take a shower? Sure! Walk about two miles each way and by the time you get back, you're dirty.

FLARES FROM THE SCORPIONS

They were a constant hazard. As long as you checked your shoes before putting them on in the morning, you'd be all right. Many are

of the opinion that the name, 389th SKY (or FLYING) SCORPIONS, resulted from the battles our guys had with the things. It is probably quite true.

One of our contributors suggests that he may have had a small part in the Group being named SKY SCORPIONS. One night, a scorpion got under his netting and gave him a couple of whacks. The co-pilot of Kenneth Caldwell was whacked that same night. Kenneth had Felix Dunagan paint a big scorpion on his plane and named it THE SCORPION. Another plane was named the SKY SCORPIONS. Subject to space, three different pictures of a "SCORPION" plane will appear in a future 389th Newsletter.



Briefing and theater area

THE BENGHAZI FLARES CAME FROM...

Paul Burton, Bud Doyle, Felix Dunagan, Cal Fager, Ray Nathe, Andy Opsata, Ben Walsh and Earl Zimmerman who provided the material for this column. Pictures were taken by Earl Zimmerman. Thanks, guys! I hope the rest of you have enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

FLARES FROM REUNIONS

We are holding a Northeast Mini-Reunion in the Catskills of New York even as this JOURNAL reaches you. Then we will meet at Hilton Head in November. At that time we will have our annual business meeting. I'll bring us up to date on the status of our Memorial Room in the Hethel Tower, the nominating committee will report, we'll discuss any thoughts our members might have, and we will determine a location for a 1994 mini-reunion of the 389th. If you have a suggestion as to a location, and are willing to help in the planning, please be in touch.

Anxious Gunner

by Robert Bocek (93rd)



It was on the twelfth mission to Weiner-Neustadt, deep into enemy territory, that the "Dogpatch Raiders" flew. It was one of those long ten-hour, high altitude, sub-zero flights.

All stations with guns were checking the guns for trouble-free operations. Being the radio operator, I was enjoying the repartee of the intercom stations. After a few hours, the instruction to maintain silence was given by pilot Russell Longnecker. The Dogpatch Raiders were ready for the target and the enemy fighters.

As we were approaching the target in our plane echelon, I could see over the pilot's shoulder that we would fly through a thick concentration of enemy anti-aircraft artillery surrounding the target.

While on the bomb run with the bomb bay doors open, our ship rocked severely. It felt like a flak hit. After the bombs were

dropped and pictures of the target were taken, the doors began to close.

P.A. Martin, engineer, left the top turret and told me to take it while he went back to inspect any hits we might have encountered.

Seeing enemy fighters at nine o'clock, I spun the twin 50s around in the direction of the enemy fighters. One broke off and started towards us. Being anxious for action, I gave short bursts and continued to follow him around to about three o'clock, shooting continually now. All of a sudden, a voice over the intercom I identified as Leigh Claflin, our waist gunner, shouted, "I'll be damned if I want to be shot down by our own man!" It seems the interruptors on the top turret malfunctioned, and as I swept across the tail firing, I was hitting our twin stabilizers with the twin 50s.

Fortunately, no extensive damage was done. I felt like reporting a partial hit.

A Day To Remember

by Jim Maris (392nd)

August 3rd was briefed as a "NO BALL" mission that we expected to be a milk run. We were assigned an alternate airplane called The Fords Folly, and departed Wendling at 4:00 p.m. We penetrated the coast at 23,000 feet, and the lead bombardier missed the target. Since we had had no flak or fighters, he elected to take the group around for another run on the V-1 launch site that was our target.

This allowed the enemy to activate several batteries of mobile anti-aircraft guns, and as we passed over the I.P. (initial point), they started firing on the 392nd. Our wing men later told us that the first burst of four exploded 300 feet low and behind us. The next burst of four took us out of the lead of the lower element. They said our B-24 disappeared in a cloud of smoke and they could see it being blown up and over on its back above the formation. I had set up the Minneapolis Honeywell electric auto pilot on standby earlier in the mission, and with the aircraft inverted and badly damaged, I activated the auto pilot, which righted the B-24 and gave us a chance to assess the damage. One engine was gone, another was running away with the controls severed, and the third was sitting out there stripped of its cowlings, supercharger blown away, but still running. A heavy odor of aviation fuel permeated the cockpit, and all electrical systems were deactivated.

The recovery was accomplished at 18,000 feet on a westerly heading, approaching the coast. Since we had been hit along the coast where the swimmers cross the channel at its narrowest point, the cockpit crew elected to attempt to get back to England, rather than bail out over France. The flight engineer was told to go to the various stations and tell them to prepare for the crossing by throwing out everything that we could toss. They were to then rig parachutes at the waist windows to use for airbrakes upon landing, if we could make it back to a field in England.

As we became stable, I finally managed to feather the runaway engine. Later we found the only control out to the runaway engine that wasn't severed was the circuit to the feathering pump. We calculated that with the rate of descent we had established, we should come over the English coast with about 2,000 feet of altitude remaining. We then approached the Continental Coast; more flak hit our limping B-24 which sustained more damage. The waist gunner came forward to tell us that the right wing had a hole big enough to drop a man through, and the fuel cells in that area were ruptured and dumping fuel. This allowed fuel to follow the spars into the fuselage and was the reason we were experiencing the fuel in the cockpit area.

Two Spitfires came into formation with us, signaling that we should follow them. We gave them a thumbs up, and continued throwing everything loose out of the airplane. Some of our wing men had punched the emergency channel when they saw us recover and head for England. They had requested help for us, so that German fighters couldn't pick us off on our way back.

We were at 1800 feet as the Spits led us

over the coast of England, near the mouth of the Thames River. We could see a dark black column of smoke ahead, and we assumed the British had lit a tire fire, which they sometimes did to mark a field to help to burn off fog. The smoke was rising from Manston, the crash recovery base near the British coast. The Spits peeled off with a waggle of their wings, and we started to prepare for landing. The flight engineer and the crew in the nose released the lock and kicked out the nose gear. They then went back to the bomb bay to crank down the mains. They rigged a safety device out of parachute harnesses, and one at a time they'd go out in the bomb bay and crank until they would nearly pass out from the raw fuel and fumes. The cranker would be pulled back in and another crew member would go out into the bomb bay and crank. On downwind we were down to about 900 feet and the gear was not clear down. One of the crew was at the rear of the cockpit keeping me informed of the progress.

The crew in the rear portion of the aircraft had rigged the parachutes in the waist windows and had sat down with their backs against the crash belt. Turning on base, I glanced out the left side window and was alarmed to see that the column of black smoke was from a B-24 that had crashed about halfway down the recovery runway. In the cockpit the bombardier, navigator, top turret gunner and flight engineer had assumed their crash positions, immediately behind the pilots' seats. Turning on final approach, I had to allow for no flaps, damaged wing surface, no hydraulics, and a cockpit full of gas fumes. The B-24 had been at altitude for several hours and the outer surfaces were deeply chilled.

When the B-24 passed through 400 feet, the windows clouded up with condensed moisture and immediately froze in a thin covering of ice. Forward visibility was immediately cut off, and I immediately threw open the small weather window on the left and reached out, getting one good scrape across the corner of the windshield. I didn't recall this action, but Herb, the navigator, described the instant response later as the crew was debriefed.

Peeking through the iced windshield and judging height with glances out the side, I brought the B-24 in on the crash recovery runway. There were no brakes and the tires were losing air, but the B-24 tracked straight and rolled to a stop just a few feet short of the burning B-24. The crew had been well drilled on evacuation, and as the pilots shut everything down they went out through the bomb bay. As I ducked down out of the bomb bay, I ran into the crew waiting to see if everyone was getting out. I yelled, "Run before it blows!" and they took off like they were shot.

About 200 feet down the runway, we stopped and turned to look at the dying B-24 that had so valiantly brought us home. Fuel was dripping from the wings and the fuselage, and the tires were now flat. The wing had a hole through it big enough to drop a man through, and later we counted eighty-five holes from nose to tail. Our guardian angel must have been riding with

us, since not a crew member had been hit. We did have several suffering from gas fume inhalation, extreme soreness from extensive cranking on the main gear, and I was in a state of nervous stress from the pressures of the last couple of hours. Captain English, the officer in charge of the crash crew, debriefed the crew and complimented them on a job well done. The medical staff asked everyone to go to the infirmary for checkups and a night of rest.

In the dressing room where the crew was removing their flying clothes, flak vests, etc., the doctor stopped me and asked to check my badly bruised left side. I had repeatedly been checking my left side for signs of blood on the flight over the Channel, because I felt like I'd been hit by something. The flak vest was checked; one of the steel squares near the bruised area was badly bent and in the cloth near the bent piece of metal was a small piece of flak shrapnel. When checking the B-24 the next day, a hole in the left side of the cockpit was identified as where the shrapnel had penetrated the aircraft and hit me in the side. Fortunately the flak vest had stopped its travel, because the doctor said it would have gone on to my heart if it had not been stopped by the small square of steel. I kept the small piece of the flak vest and the shrapnel, and they're a part of my collection of memories from my B-24 days.

The crew was worried about Blondie, and I called the 392nd asking them to feed our mascot and to please not strip our Quonset, for we were in fact okay and would be back to base in a day or so, as soon as they would release us. There was a B-24 that had been repaired that needed to be taken back to Norwich, and I had said our crew would take it back.

We settled down in the infirmary to try to sleep, and soon the nurse came in and asked us all to put on our robes and follow her out into a revetment at the building's rear. She explained that the Germans sent their V-1 planes over every night at the same time, and they'd be over the coast at 11:30 p.m. Sure enough, the sky lit up at 11:30 p.m., and to the west we could see the searchlights lighting up the V-1 as it crossed the coast. Anti-aircraft fire was tracking the V-1 as it approached the airfield. About this time, a battery of four anti-aircraft guns in the revetment next to the one we were in started firing and frightened us all more than the day's mission had. Suddenly a green flare was fired, guns ceased firing, and an unfamiliar whine filled the air.

Flashing into the cone of light was a twin-tailed airplane like one we had never seen. It appeared to have no propellers, and the strange high-pitched whine continued. The sleek twin-tailed fighter moved into close formation with the V-1, and when properly positioned, the pilot raised his wing up under the wing of the V-1, upsetting the gyros of the V-1 auto pilot, and it immediately went into a spiral, crashing out on the airfield with a roar that sent us all down to the dirt behind the revetment wall. Enough was enough; we all retreated to the infirmary and were given something to help us sleep. The 3rd was certainly a day we'd all remember.

Prelude to a Mission

by John W. Archer
(An English friend from Earsham)

Many stories have been written about the bomber aircraft and their crews, their experiences, and the historic, brave, or unfortunate episodes of WWII. One subject not dealt with in any great detail in the aftermath of the war is the trial of the bomber crew leading up to the climax of a mission. The following description is based upon an account of the life and times of a unit of the 8th Air Force. The 446th Bomb Group (H), a B-24 Liberator unit, was flying missions out of Flixton Airfield in Suffolk in 1943 to 1945. It was a typical heavy bomb group in East Anglia, and its airmen experienced many of the feelings common to other crews throughout the war.

Usually if there was to be a mission on the next day, the crews would have the word by mid-afternoon. This sort of took the joy out of the rest of the day, but it was not as bad as those days when no decision was made either way until late in the evening. Then it seemed impossible to go to sleep even though wake-up time might be as early as 2:00 a.m.

Over the officers club bar at Flixton there were three lights. Red indicated that a mission was "on," green indicated no mission, and amber implied no decision had been made yet. Worse, no liquor could be dispensed at the bar until the green light came



on. On the days when the amber light stayed on until after the evening meal, all would sit around the club waiting it out. If and when it turned to green, every man rose and walked to the bar. Here the barman poured Scotch steadily until it was finished. Scotch was limited, and without a lost motion he would switch to gin. They drank it all; the day's ration was not large.

There was no demonstration of exuberance at the green light. All would, for a time, be quiet. It was a powerful feeling — there was at least one more day to live, guaranteed. At the same time it did not bring joy to the flyers; each knew that so many more missions remained to be completed, and putting it off one day didn't gain anything. And even though postponed, it was not possible to sleep well.

When the red light came on — the mission light — all the crewmen retired as early as they felt possible. At the appointed hour the watch officer awakened each man individually, called his name and made certain

he was fully awake, and was the right man. The only information he could tell them was the gas load — nothing else. If 2,300 gallons, it was good — a short mission. If 2,700, that was bad — it meant deep penetration into Germany. At 2,500 gallons, though halfway between, there was some slight relief.

The aircrew walked or rode bicycles to breakfast, consisting of the inevitable dried eggs, marmalade, and coffee. Diet was watched to avoid foods that caused distension at high altitudes. Then things began to run on a schedule of sorts. Trucks whisked them off to the briefing, where the job of putting on flight gear began. Once dressed, and with every item carefully checked, it was on into the briefing room. Once in, nobody was allowed out until the briefing was completed.

Dominating the briefing room was the great map board, possibly four meters square. This included all of the territory within possible range of the Group. It was covered by a curtain until the last man arrived and was checked off. The incoming crews always looked at the size of the ball of string unused and hanging behind the board. The larger the ball, the shorter the mission. At the spot on the map indicating their own field, Flixton, a red string was pulled through a hole and strung around pins stuck in the map to define the full flight path of the mission.

Briefing began with uncovering the map. Sometimes this was a very bad moment. All the areas on the map where heavy flak was anticipated were overlaid with red cellophane. Sometimes it appeared that the string did not miss any of those areas. Actually, however, the indication of a large flak area did not mean inevitable destruction — heavy concentrations of flak were scary as hell, but the box-barrage or the sky-filling smoke puffs were not as dangerous as one very eager four-gun battery.

Briefing took a long time; there was a lot of information to be disseminated. Nature of the primary and secondary targets... the



Main Briefing

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Chaplain Father Joseph B. Murphy blesses the crew (Catholics) of "Tar Heel Baby" before a mission.

targets of opportunity...the weights and types of bombs (bad to carry the incendiary clusters; big G.P.s were safest)...the fighter cover...where to rendezvous...altitudes for each unit...radio call signs and procedures. Each of the specialist officers would present his information. Finally, what to do if damaged; if there was a possibility to make neutral Sweden or Switzerland; all this was covered.

The numbers of wings, groups, or squadrons attacking each target, if several, was all to be understood. There were probably two hundred or more important little details to each mission, and knowing but one might save the crew from disaster.

After the general briefing of the officers and men, the pilots, bombardiers, navigators, and radio operators were given short, special briefings by the strike echelon or intelligence section. All others went to their waiting airplanes and began checking over everything, even though the ground crew had gone over them previously. Eventually all of the airmen would arrive at their assigned bombers and, if all had gone well to that point, the control tower would fire a flare at the scheduled time to start engines.

There were often delays. Sometimes there would be a delay after engines had been started and burned a considerable amount of fuel. On occasion it had been known for a mission to be scrubbed even as the first bomber was on his takeoff run. A scrubbed mission was a disappointment; even if it was a bad target, it was still resented. A lot of the sweating occurs before being airborne, and anyway, it would likely be the same target a day or so later.

Takeoff would be in squadron order, lead crew first. A pilot's position in the formation had already been allocated during the briefing. The climb to the assembly position was always difficult, especially in the winter months. Lifting off at thirty second intervals, a thirty-six plane formation would take eighteen minutes to get off

the ground. With an overcast, and it was often there, the group would fly on instruments to reach the tops of the clouds. The higher the tops, the worse the forming would be.

One time, due to the tops of the clouds being very high, the Group assembled at 17,000 feet. At this altitude, fully loaded, it was very easy to stall a B-24 on the inside of a formation turn. At times, one or more of the big bombers would abruptly depart downwards, disappear into the clouds and not show up again for half an hour.

Flying a "racetrack" pattern within close range of the home base for two hours was not uncommon, or conducive to relaxing tension. There were many airfields situated in the area of 446th B.G. and when arriving

on top one could see airplanes everywhere, with many groups forming up at the same time in an area twenty or thirty miles square. This was especially so if one was in the last airplane off the runway. It was very easy, in the beginning, to mistake one's group leader. The group leader would fire flares of a certain color and the squadron leaders would fire different colors. By this method some particular leader could be singled out. Often, in the confusion, some bombers would wind up in the neighboring group.

As the formation began to appear complete, the Group took its position in the Wing formation and the Wing, in turn, in the Division. Such a bomber stream would take half an hour to cross a point on the coast.

The ordinary GP (general purpose) bomb was the most desirable to carry, since it was fairly safe against explosion in the bomb bay. One pin in each bomb was pulled by the radio operator shortly before the beginning of the run over the target. Another pin, attached to the arming wire, was fastened to the rack so it would be pulled when the bomb left the airplane. In addition, a small propeller on the nose fuse must revolve a couple hundred times in the airstream until it was duly armed. Lastly, the bomb must strike something very hard. Thus, in spite of the fact that the arming propellers would revolve as soon as the doors opened (and probably had their work done well before release), the GP bomb was not likely to "go." It was a worrying experience, nevertheless, coupled with the assumption that the impact resulting from a bomb striking a bomb-bay door would set it off.

The small incendiary bombs were a different story. A piece of flak could set them off, and a drop could not always be accom-

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Ground crew load "big one" (2,000 lbs) at Flixton Airfield.

Division Headquarters

by Ray Strong

I am writing this in mid-April and have just received the Spring JOURNAL. It contains all the information about registering for the 2ADA November reunion. Those of you who haven't been to a reunion lately, now is the time! Hilton Head is a great place, and we had a great time a few years ago at this same hotel. Hilton Head is easy to get to. Those of you in the eastern part of the country, just get on one of those big interstates and you will be there before you know it. Those flying can go to Charleston and connect direct to Hilton Head. Or, if you prefer, you can fly to Savannah and take a van to Hilton Head. I would like to see the largest HQ contingent ever to attend a reunion!

Since I have run short of material for the JOURNAL, I thought that I would put down some thoughts of my own about my experiences at HQ, particularly about the Adjutant General (AG) Section. I have great memories of the really outstanding people who worked in the AG Section — even though many of the names escape me.

In October 1942, having just graduated from OCS, about 100 new second lieutenants were put aboard a small Puerto Rican "banana boat" in New York, without escort, bound for Liverpool. After eight days of very rough weather in the North Atlantic and being seasick the whole time, I barely had enough strength to drag my gear off the ship to a waiting train. After what seemed an eternity, the train arrived in London and we were put aboard 2½ ton trucks for the trip to "Pinetree" at High Wycombe. Upon arrival, about a dozen of us were put aboard another 2½ ton truck for a cold overnight ride to Norwich. We arrived the next morning at Old Catton, the temporary HQ of the 2nd Bombardment Wing, as filler personnel for the fledgling unit.

My first assignment was as Assistant to the Assistant Chief of Staff, Major (later Colonel) Frederick Bryan. My primary job, other than running errands for Major Bryan (I had been issued a bicycle), was to maintain a progress chart on the construction status of each of our 14 bomber bases as the British were working very hard to build runways and put up Nissen huts for living quarters, messes, administrative offices, etc. Although not complete, Shipdham and Hardwick were already partially occupied.

After a few weeks, HQ, 2nd Bombardment Wing was moved to Horsham St. Faith, still partially occupied by the RAF. With the Wing growing fast, I was assigned as Assistant Adjutant under the legendary George L. Paul, a regular army Master Sergeant, who was given a direct commission when the army began to expand.

Headquarters stayed at Horsham until December 1943, when it moved to Ketteringham Hall. During that time, it was upgraded to become the 2nd Bombardment Division, and later to 2nd Air Division

when fighters were assigned. Brigadier General James P. Hodges became a Major General. This was a period of tremendous growth of the Division as more bases were occupied by newly arriving Bomb Groups. The Groups were flying more missions, and Division HQ was developing better general and special staff sections in order to be of more help to the Groups and Squadrons. The Wing Adjutant became the Division Adjutant General (AG), and the AG Section was organized into several subsections. I was assigned to head up the Battle Casualty Section. I had outstanding help from Harry Futor and Marie Cizek, and several other great enlisted men and women whose names, in my old age, I cannot remember. (Harry, how about giving me some help!)

While at Horsham, we never had nearly enough men to do the work. However, when the WACs arrived, they were a lifesaver for HQ, especially the AG Section. It is difficult to imagine how HQ would have functioned had it not been for these women. With the Division growing to five Combat Bomb Wings, fourteen Bomb Groups, and a Fighter Wing with five Fighter Groups, the complexity of control, supervision, coordination, and assistance which HQ provided to these units increased dramatically. At its peak, the Division had a strength of 55,000 men and women, and if I remember correctly, almost 200,000 passed through its units during the almost three years of its existence.

At Ketteringham, we occupied most of the Hall. The Boileau family still lived in one wing. The Commanding General (CG) and a few senior staff officers lived in the house with their own small mess. Our beloved John "Gus" Karoly saw to the comforts of those living in the Hall. The rest of us lived in Nissen huts not far away. Also in the main house were the offices of the CG, the Chief of Staff, and the AG, across the front of the second floor. And the War Room, the A-2, and A-3 sections were located in the Hall. The Signal Section and a few other functions were performed in the attached buildings, but administrative functions such as A-1 and A-4 and the special staff sections were in Nissen huts.

After turning the Battle Casualty Section, which was in one of those Nissen huts, over to Clyde Rine, I moved to the room over the main entrance to the Hall. Also working in that room were George Paul, Billie Ash, Barry Colvin, and Marilyn Fritz. The AG was to ensure that all incoming correspondence, orders, publications, etc. were distributed to the concerned staff sections and that any action or outgoing communications were properly coordinated with all staff sections concerned. And the AG was charged with being certain that any correspondence going up or down the chain of command did indeed represent the wishes of the CG. The AG issued all general and special orders. In addition to the Battle Casualty Section, we had (I think) the

Official Files Section, Publications and Distribution, Top Secret Control, Postal Officer, and, just yesterday I received a letter from J.W. (Jimmy) Tune, who reminded me that he worked in the Mail and Dispatch Section with Frank Verduzco, Tony Aromando, Joe Strickom, and Armand Beregon.

I'm certain that I have forgotten something. And I can't remember the names of a lot of those great people; such as Jim Coulthard, Livingston Jones, Harry Snyder, Sid Piper, Bill Jenkins and Jack Klepper. But I wish that any of you, especially those of you who worked in the AG Section, would send me your comments, tell me what you did in the AG Section, and remind me of some of the names that I can't remember. It would be great if someone would send me an organizational chart of the AG Section and perhaps a roster. If I have left something out, I apologize. Let me hear from you and set me straight.

Now that I have done what I have been asking you to do, I hope that each of you will sit down and write up your own reflections of your time at 2AD HQ. It is not that hard. Just sit down and start. It can even be in longhand. We need more documentation of the duties and activities (and non-duty activities) published for posterity. I know that a lot of you have been intending to do this. Now is the time!

Prelude to a Mission

(continued from page 28)

plished in time. Further, a bomb hang-up in the shackles was a nightmare. Once in a great while this would happen; the shackle would not release. If all efforts to release failed, one had the choice of bailing out, hopefully near home, or gambling on a safe landing. A rough landing might loosen the bomb, which then followed the bomber down the runway doing football-type bounces, and creating considerable nervousness for everyone in the vicinity. This happened once in the 446th BG, but no one was hurt except a couple of airmen who jumped off the control tower observation deck as the bomb came hopping down the field.

Many crew members became very superstitious in these times, and grasped at all sorts of psychological straws to bolster courage. Serious afterthought has led to the conclusion that fear was the driving force which made it possible to go willingly — apparently — to risk their lives on repeated missions. The fear of being regarded as a coward by one's fellow men, whom they scarcely knew, was truly greater than death; and this was neither reasonable or ennobling.

Men who have never had the experience have wondered if they *could* do such things, but only those who actually went out on the missions ever found out.

Folded Wings

44th

Walter Cohn
Robert J. Fadeley
Don L. Hart
Harm J. Krull (466th)
Marion A. Williams

389th

William J. Bour
Tom S. Garrison
Kenneth J. McGee
Col. Robert G. Stoner, Ret. (453rd, 93rd)
Lester D. Walton

392nd

C.R. Bishop
Alexander A. Quaglietti

445th

James F. Biggins

446th

Burt M. Aukerman

448th

David O. Anthony
Collis H. Carlee (489th)
Dale L. Emlet
Albert F. Kolb (491st)
Walter L. Maddox
Howard L. Morton

453rd

John L. Black
H.C. Giambruno
Eugene O'Leary
Lt. Harry Stein, Ret.

458th

Julian L. Friedman
Robert W. Morford
William Patak
Theodore W. Urbano

466th

Kenneth W. Kelly

467th

Leonard Alberts
James H. Boisseau

489th

Wendell R. Buck

491st

Walt Boychuk
Don E. Ferguson
Paul H. LeFave
Louis Meyer, Jr.

492nd

Sigmund E. Grudzinski

HDQ

William R. Owmbey

How I Learned To Love The B-24

by Joe Sirotnak (458th)

The best thing about May of that year was that it was graduation time from Advanced Flight Training at Pecos Army Air Field in Pecos, Texas. It wasn't that flying around in those twin engine Cessnas with the fabric covered fuselage was all that terrible. It was just that in that period of history, Pecos, Texas was at the end of the road. And a dirt road at that.

Just think about this. In the ten weeks I was there, the most eventful occurrence in Pecos was the arrival in town of a run-down carnival whose biggest attraction was an exotic dancer of relatively ample proportions and of mature age. I guess she'd been around, but yet, she had it all: dandruff, athlete's foot, pimples... She had everything.

I digress. Graduation had come and gone. Now, I stood in front of a bulletin board with my shiny new wings giving off a sparkle in the bright desert sunshine. I pondered my fate. Since I had excelled in stupid and unorthodox maneuvers, surely, I would be given an assignment accordingly.

My gaze went up and down the assignment orders, and finally, I found my name. Then I looked at the top of the page. "B-17 Transition Training." B-17!! Now I knew the *what*. But how about the *where*? Yuma Army Air Base, Yuma, Arizona. Yuma, Arizona!! I had not cried since I was seven, but right then I was close to tears. Back to the desert!

After a short leave, I arrived in Yuma in early June. They were having an unseasonal cool spell. The thermometer outside the railroad station showed 102°!! Well, while I was waiting for transportation to the field, I walked through the center of the town — all four blocks. What a country!

Yuma Army Air Field was, primarily, a gunnery school for the young airmen who would eventually man the .50 cal. weapons and turrets aboard the thousands of bombers flying missions all over the world. Most of our B-17 training was done while flying groups of students on air to air gunnery practice missions. The training mostly involved the firing of live ammo at a sleeve target that was towed by a B-26.

I became friendly with a couple of those B-26 pilots. Let me tell you that they were not thrilled with their job at all, and that's putting it mildly. It seems that every so often they would land with holes in their aircraft put there by some over-eager gunnery student. Not long before, the pilot of one B-26 had to bail out when a student went off the deep end and strafed their ship from tail to nose.

Anyway, it was now July and daytime temperatures could be reaching 115°. Gloves were standard issue, as it was impossible to touch anything around the aircraft without them. And that's how I learned to drink tequila.

As I hinted above, there was not much to the town. A string of cantinas made up the major part of the entertainment complex. During this time of booze rationing, tequila was the featured beverage. Because of the town's proximity to the border, it probably all came over from Mexico. We accepted the tradition of drinking it neat with the pinch of salt off the back of the hand. For the sissies there was also the wedge of lime. This tequila was great stuff. I believe they blended it with some gasoline to soften the bite of the sulfuric acid and make it more palatable.

Anyway, we figured out why there was this predilection for the tequila. When the temperature gets to 115°, you imbibe of a beverage which feels like 180° as it slides down, and now you are burning up inside so 115° can feel pretty cool outside by comparison. Not bad.

Well, we continued to fly our daily gunnery practice missions. The airplanes we were using were well worn and not really in great shape. We landed twice with a prop feathered. We had landing gear problems, and we almost had to come in on the belly one time. But most days were routine.

The end of July approached and it seemed like it was getting hotter, although we were assured by the weather wizard that this was not the case. I was using two and sometimes three uniforms each day. The tequila seemed better, but I thought the salt or the lime was ruining my gut. Then, the "Notice" appeared on the Headquarters bulletin board.

Pilots were needed to make up crews to fly the B-24s. Volunteers would get immediate transfer to Westover Field, Springfield, Massachusetts. Massachusetts!! I mentally reviewed my geography. I felt sure that there were no deserts in Massachusetts. B-24?? I had only seen pictures of them. I asked some of my fellow pilots about this airplane. Typical comments were as follows:

"Are you nuts?"

"You've been into the tequila too often."

"You know what they call them? Flying coffins."

"You gotta have a death wish."

So with all of this encouragement I was to persevere. I rushed to the orderly room to try to avoid some of the crush. There was one daring flyer ahead of me — I was the second to sign up. I was also the last. I had no idea so many of these guys loved the desert so much.

Some days later I arrived at Westover Field. Green grass! Trees! Temperature 74°! Rain! And then I got to see my first B-24 up close. I looked her over with wonder and thought, "What an ugly looking bird."

"But I love ya!"

She had everything.

And the rain kept coming down.

Out of Gas?!

by Clifford B. "Dusty" Rhodes (453rd)



It was a bad day to start off with. Over there you never flew a thirteenth mission. You flew number twelve, and then twelve B; if twelve B was scrubbed, you flew twelve C and so on. Then you flew your fourteenth. Part of the crew were flying their thirteenth and the rest were flying their thirteenth lead mission. I believe there were thirteen men and thirteen parachutes on board. I also believe there were some more thirteens included. Walt Cullen, the pilot, had a premonition and told me. I gave the plane a thorough inspection trying to find something to ground it for. I couldn't find a thing. We took off and when I exercised the bomb bay doors some water had frozen in the track and they wouldn't close. This caused considerable drag, which used our fuel up faster. When we returned to England we were low on fuel and the island was socked in. We flew around for a while and finally found a hole to come down through. I was trying to level the gas tanks, and was pumping from a high to a low tank and to both engines on that side. I thought I heard someone on the intercom say we were six miles from the base and flying a straight line to the runway. I must have heard wrong, for we were farther than that. At six miles I figured I had time to go back and check the landing gear and get back to the transfer pumps on time. We were farther than that and before the landing gear went down the pumps had pumped the tank dry and were pumping air to the two engines.

We were lucky for where we hit was a tree

farm. The trees were from five to seven feet high and about 1½ inches diameter at the ground. It was like landing on a sofa pillow. Ahead, behind, and on either side was rough ground that would have splattered us. We all walked away from it although four of the crew members were injured. Cullen's seat belt broke and he was thrown across the plane. The throttles hit his kidney on the way, damaging it enough to ground him.

The radio and radar equipment were jammed against the bottom of the top turret, pinning Fournier in the turret. The plane was threatening to catch fire. We later found that the bucket wheel of the supercharger (which was red hot) was scorching some tree limbs and throwing out a helluva smoke. There was no way for Fournier to get out except through the top of the turret. There is no way to tear the dome off of the top turret, for it is perfectly smooth and nothing to get a grip on. I still don't know how I did it but I did. I guess it is one of those things you do in a moment of stress and can never figure out how you did it. I finally got him worked out of the turret, but he had badly wrenched his knee somewhere along the line.

A few days later, I found that Capt. Seavers, the operations officer, was blaming me for the crash and had filed for a court martial. I knew that it was my error but I felt I had done what any other engineer would have done under the same conditions.

I was a little hot under the collar when I went down to talk to him, and very much

scared after we had talked. We had run out of gas with our auxiliary tanks still full. I was the one who was supposed to transfer it from the auxiliary tanks to the main tanks. He asked me why I didn't do it. I told him I thought I had done it. I had gone through the transfer procedure. He asked me if I had checked the transfer pump. I told him I hadn't for the bomb bay doors were frozen open and I didn't want to go out in the air blast to check it (the transfer pump was located in the center of the bomb bay catwalk) but that I had felt of the hoses and they were vibrating which would indicate they were pumping gas.

When they had brought the stuff in from the plane they had pulled the fuses and brought them in. He brought out the fuses. The fuel transfer pump was the only one that size and it was blown. Capt. Seavers dropped the charges. I have had a lot of addresses during my lifetime, but that little blown fuse kept Leavenworth from being one of them. I kept that fuse for a long time but somewhere along the line I lost it.

While it was my goof that caused the crash, the crew didn't hold it against me, and I could still hold my head up and look myself in the face when I shaved.

Del Wangsvick was the senior man on the crew and he put Cullen and Jack Dean (the co-pilot) in for the DFC for landing the plane in such a way that we all walked away from it. It was disallowed because a crew member caused it. After we got it straightened up, Del resubmitted it and they got their DFCs.

489th Notes

by Neal Sorensen

A personal note: Our deepest gratitude to all of you wonderfully thoughtful 489ers and wives for the telephone calls and notes of encouragement to my wife, Pat, during and after her hospital stay. Defying medical logic, her diabetic foot wound is now fully healed!!! Thank you, one and all. You are wonderful.

The most pressing request which you have passed along to me and the other officers of the 489th Group is to have more time available for group activities and getting together at reunions. After the Las Vegas Convention there were so many of you that I wanted to visit with, but could not due to the shortage of time. On pages 35 and 36 of the Spring 1993 2ADA JOURNAL you will note that for a cost of \$80.00 per night, we can extend our time at Hilton Head. If you would be interested in an additional day devoted strictly to 489th activities, please call any of the following: Neal Sorensen at (612) 545-2698, Charlie Freudenthal at (703) 560-6422, Ralph Belward at (516) 785-8464, or Otey Berkeley at (716) 652-7032.

We are striving to find some way to organize an event for 489th members during the year at a time that does not conflict with 2ADA scheduled events, nor with Harry Wagnon's get-together which has been so successfully held in Orlando for the past four years. Ideally it would be held in the central U.S. so that access would be available to more members. There will be more information in Charlie Freudenthal's Newsletter concerning some of the plans that have been discussed.

The success of the *History of the 489th* as a money raising venture provides us with a possible pool of money which could be used to enhance a free-standing 489th Convention. Speaking of the history, there are still copies available from Charlie Freudenthal or me. Just write or call. With only a limited number of books left, our stock will soon be depleted.

On some of the rainy days that we have had this spring, I have found myself re-reading our history. It is the greatest reminder of how truly fortunate all of us who survived our tours of duty truly are. Permit me to remind you with the following, which you can find on pages 160 and 161:

Saturday, 9 September — Mainz

Only two 489th aircraft were scheduled this day, providing Pathfinder leads for the 448th Group, which led the 20th Wing in an attack against the Mainz marshalling yards. The results were rated as Good, but intense and accurate flak in the target area caused the loss of Captain Thomas Plese and his lead crew, in 42-50897. Six men, including Plese, were killed, and five were taken prisoner. Lieutenant Edward Malone and crew flew deputy lead.

One of the survivors of the Plese crew, S/Sgt. John Davis, recalled the day: "The marshalling yards at Mainz meant little to me the morning of 9 September 1944. This was

to be my 24th or 25th mission over enemy territory, and I was looking ahead — only a few more to go and the combat tour would be finished. We (Captain Plese's crew) were leading the 448th Group and the 20th Wing. Oddly enough, we had started our tour with the 448th and came to the 489th after Pathfinder training.

"As we came in on the bomb run, the flak started bursting around us, and the plane rocked from the force of the explosions. I remember looking up and seeing an angry black burst directly overhead. The bursts seemed to be closer than usual, and directly in line with our flight path.

"Suddenly there was an explosion right on us, and our aircraft started down immediately. It must have been a direct hit. We were going straight down, because I could see the formation of planes that we had been leading passing overhead, and I was on my back. At that moment, I figured the end had come. I didn't know fear; only sadness. As I saw those planes passing over, it was like saying goodbye to everything and everybody. This was the end. I felt sad that I wouldn't be going back to England that day, and that I would never see my family again. It's amazing how calm one can be when certain death seems imminent.

"I have no recollection of what happened in the next few moments. The one thing I know is that a certain calmness came over the plane. Everything was unbelievably quiet, and the aircraft leveled off. That was when the instinct for survival came to me. That power in man is hard to believe, unless you have actually experienced it.

"My tail turret was turned at an angle, and when I tried the hydraulic controls I got no response. I was trapped. Desperately, I pushed against the fuselage of the plane, and somehow the turret turned to where I could open the door. I tumbled out, forgetting to unfasten my oxygen hose and the various other connections. What hadn't pulled loose I hastily unfastened, then turned around. I

couldn't believe my eyes. Where Joe Holmes' radio operator's station and the bomb bay were supposed to have been, there was nothing but blue sky. The plane had apparently been hit in the bomb bay and the force of the explosion had broken her in half. I WAS IN HALF AN AIRPLANE!!!

"About then I spied our two waist gunners, Gabe Latsko and Dale Stensrud, sprawled out on the floor. I took a quick glance out of the waist window to get an idea of our altitude. I would guess we were around 7,000 feet. I reached down and pulled their flak vests off, and as they started to struggle to their feet I saw their chest chutes lying on the floor in a pile of debris. Sometimes I wonder what I would have done if I had found only one chute. They got the chutes attached to their harnesses, and since I wore a back pack in the turret, we were all set to jump.

"Just for a second I thought about moving the debris that covered the escape hatch, but Dale had already started to make his move, so Gabe and I followed. Though he appeared to be badly wounded, Dale simply walked off the jagged end of the plane and into space. We never did see his chute open, and never saw him again. He was eventually listed as "Killed in Action." I followed right after him, and Gabe came after me, and our chutes opened without any trouble. We landed near the anti-aircraft batteries that had shot us down and were captured immediately by the troops who manned the guns.

"We all spent the rest of the war as prisoners, most of the time in Stalag Luft IV, in what is now Poland. The last 85 days we were on the 'death march' from Poland to western Germany, where we were eventually freed by British troops in 1945."

There are untold stories that we can all tell one another given the time a free-standing 489th convention would afford us. Please think about it and call in your suggestions to the four of us who are your current officers.



When the A.R.C. "CLUBMOBILE" rolled onto the base, if you were within visual range, so did you, for a couple of "homemade" doughnuts and coffee served in a white, china cup!

Letters



Dear Bill:

I am interested in obtaining some information in regards to becoming an associate member. I would also like to get a subscription to the 2ADA JOURNAL and also the Friends Journal. I am presently a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force Reserve attached to the 913th Security Police Squadron at Willow Grove, PA, and a life member of the Air Force Sergeants Association.

I have a strong interest in your organization due to my research on a book. The subject of my book is a member of your organization and a former member of the 93rd BG, Harold J. Mann, M.D. I have known Dr. Mann for about two years and got very interested in his story. I feel that his story was above routine. I cannot say "heroic" since I tend to agree with Dr. Mann to a degree who feels, "The heroes are those who died."

I am asking for assistance in obtaining crew photographs and aircraft photographs for the following B-24s: (1) B-24D #41-23717-H "Exterminator," 329th Sq., 93rd BG. This was Dr. Mann's original ship and crew. (2) B-24D #41-23711-B "Jerks Natural," 328th Sq., 93rd BG. (3) B-24D #41-23722-C "Bomerang," 328th Sq., 93rd BG. (4) B-24D #41-23754-L "Little Lady," 409th Sq., 93rd BG. (5) B-24D #41-23999 "Teggie Ann," 409th Sq., 93rd BG. (6) B-24D #41-23729-D "Shoot Luke," 328th Sq., 93rd BG. (7) B-24 "Utah Man," A/C commander 1st Lt. Walter Travis Stewart.

"Exterminator" was involved in a mid-air collision over Ploesti on August 1, 1943. Lt. Stewart was the original co-pilot on that ship before getting "Utah Man." Two other former crew members of "Exterminator" that I am trying to get in touch with are: S/Sgt. Bunin, no other information available; and S/Sgt. Haggerty, a tail gunner who lost some fingers to frostbite while trying to clear his .50s. This would have been prior to April, 1943. I would also like to hear from anyone who witnessed the collision in which "Exterminator" was involved.

Other members of the 93rd BG that Harold Mann served with that I would like to contact are listed below with their ASNs and home of record and last known assignment.

(1) Maj. Joseph S. Tate Jr., ASN 0-24034, St. Augustine, FL, last known to be with the 328th Sq. (2) Maj. Ramsay D. Potts Jr., ASN 0-431039, Memphis, TN, last known to be with the 330th Sq. (3) Capt. Claude A. Culpepper, ASN 0-430727, Hattiesburg, MS, last known to be with Headquarters, 93rd BG. (4) 1st Lt. Joseph Avendano, ASN 0-724581, Brawley, CA, last known to be with the 328th Sq. (5) 1st Lt. Walter Travis Stewart, ASN 0-724654, Salt Lake City, UT, last known to be with the 330th Sq.

A final request that I would make is this. "The Mighty Eighth" by Roger A. Freeman gives credit to the 93rd BG for sinking three U-boats. The only one I find any record of is the one that was sunk in the Gulf of Mexico on June 24, 1942 by John L. Jerstad and his crew. Any information on the other two sinkings would be appreciated.

Although Harold Mann is the focal point of my book, I am mentioning all the people involved in telling the story. To make it complete I am trying to find out what happened to them. I have put a lot of time into this project because all of you did your duty for our country fifty years ago. I think it is time that some of the story was told.

I will accept collect calls, and any pictures that are sent to me I will get duplicated and return the originals. If it is preferred that the readers want to get copies made, I will repay them for the costs involved.

Thank you for your time and efforts in this project, and I hope to hear from you in the near future.

John Chapman
116 Penny Pack Circle
Hatboro, PA 19040-3559
Tel. (215) 675-6542

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Dear Bill:

Ref. enclosed photo: This quartet of aircraft mechanics of the 458th Group, 754th Squadron, stand proudly by their B-24 Liberator at Horsham St. Faith, near Norwich, England in 1944. Our plane was the first in the Squadron to fly 50 combat missions over Germany and occupied Europe. Left to right: Sgt. Warren E. Courtney, Arlington, VA; Sgt. Arnold W. Holcomb, Asherville, NC; Sgt. Donald E. Seyler, Troutdale, Ore.; and T/Sgt. F.C. "Jack" Kingsbery, the crew chief, of Santa Anna, Texas.

My brother, Henry W. Kingsbery of Beaumont, TX, was a B-24 pilot stationed at nearby Bungay with the 446th Group, 706th Squadron, at the same time. He was injured in a crash on his 26th mission. Another brother, Sgt. Tom Kingsbery, was in the remount troops at El Reno, Oklahoma.

Jack Kingsbery
P.O. Box 477
Crystal City, TX 78839



Crew chief Jack Kingsbery (far right) and ground crew members at Horsham St. Faith in 1944.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Bill:

This picture was sent to me by Ed Logan to see if he could locate any of his old crew. They flew during the latter part of the war, on a plane called "The Joker" #440472. They also flew this plane back to the States.

These fellows are a little hard to identify as most are looking down. Possibly you will remember them by name. Any address known, please contact Floyd H. Mabee, 11524 Zimmerman Rd., Port Richey, Florida 34668.



Pictured at back of truck (l-r): Jose Deiz, Navigator; John Schmidt, Co-pilot; Ed Logan, Pilot. Unloading off back of truck: Francis Rogowski, Engineer; Richard Wintgens, Radio; James O'Shaughanessy, N gun; George Walter, T gun; Robert Walsh, RW Gun; Thomas Price, LW Gun.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Dear Bill:

Having read your marvelous JOURNAL of the Second Air Division Association for about three years now, I feel as if I have known you for at least that long. I hope to shake your hand one day and tell you personally how much your editorial efforts have meant to, at least, one old, tired B-24 throttle jockey.

I recently came across this poem about grief. It expressed, so well, the thoughts I have had in my heart for many, many years concerning our comrades who died over the skies of Festung Europa.

GRIEF

Author Unknown

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glint on snow,
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn's rain.

When you awake in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight,
I am the soft star that shines at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.

This was printed in the Los Angeles Times, September 10, 1990, by Abigail Van Buren (Dear Abby).

Jack D. Pelton
51 Cypress Way
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

My dear friend, John (Page):

It was good to hear your transAtlantic voice the other night, and I was happy to learn that you, Jan, Sarah and Nick are all in good health. However, John, I was appalled when I learned the underlying reason for your call. I was embarrassed and distressed by the indecorous action that Joe Warth took in summarily dismissing you from the solemn ritual that you have so faithfully performed for the 44th BG for quite a few years: The laying of our 44th wreath at Madingley on Memorial Day is, perhaps, the very cornerstone of our observance to those men who gave their lives for me — and you — and all free people.

Let me assure you, John, that as long as you're willing to serve as wreath bearer in the stead of a 44th veteran, and as long as there is a caring 44th man alive (and there are thousands who still honor their departed comrades), the laying of a sacred 44th wreath at Madingley will continue!!

Shortly after talking with you, John, I phoned Warth and expressed my displeasure of his callous regard (or, rather, disregard) of your unselfish service to our war dead these past Memorial observances; and especially this year, 1993, is an all-important year to honor our deceased. As well you know, 50 years ago, 1943, brought death to many, many young 44th airmen. We WILL honor their ultimate sacrifice. We WILL remember our fallen at Madingley, regardless of what one or several

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Dear Bill:

I am looking for addresses of the following men who do not belong to the 2ADA: W.D. Landon, George S. Burford, and Joseph Stalling. Here is a picture of their



Standing (l-r): George W. Sadler, bombardier; W.D. Landon, navigator; Richard C. Scott, co-pilot; Larry M. Hewin, pilot. Kneeling (l-r): S/Sgts. George S. Burford and Eugene Shabatura, gunners; T/Sgt. Frank L. Wathen, flight engineer; William Kirlin, radio operator (deceased); S/Sgts. Osborn Malone and Joseph Stalling, gunners.

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disinclined airmen have decreed.

Warth did volunteer that he (the 44th HMG) has — in lieu of the Madingley observance — set aside funds for Mr. H. Pyne to pay for a wreath to be laid in the churchyard at Shipdham on Nov. 11, 1993, in connection with the British remembrance of the Allied casualties. I and other 44thers I've spoken to agree that that gesture is commendable, and we are pleased to join with our British brethren to honor the 50,000 plus fallen UK airmen, as well as our own 25,000, along with the multi-thousand ground and naval troops that gave their lives in freedom's cause.

But, lest we forget, Madingley is where our dead 44th airmen lie; and it is there that our continuing personal, heart-felt tribute of a wreath-laying ceremony will take place this year and for every foreseeable year, God willing.

I've talked at length with Will Lundy about this unseemly HMG wreath-laying blunder. He and I — along with the Tower Restoration Board — agree that the cost of the Memorial Day wreath will be underwritten by Tower funds. So there you have it, John. And if you haven't already, you soon will get a letter from Will regarding this matter. Thanks to you, John, 44th's fallen at Madingley will not be forgotten come Memorial Day.

Donald Chase
11517 Pumpkin Seed Ct
Orlando, FL 32821-7970

crew to help jog someone's memory:

Floyd H. Mabey
11524 Zimmerman Road
Port Richey, FL 34668

Dear Bill:

I am trying to find out what became of B-24 Serial No. 42-29552. This aircraft was initially assigned to Fred Stone's crew (44th BG, 506th SQ) at Topeka, Kansas, and was christened "Bronco Nagurski" in honor of the Chicago Bears football player by that name.

Stone and his crew flew the aircraft to England via the southern route through South America and Africa. We landed at Prestwick, Scotland on or about 19 March 1944 and never saw the aircraft again.

I assume it was delivered to one of the groups in the 2nd AD. Does anyone recognize it either by tail number or name? Was the name possibly changed? Please send any responses to me. Thank you!

Merritt E. Derr
RD 1, Box 705
Bart, PA 19504

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

I volunteered for the draft in June 1943; went in in July. I joined the AAF because I didn't want to drown in the navy, and I didn't want to die in the mud in the infantry. Basic training at Miami Beach with the cockroaches, gunnery school at Panama City, and crew assignment at Westover, Mass., which brings me to ask your help in locating my two crews:

First crew at Westover: Burkhart, Bloom, Gillis, Crisson, Alec, Clark, Cox, Twitchey, Mac, Clawson. Taken off this crew and put on crew ready for overseas flight. Reason? Crews were rearranged after B-24 with 13 pilots aboard hit Mt. Holyoke. New crew: 2nd Lt. Charles E. Deardorff, pilot; 2nd Lt. Max Shaver, co-pilot; 2nd Lt. Robert A. Keyes, navigator; 2nd Lt. Seymour Friedman, bombardier; Sgt. Bernard C. Regan, radio; Sgt. Albert L. Casey, waist; Sgt. John C. Miller, engineer; Cpl. Charles H. Clawson, ball; Cpl. Harry L. Clayman, tail; Cpl. Sidney Katz, waist. Started flying combat with 467th BG from Rackheath, just outside Norwich, in July 44.

One incident that sticks out in my memory of those days: I can't remember the target on this day, but after dropping our bombs and heading home, a P-51 came in on us on a pursuit curve and we shot it down. I was manning the right waist gun that day and saw my 50 cal rounds go into his engine and black smoke pouring out. I've often wondered and hoped it was a German in a repaired/downed P-51. I'd like to hear from anyone who remembers the incident. I know Al Casey remembers, because he was screaming in my ear while I was firing, saying I wasn't tracking it right. Hell, the damned airplane was at point blank range.

I'd appreciate any info on crews and P-51 incident you could pass along.

Charles H. Clawson
5605 Pry Court
Sacramento, CA 95841

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Dear Bill:

This concerns the article "A Lasting Scar" by G.K. Reynolds, which appeared in the Winter 1991 JOURNAL, page 11. As far as I know, I'm the only eyewitness to the actual collision of those B-24s. Mr. Reynolds is wrong about at least one thing: there were SOME clouds that day. That's what caused the collision.

I was on R.J.D. Johnson's crew, and we were climbing through the clouds to find our formation. At about 12,000 feet we were told to go on oxygen, so I climbed in the tail turret and, looking down, was connecting my equipment. We were just beginning to break through the tops of the clouds, skipping in and out, when I glanced up and saw another B-24 break out of the clouds VERY close on our tail.

I grabbed for my mike button to warn our pilot, but before I could press the button another B-24 flashed by going in the opposite direction. His left wing was raised at a crazy angle, to miss our plane, I'm sure; he couldn't have missed our tail by more than inches. To my horror, he hit the plane behind us almost dead center.

For the next few seconds it seemed like time stood still. I'll never forget the sight; there were landing gear, wheels, turrets, engines with the props still spinning like crazy; there were bombs and wings; the sky was filled with wreckage. I don't remember seeing anything that looked like a body. I must have sat there several seconds, speechless, waiting for the explosion which would have taken our plane also. Suddenly it was all gone, back through the clouds, leaving the sky ever so clear, ever so innocent, as though it never happened.

I inquired about the accident when we returned that evening but couldn't find out a thing; why would they keep things like that so secret? Until I read that article in the JOURNAL I had no idea what happened after those two planes fell back through the clouds.

I saw far too many planes get shot down, but that was the only time I had a collision right in my lap. Only a miracle prevented an explosion which would have taken us all down. I had no idea that so many men were killed on the ground. One other thing: I may be wrong, but I doubt they were carrying 2000 lb. bombs; possibly 1000 pounders???

J.L. Mosier
403 Crane Street
Flat River, MO 63601

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Dear Bill:

You do a super job putting the 2nd ADA JOURNAL together. All of us owe you our sincere gratitude for doing such an outstanding job.

Ever since joining the 2nd ADA in 1988 and attending the annual reunions, I have been searching to find crew members as well as barracks buddies. It has been a fascinating and rewarding experience. My first contact occurred while playing in the golf tournament during a 2nd ADA reunion at Hilton Head in 1989. One of my golf part-

ners knew a barracks buddy of mine and told me he would be at the Group dinner. What a thrill to find my barracks buddy, John Roth. Amazingly, he put me in contact with O.K. Long, pilot of the lead crew on which I was the co-pilot. From that contact, and with the help of the All American as well as conversations with attendees at subsequent reunions, I have now found our engineer Dallas Noffsinger, navigator Nick Plasmati, bombardier Seth Heywood, and "mickey" navigator Duke Thurman. I am still searching for the rest of our crew and hope someone might recognize our gunners

and radio operator from the enclosed picture of O.K. Long's lead crew, which was operational from September '44 until March '45. Unfortunately, I don't remember the first names of all, but if anyone could help me find these buddies I would be most grateful. Also enclosed is a picture of the four of us who attended the Las Vegas reunion. We are hopeful all six of us will meet again this year at Hilton Head.

Don Parcells
48 Mulberry Road
Woodbridge, CT 06525



At Las Vegas, 1992 (l-r): Don Parcells, O.K. Long, Nick Plasmati, and Dallas Noffsinger.



Standing (l-r): O.K. Long, pilot; Freiberg, TG; Seth Heywood, B; Duke Thurman, N; Dallas Noffsinger, E; Ruble, G. Kneeling (l-r): Green, G; Don Parcells, CP; Nick Plasmati, N; Herb Brady, RO; Turner, G.

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Dear Bill:

Can any 93rd 409th members remember flying in a B-24 #42-5130? I would like the name of this plane. I received a letter from Mr. Beck Alain, 37 Rue Foch, 88150 Thaon Les, France, who would like to contact any survivors who were on this plane or anyone who knew any of the crew.

Mr. Alain sent me copies of pictures of this plane crash in the northern part of France next to the village of Noorpeene 3/21/45, when this area was already freed by the allied forces. The copies show

#251305 on the inside of the left aileron, W in the black strip between the two yellow strips of the right aileron, YM letters on right side of the fuselage.

The village of Noorpeene is 5 KMS from Cassel, 30 KMS from Dunxergve, and 50 KMS from Lille. The plane was later salvaged. Anyone who has any information may contact either Mr. Alain or me, but I would still like the name of the plane.

Floyd H. Mabey
28 Hillside Avenue
Dover, NJ 07801-3144

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Dear Bill:

Having published a book last year about three U.S. planes shot down in my region of Belgium, I would like to have a note published in the JOURNAL explaining the research I am doing about the air history in my area and more particularly about the subject of "planes shot down." I am connected with more than one hundred U.S. veterans concerned.

I am now interested in three B-24s of the 445th Bomb Group listed below. I had an exchange of letters with many of the crew members between 1985 and 1989 when working on my first book, and have written again to warn them of the preparation of a book concerning their adventures.

(1) 445th BG, 700th BS, B-24 "K for King" piloted by Francis C. Sneed which fell a few kilometers from my house on 22 April 1944. Other crew members: Riddle, Hargis, Bryant, Varty, Mahoney, White, Coffman, Kolinski, Cockriel.

(2) 445th BG, 701st BS, B-24 "Our Gal Sal" piloted by Jack Webber which fell 20 kilometers from my village on 11 July 1944. Other crew members: Greenwood, Posey, Wimbiscus, Merritt, Tulloch, Browder, Leyda, Wagner.

(3) 445th BG, 700th BS, B-24 "Terrible Terry's Terror" piloted by W.F. Hunter, fell 27 September 1944 but crew members died in 1945. Other names: Hunter, Ferryman, Keams, (Smith), (Sperra — photograph officer??), Parsons, Ratchford, Monzingo, Cannon, Sarber, Schaffer, Selser.

I would like to correspond with some ex-members of the 445th BG who used to know the planes and crews listed above so that they can tell me their personal memories of the missions on which the planes were shot down. I would also like to find pictures of these planes at their base in England and other interesting photographs to publish in my book.

Thank you in advance; looking forward to hearing from you.

Dominique Van den Broucke
Rue Louis Dassonville, 115
7712 Herseaux
Belgique - Europe



"Terrible Terry's Terror" fell 27 Sept 1944



"Our Gal Sal" fell 11 July 1944

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