



Volume 33 Number 2

Summer 1994

We Salute Bill Robertie

Journal Editor Bill Robertie took his "last flight" on Sunday, May 8th, 1994, after a long illness. The Executive Committee of the Second Air Division Association, on behalf of all 8,000 of its members, hereby presents a respectful and grateful salute signifying our appreciation for his long and dedicated service to our Association.

As we have gone through the steps to produce this issue of the *Journal*, we have had occasion to go back through our history to 1972 when Bill took over as Editor. The first issue was a four pager, and our membership at the time was around 1,500. Going through the years we have noted the growth from that humble beginning under Bill's leadership to the six pagers, and the 10's-12's-18's; up to our present 36 (or maybe even 40?) pages of the most highly respected veterans publication around — the 2ADA *Journal*. During that same period, 2ADA membership has grown to our present 8,000 strong! There is no question that Bill's efforts with the *Journal* have played a large part in that membership increase, so, another salute!

Bill Robertie had much to be proud of, from his contributions to the wartime 44th Bomb Group, on the ground and in the air, to his leadership role with the Association. He was one of the few two term Presidents (1972/1973, 1973/1974); he started the

successful five year, \$50,000 fund raising drive for the Memorial in 1974; he served for over 20 years on the Executive Committee; and, he was a faithful correspondent with our many friends abroad and countless more of our members who continually wrote seeking information and guidance.



Bill has already received the Association's EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD (1989) and there are not enough words that can fully express our appreciation for what he has done for all of us. He will be missed. ■

A MESSAGE FROM ROGER FREEMAN

During a 2ADA bus trip from Cincinnati to the Air Force Museum in 1970, I was approached by a tall, smiling man who introduced himself by saying, "I'm Bill Robertie and you're thinking why don't I go away and sit down." I didn't think that and Bill didn't sit down, at least not for a long while. Thus began a friendship that was sustained through an exchange of hectoring but good-natured letters. Bill's hallmarks were humour, generosity and a determination to work at whatever he set his mind to. His editorship of the *Journal* and his development of the group approach was largely instrumental in the expansion of 2ADA membership in the '70s and '80s. His belief that the way forward was to encourage veterans to tell of their experiences certainly proved to be the case and resulted in the 2ADA *Journal* being the best of its kind and a role model for many other veterans' association publications. Bill Robertie was not only a darned nice man; he was one of the bright stars in your Association.

Ed. Note: I believe most of us know of Roger Freeman's scholarly works as an historian of the 8th Air Force experience in England. We appreciate his joining us in our tribute to Bill. ■

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION



JOURNAL

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William G. Robertie, Editor



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THE SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION traces its initial meeting to 1948 in Chicago, Illinois. It was organized as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Illinois on January 10, 1950. Members of the original Board of Directors were Second Air Division veterans Marilyn Fritz, Howard W. Moore, Jordan R. Uttal and Percy C. Young. The association's purpose is to advocate and support an adequate, effective and efficient Army, Navy and Air Force at all times; to perpetuate the friendships and memories of service together in the Second Air Division, 8th Air Force in England during World War II; to support financially, and in any other way, the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division as represented by the 2nd Air Division Memorial Room of the Norwich Central Library; and to undertake such other activities as may from time to time be deemed appropriate by the membership.

REGULAR (Voting) MEMBERSHIP in the association is limited to those personnel, military and civilian, American or British, who at any time served with the Headquarters organization of the 2nd Bomb Wing, 2nd Bomb Division or 2nd Air Division during World War II and any person who served with any bomb group or fighter group or any other unit of the Second Air Division assigned or attached. Provisions are also made for Associate (Non-Voting) memberships.

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Please submit material for publication to the editor by the 15th of January, April, July or October.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JOHN B. CONRAD

The mid-term meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Kansas City on March 5 and 6. One of two scheduled annual Executive Committee meetings, two full days are allotted to the mid-term meeting. The meeting was concerned with reports from the Secretary; Treasurer; Audit Committee; Vice President - Membership, convention arrangements; the Association's Representative on the Board of Governors; Vice President - Communications; Librarian Fund Oversight Committee; Awards Committee; Nominating Committee; and others. It was reported that the 2nd Air Division history is on schedule for completion in late May. If it continues on schedule, your books will be distributed before you read this report. (Editor's Note: Now, late June or early July.)

Proposed amendments to the Bylaws (the first since 1977) were acted upon and will be submitted to the next General Membership meeting for consideration. If adopted, these amendments will (1) increase the number of voting group vice presidents seated on the Executive Committee from three to six; and (2) broaden the function of the Vice President - Newsletter beyond that of the 2ADA Journal, still our principal communication vehicle, to Vice President - Communications to include a public relations release program concerning 2ADA activities and regional reunions and to improve our internal communications.

The Executive Committee approved a tentative pledge of \$100,000 to the 8th Air Force Heritage Center at Savannah with \$25,000 payable when ground is broken for construction. A committee has been appointed to meet with Sherman Small and other officers of the 8th Air Force Historical Society to plan a joint 1996 celebration to dedicate the Heritage Center and to consider other projects of mutual interest.

Now nearing the end of my second term as your President, it is appropriate for me to publicly acknowledge and commend to our membership all those who have worked so hard to maintain the Second Air Division Association as the viable organization that it is. The members of your Executive Committee, group vice presidents, and other officers and members of the standing committees are all dedicated people devoted to managing the affairs of the Association. Certainly thanks and equal recognition must be given to the wives of these officers and committee members, who are so supportive of their endeavors.

Appreciation is acknowledged also for the efforts of all those members who organize and manage regional reunions and dinners and who work for the varied activities of the groups — searching for "lost souls," publishing group newsletters, developing memorials and organizing mini reunions. Another affiliated activity for which appreciation is expressed is the 2AD Memorial Room in the Norwich Library, so carefully developed and operated by the staff under the direction of its Board of Governors.

The continuing progress of our successor organization, the Heritage League, must be recognized and encouraged. Nearly all the offices and standing committees are filled by our children who are very capable functioning adults, many approaching middle age. Grandchildren and other relatives are now joining our children as members of the Heritage League and continuing its work. This is the organization which will perpetuate the memory of our comrades killed in action and the part the rest of us filled in bringing World War II to a successful conclusion.

Serving as your President has been a memorable experience which I cherish. Let us remember that the strength of our Association lies in our comradeship and concern for one another. ■



AS YOU READ YOUR JOURNAL...

YOUR GROUP REPORT.....
The page to which most of us automatically turn.

SEARCHING FOR CREWMEN AND OTHER FRIENDS USING PHONE-DISC USA, RESIDENTIAL9

Phone-Disc is a huge list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of most people in the USA. It is available in most public libraries, and it is FREE!

SONGS THAT ARE PART OF MY MEMORIES11

Vera Lynn sang the songs that not only tickled our funny bones and made our fingers tap to the beat, but also touched our hearts. Keith Roberts (392nd) recalls her inspiration as he remembers the White Cliffs of Dover — and the green fields of Wendling.

THE UNHERALDED BLACK B-24 SECRET MISSIONS18

Did personnel assigned to Headquarters 2nd Air Division and all of its B-24 bomb groups not know of the existence of a top secret B-24 group which was located about 100 miles southwest of Norwich, at an air base named Harrington?

THE PX PAGE36

The PX Page is back!! Your best source for books, videos and other 2ADA related merchandise, it's all here in one place.

Enjoy your Journal. It's good reading!

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CHARLES L. WALKER



The Group Relations Committee received excellent response from the Group VPs when they were asked to enumerate those areas of the 2ADA management policies and practices they felt could be improved. Nearly all Association officers and Group VPs attended the working sessions of the Executive Committee at the Hilton Head convention, and participated in sometimes heated but very illuminating discussions. Both the Executive Committee officers and the Group VPs acquired a new understanding and respect for others' positions on many controversial issues. (Your new Executive VP also learned a lesson in presenting reports to the Executive Committee.)

The Kansas City mid-year Executive Committee meeting in March was not as well attended, but by my count, six non-voting Group VPs attended. From the very beginning of deliberations, it was apparent that all sides on any given issue had studied and considered the merits of each point of disagreement. All attendees were prepared to recognize and accept the solution most beneficial to the membership of the 2ADA. You can be proud of the officers you have elected to serve on the Executive Committee and their dedication to the welfare of the groups, as well as the 2ADA.

It is especially important that the groups continue to elect VPs who are willing and able to represent their groups on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee encourages their participation and hears the voice of every Group VP who attends these meetings. Now six are voting

members of the Committee. More than ever before, the Group VPs' value to their respective groups and to the 2ADA will depend on their attending Executive Committee meetings and the degree to which they acquaint themselves with the problems and opportunities facing the 2ADA. Group influence on the management of the 2ADA, in my opinion, has taken a giant step forward — now it is up to the groups to take advantage of this opportunity by judiciously choosing their VPs.

If your children and grandchildren are not members of the Heritage League, they should be. Begin a family enrollment campaign today. Help expand League membership within your group. Why? Read Billy Sheely Johnson's Heritage League column in the Spring 1994 issue of the Journal. The winning essay submitted by Jessica D. Zobac clearly demonstrates why you should encourage the next generation to join. Congratulations, Jessica, you indeed authored a winning essay.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Norwich in 1995 when we gather to celebrate the end of WWII. In the meantime, stay well and happy. ■

46th Annual Business Meeting

Second Air Division Association, 8th USAAF

Saturday, November 6, 1993 – Hyatt Regency Hotel, Hilton Head, SC

A. Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order by President John Conrad, with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

There were over 650 members present, constituting a quorum.

The President stated that Roberts Rules of Order would prevail, and appointed Floyd Mabee, Executive Vice President, as parliamentarian.

F.C. (Hap) Chandler, Group Vice President, 491st Bomb Group, and Chairman of the Delegate Committee, stated that this was an official business meeting of the 2nd Air Division Association, a not-for-profit veterans organization. Mr. Chandler moved that members in attendance be named official delegates to this 46th Annual Business Meeting. Motion seconded and carried.

B. Report of the Secretary:

The Secretary read the minutes of the 45th Annual Business Meeting, held October 6, 1992, at Las Vegas, Nevada. He indicated that the minutes had been published in the Winter 1992 edition of the Association's *Journal* for member review. Further, that copies had been distributed to all Group Vice Presidents earlier this week for review at their group business meetings. The Secretary moved to accept the minutes as read. Motion was seconded and carried.

C. The Treasury Reports:

1. Report of the Treasurer:

The Treasurer summarized the financial reports for the fiscal year July 1, 1992 – June 30, 1993. These had been distributed to all Group Vice Presidents earlier this week for review at their group business meetings. Total monies as of June 30, 1993:

1. General Fund: \$232,683.
2. Memorial Trust Fund: \$25,497.
3. American Librarian Fund: \$24,475 (over and above the \$550,000 fund now in the custody of the Fulbright Commission).

A detailed report of the finances will appear in a future issue of the *Journal*. The Treasurer indicated that the books of account are fully computerized, and thus complete detail is maintained and is readily available.

Mr. Robert Alexander (446th B.G.) moved the report be accepted. Motion seconded, and carried.

2. Report of the Audit Committee:

The Audit Committee was composed of Floyd Mabee (93rd BG), Donald Champagne (489th BG), and E. Nothstein (466th BG). Mr. Nothstein, representing the committee, reported that the books of account were thoroughly audited on August 15-16, 1993, and were found to be accurate and in good order. Included in the audit were on-site examinations of accounts at the various banks holding and processing the Association's funds. All recommendations of prior audit committees for improvements in procedures were in place, and working well. Some additional modifications were recommended to be instigated, and the Treasurer will proceed to implement these.

Mr. Oak Mackey (392nd BG) moved acceptance of the report. Motion was seconded and carried.

D. Report of the Vice President, Membership & Chairperson, Conventions:

1. Membership stands at between 8100 and 8200. (Changes are occurring each day, thus a more definite figure isn't meaningful until a year's end tally, tied to dues receipts, is made.)
2. The 1994 Convention will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri. It will be held over the Memorial Day holidays, May 28-31. (Note that Memorial Day is a Monday; and that

May 28th, the first official day of the convention, is a Saturday).

3. In 1995, there will be two major Association "get-togethers:"

- a. A "Celebration Week" in Norwich, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII. This will be approximately 6-7 days, and will encompass May 8th, VE Day. The trip will include one scheduled visit to the American Cemetery at Cambridge. The British are already beginning preparations to welcome us, and the week should be a memorable one. The maximum number of hotel rooms available will be 250, and reservations will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Nonrefundable deposits of \$50 per person are now being accepted by Chairperson Evelyn Cohen. Further details will be provided by her as time progresses.

- b. The 1995 Annual Convention of the Association will be held in the U.S.A. at a location and time yet to be determined. It will be in either September or October, and will be in the central area of the U.S.A.'s "lower 48." Details later.

Mr. Unangst (93rd BG) moved acceptance of the report of the Vice President, Membership; Chairperson, Conventions. Motion seconded and carried.

E. Report of the Vice President, *Journal*:

The Vice President was unable to attend to make a report. President Conrad indicated that the Vice President was satisfied that all was well with the *Journal*, and wished to convey thanks to all who made contributions of stories and news for the publication.

F. Report of the Chairman, 2ADA/FMLA (American Librarian Fund) Oversight Committee:

1. Two years ago, the Association members raised a fund of over \$550,000 to provide in perpetuity a full time, current American professional presence in our Memorial Library in Norwich, England, dedicated to our 6,674 comrades who died in action.
2. Since then, we have been ardently seeking the best way to place this resource into play. There have been a number of challenges to overcome to accommodate the interests of the three institutional entities involved; namely, our Association, the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust in Norwich, and our designated agent, the Fulbright Commission in London.
3. The situation is still fluid, and we continue to press for a common understanding and baseline from which to move forward.
4. Meanwhile:
 - a. Our Fund continues to grow moderately.
 - b. Interest rates are such that yield on our fund is inadequate, for the time being, to cover the cost of initiating the program.
 - c. We seek more productive, but still secure, investment vehicles.
 - d. Importantly, we have in place a senior American librarian, a British resident, who does a creditable job caring for our Memorial.
5. Finally, any newcomers, or others for that matter, who want to help with a contribution are invited to contact our Honorary President, Jordan Uttal.

Mr. H.C. Henry moved that the report of the Chairman be accepted. Motion seconded and carried.

G. Report of the Association's Memorial Trust Governor:

1. The Governor introduced three distinguished guests from England and the Memorial: Ms. Phyllis DuBois, Memorial Trust Librarian; Mr. Tom Eaton, Chairman, Board of Governors, Memorial Trust; and

(continued on page 5)

46th Annual Business Meeting (continued)

Mr. David Hastings, Vice Chairman, Board of Governors, Memorial Trust.

2. The Governor then recounted that the Memorial was dedicated in 1963 and that the Memorial Trust and Memorial Library are administered by a Board of Governors of thirteen people, including two American Governors appointed by the American Ambassador in London, one American retired Air Force officer now residing in England, and a Governor representing the 2nd Air Division Association. The remaining Governors are English men and women.
3. The Trust now has assets in excess of £400,000 sterling. Interest income from the corpus is used to supply books, periodicals, and salaries for the Memorial Library.
4. An account worthy of special mention to our Association membership is the Special Endowment Fund. Donations to this fund can be made in memory of an individual, group, or organization. An initial donation of £500 sterling or \$800 given in memory of an individual or group will assure that it will be carried as a line item in the yearly financial report. Additional contributions of any amount can be added to the original gift. Gifts of at least \$25.00 will be sent to the library as part of the Special Contributions account for books.
5. The Library Courtyard remodeling project: This project began with a need to roof over the courtyard to halt the rainwater leakage into the library rooms underneath the court. Additional funds from the County have allowed the further work of remodeling the now-enclosed courtyard into complete library facilities. The project is well underway, and will include a doorway access into the Memorial Library Room, and other improvements which will enhance the Memorial facilities.
6. The 2nd Air Division Memorial is a truly "living" memorial, one designed to live in perpetuity, a source of pride to all. Its existence is enhanced by the special care given to it by the all-volunteer Board of Governors, and they deserve a special thanks for their devoted service.

A motion was made by Mr. Patterson (445th Bomb Group), seconded, and carried, to accept Mr. Koorndyk's report.

H. Report of the President:

The President reported on three significant happenings in this past year:

1. In June, the 2nd Air Division Association Executive Committee met in Norwich to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Memorial Room. At that time, the 1963 dedication ceremonies were reenacted in part by our members and the British to commemorate the establishment and the founding of this unique memorial.
2. On June 30th, our longtime and devoted Treasurer, Dean Moyer, resigned his post due to ill health. The President conveyed thanks and best wishes from the Association for his 27 years as Treasurer, and for his dedication through the years to the best interests of the Association. His service to the organization included a stint as President, as well as service in many other capacities. The President wished Dean good luck on behalf of all the Association members.
3. The workload of the Association and its officers has increased markedly as the membership has ballooned and the Association projects have multiplied. Therefore, to handle the extra work in an efficient and effective manner, two major improvements in operations have been made recently:
 - a. The books of account have been computerized. Thus, all detail is readily available for analysis and display at any time.
 - b. A new volunteer staff position of Director of Correspondence Services has been established. Mrs. Norma Beasley, wife of 492nd Group Vice President, Bill Beasley, has graciously accepted the position, and has carried on the work in a very professional and dedicated manner.
4. Many of our members have yearned for a stateside memorial to the 2nd Air Division, to complement the Memorial in Britain. This wish is coming to pass, with the imminent ground breaking for the 8th Air Force Heritage Center in Savannah, Georgia. Representing the 2nd

Air Division Association on the Board of Directors of the Center is Richard Kennedy, a past president of our Association.

I. Report of the Nominating Committee:

The Chairman reported:

1. The Committee was composed of members representing all areas of the United States, and thus provided good coverage of the membership in their search for candidates for Association offices.
2. In addition, the committee members made individual contacts with many current and past Association officers, to obtain their experienced input concerning possible candidates.
3. Two current, and very well qualified, officers were reluctantly dropped from consideration because of their serious health problems: the Treasurer, Dean Moyer, who had been Treasurer for 27 years; and the Executive Vice President, Floyd Mabee, who would have been an outstanding candidate for President.
4. Chairman Fred Thomas urged the Group Vice Presidents and the general membership to give greater thought to finding and putting forward able candidates for the Association offices at the Division level, so as to assure continued high quality leadership into the future.
5. The Nominating Committee placed the following slate in nomination:
President: John Conrad (392nd)
Executive Vice President: Charles Walker (445th)
Treasurer: Elwood Nothstein (466th)
Secretary: David Patterson (445th)
Vice President, Membership: Evelyn Cohen (HQ)
Vice President, Journal: Bill Robertie (44th Bomb Group).

For Group Vice Presidents to serve one year on the Executive Committee, the following were appointed: Headquarters (Ray Strong), 467th Bomb Group (Ralph Elliott), 489th Bomb Group (Neal Sorensen).

A motion was made by Richard Kennedy (448th Bomb Group) to approve the above slate. The motion was seconded. There being no additional nominations from the floor, the slate was approved by the membership by unanimous vote.

J. General Business:

1. **Old Business:** No old business was presented.
2. **New Business:**

Turner Publishing Company's *2nd Air Division Association History Book*:

Mr. Turner pleaded for each and every Association member to submit a short autobiography for publication. He indicated the first 150 words of the submittal would be free of cost. In addition, a photo from the wartime years, and also a recent one, should accompany the written material.

So far, approximately 1500 members have sent in their stories; Mr. Turner's experience with other military groups indicates that at least 25%, or over 2000, of our members should be the minimum response.

Deadline for material was set at December 15, 1993. Publication will be Summer 1994.

President Conrad followed Mr. Turner's presentation by re-emphasizing the urgency of getting the stories written and submitted.

3. **Announcements:**

Mrs. Anne Brusselmans, patriot and worker with the World War II underground who rescued many downed U.S. airmen from the Nazis, died recently. Her daughter was present, and was selling a book of her mother's experiences.

- K. **There being no further business**, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM.

David Patterson
Secretary ■

A TROOP TRAIN MISSING

BY HORACE L. WATKINS (44th)

AAAAHHHHH, graduation, May, 1943. Now we would be assigned to a crew and get into combat to ply our skills as aerial gunners. We were eager, trained and ready. But, wait, Sergeant. First comes a tour of the replacement centers. Let's do this by the book...the Army way. Now, you twelve men will go to Fort Ord, California; you twelve to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas; you twelve to God knows where; and the rest of you will be sent to good old Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Pneumonia Gulch!

My best friend and I were among the twelve who went to Jefferson Barracks. Arriving there, we were summoned in to meet the company commander, a brand new shavetail fresh from ninety day wonder school. The acting first sergeant, however, did all the talking. He was a man of forty, balding, baggy eyes, and wore three stripes on his sleeve, the same as we did. There, the similarity ended. He also wore twice the number of hash marks, which told us he'd been in the army at least eighteen to twenty-one years. I was seventeen years old, although my 201 file said I was nineteen.

Since we were going to be there a "couple of weeks," how would we like to command a troop train and deliver some freshly graduated basic trainees to schools in four directions? Command? Oh, hell yes! Like, we had been PFCs during training in Las Vegas, and promoted to buck sergeants the day of graduation. Command sounded powerful, and I was one of the four volunteers. My assignment was to deliver fifty-six privates to Fort Lewis, Washington. From there, they would be taken to a school at the Mount Ranier Ordinance Depot, and I would return to J.B. From there, nothing was forthcoming as to our destiny.

Jefferson Barracks had its own train station on post, and we were given two sleepers behind the baggage car, which was just behind the smoke-blowing, coal-burning steam engine. Behind us were four stateroom cars for civilians, the diner, and finally, the club car. The privates were introduced to their first real taste of hurry-up-and-wait, in that we were waiting in the station by seven AM, for a train scheduled to arrive at ten hundred hours. I boarded with the service records, pay records and shot records of

each and every one of the recruits; found the little room at the front of the car where "The Commander" was to ride, and settled in for a three day trip to the Pacific Northwest.

The ride from St. Louis to Kansas City was totally uneventful, but would change pace shortly after dinner in the diner that evening. Upon leaving my table, I strolled into the club car for a beer. There sat the most beautiful girl...no! Not girl... woman, that I had ever laid eyes on. She invited me to her table, and I accepted. Later, she invited me to her stateroom, and I again accepted. Only, I made the mistake of going to my little room and dressed for the sport in which I was about to engage: pajamas and a smoking jacket I'd gotten for Christmas, bedroom slippers, and my pipe. I felt and played the part of the war hero, being treated to a coming-home gesture of good will. I left my wallet, watch, and even my dog tags, for whatever reasons, with a private that I'd chosen as the Deputy Troop Train Commander. Off I went for an adventure of unbridled passion.

The bumping of cars awakened me early the following morning, but a quick trip to the bathroom prepared me for additional sleep, which ended as the noon hour approached. I arose to check on my troops...to get them fed, as a responsible commander should. We were moving on down as I made my way out of the stateroom and headed back to join my men. The doors and connecting platforms were always a hazard on trains, but I managed to leave the lady's car and enter the one behind. There, I found myself in the diner...in pajamas and a smoking jacket, slippers; that bit. Obviously, they'd moved my two cars behind the diner, so I proceeded on, only to find myself in the club car. It was crowded with both men and women, all of whom thought I looked pretty special, in that they applauded me before I could exit.

My troops had to be in front of the stateroom cars, so I traveled forward to the baggage car, where I met the conductor. It was then I learned that I was in deep do-do. My two cars, he informed me, had been removed in Dalhart, Texas, and were headed northwest through Utah. We were only minutes out of El Paso, Texas, where the lady was to change

trains and proceed on her way to Los Angeles. She was seemingly very pleased with my predicament, but I could see guardhouse bars in my immediate military future.

The conductor lived in El Paso, and loaned me a pair of black conductor's pants and white shirt. He advised me that El Paso had numerous Army-Navy stores where I could purchase a uniform, then bring his clothing to his house. Yet, I had no money. My lady intervened to assure me that money was no problem. She would buy a uniform and shoes, insignia, everything. She also changed her ticket to help me convert from railroad Romeo to a military non-commissioned officer.

No ID was a problem. The first two stores refused to sell me so much as a necktie, while the third store owners were more understanding of my dilemma. A very nice Jewish couple lived over the store, and she even sewed my chevrons on. That's when the MPs arrived, alerted of my presence by the owner of the first store. They took me to the Provost Marshall's office in the railroad station.

Inside, I was welcomed by the oldest, ugliest and meanest looking Lt. Colonel I have ever known. There was never a thought of lying to him, nor attempting to rationalize my actions in losing an army troop train. I told it like it was, and the Colonel was amused. He was also enthralled by my redheaded lady companion, and told me with feeling that he did not blame me for my ill-fated trip to her stateroom.

He loaded us into his staff car and ordered the driver to take us to Biggs Field. The operations officer was a captain who wanted to please the colonel, and I was told that a B-25 would deliver me to Fort Lewis the following morning. I was to be there, ready to fly, at 0900 hours. I then came to realize the colonel's motivation in helping me. I was to stay in the visiting NCOs quarters that night, and he left with my redhead in the back seat of his car.

I was in Fort Lewis a full twelve hours prior to the arrival of my lost troop train: entered the front car from the opposite side of the station depot, picked up the service records and luggage and led my troops on to the platform, where I was met by a corporal wearing four hash marks. "Hello, Sergeant," he greeted me. "Did you have a good trip?"

I nodded and handed the service records over. "Helluva fine trip, Corporal," I replied. "Carry on."

This is the first time I've ever admitted this to anyone I didn't know real well. ■

489TH NOTES

BY
NEAL SORENSEN

This may be the second correction of an erroneous report, but as Mark Twain said it, "The report of my death is a gross exaggeration." I received a courteous note from Gene (Morris) Gannon that the report of his demise in our newsletter was incorrect. His note to the editor had stated that his pilot Stuart K. Parker had passed away. In our 489th Bomb Group History the members of Parker's crew were John J. Sullivan, co-pilot; Peter C. Sorenson, navigator; Hubert C. Briggs, bombardier; John Jollimore, engineer; Jack Roehr, R.O.; and James E. Hynes, George LaFond, Raymond Vandegrift, and Gene Gannon; gunners. Thanks for the correction, Gene!

Art Bertanzetti (Crew 64) sent a very informative letter containing his recollections of his crew's ill-fated 31st bombing mission, as follows: "Crew 64 was on its 31st mission (to Ludwigshafen) when the lead crew (PFF) took us 50 miles off course over Saarbrücken, a heavy flak area. The

group lost three planes: those of, Lt. Frank Palmer, Lt. Wallace Bishop and Bertanzetti." (Editor's Note: Our Group History indicates that Palmer's plane was crippled by flak and veered into Bishop's. All of Palmer's crew were taken prisoner, six aboard Bishop's were killed, and three became prisoners.)

"We (Bertanzetti) received a flak burst between #3 and #4 engines, but the wing did not come off and the plane did not go down in flames. We tried to reach Switzerland, but couldn't make it, so all crew members bailed out and became P.O.W.s.

"Just for added information, our crew was the first to complete 30 missions. The 30th was to St. Lo on 25th of July. I doubt if you can find another crew in the 489th that can better that record!!!

"We are also probably the only crew in the 489th that completed a combat mission with a B-17 Group. (See August 1989 Group Newsletter). Sincerely, Art Bertanzetti."

It is not unusual that after nearly 50 years there would be slightly different reports on the same event. The sad thing was that the raising of a tour from 30 to 35 missions resulted in this fine crew becoming prisoners of war when they should have been on their way home."

I became curious about Art's reference to the August 1989 newsletter, so I looked it up: "Crew 64 would like to add another excerpt. Somewhere in between our 15th

and 20th missions, we encountered a maintenance problem that prevented us from taking off on schedule...It took 45 minutes to correct the problem and we elected to take off and try to join the group over Buncher 8. When we reached the assigned altitude, the group was nowhere to be found...We joined a B-17 group at 25,000 feet and went with it to its primary target, dropped our bombs with its, and stayed with it until we crossed the English Channel. We were the last (489th) aircraft off and the first one to return safely. Col. Napier met us and we related our story to him and at debriefing. Operations checked with the B-17 group and they verified that a B-24 did accompany them, so we received mission credit."

There are thousands of historical vignettes that will go unrecorded unless we can persuade YOU to take the time to select one or two that you would enjoy telling to us. We are anxious that you know that this space in the 2nd Air Division Journal that the 489th is privileged to fill is an ideal way for a part of your personal history to be preserved. There is a permanent file of Journals, so if you get in the mood, write something up and sent it to Neal Sorensen, 132 Peninsula Road, Medicine Lake, MN 55441. I will use it along with other 489th news, being sure that the credit of authorship goes to you so it can be clipped out and placed in your family history. ■

It is some time now since a report was published with regard to the "Friends," and I would like to bring you up-to-date. The latter part of 1993 saw the Annual General Meeting, which was held in the Lecture Theatre of Norwich Central Library. In attendance was Chairman of the Memorial Board of Governors, Mr. Tom Eaton; and Vice Chairman David Hastings, together with other board members.

A new committee was voted in, and Mr. Eaton outlined the position of the Memorial Trust. We were then treated to an excellent talk on the International Rescue Organisation from one of their members.

Our final event in 1993 was the Thanksgiving dinner held at Dunston Hall Hotel and Country Club, a stately home that has just been converted. We had a very good attendance; some 94 people sat down to a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, held in a room called the "Eaton Room."

During the course of the evening, a cheque from the "Friends" was presented to the Memorial in the sum of £500.00 and was accepted by Mr. Tom Eaton. A Tombola was held and raised £130.00.

A further presentation was made at the dinner to Mr. & Mrs. David Neale for their work as Secretary, News Editor, Treasurer, and Membership Secretary respectively.

1994 started with a planning meeting of the committee, with the sole objective of making the "Friends" known on a national

basis, and raising funds for the Memorial. It started with a talk by Sergeant Morrell of the 100th Air Refueling Wing from RAF Mildenhall, about his experiences in the Gulf War.

Our display tent will be at a number of the local shows, including a very big air display at Duxford. This will coincide with a national advertisement in one of our premier flying magazines.

To increase our identity, Paul Thrower, one of our committee members, is designing a "Friends" badge, which will then be made available for sale.

One of the most popular events we arrange are visits to the old bases, including the living quarters. We are currently planning to visit two bases during the summer months.

With the visit of the 2nd Air Division to the U.K. in 1995, we are looking forward to assisting, in any way we can, to make your return a memorable occasion, on the 50th anniversary year of "Victory in Europe."

UPDATE FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE 2ND AIR DIVISION MEMORIAL

BY KEITH THOMAS, CHAIRMAN

One final item before I close: I am very interested in "flak houses," and I also understand that Phyllis DuBois has one or two "gaps" in her files. The question is, can you help us both with the following:

(a) Have you any photographs of Pangbourne House, Pangbourne, Berkshire? The lady in charge in 1944 was called "Jan," surname unknown to us; do you know her other name?

(b) Have you any photographs of: Bude-land House, Wallingford, Berkshire; Eynsham Hall, Witney, Oxfordshire; or Phyllis Court, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire?

Even if you are not sure of the place, but believe it was in the above area, please send it, because the buildings are still being used today.

Any photographs would be carefully copied and returned.

If we can get this information, I hope to put together an article for the Journal for all to enjoy. ■

I went out to Kansas City in March to attend the mid-year meeting of the Executive Committee of the 2AD Association. We spent two full days in meetings conducting the business of the association and preparing for the convention which was held over Memorial Day. It is always amazing to me to see how much business there is to take care of at these meetings. I suspect that each of you would be amazed at how much time and effort the officers and the committees put into making the 2AD Association one of the most efficiently operated veterans organizations in the country.

I want to make my financial report. At the present time, I have \$617.49 in the Newsletter Fund. This should be enough for at least three more issues. I plan to put out a new issue at the end of the summer. Also, I am pleased to report that I have received contributions to the Headquarters Endowment Fund for the Memorial Room at the Library in Norwich from 33 of you for a total of \$1040. I still have hopes of receiving a few more checks — so, if you have been meaning to make a contribution (even a very small one) and just haven't gotten around to it, now is the time. As you know, our goal was to raise \$1600 which would enable us to double the HQ Endowment Fund from £1000 to £2000. I am holding this fund open until August 15th, at which time I will write a check for whatever amount is then in hand and forward it, through "Bud" Koorndyk, our representative on the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust, to be added to our HQ Endowment Fund.

You won't receive this *Journal* until after the meeting in Kansas City over Memorial Day. But you can start planning now for 1995. There will be a large group going to Norwich around May 8th for "A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of VE Day." If you are interested in this, you need to get in touch with Evelyn Cohen soon. Hotel rooms are scarce for this event. We will also have the 48th annual convention of the Association in 1995 as well.

* * * * *

Once more I am including some of the information furnished by some of you about your experiences both during your time at Headquarters and during the last fifty years. If you still have that form which I sent to you over a year ago, you can still fill it out and send it to me. I will eventually publish it. If you no longer have the form, just write up something about yourself similar to what has been in the last several *Journals* about others and send it to me.

David Nathanson worked in A-4 in the Ordnance Section. His civilian career included managing a wholesale bakery, directing a group of auto supply stores, and Purchasing Vice President of a dairy processing company. His work in the Ordnance Section was as the Division Assistant Ordnance Officer for Automotive. While at

DIVISION



BY RAY STRONG

HQ, David had great memories of taking leave in Scotland.

Lillian Grace Meadows Moore worked in the Code Room as a cryptographer. After the war, she married Harry Moore, had four children and six grandchildren, and is now widowed. Lillian worked for thirty years and is now retired. She says, "I travel a lot to other countries, then come home until the next time." About her job at HQ, she says, "There were three WACs in our office — Helen Harrington, Elizabeth Wickersty, and myself. We had to work very hard because they kept taking the men out of the office

pen and signed the approval of the recommendation, saying, 'May God have mercy on his soul.' Lady Teichman then appealed to General Eisenhower, who refused to intervene. She then appealed to our Ambassador Winant in London, who also refused to intervene. The story appears, with more details in the 8th AF News, Vol. 9, No. 2, April 1983 under the title 'Mystery at Attlebridge.' " And, not surprisingly, his most memorable experience while off duty was meeting his wife, Constance Richardson, who then lived in Norwich and worked for the British government in communications. He says, "We have been living happily ever after."

Roy D. Crist says about the last 50 years, "Relieved from active duty 4/46, but remained in the Reserve Forces. Went back to work for USDA Soil Conservation Service conserving soil and water on Kansas farms. I had a similar job before the war. In 1954, I resigned to take a job managing a northwestern Kansas cattle and grain ranch. I kept this job until retirement in 1982. I also

"Each time that I include some of these sketches of the life and times of the people with whom we served at HQ, I am amazed at the interesting lives they have led."

and sending them to the continent. We worked four 24 hour days, eight 16 hour days, and the rest 8 hour days and then 3 or 4 days off." One of her most memorable incidents off duty was going to London on a pass and she couldn't get back. "Had to stay in the Red Cross Club — boarded up. Put helmet over my face while we were being bombed. Got back the next morning safe and sound and got company punishment. I had to wash the day room windows!"

C. Douglas Smith (in the Army he was Charles D. Smith, Maj. JAGD) has been living and trying cases in Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties until appointment as Superior Court Judge for Santa Barbara County from which he retired in 1971. About his job at HQ he writes, "I was Assistant to Chief JAG Officer, Lt. Col. Allen Clark, at 2AD, and wrote the review of the General Courts Martial case which resulted in the conviction and imposition of the death penalty on Private George E. Smith of the 748th Bomb Squadron, 466th Bomb Group, for the murder of Sir Eric Teichman, owner of Honingham Hall estate where the 748th was based. Lady Teichman wrote our HQ pleading that Smith's life be spared. Our review recommended that the conviction be approved and the death penalty be carried out. I personally carried the written review to General William Kepner, who questioned me thoroughly about every phase of the case, especially about Smith's mental status and responsibility, which was the main ground of his defense. Finally, with noticeable anguish, General Kepner took his

retired from the Air Force Reserves with twenty-one years of creditable service. After 1946, I did not serve further on active duty in the Air Force. Since retirement, I have been mostly goofing off. Spent a little time in Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. Have three daughters with families." About his job as Assistant Air Inspector at 2AD HQ, Roy says, "I was assigned by the Air Inspector to special projects, including going on several combat missions. I also prepared a report on 'Use of 2nd Bombardment Division Gunnery Ranges.' Forty-five years later this report does not seem to be very earthshaking. In fact, it probably made nary a ripple in HQ 2AD. But such activity kept me busy. There were many other reports and projects. The combat missions were certainly more exciting." And his comments about a memorable experience while off duty: "Watching the victory parade in London after VJ Day, when the King and Queen led the procession. I had not seen a regular parade for over five years. To me, it was very interesting at the time. The informal celebration of VJ Day in Piccadilly was not bad either!"

Each time that I include some of these sketches of the life and times of the people with whom we served at HQ, I am amazed at the interesting lives they have led.

* * * * *

That is about it for this issue. Again, if you are planning to go to Norwich next May (1995), get in touch with Evelyn at once. And don't forget, if you planned to but put off sending a check to me for the HQ Endowment Fund, please do it now! ■

SEARCHING FOR CREWMEN & OTHER FRIENDS USING PHONE-DISC USA, RESIDENTIAL

BY EDWARD W. KING (467th)

I located five long-lost crewmen or their families in the last ten weeks by looking up their names and addresses at my local library! And that over two years of fruitless, conventional searching. Each name search at the library took only *seconds* to make, and it was *free*. I did it with help from the librarian by using **PHONE DISC**.

When the search in that electronic directory did not hit the bullseye by producing an address which was unquestionably that of the person I sought, I had PhoneDisc print out a list of people with the same last name in the city where he last lived (usually obtained from my old letters or from the 1945 Group History book.)

Then I would send a letter to 6 or 8 of those people (chosen at random) at a time. I would try to make the generic letter pique the curiosity of the receiver (by telling some facts and events about our WWII service, and the names of other friends in our group) so that it might enlist the aid of these people with the same last name — even though they might be total strangers to the one I sought. (One man sent his daughter to their local library to see what they could learn: they found and sent to me a copy of the 1989 obituary of my crewman — from which I learned the names and cities of his family members, whom I contacted using PhoneDisc.) My generic letter would read something like this:

"You might know or be related to an old WWII buddy of mine named John Smith, who lived in your city (at 1387 Orchard Street) in the 1940s. He and I served together [flew missions together; worked on B-24 engines; — whatever] in the 8th Air Force in England, 1944-1945. I want to locate John now to let him know that there is an active 467th B.G. (H) Association which holds a national meeting annually, and regional meetings several times a year. Jack Jones, Ben Scofield and I have joined it and are having a great time meeting old and new friends at these gatherings..." etc., etc.

PhoneDisc is a *huge two-section* ("East" & "West" USA) list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of *most people in the USA* (sometimes including spouses as a separate listing — indicating that some of its information must have come from sources other than telephone directory white pages). You will find it in *most public libraries*, and as I said, it is *FREE* to use!

Your search for a name will take *only seconds*, for it is a computerized listing on 2 CD disk drives hooked to a keyboard and TV screen or monitor: but *you do not need to know a thing about computers!* The screen

will tell you all you need to know! To use it you select the East or West section of the database, following the instructions on the screen and then you type in the *last name* of the person you seek, and up comes the list of people with that name (in that East or West half of the database) *with addresses and phone numbers*. Press another key, and you can get a printout of one, or of a select group of the resultant list — as you choose.

Of course using only a surname usually produces a very large list, unless it is a rather unusual name; but you can shrink the number of names (or "hits") by supplying additional information for sorting "limitations:" you can add a first name and/or initial(s) for starters, and/or you can add other limits — such as state(s), city or cities, street(s), ZIP code(s), area code(s), or even a house number (if you have one) for the search to focus on.

I found that the last name only, and the state of last known residence (and the city, if known) gave me a good start; and even a quick bullseye in one case! If I got too many responses, I might change the search request to the beginning letter of the first name (or the whole first name), but I did not rely heavily on those first names, for many people use only initials in their telephone listings, and many people we knew by one first name in the service go by a middle name or a nickname now. ("James R. Smith" may well be known as "Richard Smith" or "Dick Smith" at home today — this turned out to be the case with two of the five crew members I was looking for!)

And suppose you are looking for a woman who was not married at the time she was in the service: if you don't know her married surname, you might still be able to find her through a relative in or near her old hometown who bears that maiden surname! Don't give up just because at first you don't have a clear winner.

And some surnames are not even spelled the same way today as they were spelled (or you *think* they were spelled) in 1945: a name spelled Hofman in 1945 might now be listed as Hoffman or Hoffmann today. (PhoneDisc helpfully suggests different last name spellings for you to try in some cases; be willing to try them if you don't get promising hits at first.)

LIMITING SEARCHES to one state or group of states or cities can be helpful by at least organizing the data for you: by pushing the TAB key, you can get a list of the limiting (or grouping) items, any of which you may add if you wish. For example: If you were

searching for Chester A. Arthur, knowing he was born and raised in Vermont, went to college and practiced law in New York State, and later lived in Washington DC, you would use the Eastern section of the database, type in either the surname alone or go ahead and add the first letter of his first name: ARTHUR, C and then hit the TAB key and choose to use only the "State" limiting line; tab to it and enter VT, NY, DC.

Don't fail to put commas between limitations to multiple states (or whatever) because if you don't, the program assumes you are naming a state called VTNYDC in the above example, and instead of telling you of your error in making that entry, it will just come back with a message "No Listings" — making you think there are *no* people with that surname in all of that territory! (Actually, there are 488 people by the surname of "Arthur" listed in PhoneDisc East in those three states. Yes, PhoneDisc will even *count your hits* for you if you ask it to by pushing F9 and marking the beginning and the end of that part of the on-screen list you want it to count.)

And do find a list of State codes if you don't know them all by heart: I used "CN" as the code for Connecticut in my search for Kenneth Gilbert, and I got a "No Listings" message. It didn't dawn on me until later that CT was the correct code, so I went back and found that there were 634 people with the surname "Gilbert" listed in the Eastern database as living in Connecticut. (And be aware that even if I had used "CT" but if I was in the Western section of the database instead of the East, the program would only give me the message "No Listings," it would *not* remind me that I must use the Eastern section. (Nor does it divide the country neatly along the Mississippi River: you have to guess (test for) the presence of a mid-country state in one or the other section of the data base. Thus it is not a *totally* user-friendly system; you must *be on your guard* and ready to suspect and test a result by changing factors, checking codes and your spelling, etc. (F3 will bring back up on the screen the limitations as you last entered them, so you can proofread your entry. The name you are searching on *always* shows at the top left of the main screen.)

So let PhoneDisc help you **FIND YOUR LOST BUDDY TODAY!** Don't put it off any longer. Your efforts and persistence will pay off. ■

BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP
by
Marvin H. Speidel



Colonel Robert A. Jacobs, in an article in the *Spring Journal* entitled "The Truth About the First Mission on D-Day," made reference to my 446th Bomb Group report in the Winter 1993 edition in which I had stated that Colonel Jacob J. Brogger led the first group, the 446th, over the French coast on D-Day and which Jacobs now labels as an inaccuracy. If anyone takes the time to reread the Winter "Bungay Bull" it will be noted that it states that Col. Brogger was the airborne commander leading the first group over the enemy coast in the aircraft piloted by Captain Charles Ryan, which is a statement of irrefutable fact. Playing a game of semantics, Jacobs, who was the DR navigator on the PFF aircraft made necessary by the solid undercast over the invasion beaches, seeks credit for leading. Remember that the function of PFF aircraft was to provide assistance for navigational and bombing purposes to the leadership of a mission whenever weather and cloud cover was such as to negate visual bombing. Quite obviously, there were scores of missions during the 36 months of 8th Air Force operations in Europe that required such assistance, but this in no way ever changed the official assignment of the airborne mission commander or the designation of the lead group. This was just as true on D-Day, and the presence of a PFF aircraft does not alter the fact that the

(5) *Four Miles High* by Martin W. Bowman, page 176: "Combat crews in the 446th at Bungay (Flixton) airfield were tumbled out of their bunks during the night of 5 June, and the Tannoy system summoned them to a main briefing at 2230. Top brass from both 2nd Bomb Division and Wing Headquarters had descended on the base, and senior officers had quickly disappeared behind locked doors for a hastily convened conference. Field Order N. 328 came in over the teletype machines throughout the three Divisions. To almost everyone's surprise and delight, the Bungay Buckaroos had been selected to lead the entire 8th Air Force over the invasion coast of France on D-Day."

(6) *Log of the Liberators* by Steve Birdsall, page 97: "The honor of leading the big show went to the 446th at Bungay, and the machines taxied out onto the runways and lined up to avoid anyone leaving a revetment going off a runway and fouling up the timetable."

(7) *Ibid*, page 98: "Close by a 389th Group radar ship, Colonel Jacob Brogger and Charlie Ryan of the 704th Squadron droned along in Red Ass, leading the entire D-Day force."

(8) *Airfields of the Eighth - Then and Now* by Roger Freeman, page 48: "The first of 273 operations carried out by the Group (entitled Bungay Buckaroos) commenced on December 16 — one of these being the honor of leading all the Eighth Air Force heavy bombers in the bombing of the Normandy beaches in the early hours of D-Day."

(9) *8th Air Force Historical Society News*, in publicizing their 1993 reunion in Chicago: "D-Day To Be Featured in 1993 Air War Symposium." "One of the featured speakers will be Col. Jacob J. Brogger, who led the first Group over the enemy coast on D-Day,

"...The presence of a PFF aircraft does not alter the fact that the 446th BG was the assigned lead group on the momentous occasion of D-Day..."

446th Bomb Group was the assigned lead group on that momentous occasion and that Col. Brogger was the mission commander with Charlie Ryan as his pilot and Mike Paczan as his navigator.

It has further come to my attention recently that there are still some members of other groups who, through letters to their respective group newsletters, dispute the fact that the 446th BG led the 8th Air Force on that first D-Day mission of June 6, 1944, and who try to claim that distinction for their own group. To put such claims aside and to put the necessity of a PFF lead into perspective, let's consider the following sources:

(1) D-Day formation plane crew lists from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. list Col. Brogger and Capt. Ryan aboard lead plane #42-95203.

(2) *The Mighty Eighth* by Roger Freeman, page 153: "Air crews at Bungay were surprised to be alerted for a briefing held at 2330 hours on the evening of June 5th; then astonished and excited to learn that their group, the 446th, was to lead the Eighth Air Force heavies on a pre-invasion bombardment of the Normandy coast."

(3) *Ibid*, page 153: "In company with a 389th Group H2X Pathfinder, the 446th's lead ship 'Red Ass,' carrying Colonel Jacob Brogger, led the 2nd Division Liberators over the target area at 0555 hours and within twenty minutes the last of the force had bombed. Overcast conditions necessitated the use of radar for this attack and that of the other two Divisions which arrived on the scene some forty-five minutes later, to pound the center and eastern sector of the designated beach-head."

(4) *Mighty Eighth War Diary* by Roger Freeman, page 259: "6 June 1944 — 8AF 394 carried out at first light — PFF. 8AF 395 later in day. All bomb groups operating. First group over beach-head — 446 BG."

the 446th Bomb Group, 20th Combat Wing, 2nd Air Division."

(10) *The Liberator Legend*, copyright Turner Publishing Co., page 21: "Four hundred fifty 2nd Air Division Liberators were sent out on D-Day from the 2nd, 14th, 20th and 96th Wings. There were no air attacks by defending Luftwaffe over the Normandy beaches, but they were not out of the war yet. Led by the 446th, the Liberators droned across the Channel to their targets, shore batteries overlooking the tenuous foothold of Allied troops, and anything else that might have a black cross on it."

There is more such evidence, but allowing for the constraints of space, the ones you have read here should suffice...so all you BUNGAY BUCKAROOS — stand tall; and all you other guys...give it a rest.

* * * * *

In a letter dated January 21st, our good friend Fred Breuninger highly recommends "B-24 Liberators in the ETO" as one of the best VCR videos about B-24s he has ever seen. He remarks, "B-24 Liberators in the ETO shows much B-24 footage of actual missions, but also gives a good chronological history of the 2nd Air Division by detailing when each bomb group (by number) arrived in England, where they were based, and date they became active." This, and other tapes, can be rented from Pete Henry (see *Spring 1994 Journal*, page 14).

* * * * *

That's it for now. I'll have a lot more to tell after our 446th Tucson reunion and the dedication of our B-24. ■

Songs That Are Part of My Memories

by Keith Roberts (392nd)

Fifty years after D-Day, "We'll meet again..." But, sadly, the forces' sweetheart Vera Lynn — who sang that famous line and became synonymous with hope during the war years — will not join the official celebrations of the Normandy landings. By the time plans were made, she had been booked to entertain on a cruise.

But today Keith Roberts, a former USAAF Liberator crewman now living in California, recalls her inspiration as he remembers the White Cliffs of Dover — and the green fields of Wendling.

* * * * *

Vera Lynn, perhaps Britain's most popular vocal artist during the Second World War, was certainly the favorite of most American servicemen stationed in England during those years.

During a recent visit to England, we learned that the Queen had bestowed a title on Vera Lynn, now 76. She is Dame Vera, and deserves all her honors.

To the Yanks, she personified the grit, determination, quiet wit and grace under pressure exhibited by the British people during the war years. In her full, rich, emotional voice, she sang songs that not only tickled our funny bones and made our fingers tap to the beat, but also touched our hearts.

We often listened to the radio in our huts and barracks and tuned in to the BBC just to hear the voice of Vera Lynn. As airmen flying the big bombers, we especially liked her rendition of "There'll Be Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover" because we often flew over those white cliffs. We loved many of her other songs as well.

As we relaxed, or worked around the airfield, the words of "We'll Meet Again" seemed to be all about our homes in the United States and friends, family, and wives or special girls. We were young men, far from home, in Norfolk, England, a place of flat, green fields, country lanes and bicycles.

Our airfield, Station 118, was carved out of farm land between two small villages, Wendling and Beeston. Beeston had a couple of little pubs, The Rose Cottage and The Ploughshare. The closest town of any size was King's Lynn, about 15 miles away, with fewer than 20,000 people. If we weren't on the battle order to fly the next day, we could ride the "liberty run" trucks to Lynn, leaving in the afternoon and returning to the base after the pubs closed.

Then there was "The Badge From Your Coat" and "Somewhere in France With You," British songs of love and support for the men who had been called into service abroad.

Most of our knowledge of British lives on the home front came from the children. Kids love airplanes. They hung around the airfield, watched us over their farm fences, counted the planes that left in the morning for the day's mission, and counted us back. When we

walked or drove by, they would shout "Got any gum, chum?" We called them the "gum chum" kids.

Our realization about the strict rationing in British households came from them. Things that we took for granted, like sugar and soap and chocolate, were prized luxuries, and we tried to help out the families that we came to know by bringing them things from the base.

We played "Roll Out the Barrel," a song Vera sang with great gusto, a lot during the children's parties. Since candy and ice cream were such a thrill for them, we held parties for the kids on special occasions, like Easter and Christmas. We picked them up at their local schools in our trucks and drove them through and around the airfield for tours before the party.

The parties were a tonic for them and for those of us who had younger sisters and



Smiling through — Vera Lynn during the war years (above) and (right) in 1991.

brothers at home. Those English children were very polite and mannerly. They had lots of fun, and they all had those really cute English accents. They were great.

In "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square," Vera sang movingly of London, and one of the first things many of us did when we reached London was to search out Berkeley Square. We found a very small park, full of trees, grass and benches, surrounded by apartments in the middle of the big city. Then we went to see if any "angels were dining at the Ritz," in the words of the song. London was always an adventure, lived with a special awareness, because of the blackouts, stray

German bombers, and the V1 and V2 flying bombs, launched from the Continent and directed randomly toward London.

As combat fliers, we never were sure we would see London again. We were voracious in our enjoyment of Hyde Park, Piccadilly and Oxford Circuses, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, the Thames, the Tower, the centuries-old pubs, and all the sights we had read about in our school books.

We loved another song of Vera Lynn's: "Til the Lights of London Shine Again." And many of us were there when they did — after VE Day.

*"There'll always be an England
While there's a country lane,
Wherever there's a cottage small
Beside a field of grain."*

On a country lane at a crossroads on the outskirts of Beeston stands a small monument of Scottish granite. A bronze plate on its side reads, "Dedicated to the men of US Army Air Forces Station No. 118...who, through their efforts, devotion and duty, aided in bringing victory to the Allies in World War No. 2."

The monument was placed there in 1945, after we had closed our airfield and flown home. Our far-seeing ground executive officer, Colonel Joe Bush, financed the memorial from funds left over from our officers' and enlisted men's Clubs and from a last-minute fund drive conducted by our squadrons and the service battalions. A local farmer donated the land.

Ever since, the little monument has been lovingly cared for by the local villagers who mow the grass, plant the flowers, and paint the fences. Every November 11, Britain's Remembrance Day, the villagers meet there and conduct a memorial service for the men of our US Bomb Group who died for freedom.

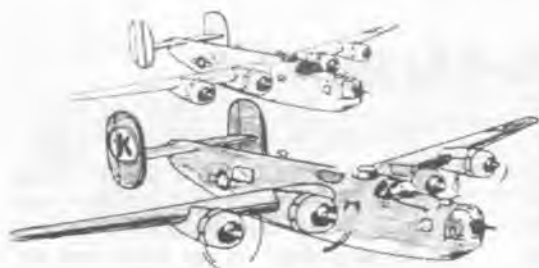
And, when we come back for a reunion, they always join us for a memorial service at the monument, followed by a pint at The Ploughshare or The Rose Cottage. We speak at their schools, and have visited Beeston Village School to bring candy to a new generation of little children.

"We'll Meet Again," Vera Lynn's Second World War song, no longer tells us about our homes in the States.

Now it reminds us of our wartime home in two small villages in England. It sings about our friends, the villagers, and our oldest friends, the now grown-up "gum chum" kids. It speaks to all the lovely people in this little corner of England who welcome home the Yanks who flew the B-24 Liberators from their villages into the angry skies over Germany, and returned, long ago.

*"We'll meet again,
Don't know where, don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again some
sunny day."*

Ed. Note: This article was also featured in the *Eastern Daily Press*, Norwich, England, February 5, 1994. ■



458th BOMB GROUP

by Rick Rokicki

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC & THE 458TH

The *National Geographic's* "Wings of War," March '94 issue surely caused an increase in my mail and phone contacts. The story showed four pictures (in color) of airmen assigned to the 458th. None of the four were identified. I was contacted by Ms. Vicky Ducheneaux of the *Geographic* and received four large 7 x 9 photocopies. In two photos, the 458th tail colors were visible. They were hoping the airmen in them could be identified before their story was to run. I took the photos to our Hilton Head convention, but none of our members were able to help. When they published the March issue, I received several letters and one in particular came from Carl Hein. Carl was sure the photos were of a crew published in Martin Bowman's *The B-24 Liberator, 1939-1945*, pages 130 & 131. I checked my book and found it had only 128 pages. I wrote to Carl and asked if he could send me a photocopy of those pages. I learned that my copy of the book was an early edition and those pages were not added until later. In any case, the photocopy I received from Carl wasn't clean enough to recognize faces, but I knew that the photo was of "Arise My Love and Come With Me" and that Howard Slaton was the pilot that day. Normally, the crew would be flying "Little Lambsy Divey,"



As pictured in the *National Geographic* (clockwise, from top left): Howard W. Slaton, Ross Messner, David Kerr, John & Don Echols.

but it was in the hangar for maintenance. I wrote to Howard, sent him the photos, and thought the one photo was of John and Don Echols; to the best of my knowledge, the only twins in the 458th. Slaton called me and said I was right on the twins and that the other three were of himself; Ross Messner, bombardier; and David Kerr, flight engineer. I have not as yet located Ross or David. Howard Slaton and his co-pilot Larry Riesen are Association members. John and Don Echols were not in Howard's crew, but were also in the 755th Squadron. Their pilot was Allen Blum and Ed Silver was the bombardier.

Thinking that with Carl Hein's help we had solved the identity problem, I started to write to the *National Geographic* with the news. Before I finished the letter, I received a call from Valerie May and then from Paul Weintraub of the *Geographic* that Col. Howard Slaton had already notified them. Well, in this case, it wasn't too tough to come in as #2, but I was able to get both addresses of the Echols twins, and they plan to join the Association and attend our Dayton reunion. I remembered that one of the twins had completed 32 missions and that the other received a severe flak wound of the wrist but completed his tour after months of hospitalization. *National Geographic* plans to do a sequel to the original story in three or four months...look for it.

MEMBERSHIP

All Group VPs have received their 1994 "drop lists," so called because of non-payment of dues. This is one of the most discouraging things a VP goes through. When you get a list of 30 to 35 names of those who haven't renewed their Association dues, the first thing that comes to mind is that a large number may have made their "last flight." I send a special notice to all, and fortunately, many respond and renew. Others have moved and forwarding time has expired. Most of the time, I receive a letter telling me that the member has passed on, in which case I notify Evelyn Cohen, Vice President - Membership. The dues notices are mailed in October and November by Evelyn.

FINDING A "LOST" BUDDY

I received some very interesting information from Edward W. King (467th BG) of Casey & King Law Firm. His letter advises that 15 minutes, using PhoneDisc at your local library, may be all it takes. Please look for further information elsewhere in this issue. The instructions are such that you don't have to know anything about computers; just follow the instructions on the screen.

NEW B-24 BOOK

A hot new B-24 book is out! The title is *Liberator, America's Global Bomber*, by Al Lloyd. Stan Cohen of Pictorial Histories says this is "it!" The book has 560 pages, hard cover, over 1100 photos plus 16 pages in full color. Basically, a combined history of every bomb group that there ever was. The book lists at \$39.95, but if you're interested, a 20% discount is offered by Aviation USK, 602 Front Street Box 97, USK, Washington 99180. Postage cost is \$3.50. Discounted, the book sells for \$31.95. I first heard of the book in February and that it would be published and distributed by the end of April. Using the above address, please mention to Tom or Donna (owners) that you read about it in the *2ADA Journal* and that you'd like to be on their mailing list for future book and model news. Hoped that I would have mine in time to give you more info on this book, but I couldn't wait any longer to get this column on its way.

458th BOMB GROUP REUNION

By the time you receive this copy of the *Journal*, you will already have the information on our reunion in Dayton, Ohio. Duke Trivette has done another great job of setting up this latest "Gathering of the Eagles, III." If you haven't already, don't hesitate to call Duke at 513-299-7125. ■



I was the guy who went into a record store in '38 or '39 when you could play a 78 rpm record before you bought it. Those were the days! Anyway, one of the employees asked me if I'd heard "Tuxedo Junction," then let me take it into a booth to listen. WOW! It was like magic. The poor guy had to practically pull me out of the listening booth before I wore it out.

Of course I bought it and I couldn't wait until my buddy Bob, next door, got home so we could play it on his record player. At that moment we were completely captured by the Miller style, and, as for me, I've never recovered. I think I knew every note of most of his arrangements.

In those days, \$3.00 bought a ticket for a couple at the Valley Dale in Columbus, Ohio (sort of like Frank Daley's Meadowbrook in New Jersey). It took a while for a high school student, at 25 cents an hour, to save up for such a big event. Naturally, you only invested in a ticket for the Miller band when you had the "heaviest date" you could find. She had to be someone *special*.

Years went by, and I found myself struggling up the gangplank of a ship with my crew, carrying a B-4 bag, a parachute bag and a musette bag — none of us knew what

ship it was or where our military destination would be. All I knew was that we had been issued mosquito netting. That was encouraging, 'cause I hated cold weather.

After the first day at sea, we discovered our ship was the *Queen Elizabeth*. The biggest thing afloat — and so fast an escort couldn't keep up with her. The antisub blimp had already turned back to the east coast.

The next day out we had a lifeboat drill and were invited to come to the upper deck later in the afternoon. And, you guessed it, there was the Glenn Miller Band! I was within inches of the stand! What a thrill — and for free. Johnnie Desmond was singing (without a mike) and Ray McKinley was acting leader since Glenn had flown ahead to take care of band preparations.

Naturally I wanted to tell my buddy, Bob, at home about my fantastic luck. But V-Mail was censored lest we give away any military secrets. Anyhow, the band played for us each of the four days at sea on our way toward Ireland.

The Normandy invasion took place in June of 1944, shortly after we landed. Several months later we were becoming as accustomed as we ever would to combat flying over Germany. Flying over the North Sea, on the way home from missions, we even heard some of the latest American music on the German propaganda station, often songs by the Miller band. The narrator was Axis Sally who always claimed we had just bombed churches, schools and hospitals.

One morning when my B-24 crew was



"stood down" from flying, someone in the tower said they needed five pairs of B-24 pilots and co-pilots to bring the Miller band to our base. My rush to volunteer did no good, since higher rank won out.

Those planes landed at a B-17 base, but in showing off how fast a B-24 could taxi (compared to a B-17), two of them clipped the control tower with their wing tips and were grounded. Pretty embarrassing, huh? They claimed the tower was too close to the taxiway since B-17s have a shorter wingspan.

Everything ended pretty well since the other three planes (without such hot pilots) brought all of the band back — except the violins! They had to catch up with the band on the next air base they visited.

The hangar that had been prepared for the performance was jammed with GIs. What a sound! And I got to hear "Tuxedo Junction" one more time. ■

The Cutest Little Barmaid – Revisited

In reply to Ed Wanner's story in the Spring *Journal* (see page 6):

My wife and I were in our "stick-on-the-floor" rented Rover. We fought the puzzling English "roundabouts" which sorted out the heavy traffic in Norwich and eventually, we were funneled onto one of the narrow unmarked country lanes. Undaunted by the wrong side of the road driving, we searched for the pub which I frequented 47 years ago while in England.

I kept no secrets. I told my wife everything...well, just about. She had heard me talk about the pretty little barmaid, cute figure, long black hair — a real smasher. She worked in the pub back then...my wife encouraged me to stop and see if, by chance, she was still around.

Then, up ahead, there was the tavern, just as I had remembered it! Quaint, thatched roof, stone walls, the sign...we parked and went in. Ed, you drove right on by the place. Just as well you did! Inside, we saw her, there she was! But I was really disappointed. You know, Ed, she didn't even recognize me!

Fraternally yours,
Earl Wassom (466th) ■



Good morning! Or good evening, as the case may be. If you'll get the coffee and an easy chair, perhaps we can visit a wee bit I prefer decaffeinated if you have it..

Let me tell you a little about PHONE DISC, which is, in essence, a computerized phone directory for the whole U.S.A. Some libraries have it. If you are looking for one of your old buddies and know where his residence once was, give it a try. Perhaps, he or a family member still lives there. You will do well to have a first name, middle initial and last name as well as the locale. Also, names such as Smith, Jones, etc. are common and directories may be filled with persons of that name. Names such as Figowitz or Kaniewski are less common and your chance of success may be greater. (Please see article on page 9).

If your library does not have PHONE DISC, Bob Burch has offered to try to locate whomever you are looking for, as Bob has access to the directory. Bob's address: P.O. Box 13632, Los Angeles, CA 90013-0632. Bob is retired from the Marine Corps and generously gives of his time to many of us.

* * * * *

This will not reach you in time for the 2ADA reunion in Kansas City. Let me say that Diana and I were there and hope that you were, too. The 453rd has always provided a great many of those present, and I hope that continues to be so. This will reach you before the 453rd BG reunion in Rapid City, South Dakota, October 9-12. Bob Marx is the head honcho for this, and he has wonderful things planned for us. It really should be well worth being there. You should have received a mailing by now on it. If you need to be in touch with Bob, his address is: P.O. Box 429, Hill City, South Dakota 57745.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS: We continue to have people find and join with us and are delighted that they do. David Allen and Linda Anderson, are both Associate members and both are offspring of "Moose" Allen. All are residents of Bolling, Texas. Harry Burgy, 617 Georgia Avenue, Melbourne, FL 32901 was with the 732nd Squadron; David Doult, 703 Blue Horizon, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 was with the 735th and, briefly, the 467th. He flew with Jerry Baier, Bill Voight, Al Stoltz, et al. Elliott Lovelace, P.O. Box 1106, Talent, OR 97540, was with the 467th Sub Depot. We

FLAME LEAP

BY WIB CLINGAN (453rd)

also welcome Ronald Neumunz, 13 Bullingham Mansions, Pitt St., London W84JH, England (whose uncle I think was lost on a mission over Germany); and Frank Sullins, Sr., P.O. Box 4204, Yuma, AZ 85366-4204. Also, we hope to have Paul Harper, 2 No. Plantation Road, Greenville, Miss. 38701. Norman Raeber has found him and hopes to get him aboard (as do we). They flew together.

* * * * *

FOLDED WINGS: The sad part of it is that we continue to lose some of our comrades. Our recent losses: Robert Atkins (a flight engineer/gunner with the 733rd); Robert DeNeal; Robert Lumpkin, Dallas Noffsinger (who provided many of the caps we have); and Vincent Turro. The 453rd family expresses our sympathies to each of their families.

* * * * *

Ruth Hays wrote to tell us that Harold Hays has been critically ill after two open heart surgeries, but is on the mend. Drop him a note at 4435 E. Edgewood Ave., Mesa, AZ 85206-2601. Harold and Ruth, we send our best wishes for a full recovery. Tom Fahey wrote that he too has been ill. Write him a note as well at 55 Boxwood Terr., Red Bank, NJ 07701-6705.

* * * * *

WE'VE HEARD FROM: Pat Ramm — he and Agnes will be at Rapid City. I don't hear well and it's a long way from Attleboro to Downey, but I think Pat said he had been or soon will be visited by Wayne DeCou, Jack Morer and Susan Freed — I'm sorry. I just could not hear. I think Susan's dad flew with Kent Stokes. Forgive me — age, senility, bald head, etc. "Dusty" Rhodes wrote to say he was having heart problems — and her name is Marie Knight. Abe Wilen sent a nice picture of the "All American" and an appropriate poem with it. He thinks we need to send our newsletter to all 453rd people we can find, whether they are paid up mem-

bers or not. There is merit to this. Write Wilbur Stites to let him know your views. Bob Harper says he is gaining some weight back and doing somewhat better. Russ Robinson, 732nd, says he flew "Arrowhead" on its 100th mission along with all the others of his "Raunchy Raiders" crew. He is looking for John Burke, 732nd Armament Officer. Jim Scanlon wrote. He said that Bob Witzel has a new bride. Jim had a lot to tell of his time with the 453rd and with his fighter assignments. Al Thomale was with the original crew of Joe Waites, 733rd. He was looking for Morris Elisco, Phillip Stock and Everett Stratton. Ron Burgy's dad was Harry M. Burgy, a 732nd bombardier. Reid Sprague called. Reid is looking for Wm. Stobbe, Edward Kutcha, and Ray Mangus.

Jack Stilbert and "Sy" Syverson both called. Both said they expect to be in Rapid City. Alan Williamson ("Crow's Nest") has located their bombardier, Clarence Brammel, in Turtle Lake, WI. Jim Dyke has called and written. He and Dorothy are good and tireless workers on behalf of all of us. "Moose" Allen and Len Lincoln have called. Len has moved to Lake Tahoe.

I'm running out of allotted space. Those of you who have called and/or written but aren't mentioned above, forgive me. All of you, please keep the calls and letters coming.

* * * * *

Paul Gaudette is interested in buying copies of unit histories or personal narratives. Write him at 2050 E. 17th Street, Tucson, AZ 85719. Alexander Ciurczak, 34552 Camino Capistrano, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624-1232 wants to form a Distinguished Flying Cross Society. Write him if you have an interest. Rusty Briarton, 5270 Del Paz Drive, Colorado Springs, wants to compile a "Chronicle from the Men of the Mighty Eighth." If you want to send him one of your experiences, he would like you to do so — unique, heroic, humorous, etc.

* * * * *

THAT'S IT. Thanks for the visit. Someone once said, "Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it you have to start young." And in looking at Richard Cluphf's log for a mission on March 24, 1944, he states: "Flak hit the nose turret. 4 gun battery accurate as hell." May the Good Lord bless you all. Diana and I look forward to seeing you at our reunions. Cheers! ■

10TH ANNUAL SOUTHWEST REGION DINNER REUNION

by David A. Nathanson (44th BG/HQ 2AD)

And a good time was had by all!

On Saturday 19 March in Dallas, 170 of us boys and girls came together again to celebrate our common bond — our service with the 2nd Air Division in World War II — and to congratulate each other on our longevity. Bless us all!!!

We came from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas — 80 of us from the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, and the rest from throughout the region. All fourteen bomb groups and Headquarters were represented. We are grateful to our California friend and colleague, Fred Thomas, who prodded us into getting started on this annual activity in 1984 when he was President of 2ADA. We really do enjoy seeing our friends every year at this event, and, of course, at the 2ADA conventions wherever they are.

Our hospitality room opened at noon, and for most of the afternoon there was an enthusiastic coming and going, browsing through the displayed memorabilia, and examining the flight gear exhibit set up by the son of one of our members. Many pleasant old memories were stimulated of people and places, and warm friendships were quite evident.

At the dinner our M.C., Geoff Gregory (467th) was in his usual good spirits. We started off, of course, with our "Eight Candles for Remembrance" ceremony honoring our fallen comrades.

For entertainment we were serenaded by The Harmonichords, a group of Air Force veterans led by Tom Bamford (93rd).

They kept our toes tapping to the tunes of our golden oldies favorites. We also heard from a guest speaker, Clay Waldrop, who described his 1,914 days L.W.O.P. (leave without pay) while he served with the RCAF/RAF flying B-24s from England on coastal patrol...all this on an extended pass from the U.S. Army.

During the evening we were very pleased to hear a letter from 2ADA President, John



THE HARMONICHORDS

Conrad, congratulating us for our ten years of bonding together. As always, there were several "first timers" at the dinner. In a letter received from one of them a week later, he said, "Thank you for making me feel so welcome at the Dallas reunion. I had a very good time. It was amazing that there were no strangers there. The food was good — the fellowship was great. I am glad I came."

Another wrote, "The older we get, the more we appreciate the good fellowship. We will do our damndest to make it next year."

These expressions, we feel, capture the spirit of what we are all about, and what we are proud to offer to each other.

Y'all come and see us. Hear???? ■



(left to right): John Sanders (HQ), Jim McCrory (492nd), Geoff Gregory (467th), Bob Cash (492nd).



(left to right): Felix Leeton (389th) with Chuck Walker (445th) and his wife Maxine and daughter Susan Horlock.

SECOND ANNUAL FLORIDA REGIONAL REUNION

by Ed Schwartz (392nd)

Into history goes the Second Florida Regional Reunion. Another successful and enjoyable affair it was! It was held this past February 6 in Orlando, with beautiful weather prevailing. Two hundred and thirty members and guests attended, including John Conrad, the current President of the 2ADA, and four former presidents of the Association. The reunion and the lure of Florida in winter was enough to draw members from many states, giving the affair the aura of a mini national convention.

The day started with opening of the spacious hospitality room at 9:00 AM. A continental breakfast was available to the "early birds" and "snowbirds" until 12:00 noon. At that time, Teddy Egan and her staff made available a delightful buffet luncheon. The hospitality room was well attended from opening until closing at 4:00 PM. An untold number of "missions" were reflown during the period with no additional losses.

At 6:00 PM the festivities resumed with a well attended cocktail hour. At 7:00 PM we sat down to a nicely presented and delicious roast beef dinner. The dinner session was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by "Hap" Chandler and a moving invocation given by Joe Whitaker. Following dinner, a program was ably emceed by the reunion committee Chairman, Lawrence Gilbert. It was kicked off by an enlightening update of the status and improvements of the 2AD Memorial Room in Norwich, England; presented by Bud Koomdyk, the 2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors supervising the library. Lawrence Gilbert then reviewed the brilliant career of 8th Air Force Commander, aviation pioneer, and test pilot General James Doolittle. He also noted the 50th anniversary of "Big Week," the all-out effort of the 8th Air Force in February 1944 to gain air superiority over the Luftwaffe. General John Brooks then reminisced about his rich and varied combat experiences in the 2AD, his participation in the Ploesti raid, and as Commander of the 2AD Scouting Force.

It was also noted to the assemblage that in attendance were six members of the crew of the "Pink Lady" of the 392nd Bomb Group. Their aircraft was "Abgeschossen" in March of 1944. The entire crew parachuted safely, and were captured and interned for the duration. They were Bruce Sooy, 1st pilot; Ken Mardis, co-pilot; Ed Schwartz, bombardier; Orley Jones, navigator; Paul Terrell, radio-man; and "Mac" McBrayer, belly gunner.

As with the inaugural reunion in 1993, this reunion was brought to a close with the lusty singing of "God Bless America" by the group. ■

13th Annual Southern California Regional Reunion Dinner

BY DICK BAYNES (466th)

A record 330 2nd Air Division members, family and friends attended the oldest of the organization's regional reunions. It was the 13th Annual Southern California Regional Dinner on February 26, 1994, at the Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro. This was the ninth year that the function has been held at El Toro's excellent Officers' Club.

The program was a tribute to a great American, and one of the most popular persons of our time 50 years ago. He was Major Glenn Miller, leader of the AAF band who played for many of us at our bases in England, and to all of us via his radio broadcasts. We missed the anniversary of Glenn Miller's birthday by three days. He would have been 90 years old on March 1, 1994. This year is also the 50th anniversary of his last flight, when he disappeared on that fateful trip from England to Paris. Our "Tribute to Glenn Miller" was climaxed by an outstanding presentation on Glenn Miller's life, with slides, music and narration by Alan Cass, curator of the Glenn Miller Archives at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Alan Cass was

B-24 chronicler; George Welsh, Editor of *Briefing*, The Journal of the International B-24 Liberator Club; and Mark Hoage, exhibitor, who displayed four tables of his extensive 8th Air Force collection.

Dick Baynes, 466th BG, and Jay Jeffries, 453rd BG, co-chairmen of this year's event, recognized the dedicated services of past committee members who had planned and conducted the regional reunions over the past years. Appreciation was shown each former committee member by a plaque with words of appreciation and the individual tail marking symbol of his own bomb group. Receiving the awards were Richard Boucher (445th BG), Charles McBride (448th), Harry Orthman (492nd), J. Fred Thomas (392nd), and Charles Walker (445th). The ladies from the former committee were also recognized, and Val Boucher, Agnes McBride, Sally Orthman, and Elva Thomas were each presented with a token of appreciation.

A raffle was run by Roy Guy, 466th BG, and prizes were presented to the lucky ticket holders. Several of the handsome raffle prizes



Outgoing Reunion Committee members recognized. (L-R) Charles McBride (448th), Charles L. Walker (445th) & 2ADA EVP, Richard C. Boucher (445th), J. Fred Thomas (392nd) & Reunion Founder, Harry Orthman (492nd).



The ladies who used to do all the work. (L-R) Val Boucher (445th), Agnes McBride (448th) and Sally Orthman (492nd). Not present, Elva Thomas (392nd)



Reunion Cochairman Jay Jeffries (435rd) and his wife, Anna Jane



Cochairman Dick Baynes expresses appreciation to Alan Cass for a magnificent program.



Cochairman Dick Baynes recognizes Steve Miller's contribution to a fine evening.



The ladies who did all the work. (L-R) Margaret Baynes (466th), Muriel Reading (453rd), Marie Steichen (93rd), and standing is Joan Guy (466th).



Keith Roberts (392nd) caps off the evening with his rendition of "Moonlight Serenade."

introduced by Steve Miller, son of the late Glenn Miller. Other members of the Miller family were in attendance, including daughter Jonnie Miller Soper and three grandchildren, plus spouses.

Many gathered by 5:30 PM for an extended social hour of mixing and visiting before activities started at 7:00 PM. The meeting was opened by the singing of our National Anthem by Maria Gunnarsson, wife of Frank Grew, 448th BG, the invocation by Roy Guy, 466th BG, then the traditional lighting of Eight Candles for Remembrance followed by a welcome from our Marine Corps host, Col. Jerry Agenbroad, Director of MWR, MCAS, El Toro.

C.N. "Bud" Chamberlain, 489th BG, Past President, 2nd Air Division Association, served as Master of Ceremonies. He introduced other officers of the 2ADA, including Executive Vice President Chuck Walker, 445th BG; Past President J. Fred Thomas, 392nd BG; Group Vice Presidents Paul Steichen (93rd), Oak Mackey (392nd), Ray Pytel (445th), Wilbur Clingan (453rd), and Bill Beasley (492nd). Other persons attending were Fred A. Johnsen, Edwards AFB Historian and

were made by Earl Zimmerman, 389th BG. Raffle proceeds went to the Glenn Miller Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder, and to the 2nd Air Division American Librarian Fund.

Co-chairman Dick Baynes presented Steve Miller with a plaque in recognition of his support to our regional reunion dinners and especially for his help this year in arranging for the program.

The evening was closed by an emotional reading of "Moonlight Serenade," written and read by Keith Roberts, 392nd BG, while Alan Cass played a tape of Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" in the background.

Besides Dick Baynes and Jay Jeffries, committee members for this year's event were: Fred Bromm, 445th; Bud Chamberlain, 489th; Roy Guy, 466th; Doug Leavenworth, 453rd; Dick Peterson, 389th; Dan Reading, 453rd; John Rowe, 448th; and Paul Steichen, 93rd.

We'll meet again — Mark your calendars for next year: February 25, 1995 (the last Saturday in February). ■



Open Letter To the 93rd

by Floyd H. Mabee

NEW MEMBERS & FOLDED WINGS

OF THE ZADA: I trust that you noted that all new members as well as "Folded Wings" of each group will now be carried in the *Journal*. This is great, since it gives us additional space for our group reports. Please note that Paul Steichen, VP 93rd, will now list all non-ZADA 93rd men deceased in the "Folded Wings" section of the "Ball of Fire Quarterly Express." Please report to me, any 93rd ZADA "Folded Wings," May – October at 28 Hillside Ave., Dover, NJ 07801 (Tel. 201-366-5916), November – April at 11524 Zimmerman Road, Port Richey, FL 34668 (Tel. 813-862-2309). Please report to Paul Steichen, 2227A Ruhland Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-2401 (Tel. 310-214-1618), non-ZADA 93rd men.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA REGIONAL:

We had a good number of 93rd members attend the regional at Orlando on February 6, 1994. We didn't beat the 392nd BG with attendance this year. I had sent over seventy postcard notices to 93rd Florida residents this year. Col. Gilbert of the 392nd has managed these regionals the past two years and asked me to see if I could find three or four 93rd men to work with the committee for planning next year's regional. I called four of our 93rd members who live in the Orlando area: Col. Luther Cox (Ret.), author of *Always Fighting the Enemy*; Robert Wright; Warren Milliken; and I'm not sure but I think it was Maj. John Conlon, and they all volunteered per my request. Thanks, fellows. This regional has been a well planned affair that Florida ZADA members have needed.

INFORMATION REQUESTED:

I seek information for the daughter of Sgt. William E. Austin (330th BS) concerning two crews that were lost during a 13 June 1944 mission over "Tuton." Except for Staff/Sgt. John R. Rudy and Sgt. John J. Hines, none of the two crews are shown on the 93rd Roll of Honor. Anyone who can provide anything on these fellows, if they did survive, please let me know. I am mostly interested in

anyone who knew Sgt. Austin and can provide something that I can relay to his daughter, as she has just learned that he was her father. I believe the two planes missing were #42-95153 and #42-110104. Were there names for these planes? The other members of the two crews, both from the 330th BS: 1st Lt. Albert B. Cool, F/O Theodore Juraschek, 2nd Lt. John F. Sykes, 2nd Lt. T.V. McCorkle, 2nd Lt. Davis Mahoney, 2nd Lt. Vern Brown, 2nd Lt. John R. Hoffman, S/Sgt. James F. Bundy, S/Sgt. Thomas C. Sornsin, Sgt. William E. Austin, Sgt. Carl W. Lewis, T/Sgt. John J. Merlino, S/Sgt. Mattheuo R. Pelczar, Sgt. Glenn A. Creasey, Sgt. Edon B. Pickett, S/Sgt. John R. Rudy, Sgt. John J. Hines, and Sgt. Daniel V. Matlock. The last three on this list appear to have survived. I welcome any information you can supply.

"WHERE IS THIS MAN NOW" — UPDATE:

Re the story I had entered for Jim Reeves (HQ) in the Spring *Journal*, asking for information about a 93rd man, Capt. Kenneth L. Gilbert, I have since received a letter from Donald E. Wimbiscus, radio operator from the 445th BG. He stated that a few years ago he had transferred his membership after moving to the Captain Kenneth L. Gilbert Post 4487 Veterans of Foreign Wars located in Middletown, RI, just outside of Newport. He was told that Capt. Gilbert had been killed in action and that the post was organized in September 1945 using Capt. Gilbert's name. Mr. Wimbiscus said that the VFW post only had sketchy information. The post quartermaster told him that Capt. Gilbert had several write-ups in the *Newport Daily News*, and further information could be obtained from their archives. Capt. Gilbert's father was a World War I veteran who joined this post and his wife joined an auxiliary. There isn't any info on either's whereabouts. I wrote to the *Newport Daily News* requesting any information that they have in their archives about Capt. Kenneth L. Gilbert. Hope to have additional information for the next *Journal*.

I also received information from Edward G. King, 467th BG. He sent me information on how to search for crewmen and other friends using Phone Disc USA (see article on page 9), and sent a printout on a Kenneth L. Gilbert who lived in Newport, RI; Gilbert K or L in RI; and several other locations. He said it only took a short amount of time with instructions

on different ways to find a lost soul. Thanks a lot, Edward. I also received information from Art Hand, 44th BG. I sure appreciate all the help I get from ZADA members; I just wish I could get some information from my 93rd members once in a while.

BALL OF FIRE:

For years I've endeavored to find some documented record of the so-called assembly ship (Ball of Fire) idea which appears to have originated with the 93rd. I've never been able to find anything in the records, but feel there must be some official blessing at either group, wing or division level. If any of you can provide some such documentation or reference, please pass it on to me.

I have been concerned about "Ball of Fire" for years. The original "Ball of Fire" was hit badly on an 18 Nov 43 mission to Lorient. The plane made it back to England, crash landed, and was demolished. This is some of what I have found later. "Ball of Fire" was patched up and first used as a hospital ship. There was a lack of Group and Squadron reports in those early days. This has been my thought: I believe the whole affair was covered up from the start. At that time Capt. Tate was a very good and popular West Pointer. One of the original crew disagreed with me on this. Just last year I received some copies of the *Stars and Stripes* feature story dated Feb. 1944, by Lt. Cal Stewart: The Ball of Fire #41-23667, shunned by all after five missions climaxed with the Yenarge incident, was converted into a hospital ship. The plane that Lt. Tate of St. Augustine, Florida STOLE by flying her away from airdrome in Scotland without the blessings of red tape. This plane was named "Ball of Fire Junior" #41-23874 I. I have sortie reports that verify that Tate flew this plane while we were in Africa the first time, 1942-43. When we returned to England our co-pilot, Capt. Frank Lown on "Shoot Luke" was given "Ball of Fire Jr." and crew. They barely survived the Vegasack mission 18 March 43, but were shot down on the Brest mission 16 April 43. Capt. Lown and some of the crew survived and were the guests of Germany for the duration. That is another story told very well by Col. Luther Cox (Ret.) in his book *Always Fighting the Enemy*.

I'm sorry, but I have to cut this off; my typewriter has gone to the dogs. I'll have more for the next *Journal*. ■

THE UNHERALDED BLACK B-24 SECRET MISSIONS

BY KENNETH DRISCOLL (467th)

In April 1944, I started flying high altitude B-24 day bombing missions from Rackheath Air Base near Norwich, with the 788th Bomb Squadron, 467th Bomb Group, 2nd Bomb Division. The missions of the 2nd Bomb Division were highly publicized in the local newspapers and the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*. The day after a mission there were headlines in the papers such as "1000 Bombers Blast Targets in Germany," "Berlin Bombed by 8th Air Force," and "Heavy Bombers Strike Again." There were long articles describing targets, damage, losses, etc.

The personnel assigned to Headquarters 2nd Bomb Division and all of its B-24 bomb groups did not know of the existence of a top secret B-24 group which was located about 100 miles southwest of Norwich, at an air base named Harrington, near the town of Kettering.

When the crews and support personnel of the 2nd Bomb Division were going to bed at night, prior to an early morning wake up call for a mission briefing, the crews of the 801st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, were taking off from Harrington in their black painted B-24s for low level flights to secret drop areas in occupied Europe. A typical flight took off at 10-11 PM and returned about 4-5 AM.

The mission of the 801st Bomb Group (code name "Carpetbaggers") was to drop spies/saboteurs and military supplies into the occupied countries to assist and develop resistance (underground) forces. These clandestine flights were in support of the American OSS (Office of Strategic Services) which was led by General "Wild Bill" Donovan.

This covert operation worked closely with the British SOE (Special Operations Executive) flying RAF aircraft from their base at Tempsford. The high degree of security was such that only those personnel with a "need to know" were familiar with these operations.

The black B-24s had many modifications to adapt the planes for long night flights over enemy territory. The nose and ball turrets and the two waist guns were removed, as well as all oxygen equipment. The nose section was enclosed with Plexiglas. The pilotage navigator (former bombardier) sat at that location. In addition to doing pilotage navigation, he verbally assisted the pilot in lining up, at low altitude, with the target (drop zone). He also dropped the supply canisters (instead of bombs) and gave the dispatcher in the waist the signal when to drop the agents. This was done through a trap door opening in the waist of the plane where the ball turret formerly had been located.

The navigator had extra classified electronic navigational aids. There were flame dampeners on the exhaust manifolds of the engines. The pilot and co-pilot had blister windows to enable

them to look straight down. The pilot had a special radio altimeter that gave the height above the ground. It had two ranges, 0-400 feet and 0-4000 feet. There were many other changes made to the aircraft to assist the crew in accomplishing its mission undetected.

Each crew made its own flight plan and route to be flown after checking flak maps and receiving a weather briefing. Altitudes to be flown varied from 400 to 7,000 feet. The pilots changed altitudes at their own discretion depending on terrain, visibility, weather conditions, etc. Agents were dropped at 600 feet above ground and canisters were dropped at 400 feet. Airspeed was reduced to 130 MPH with half flaps during the approach for a drop.

A target (drop zone) was identified by three small fires in a row and by a prearranged Morse Code letter sent by flashlight from the down wind end of the fires.

During May, 1944, the 788th Squadron from the 467th Bomb Group at Rackheath, Norfolk, and the 850th Squadron from the 490th Bomb Group at Eye, Suffolk, were transferred into the 801st Bomb Group (Carpetbaggers). This increased the number of night flying B-24 squadrons at Harrington from two to four, in anticipation of additional requirements prior to and after the invasion at Normandy on 6 June 1944.

I had an excellent eight man crew. My navigator, Lt. Bob Ricketts, and my pilotage navigator (bombardier), Lt. Joe Fox, did superior jobs in getting us to and from our drop zones. We never missed finding any of them; we were successful on 27 of 29 missions. We did not drop our loads on two flights. On the first miss, the ground reception team was not at the drop site (we never were told later why they were not there); on the second unsuccessful drop, the wrong Morse Code letter was transmitted visually to us. We returned to base with a team of four U.S. agents that were to be dropped in south central France. Their objective was to support the allied invasion forces moving northward from southern France.

The Carpetbaggers had missions to Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Germany and France. Some crews, dressed in civilian clothing, flew across Norway and landed in neutral Sweden to drop off or pick up VIPs. Major William E. Colby, who in later years became director of our Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was dropped by a Carpetbagger aircraft in France during August 1944 and dropped again in Norway about March, 1945.

In mid-1944, the Carpetbaggers only flew black B-24 type aircraft. As the months went on, they had a few C-47s that they flew and landed behind enemy lines in France. They also flew some modified A-26 aircraft and British Mosquitos to drop agents deep in Germany,

including the Berlin area.

Some aircraft losses were caused by German night fighters and small caliber anti-aircraft guns. Some were also lost by mid-air collisions and aircraft hitting hillsides when flying too low. A couple were shot down by allied gunners after the invasion of France, and another was lost over Murmansk, Russia. This aircraft was severely damaged by German anti-aircraft fire over northern Norway. The crew elected to fly on to the "friendly" Russian port of Murmansk. Since the Russians did not have any flight information on the incoming aircraft, they shot it down. One aircraft was shot down at 3:00 in the morning by a German night fighter, while on a training mission over England. Due to damaged parachutes on board, the navigator and pilotage navigator bailed out successfully, piggy back style, using only one chute.

I never knew how close my plane came to being detected by enemy night fighters, hit by anti-aircraft fire or hitting the top of a hill (the radio altimeter could indicate the distance directly below an aircraft, but it could not detect a hill in front of the plane). I do know, however, that on a couple of missions, the sudden brilliance of German searchlights scanning the sky looking for us got my immediate undivided attention. On two occasions, we got in prop wash from unseen, undetected aircraft in front of us while on the final low altitude approach to drop sites. We finally detected one of them but never saw the second one. This was hard on the nerves, at least on mine.

An incident happened one night at Harrington that I have never forgotten. We had been briefed in the afternoon that our drop site was in Belgium and that we would be dropping two agents. As a general rule, air crews did not mingle with the agents to be dropped. I, as pilot, usually introduced myself to them, time permitting, and asked if they had any questions about the flight or drop.

As I approached the two agents, who were standing near the nose of the aircraft just prior to boarding, I noted that one of them was a lady about 20-25 years old. Just before I got to them, I saw their escort hand them some capsules. These capsules contained poison and were to be swallowed by the agents to kill themselves, if they so desired, when they were captured. If captured, they would have been tortured as spies and put to death by the Germans. Seeing this young lady voluntarily embark on such a dangerous mission, knowing the consequences if it failed, has been etched in my memory ever since.

In early August, 1944, the 492nd Bomb Group at North Pickenham, which had been flying high altitude day bombing missions in the 2nd Bomb Division, was deactivated. Immediately thereafter, the 8th Air Force, for administrative reasons, reassigned the group number 492, along with its four squadron numbers, to the Carpetbagger operation. The 801st Bomb Group then became the 492nd Bomb Group at Harrington with all four of the old 492nd squadron numbers, 856th, 857th, 858th, and 859th.

To differentiate between the two 492nd Bomb Groups (the first, day bombing; the second, night flying Carpetbaggers), the present Carpetbagger Association is known as "The 801st/492nd Bomb Group Association, Carpetbaggers." ■

Attlebridge Tales



by Earl Wassom

In the Spring 1994 issue of the *Journal*, I introduced a new masthead for our page. It is the familiar and indomitable old war bird which we have often seen on different 466th publications from Attlebridge days and on fundraising brochures for the group in more recent years. This cartoon came from the pen of Charles D. Saxon, pilot, 564th/785th. He has been called "resident cartoonist" for the 466th. Not only did he illustrate the posters and pamphlets for the Group, he entertained us with his creative art work in the Officers Club, chow hall, barracks — wherever there was a willing subject to pose for him, and there were plenty!

We are going public with one of his cartoons which he created as nose art for our airplane. Our crew was assigned "Ma's Lil' Angel" and we flew her on several missions until enemy flak damaged her to the extent that we had to land at a fighter base, St. Dizier, France, and leave her remains. Later, she was resurrected and returned to Attlebridge and assigned to another crew. We had been given another aircraft, 545B, which did not have a name or nose art. Someone, I don't remember who, gave me the nickname "Bottle Butt." We observed many who developed this physical distortion while in the ETO as a result of being strapped in the pilot's seat and mashed



down with a heavy flak suit for long periods of time. I was the one who got the title, and it stuck. "Bottle Butt" was the theme Saxon chose when he drew my picture. We flew almost all of our remaining missions in "Bottle Butt's Buggy," but it was never painted with the nose art Saxon created. But to

us and those who knew, 545B was the "Buggy."

I know there are other unpublished Saxon portraits out there. I have heard of them. Send me a copy and let the rest of us see how you used to look!

Many of you did not have a portrait drawn by Saxon but there are "word pictures" of yourself which you can send to me. Bombs had to be "delivered" to the enemy in B-24s. It took air crews to do it. I was one of the "drivers." But our success was not based on our flying skills, luck, and the mercy of our Creator alone; it was also made possible through you who were trained to be ground crew personnel. There were many categories and many skills required to keep the old Liberator in the air. Some of you were: cooks, MPs, bomb loaders, ammo personnel, chaplains, tower operators, truck drivers, radio and instrument technicians, medics, quartermaster guys, dispatchers, G-2, mechanics and crew chiefs, just to name a few. You received flak of another kind. You stayed "at home" but sweated out the safe return of planes and combat crews. You counted the returning aircraft; you watched anxiously for "your" plane and crew. You were distressed when a "wounded Lib" returned, and as the ones shooting red flares managed to get on the ground, you watched anxiously as the "meat wagon" rushed out on the field.

You crew chiefs and mechanics took your jobs seriously — keeping your aircraft in the best mechanical shape as humanly possible. Working at the hardstand under adverse conditions, you received no medals of valor and no "completed tour" was possible. You men pulled 25, 50, 100 hour inspections, changed engines, spark plugs, repaired damage from enemy flak and bullets, filled the gas tanks and changed the oil, inspected every part to make certain that your plane was safe to fly. You carefully read the pilot's or co-pilot's mechanical report. Turning the pages with fingers cracked from the cold and stained with grease and oil, you searched for clues as to why the plane "lost power" or "vibrated" or "handled funny" or dozens of other unexplainable malfunctions. But, you always found the cause and fixed it! Ground crew guys, you are appreciated. Thank you. Send me a note about yourself and your phone number. The 2ADA and the 8th AF need to know your experiences. Your story will never be told if you don't tell it.

REUNIONS: One just has to attend his first reunion and then he is "hooked." These gatherings, state, regional, or national, are alive with "old-timers" (those who have been to one or more before), and the "first-timers." Once there, these "first-timers" experience a flow of familiarity and a sense of belonging takes over. I was able to attend the 2nd Florida Regional Reunion in Orlando on February 16. Over 200 were in

attendance, and the 466th was well represented. Richard C. Baynes (466th BG), co-chairman for the 13th Annual Southern California Regional on February 26, reported over 300 present and the 466th fellows were there in strength. Then there was the Eleventh Annual Midwest Region Conference, Dayton, Ohio, May 20-21; and of course, the May 27-31 Annual Convention in Kansas City. Recently, I overheard someone say, "...I learn more about the 466th in one gathering than I did all the time I was at Attlebridge!"

LETTERS: Lt. Col. Albert Hansen wrote a letter and sent a sketch of a plaque raising the question about a 96th Combat Wing Headquarters insignia. He asked, "Does anyone remember whether or not this patch was ever adopted?" His query appeared in the Winter 1993 issue of the *Journal*. The resounding answer is, "Yes, it is for real." Al Hansen (458, 466, 467) has received correspondence, photos, and copies of a certificate of valor containing this insignia. I too have received an original document awarded to Sgt. James O. Bates (466th) with missions flown, military decorations awarded, and the signature of B/Gen. Walter Peck, the 96th CBW Commander. More about this citation next time.

BOOKS: There are many exciting activities connected with our Air Force associations. With time getting away from us, more and more quality books about the 8th Air Force are being written. This is a memorable activity: our stories, experiences, and histories are appearing in print. Once written, these events will be preserved for the generations which follow. Our voices verbalizing our experiences will fade away, but the written word will endure. I recently received an interesting brochure which describes the subject of many of the books being written. Speaking of Grandpa and Grandma, this flyer declares, "When they were young — they saved the world." Written by John Matt, this new title is *Crowdog, a Saga of a Young American*. Another one coming out is the history of your 466th BG, *Attlebridge Diaries*. This history is being reprinted from the original and expanded to include the events which have happened since the end of the war. Please order direct from Taylor Publishing Company, P.O. Box 12431, Charlotte, N.C. 28220. The cost is \$40.00 plus \$4.95 shipping and handling. Both of these titles are about groups and individuals in the 2nd Air Division. ■

466th BGA ANNUAL REUNION

The 466th Bomb Group Association Annual Reunion will be held October 4-9, 1994, at Town & Country Resort, San Diego, California. Coordinated with the 8th AFHS Reunion. Contact:

Lou Loevsky
(201) 226-4624

PLOESTI, ED DOBSON REMEMBERED

BY EDWARD M. DOBSON, JR.

In our everyday lives, Dobson Avenue connects Merrick Road to Sunrise Highway. But in matters larger than life, Dobson Avenue connects two towns, Merrick and Bellmore, with wartime's ultimate sacrifice.

Fifty-some years ago, as Mepham High School's first graduates went off to war, Ed Dobson ('39) from Buckingham Road, Merrick, joined the Army Air Force. He signed up for flight training and earned his commission, his pilot's wings, and an assignment to the 67th Squadron, 44th Bombardment Group, Eighth Air Force.

Ed Dobson and Margaret Frank of Chapman Avenue, Bellmore, classmates in Mepham's first graduating class, were married at Brooks Field in Texas, where he earned his wings. After B-24 school in desert-like Alamogordo, New Mexico, he went to the war.

On Sunday, August 1, 1943, 178 powerful B-24 Liberator bombers took off from bases in North Africa to cross the Mediterranean, headed for Romania. Lt. Ed Dobson, co-pilot, sat next to Lt. James E. Hill of Midland, Texas, in the cockpit of a B-24 named "Calaban". Seven other crewmen examined guns and gear. They comprised Hill's crew except for a tenth man left behind because this flight had no use for a belly gunner.

Their assignment was to cross Yugoslavia's mountains and approach Romania at tree-top level to destroy the oil refineries at Ploesti. The strategy was to avoid radar detection and to prevent flak gunners and fighter pilots from getting good shots at them.

Lt. Hill's crew trained together stateside and were assigned to "Calaban" and to North Africa immediately on arriving in England. After a few missions over Sicily and Italy in preparation for that invasion, the 44th Bomb Group practiced very low level flying in the desert, occasionally flattening an Arab tent with propwash. It was inadequate rehearsal for the actual mission.

Five bomb groups were assigned to destroy Ploesti's refineries in one massive raid: Sky Scorpions (389th); Liberandos (376th); Pyramiders (98th); Ted's Traveling Circus (93rd); and the Flying Eight Balls (44th). Each group was briefed to attack a certain target.

The 376th Group led the formation. In the 376th's command plane, "Teggie Ann," were three pilots: the plane's pilot, Capt. Ralph "Red" Thompson; the command pilot for the 376th Group, Col. Keith Compton; and the mission commander, General Uzal G. Ent. Suddenly a 376th plane, "Wongo Wongo," fell out of control into the Mediterranean. All planes held radio silence as ordered.

Hours later, "Teggie Ann" made her assigned right turn too early and headed for the city of Bucharest. Other navigators in the 376th and the 93rd realized the mistake but dutifully held radio silence and followed. The other three groups were too far back to see the error.

There are conflicting explanations for the wrong turn. One has the lead navigator going down in "Wongo Wongo," and the command

plane's navigator not being fully briefed. Another has the command pilots overriding the lead navigator in "Teggie Ann." It would have been unusual for the lead navigator and the command pilots to be in separate planes.

Any remaining hope of surprise now lost, the 93rd finally broke radio silence. Col. Addison E. Baker ordered a left turn, north, to Ploesti. The 93rd approached the refineries almost 180 degrees off their assigned bomb run. The 376th turned later. Neither group could recognize its assigned target. Guessing wrong, the 93rd hit Lt. Dobson's target.

Flying as low as twenty feet high, parallel to a railroad and the blazing guns of a flak train, Lt. Dobson and half of the 44th approached Target White 5, Columbia Aquila refinery, as planned. "Calaban" flew left wing in the second three-plane V-shaped element. Gunners raked the flak crews who were trying to find the range on the low-flying planes. The B-24s

"There were at least 100 fighters...everywhere I looked...our ships were being shot down behind us so fast that I didn't think we would ever make it through."

would need more altitude to clear the refinery stacks.

Leading this formation in "Suzy Q," 44th Group commander Col. Leon Johnson was the first to see another problem, the smoking hell before them, their target partially destroyed by the 93rd. His choices were to break from their assigned run and risk flying into other American planes or hit this target again and risk flying into obscured stacks and barrage balloon cables. It was a quick decision: don't endanger other groups.

Col. Johnson gained a hundred feet of altitude and throttled up, leading his flight of the 44th into the target identified as White Five, the Columbia Aquila refinery. Fifteen B-24s followed. Only seven would return to base. On the bomb run, radioman Sgt. Ray Reeves of Houston, Texas, stood behind Lts. Dobson and Hill, a helpful third pair of eyes. Suddenly, Lt. Dobson lifted up in his seat and yelled, "BALLOON CABLES!" said Sgt. Reeves in retrospect. Lt. Hill had no time to consider an evasive maneuver that would have created dangers similar to those Col. Johnson avoided.

A cable whizzed past "Calaban's" nose and sliced into the right wing a foot from the fuselage and Lt. Dobson. It missed the inside propeller, a hit which might have been fatal. It cut the deicer boot and the air speed indicator tube, but the main spar held. The cable snapped instead of the wing, and it snapped before any of the affixed contact bombs hit the wing. "Calaban" stayed airborne with the extra speed gained for the bomb run.

An explosion at the burning target sent up a huge fireball, parting the smoke with a column of intense heat. This was the tunnel of fire

so named by Dugan and Stewart in their book, *Ploesti*. Racing into this tunnel inferno, Col. Johnson's first six planes were buffeted by exploding tanks and delayed action bombs dropped by the 93rd. Bombs away!

Waist gunner Sgt. John Russell of Wood River, Illinois, remembers the heat being so intense that he was unable to toss out his boxes of incendiaries. After "Calaban" passed the target, the smoke consolidated. The trailing nine planes separated as they flew around and into the smoke, anti-aircraft batteries damaging most of them.

Suddenly an unfamiliar B-24 appeared above and to the right of "Calaban," angling down, two engines smoking. Tail gunner Sgt. Hubert Womack of Colleyville, Texas, remembers struggling with his throat mike, trying to get on the intercom to warn Lts. Hill and Dobson of the impending collision. Then "Calaban" lurched out from under the stricken B-24. Lt. Dobson had seen the plane and taken control for the evasive maneuver.

Sgt. Womack's diary entry, written the next day, tells of "at least 100 fighters...everywhere I looked...and so many of our own ships behind us that I couldn't shoot any fighters. Our own ships were being shot down behind

us so fast that I didn't think we would ever make it through."

Behind them, Lt. Worden Weaver's "Li'l Abner" came away from the target with three engines damaged and controls shot up. After trying unsuccessfully for parachute altitude, Weaver committed his plane to a wheels-up crash landing. Except for one man, Lt. Weaver and his crew survived and were taken POW in Romania. Lt. Weaver was awarded a Silver Star for saving so many of his crew.

Now with bomb doors jammed open, "Calaban" struggled through a flat right turn following element leader Capt. Bill Cameron in "Buzzin' Bear" back down to the treetops, hedgehopping to frustrate the Nazi fighters in the sky around them. "Calaban" flew between trees and mowed the tops off corn stalks that ground crew would later clean from the jammed open bomb bay. Sgt. Russell remembers Lt. Hill grumbling into the intercom, "Cable cut the air speed indicator, so watch those RPMs and the manifold pressure. 'Don't worry about the speed,' said Lt. Dobson, 'just drive it.'" The irony of driving a B-24 through cornfields took the edge off for the moment. Lt. Dobson had a way of doing that, said Sgt. Russell.

The crew was set up for tension-breakers by the regular banter between Lts. Hill and Dobson over such things as the pronunciation of words. Most words were said differently in Texas than in New York, hearing those two argue.

"Calaban" fought to keep up with survivors of the scattered and decimated formation. A third of the 178 B-24s would not return to

(continued on page 21)

PLOESTI, ED DOBSON (continued)

base. Many members of their crews survived as POWs in Romania or as internees in neutral Turkey.

Axis fighters sporadically attacked all the way to the Mediterranean. The crew alternated between fighting off the enemy and throwing things out of the plane to lighten the load.

Later, Ed Dobson wrote to Margaret in a letter that somehow managed to survive the censors: "You'll never have to know how good it feels, when you're all shot up and going to run out of gas, and suddenly you think, Malta!" The nearest friendly ground was Malta, thanks to the valiant Maltese and British, and "Calaban" barely got there on two engines, and no oil left in one of those two.

Lt. Hill and several other first pilots were awarded the Silver Star for their courage, leadership, and skill in executing the assignment. Lt. Dobson and the rest of the "Calaban" crew each received the Distinguished Flying Cross, as did most others who flew this mission, for their perseverance, technical skill, and valiant effort bringing high honor to the Army Air Forces. Of those overlooked for medals, at least one never got credit for flying the mission.

Five Medals of Honor were awarded, more than for any other single action in any war, three posthumously. One went to Col. Johnson, who said he did not receive the award for himself but on behalf of all those participants under his command. Planes that survived Ploesti had a bomb painted horizontally on the nose to signify the Medal of Honor low level mission.

Ploesti was one of 25 missions Lt. Dobson had to finish to come home at that stage of the war. The odds were against him. On the August 16th mission to Foggia, Italy, two weeks after Ploesti, and again on the October 1st mission to Wiener-Neustadt, Austria, "Calaban" was the only plane of the 67th Squadron to return to base.

At Foggia, "Calaban" gunners were credited with six fighters shot down and two damaged. "Calaban" suffered damage including a 20-millimeter armor-piercing shell through the radio. At Wiener-Neustadt, "Calaban" shot down seven. Sgt. Russell dug six German 30-caliber bullets out of his parachute pack.

Finally the 44th Bomb Group returned from North Africa to Shipdham Air Base near Norwich, England. Lt. Dobson had a personal goal to qualify as first pilot and have his own plane. All of the "Calaban" crew met one night in Lt. Hill's room to talk things over. No one wanted Lt. Dobson to leave, but they respected his choice.

Lt. Dobson loved flying and thought he might make a career of it, military or civilian. Making first pilot seemed a necessary step. In November 1943, Lt. Dobson made first pilot and qualified for his own plane.

On November 18th, the 44th's Flying Eight Balls joined three other groups on a long, cold mission to disable the German fighter repair base at Kjeller, near Oslo, Norway. A report shows that Lt. Dobson made the bomb run and dropped on target. After that, no one knows what happened to Lt. Dobson, his new crew, and their plane.

There were fighters swarming on the

return trip, and the formation had broken up. Six of the 107 planes were lost, and another three planes landed in neutral Sweden.

Only Lt. Dobson's plane remains unaccounted for. Margaret Dobson spent nearly two years with no news, tossed between hope and despair. At the end of the war, Ed and his crew finally were declared killed in action.

On February 25, 1944, Lt. Hill's crew finished its 25 missions, but without "Calaban." On December 11, 1943, "Calaban" and another crew were lost attempting evasive maneuvers to avoid flak on a bomb run over Germany, struck by bombs from a B-24 above. No one suffered a serious injury while flying with Lt. Hill. According to former 67th Squadron Commander Bill Cameron of Carmel, California, no other bomber crew took more damage to their aircraft and survived the war without injury.

In 1947, Margaret married John Stavish, a veteran of the invasion of the Philippines, the Battle of Lingayen Gulf, and terror known as kamikaze. Their wedding and reception, so symbolic of the end of the war, are commemorated in a wall plaque photo at McCluskey's Steak House, Bellmore, where they first met. Ed Dobson's commemorations are on the west wall of the main foyer at Mephram, on the Wall of the Missing at the American Cemetery in Cambridge, England, and in the renaming of Dobson Avenue in his honor.

MacKinlay Kantor, who had written an academy award winning film entitled *The Best Years Of Our Lives*, chose to write an article on a woman who lost her husband during the war. The chaplain at Mitchell Field referred him to Margaret Stavish. Her story, "V-J Day Plus Five Years," appeared in the August 1950 *Redbook* magazine.

Margaret and John Stavish raised their own family, and Ed Dobson, Jr., in Bellmore. Life goes on. Freedom goes on. Take a slow drive on Dobson Avenue and enjoy.

On August 1, 1993, the 50th anniversary of Ploesti, the 44th Bomb Group Memorial Association held a ceremony at the Air Force Museum on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. One member of "Calaban's" crew attended, Hubert Womack. The only others known to be living, John Russell and Ray Reeves, were unable to attend.

On November 18, 1993, citizens of Norway commemorated the 50th anniversary of the 8th Air Force missions to Norway and the loss of 63 airmen, including Ed Dobson, and the three Norwegians killed on the ground. Several men who flew the mission dedicated a plaque on a large granite stone at their former target, Kjeller Air Base. About 400 Norwegians attended, many of them active in the resistance during the war. They are serious about remembering the Americans of the Eighth Air Force.

* * * * *

Edward M. Dobson, Jr. is an attorney employed by the Supreme Court of Montana as a special master in the adjudication of water rights. He attended the 50th anniversary ceremonies for both the Ploesti and Norway missions, and organized a reunion in Texas in February 1994 for his father's 67th Squadron. This article first appeared in the Merrick Life (Long Island, NY), a weekly newspaper. ■

PLOESTI DOCUMENTARY JUDGED "BEST IN WEST"

The television documentary *Wing and a Prayer: The Saga of Utah Man*, a coproduction of Spike Productions Inc., Salt Lake City and KBYU-TV of Provo, Utah has earned the Best of the West award for Outstanding Documentary produced by a public television station in the Pacific/Western United States.

Wing and a Prayer has also won the 1994 Silver Angel Award for International Television Programming.

Wing and a Prayer documents the story of an American bomber pilot and his crew as they flew the celebrated bombing mission over Ploesti, Romania on August 1, 1943. Ploesti is the most highly decorated mission in America's history.

For further information, please contact:

Spike Productions Inc.
(801) 533-0724

SEEKING Unusual & Interesting WWII STORIES

I am compiling exciting or unique Eighth Air Force WWII experiences for a publication collaboration tentatively entitled *Chronicles from the Men of the Mighty Eighth®*. If you or a relative have one or several WWII experiences that are touching, heroic, romantic, unique, or just plain incredible, please send them in. There is no restriction on the number of stories submitted. Please enclose your full name, time served in the 8th, unit, plane name, base, title of your story(s), and be sure to include all dates and locations. (Please include your home phone number in case I have any additional questions.) Send stories to:

Rusty Briarton
5270 Del Paz Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80918



492ND BOMB GROUP Happy Warrior Happenings

BY WILLIS H. "BILL" BEASLEY

PANGBOURNE REST HOME

The Winter edition of the *Journal* under Happy Warrior Happenings carried a request for information about the Pangbourne Rest Home. Bob Fisher of the 458th BG sent a picture of the Elephant Hotel (below) and a



picture of the rest home (unfortunately the quality of the photocopy is not good enough to reproduce in the *Journal*). Thanks, Bob!

HUGH SHALVOY'S CREW

Robert J. Downes, gunner of Lt. Shalvoy's crew, has been sought by two of his crew members, Paul Edwards and Paul Perry. Thanks to Will Lundy of the 44th BG who sent Bob Downes' address. Bob Downes sent a crew picture of Lt. Ogden's crew and orders which transferred him to the 389th Bomb Group.

REPLACEMENT CREWS OF THE 492ND BG

Dick Bastien, with an assist from Russell Ives, provided a list of all the pilots of the replacement crews in the order in which they were assigned to the 492nd Bomb Group. I have made contact with those pilots or members of their crews marked with an asterisk. They are as follows:

Monroe, Rasmussen*, Simon, Taylor*, Kaufman, Kilpatrick, Kuecker, McGowan*, McCoy*, Koltun*, Bowland*, Faucher, Testa, Abernethy, Bocksberger, Cary, Leahy*, Roseborough*, Watson, Foster, Perry, Sheffield*, Brothers, Cravens, Hudson, Pizenbarger*, Young, Nutt, Rusden, Ruthenbeck, Seger*, Shannon*, Wesson, White, Vowinkel*, Leister*, Miller*, Pease, Schulze, Thompson, Walker, Beatty*, Boswell, Both*, Mills, Dunnam*, Fleming, Ives, and Morgan.

Many of these crews finished their tours with other bomb groups. I would like to hear from any of the personnel connected with the above crews. We are trying to put together as complete a history of the 492nd BG as possible. Every scrap of information is valuable. Time is of the essence!

2ADA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL REUNION DINNER FEBRUARY 26, 1994

Another great reunion dinner and a pleasure to see many of the 492nd Bomb Group members again. Norma, our son Craig and I spent a couple of days in San Diego before the dinner and enjoyed the chance to escape the snow and cold of Colorado. The following Happy Warriors were in attendance: Albert & Jean Barnebee; Bill, Norma & Craig Beasley; Carl & Verla Johnson; Robert & Patricia Mattson; Tom & Mary Anne Nelson; Harry & Sally Orthman; Bill & Molly Sparks. Although registered, Bill & Maxine Clarey and Gene & Renie Gossett were unable to attend. Bill Clarey was under the weather and Gene Gossett had major surgery that week. I am pleased to report they are doing well at this writing. They were missed. Harry and Sally Orthman were presented with awards for their years of service as members of the reunion committee.

The Glenn Miller Story in slides with the sounds of the Glenn Miller band was presented after dinner by Alan Cass, Director of the Coors Events/Conference Center and archivist of the Glenn Miller collection at the University of Colorado at Boulder. What luck; Alan also presented his program at the 2ADA reunion in Kansas City on May 28, following the buffet dinner.

Three days after we arrived home from California we were off to Kansas City to attend the Executive Committee meeting. The accommodations at the Hyatt are great and the next issue will have a full reunion report. At this writing the 492nd Bomb Group had 23 members registered for the reunion. Among those planning to attend were my pilot Joe Harris and his wife Fran; Sam Micelli and his wife who were unable to make the Hilton Head reunion; Gerald & Freda Campbell; Bud Carter; Barney & Hazel Edwards; Ed & Betty Erickson; J.P. & Jac Harper; Bud & Marguerite Beasley; Bill & Maxine Clarey; Bob & Pat Mattson; Paul Seifert; Jim McCrory; Elvern & Hazel Seitzinger; and Bill, Norma & Craig Beasley. Hopefully Don Pierce was back from Holland, and Jim Brown from his trip in the States, in time to make the group dinner.

RECORD PRESERVATION

Those copies of orders now 50 years old are in the various stages of deterioration. Some are quite yellow and fragile to handle. It is up to us, as individuals, to take the necessary

steps to preserve history that no one else may be interested in spending the time, energy, and possibly the money, to preserve. When copies of orders are received at the 492nd BG they are first xeroxed onto acid free paper (25% to 100% rag content) and then housed in folders of either acid free paper or the poly sheet protectors that state they are "non-stick," won't lift print off and are archival-safe material.

Enemies of paper and sources of acid are: paper itself; atmospheric pollutants; oils from skin; saliva; perspiration; dust which is abrasive and transfers pollutants; acidic inks; insects and rodents which eat paper documents and leave acidic droppings (silver fish are notorious paper eaters).

Some "paper don'ts": Don't fold or roll paper. Store flat if at all possible. Don't use straight pins, staples, or paper clips. These cause permanent rust stains (use stainless steel versions of these items). Don't use rubber bands. They melt at a low temperature, stick to your paper and cause stains. Don't get the paper wet. Water damage is very difficult to repair.

So fellows, check your records, don't let them become lost to the ravages of time. Let's leave a legacy of our valiant efforts of 50 years ago. These records are irreplaceable, and have tremendous importance in preserving our history. Your 492nd BG records will receive TLC if you share them with me for copying.

MAY 19, 1944 - TARGET BRUNSWICK

This date will be forever etched in the memories of many of the men of the 492nd Bomb Group. A 50 year anniversary pilgrimage marking the date of this mission and their crash is being made by Charles Arnett, pilot; Don Pierce, radio operator; and Ernie Gavitt, navigator, to their crash site in Tuitjhorn, Holland. They will leave the States on May 12 and will visit Norwich and the base at North Pickenham; then take the ferry to Holland where they will be met by city officials for a memorial ceremony on May 19. Making this return journey along with Charles, Don and Ernie are their wives and Ernie's grandson, Doug.

Simultaneously, in North Carolina at the grave site of Uriel Robertson, the only casualty of this crew, Uriel's family and a minister will gather to hold a memorial service.

We welcome Jay Steinberg, a new associate member. His grandfather, Jack Rosey, bombardier on Brantley's crew, was KIA on this same mission to Brunswick on May 19, 1944. Jay made a trip to North Pickenham this past March to visit the base from which his grandfather flew, and has contacted the surviving members of this crew. ■



392nd B.G.

BY OAK MACKEY

"Courage is doing what you're afraid to do; there can be no courage unless you're scared." — Eddie Rickenbacker. Or, as John Wayne put it, "Courage is being scared to death, and saddling up and going anyway."

You have already read the following story on the front page of the 392nd BGMA "News" if you are a 392nd BGMA member. For all others, you may find this story of some interest, and keep in mind, I am writing this report in mid-April, 1994.

On January 4, 1944, while returning from a mission to Kiel, Germany, a B-24 from the 392nd BG named "Alfred" crashed near Sheringham, which is near Cromer on the North Sea coast about twenty miles north of Norwich. Witnesses report it was flying on two engines and apparently was unable to gain altitude to clear rising ground. Five of the crew were killed in the crash; there were five survivors. Those who perished were Lt. Colby Waugh, pilot; Lt. Arthur L. Cound, navigator; Lt. Virgil E. Thomson, bombardier; S/Sgt. Don C. Belden, gunner; and S/Sgt. Edward R. Murphy, gunner. Survivors were Lt. James W. Barton, co-pilot; T/Sgt. Lester L. Wagner, engineer; T/Sgt. Parke V. Kent, radio operator; S/Sgt. Earl J. Johnson, gunner; and S/Sgt. Henry Wilk, gunner.

The idea for a memorial to honor this crew came from Mrs. May Ayers of Sheringham. Her father was an eyewitness to the crash and assisted in getting survivors out of the wreckage. In recent times, she enlisted the aid of Doug and Celia Willies, also of Sheringham, to raise the necessary funds and to do the research required. Mr. Willies has learned that Lt. Virgil E. Thomson is buried in the American Cemetery near Cambridge. The other bodies were sent home to the United States. Of the five survivors of the crash, it was learned that all have passed away of natural causes since the war, except one. Henry Wilk is alive and well, and has been located.

Supporters of the memorial donated over £500, and Sheringham Engravings engraved it free of charge. The memorial is now in place at the All Saints Church in Sheringham. On January 4, 1994, fifty years to the day after the crash, a simple blessing service to honor the memory of

Lt. Waugh and his crew was held in the churchyard. Doug Willies said, "At last we have honoured the sacrifices made by these men who, like countless others, fought for our freedom. It is too easy to forget as the years go by, and we felt it was important that their memory should live on close to the spot where they died."

Formal memorial dedication services took place on May 7, 1994. Henry Wilk, his wife, son and daughter-in-law, and seven relatives of Lt. Waugh planned to attend. Doug Willies also tells me he has received many wonderful letters from relatives of other crew members, expressing sincere appreciation to him, and to all the



people of Sheringham, for placing this memorial to remember and honor Lt. Waugh and his crew.

What a beautiful tribute! To be remembered and honored after all these years by the people of Sheringham is truly an act of love and friendship in the highest degree. A very special THANK YOU to May Ayers and Doug & Celia Willies for all the work and research required to place this memorial in memory of these gallant airmen of the 392nd BG.

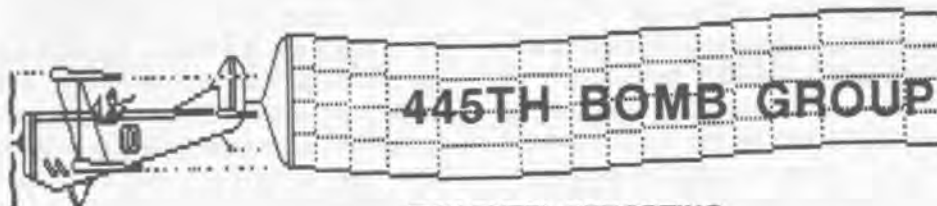
Did you go to the Southern California Dinner, February 26, 1994, at the El Toro Marine Corp Air Station? There were 28 attendees from the 392nd BG. I'll not name them; you know if you were there. Total attendance was 330, including Steve Miller, son of Glenn Miller, and seven other Miller relatives. The main speaker was Alan Cass, curator/archivist of the Glenn Miller archives. Steve Miller introduced the other members of the Miller family, then Alan Cass narrated a slide presentation of Glenn Miller's life; as a

young lad growing up in eastern Colorado, his rise to fame in the music world, enlisting in the Army Air Force, organizing a band there to entertain the troops, and finally that dreadful night in December, 1944, when he boarded a plane in England for a flight to Paris and was never heard from again. And, as always, the food was good, the drinks were good, the conversation outstanding! If you find yourself in the vicinity next year, please go; you will enjoy yourself. It is always scheduled the last Saturday in February.

You are aware of the 8th Air Force Heritage Center soon to be erected near Savannah, Georgia, the original home of the 8th AF. Plans are for a grand opening in the fall of 1996. At the March 5 & 6, 1994 Executive Committee meeting in Kansas City, something unusual happened: money was voted for something other than the library in Norwich. \$25,000 will be taken from the 2ADA general fund and set aside as a donation to the 8th AF Heritage Center. In addition, \$75,000 will be collected from those 2ADA members who wish to make a donation. When you receive your dues notice from Evelyn Cohen next fall for your 1995 dues, there will be a line on the dues notice for a donation to the 8th AF Heritage Center. My handy-dandy calculator is right here at my elbow — let's see — 75,000 divided by 8000 = 9.37; so \$10.00 from each member of the 2ADA will be sufficient and will support a memorial in the United States. Land for the Center has been donated and the County has authorized revenue bonds in the amount of \$12,000,000.00 (I hope I have the amount correct.) In order to obtain this funding, the Center must guarantee seed money of \$1,000,000.00. They are well on their way to collecting this amount, and our donation of \$100,000.00 will certainly help. Penn State University is now acting as a repository for 8th AF books, films, files, documents, etc. When the Heritage Center is completed, these materials will be transferred there, and much other memorabilia will be displayed there as well. There are plans to build an English air base control tower on the grounds. Your children and grandchildren can go there to learn and remember the things we did when we were young. "Looky there, it's the B-24 tail insignia of the 392nd Bomb Group. My grandpa was a tail gunner there in 1944."

Also in Kansas City, the Executive Committee voted to increase to six the number of Group VPs who would be appointed as voting members of the

(continued on page 25)



RAY PYTEL REPORTING

I just told Chuck Walker, this will be a "Pullet Surprise" column! But if not, then I can always find comfort in Will Rogers' admonition that "if you find yourself pleasing everybody, you are definitely doing something wrong." Well, no fear of that! Pleasing everybody in the 2ADA, even in the 445th, is not possible...that is one thing I learned at the Executive Committee meetings!

"Something wrong" reminds me that in previewing some of the articles for the new Second Air Division history book, I see that quite a lot of you "joined" the "Air Corps." Well, either many of you were real early birds, or you stayed in training too long.

Two "official" history books, *The Pictorial History of the Army Air Forces and Air Force Combat Units of WWII*, seem to suggest that some individual named Henry H. Arnold became Chief of the Army Air Forces on June 20, 1941, and that a Major General George H. Brett, then Chief of the "Air Corps" and a Lt. General Delos C. Simmons, Commander of "General Headquarters Air Force" (created in 1935) were put under the Chief of the Army Air Forces, Major General Henry H. Arnold, as of that day; in addition, General Simmons' command was redesignated "Air Force Combat Command."

The history books relate how conflicts still existed between the two sub-units; i.e. Air Corps vs. Air Force Combat Command, as to which unit is going to do what to whom; how, when, and where. Tired of all this bickering, and with several newcomers (Japan, Germany and Italy) coming into the fray, the Army reorganized the "whole shebang" and divided itself into three separate and independent branches within the War Department; Supply, Ground, and Air. Each had its own command, as of March 9, 1942. The Army Air Forces discontinued the sub-units Air Corps and Air Force Combat Command, and General Arnold was made Commanding General of the Army Air Forces.

Now with all these high echelon decisions and clarifications, you would think "it was perfectly clear," as President Nixon used to say, that the "Air Corps ain't no mow," but of course the persistence of memory, resistance to change, specific Congressional appropriations for "Air Corps training" and perhaps a bit of envy by the other services kept the term alive throughout and immediately after WWII until the creation of the independent United States Air Force on September 26, 1947 under the command of General Carl Spaatz.

Now I know that the aviation cadets upon receiving their commissions were told to sign themselves as "Second Lieutenant, Army Air Corps," but nevertheless, they were in the Army Air Forces, just as any infantry or artillery officer was part of the "good ol' Ahmy" unless they stayed "in training for the duration."

While we are on the subject of Generals and "the Ahmy," many of our members mistakenly believe that "Tke," the supreme commander, was also in command over the 8th Air Force. This was only so during the D-Day invasion period, when the 8th was placed at his disposal. Otherwise the Air Force command was quite convoluted way up to the Pentagon. By the way, many believe that Ike's greatest achievement was not keeping General Patton, General Montgomery, and General De Gaulle from fighting a war of their own; nor was it his victory over the Germans, or even his subsequent Presidency. No, his greatest achievement happened while he was President of Columbia University.

It was while Columbia was in its greatest building expansion; every site was torn up, buildings were mushrooming everywhere, and the campus police had a hell of a time keeping the students on the specific paths designed for future sidewalks. It seems everyone was taking shortcuts, making their own paths between the new buildings, and ignoring the paths designated by the "powers that be." In desperation, the problem was bucked up from one office to another, without any solution, until finally it reached Dwight D. Eisenhower. Like the great General he was, he ordered the sidewalks to be built where the students were walking. This was unheard of in the annals of construction. "It won't work!" everybody screamed. "What the hell does a General know about sidewalks?" said the academics. "We'll have to rewrite a hell of a lot of laws!" said the politicians. Everybody except the students were interviewed, and everyone agreed Ike must go someplace, any place, where his decisions would not cause such havoc. Eventually Ike was relegated to the U.S. Presidency, where no one ever pays attention to the presidential orders. But today, some 40 years later, thousands of Columbia students walk in the "foot-steps designed by Ike." Thousands each day take the "shortest distance between two points," thanks to the daring and foresight of one man: Dwight D. Eisenhower. This was an achievement unique in the annals of history, an event not likely to be repeated in our time unless, of course, another Ike comes along, precisely at the right time to upset the apple cart.

I guess I stirred up a hornet's nest with some of the "NOSTAL-GAG-LIA" or "campus trivia" items in my last column. A slew of letters with reminders of happenings in and around Tibenham while we were not in serious combat (but some other equally dangerous activity) comes up with these gems:

What was the name of the pilot who landed with a deep gash on the side of his B-24 from front to rear, and gave the reason as "hit bird, bird in a tree?" (He also claimed that all accident investigations had the same cause preprinted on the form: "pilot error.")

Several writers wanted to know the last name of the young man who used to pick up enlisted crew members' laundry in the 701st barracks. I recall he was about 12 years old, his dad came with him on occasion, that they called him "Johnny" and that he ended up with a lot of unclaimed clothes during my stay there, as the group lost exactly 50 planes, and even I ended up with at least six class A uniforms.

Does anyone remember a crew member bringing a live goose into the barracks after a whole day and evening of solid "pubbing" around good old Tibenham and its environs? Also does anyone recall these?

Also a "smoke bomb" was apparently thrown down a stove pipe which protruded straight through the roof, ending up in a barracks' little brick-lined charcoal burner, smoking out the whole barracks on a cold night, forcing everyone outside in their underwear for several cold, cold hours! Who "done it"? Was it the same guy who sneaked into our abode and threw a handful of live caliber 50s into our little charcoal burner, making it dance and bringing down the sooty pipes?

Remember a drunken "shoot out" a la O.K. Corral, where two crew members buoyed up by "bottled up courage" came home to their barracks, grabbed their trusty 45s and started firing across the barracks, emptying the place except for one fellow who slept through the whole thing and found a bullet hole six inches above his head?

Remember an officer who stayed a wee bit too long at the Officers' Club and ended up trying to create a "drive in" barracks with his Jeep?

Now I know this one: Who was the guy who kept wheels, frames, tires and various bicycle parts under his bunk? That was the now deceased Sperry ball gunner Ray Gilliam; he started a general workshop and had several bikes around the "campus." He even tried to teach me how to operate one of those dangerous monsters! Now I could fly a plane, even had a commercial pilot's license before Pearl Harbor, and could drive just about any car or tractor, but a bike was always a hardship to keep upright. A well trimmed plane will fly by itself, a car will usually go in the direction you originally aim it at...but a damn bike does nothing but fall over if you just let the controls go for one second!

Now I know that many of the wives of our crew members think that only combat was dangerous...but sometimes it appears that it was just as safe as the extra-curricular activities of some of our crew members!

Some of you know that I am also a member of the Warbirds, and the Yankee Air Force, located in Ypsilanti, Michigan. (Sounds familiar? Well, Ford built a few B-24s in his spare time there during WWII.) Anyway, they have a static Privateer, the Navy version of the B-24, which apparently recognized the great importance of the flight engineer; at least much more than the Army Air Force...they extended the fuselage by some seven feet, and created an engineer's compartment right behind the pilot and co-pilot...which did not get any seven feet in either the good old B-24 or PB4Y2. (Note to Jack Pelton: Eat your heart out; I told you the flight engineer was important.)

(continued on page 25)

392nd B.G. (continued from page 23)

Executive Committee. As you know, the number now is three. This required a By-Laws change and cannot become effective until voted in by a 2/3 majority of the regular members present at an annual convention. Thus your Group V.P. would be a voting member of the Executive Committee about every second or third year, instead of every fourth or fifth year. The appointments are made by the Nominating Committee, and are usually made on a rotating basis.

Future 2ADA annual conventions will be planned in May or June of each year in a city located in the midsection of the United States. It is hoped this will assist those planning group and regional events in selecting dates far away from the 2ADA convention, and will reduce travel time and expense for the largest number of members.

In a letter dated 2-19-94, John Rosenberg of Brookfield, WI advised that Clyde G. Williams, 11533 Zion St. NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433 passed away January 25, 1994 of a heart attack while undergoing an angiogram. Our sincere condolences go out to his wife,

445th Bomb Group (cont. from page 24)

Last February Twyla and I decided that enough is enough, with 27 below and about 5 feet of snow in Wisconsin, we headed out for Kansas City on February 13th, "overshot it" by some 500 miles and ended up with our crew's radio operator Tom Hart and his wife Pat, in Lubbock, Texas. Needless to say, there was no snow and the temperature was in the low seventies. You sure know how to treat us northerners, Tom and Pat!

We decided to head west, stopping in Phoenix for several warm days, where I contacted Frank DiMola and his wife Elizabeth...again 70s and sunny! Frank said "no way" to the cold, and his wife "Liz" decided to "break a leg" playing golf so that she and Frank continued to stay there. (I hope that by now you are traveling again!)

We ended up in San Diego for some ten days, taking in the El Toro dinner near L.A. where some 300 2ADA members enjoyed the history of Glenn Miller's rise to the top of the big bands — a very fine program by the Miller family. It was nice to meet so many of our West Coast friends who can't make the "big one," and oh yes, thanks for the "Liberator" book award for being the "furthest away!"

Finally we headed back and made it to Kansas City just in time for the Executive Committee meeting March 4-7. When we got home, by some miracle the snow was all gone and winter had left us...for good! But even in Kansas City the outdoor swimming pool was comfortable atop the Hyatt Regency. Twyla basked in 76 degree weather!

We are sorry that we had to miss the Dallas dinner later in March, but the IRS wants my clients to file their returns on time, and being in the accounting and tax consulting business for some 45 years, some of my clients feel that I am the only one who knows their farm, investment or business problems to the point of telling it to Uncle Sam, although I am trying to steer them away from that position. Hopefully, we can visit the Dallas area and attend their dinner next year.

Betty, two sons, two daughters, and four grandchildren. He and Betty were in Albuquerque in May of 1993 for the 392nd BGMA convention.

"The Friends of the Second Air Division Memorial" is a volunteer group formed to act in support of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Room at the Norwich Central Library. Although this is primarily an organization for English folk, membership is open to all. To join, simply send your name, address and a check, made out to Jordan Uttal, 7824 Meadow Park Drive, Apt. 101, Dallas, TX 75230. Jordan has an account in Norwich and will remit to the Friends in pounds (in view of the high bank charges for every dollar check that we may send direct.) Annual dues (at present exchange rates) are \$5.00 per individual, \$8.00 per couple. From time to time you will receive a copy of the Friends' newsletter, "Second Thoughts." I have a copy before me as I write this. It contains 15 pages of very interesting articles. You will enjoy reading it, and you have a grand opportunity to make new English friends.

As you go through life, you belatedly find that each precious day is one of a kind. ■

Maybe we can "overshoot Dallas" in 1995.

While in Phoenix we were saddened to hear of the death of Gloria Stewart, wife of the former 703rd Squadron commander Jimmy Stewart. A card of condolences was forwarded on behalf of the 445th Bomb Group to their Beverly Hills residence.

I have recently received a letter from the Treasurer of the 361st Fighter Group stating that orders for their history book, *Little Friends*, which has eight pages on the Kassel mission in which the 445th was involved, should be sent to the 361st Fighter Group Association, c/o William Hild Jr., 811 Lynvue Road, Linthicum, Maryland 21090. Sending the order to the publisher only delays the process.

Lyle Platner of Janesville, Wisconsin was on the program of the local Yankee Air Force Stateline Division in February, at which he was both snowed and frozen out; rescheduled to March 8th. I missed the meeting by one day. Lyle flew 35 missions as pilot with the 445th. You had better luck with the 445th, Lyle!

For those who are coin collectors, the Gander (Newfoundland) Chamber of Commerce, 109 Trans Canada Highway, Gander, Newfoundland, Canada A1V 1P6 offers "aviation dollars" in uncirculated or proof quality for \$4.00 in Canadian currency only, postpaid. (Ask your banker about the Canadian currency.) All first class letters require a 40 cent stamp, and should be addressed ATTN: Colleen Hiscock. Oh yes, they have the Liberator on each coin, as well as some other WWII planes including the Hudson, the Fort, the Catalina, the Hurricane, and a few other lesser known flying machines. State your choice!

We are sorry to hear that our dear friend and neighbor at Tibenham, Nigel Bayne, has passed away. The Baynes, along with many of the "locals," made us so welcome each time we visited Britain. Our condolences.

To all of you who for over 50 years have been wondering what the French were doing when they were broadcasting "Hallo Pierre" over and over again, and sometimes interfering with our own channels of communications:

Lest We Forget

Submitted by Myron Keilman
392nd Bomb Group, 579th Squadron

The city of Bremen with its great port facilities, submarine pens, oil refineries and industrial complex was an important strategic target and was heavily defended by anti-aircraft batteries. The 392nd struck it as early as 13 November 1943 and lost four (4) airplanes. The group returned to it two times in December. On 29 July, 1944, forty-five (45) of the group's B-24s bombed it again by radar. Here is General Hodge's message from Headquarters, 2nd Bomb Division:

"Flash report just received from Pinetree states H2X mission to Bremen yesterday was one of the most successful to date. PRU shows several damaging hits on the ordered primary target; and concentrations in the Deschimag U-boat shipbuilding works, a target which has always been priority number one. Considerable damage is also evident to the yard facilities; and two or three ships, one of which was a very large vessel, were sunk. Further, a warehouse district north of Deschimag, the Kaffe-Handlesac priority three, sustained heavy damage, and in the principal Bremen warehouse district east of Deschimag, even heavier destruction was caused. Twelve warehouses were severely damaged and were still burning. Railroad facilities north of the target were hit heavily and considerable damage was caused to rolling stock. Full reconnaissance coverage has not yet been obtained and it is quite possible that even further damage was caused. My heartiest congratulations on this good news — Hodges."

Well, just recently there was a "secrets and codes" program either on A&E, Discovery or PBS that went into great detail as to what it means. Apparently the time sequences were the key to the pre-arranged messages...this clears up the question of why good old "Pierre" never bothered to answer, and why the statement never seemed to change.

By the time this is being read, Twyla and I will be planning on going to Oshkosh, where the world's largest gathering of airmen and "aircraft experimenters" convene. A week long, usually this international meet hosts close to a million people. While we no longer get involved in building a personal plane, it is always interesting to see what new developments are on the aviation horizon. We also get to meet many of the WWII members of the Warbirds of America, of which I am a member, and which usually puts on quite a show for the public. We've had either the "All American" or "Diamond Lil" bombing "low level" each year, and several years ago we had a whole formation (2) of Liberators together with a B-29 and a B-17 buzzing the field! Usually a dozen or so P-51s and P-40s escort the big birds. As usual, Twyla and I will wear 8th AF t-shirts and supply all the inquirers with information on our 2ADA.

Have a nice summer, everyone, and we hope to see you at one of the "minis" or at the "Big One" next year! We are also planning on England next year, perhaps taking our grandson along for the ride!

Finis. ■

MISSION COMPLETED!!!

We Made Our Peace With the B-24 Liberator

BY ABE WILEN (453rd)

On February 20, 1994, from 2 to 3 p.m. we flew in a B-24 for the first time in almost fifty years.

Irwin Stovroff of the 44th BG went down in August 1944 in France.

Abe Wilen of the 453rd BG went down May 8, 1944 in Germany.

In both of our cases we parted violent company with the B-24. The planes went down one way and we another in our parachutes. Both of us spent the rest of the war as POWs.

For a full hour on a hot, sunny afternoon we renewed our relationship with the plane that we spent so much time in. A plane we had developed a dependency on and kinship with. We had entrusted our lives to it and it kept bringing us back time and again, until the day we parted and thought it was our last.

This time we buzzed the beaches of South Florida and saw everyone standing up and pointing at the history above. A B-24 with a B-17 on its wing roaring above. We were low enough that we were at eyeball level with high rise condominiums.

We flew low over the local airports with smoke trailing behind us. We flew over the tennis courts of Boca Raton, Florida for Stovroff, who is a tennis buff, and over golf courses for Wilen, a golfer.

It was like I was back fifty years in time, 1943 and 1944. I could close my eyes and imagine Dick Witton, my pilot, and Buck Croxford, my co-pilot, at the controls and both getting playful and doing all kinds of maneuvers.

Stovroff was a bombardier and wanted to crawl up to his former station; while I as a navigator wanted to go up to where I used to call home, in the nose.

Somehow the catwalk through the bomb bay seemed narrower. The crawl space to the front had become too small and narrow and the area around the nose wheel, where I dove out of head first fifty years ago, all of a sudden seemed too foreboding.

We spent our time in the waist, looking out the waist windows and



Abe Wilen, 453rd (left) and Irwin Stovroff of the 44th (right) reflect on their first B-24 flight in 50 years.

holding on to the waist guns for support as the pilot took all kinds of evasive action.

Stovroff did go all the way to his former post and then returned to the waist.

At 3 p.m. we landed. We walked away from this flight on friendly terms again with the B-24. We made our peace with the B-24 and completed the mission that we were unable to fifty years ago.

Bill Eagleson of the 453rd had lent me his leather flight jacket with 35 bombs on it for his 35 missions. As we got out of the plane, over 200 people cheered as if we had just flown our 35th and final mission. ■

"Wonder Whatever Happened To..."

BY JOHN HILDEBRAN (453rd)

I am sure that each of you who have read the *Journal* have heard that statement, or probably have even said it yourself. Even though this is from a crew member's point of view, I am sure everyone has uttered this same phrase at one time or another.

Most of us were just out of high school, probably early twenties or so, when we were called to military duty in the early forties. We had to leave families, loved ones, and good friends; most of us for the first time. When we were finally assigned to a certain outfit or unit, it was just like joining another temporary and new family.

As for Rudy Kremer's crew that joined the 453rd BG, 732nd Squadron as a replacement crew, we ten guys came from all walks of life and from all over the country and became a new family that learned to more or less live together for some eight months, from Casper, Wyoming; to Alamogordo, New Mexico; to Biggs Field in El Paso, Texas; to Topeka, Kansas. Then it was across the southern route to England to Old Buck, and the most vivid memory — our 30 missions plus three aborts. By this time in our early lives we had a certain bond with one another, officers and enlisted men alike. One closely knit bunch that had been through a lot.

We all then went our various ways and to our new assignments all over the country. Through the years we lost contact with each other. Some of our crew exchanged Christmas cards and stayed in touch that way. We knew our tail gunner, Frank Gurelski, had passed away several years ago. However, we had lost touch with our co-pilot and our top turret gunner. Years went by, and I heard of and joined the Second Air Division Association and then helped organize the 8th Air Force Historical Society

in Florida. During one of the reunions Aida and I had our photo taken with General Jimmy Doolittle.

Our Oklahoma public broadcasting station shows old movies every Saturday, during which time they ask for and then show pictures taken with celebrities. Well, we sent in our picture with Jimmy Doolittle which they showed in May 1990. The very next day the TV station manager called us and said they had received a call from a viewer in Tulsa, who had said he had recognized the fellow in the photo as being with his outfit in England! We had made contact with this fellow from Tulsa, and lo and behold...it was our long lost co-pilot, Ed Anderson! Now the only "wonder whatever happened to" was our top turret gunner, Joe Corey.

Our crew had a reunion in Dallas, Texas, in April 1991, and then a second reunion in Shreveport, Louisiana in April 1993. Each time, we'd say, "Wonder whatever happened to Joe Corey." This March I decided to take a long shot and drop a line to the Veterans Information Center in St. Louis. I asked about a Joseph Corey and a Robert Smallwood who had gone through radio school with me as well as most of our flight training. I received a letter back that Bob Smallwood had passed away but that they did have an address for Joe Corey! Per their instructions, I wrote a letter to Corey but sent it to the Information Center. They had told me that no way could they be certain that the address they had was current. Several weeks later I received a letter from Joe Corey!!! 49 years and 8 months since anyone had heard from Corey! Now every one of Kremer's ten man crew is accounted for.

Joe Corey was more excited to hear from an old (meaning a long time ago old) crew member than I was to hear from him. He lives in San Diego, California. He wanted to write to each crew member, however I did mention it to Jay Jeffries. They have talked with one another on the phone, and Jay even spent a couple of days with Joe and his wife.

The wrap-up to this story is this, guys. Do not give up in trying to find any of your wartime "family." I hope you will be as surprised and thankful as I was. Now we will plan on another crew reunion which will include the last family member. ■

THE 448TH SPEAKS

BY CATER LEE

Many of our members who attended the group reunion at Seattle/Bellevue, Washington last July will recall that Barbara and Leroy Engdahl had their daughter, Donna Engdahl Hampton and her husband, Wade, attend with their two boys; Foster, age 4, and Preston, age 6. At the Thursday evening banquet they were dressed up with shirt and tie and every memento of the B-24 their ties would hold. They were so proud to display mementos of their granddad's plane. They were personally treated like celebrities at McChord AFB where the lieutenants took them under their wings, so to speak; and when they parted at the end of our visit the two young aviation enthusiasts gave the lieutenants a snappy salute, bringing a round of applause from those of us on the bus.

Donna and her family are presently living in Hong Kong, where Wade covers a big territory including Beijing, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines for his medical manufacturing company whose world headquarters is in Bellevue, Washington.

Barbara and Leroy recently received a letter from Donna saying that their family was at the "American Club" in Hong Kong honoring the officers of the aircraft carrier the USS Carl Vincent. The visiting officers were in civilian dress and Donna was having a cocktail with one of the officers when she bravely asked the question, "Who would I have to butter up to take my boys on a tour of the aircraft carrier?" The carrier was fully equipped with 80 jets including F14s and "Tom Cats" and a crew of 5,500 sailors and airmen. The gentleman officer replied, "I am the Chief of Operations; I guess I'll do." The boys got to sit in the captain's chair and were highly impressed with all the salutes their personal guide was getting. Climbing so many stairs became tiresome to Donna and Wade, but the boys "ate it up." It made them so proud to be Americans.

The boys' paternal granddad is a West Point grad and a retired Marine Colonel, and Leroy is a retired Lt. Col. in the Air Force, so no wonder they are gung ho. The

oldest boy is in the second grade at a British run school in Hong Kong. He wrote his first letter to Grandma and Granddad Engdahl expressing his excitement and joy for this wonderful occasion, saying how proud he was to be an American.

Those of you who attended our Seattle/Bellevue reunion last July, please send a snapshot of yourself taken during the reunion and send it to Leroy at 1785 Wexford Drive, Vidor, TX 77662. He will include you in the reunion album he is preparing and will have on display at Boston in the memorabilia room. Please do this now while it's on your mind. Identify the place, the occasion, and your names. Thanks!

Many of our members will remember that a few years back we voted at one of our group reunions to send "on a voluntary

bution." As some know, we ended up getting enough money to establish two granite memorials, one on the air base and one at the village of Seething churchyard.

These were dedicated June 6, 1984. Following the ceremony and lunch at the Waverly Flying Club's headquarters we were treated with airplane rides around the airfield area. When this was all over, John Grunow went to the club and picked up the tab for all the "petrol" gasoline. Not many are aware of this and might want to thank John for his generosity when you see him at our Boston reunion, which he plans to attend.

Those of you wanting to show off your group T-shirts and B-24 mementos, see the last issue of the Journal for details. Be proud, let people know you fought to

The boys were dressed up with shirt and tie and every memento of the B-24 their ties would hold. They were so proud to display mementos of their granddad's plane, and so proud to be Americans.

basis" a \$10.00 donation to our 448th Bomb Group Memorial Association to help keep our treasury in the black. If you haven't done so in 1994, please send a check to me, Cater Lee, at P.O. Box 850, Foley, AL 36536. Thanks a bunch.

Through the generosity of many of our group's loyal members we have been able to do lots of things. We were struggling at first to get money for our two granite memorials when Leroy was our Group VP. He got a phone call one night from General Hubert S. Judy, now deceased, asking how we were doing on the campaign. Leroy replied, "Not too well," and General Judy asked, "How would \$500.00 do you?" Leroy replied, "It sure would help." Soon thereafter another one of our original group officers called and asked the same question. This gentleman is still living in Stamford, CT and is John Grunow. John said, "Leroy, I'm sending you \$900.00, but don't tell anyone because it might keep others from sending a contri-

preserve democracy.

Don't forget to be giving serious thought as to what your preference will be for our 1995 group reunion. Will it be San Diego, which was narrowly defeated when we chose Boston for 1994, or will it be a return to England to join with the British to celebrate the end of WWII, September 2, 1945?

Also, don't forget the 448th's pledge to give \$25,000 toward the establishment of the 8th Air Force Heritage Memorial Center in Savannah, Georgia. Hopefully, it will be ready in 1996 and we can join with dignitaries all over the world at its dedication. In Seattle we voted to each send \$100.00, but not limited to that. All donations are needed and appreciated.

Now that spring is here in much of the USA, let's think "Boston" and start planning to meet with your 448th buddies for a get-together.

All the best and good health! ■

YOUR HERITAGE LEAGUE

BY BILLY SHEELY JOHNSON

The response by veterans to enroll their children and grandchildren in the Heritage League of 2ADA continues to be positive, and the Executive Committee is very grateful for your having responded so well. Again, we thank you!

People often ask those of us who are actively involved in the 2ADA Heritage League, "Why are you so interested? It was 50 years ago." In this and subsequent issues of the *Journal*, members of the Heritage League Executive Committee will answer this question. Here is what the Heritage League means to me:

The highest compliment we can pay our Second Air Division relatives is to be interested in the whole of their lives... not merely the portion of their lives we've been privileged to share and therefore feel we have first-hand knowledge of, but in their lives prior to our creation or early in our lives...the whole of their lives makes up our "heritage." Our "heritage" surely included the portion of their very young lives spent ensuring the freedoms we have experienced since World War II.

I did not have the privilege to share in or have first-hand knowledge of any portion of my dad's life...he was killed in action while participating in the July 7, 1944 bombing mission to Bernberg, Germany. His death occurred approximately three months prior to my birth in the fall of 1944; he was very young, 20 years of age, chronologically. One 2ADA veteran related to me, "I left on my first mission a 19 year old boy, but I returned a man." I envision this as being the feeling my dad must have experienced having returned from his first mission. Many of you veterans probably identify readily with this feeling with vivid memories of your first mission.

Now, almost 50 years later, I have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge of him and what he stood for...this thirst surely includes his association with the Eighth Air Force, Second Bomb Division, and the experiences which matured these very young men during such a brief period of time.

Having had the opportunity to share in the experiences of 2ADA annual reunions has been particularly satisfying for me. I am certainly committed to helping ensure that not only the living Memorial Room in Norwich Central Library and friendships formed with the English continue to grow, but I am fervently dedicated to establishing a similar tribute to Second Air Division veterans and their fallen comrades within the boundaries of the United States. The Eighth Air Force Heritage Center affords such an opportunity. The Heritage League joins with 2ADA in support of this facility. This is my responsibility to my dad, my children, and

their children. Certainly, one of the most effective ways to do this is to become actively involved in the Heritage League of 2ADA.

I heartily encourage all of my generation to wait no longer to pay tribute to your Second Air Division parents and relatives and the marvelous role they played in ensuring that we have lived in a free country for the past 50 years. If you happen to be one of the fortunate ones whose relative was allowed to return from England and World War II, don't take their contributions to world peace for granted. If you are especially lucky and still have your Second Air Division relative physically present with you, please become interested in the whole of his/her life, including World War II. Believe me, the older we get and the more we become aware of our own mortality, the more we genuinely need to know our relatives so that we can help our children really know them. For only as they "live on" through us, we and they will subsequently "live on" through our children into perpetuity.

So you of my generation say, enough, enough...no more preaching! I look forward to meeting you and sharing life with you, hopefully through the Heritage League of the Second Air Division Association which fosters our "heritage!" Veterans, I hope this answer explains some of what the Heritage League represents in my mind and what I so passionately hope to impart to your relatives. Best regards from your Heritage League.

And now, as promised in the Spring 1994 issue of the *Journal*, we are publishing another winner in our annual Heritage League essay contest. We are certain that you enjoyed reading Jessica Zobac's tribute to her grandfather, Robert W. Zobac, and the crew of "Asbestos Alice." We now offer you Anne M. Westgate's tribute to her grandfather, William C. (Bill) Edwards.

Bill was a member of the 448th Bomb Group, 712th Bomb Squadron's "Baby Shoes." The aircraft was named for Nancy Edwards Westgate, Anne's mother, because Bill's wife was pregnant at the time the ship was named. "Baby Shoes" was shot down March 20, 1944, over Dieppe, France, eight days prior to Nancy's birth on March 28, 1944. Bill was a POW at Stalag Luft III until being liberated April 4, 1945. Anne knew her grandfather but saw him very seldom; she became interested in learning more about his life following his death in 1990. Her heartwarming tribute follows:

It's 3:00 a.m. and the coldness is cutting to the bone. The day's just getting started. You get dressed and head to the mess hall before going to briefing. You've eaten and gotten your seat to be briefed and know the

location of your bomb target for the day. "You brief the crew on their target for the day and reco German tactics and what to expect on the mission so as not to be too surprised," says Bob Harper. He was an intelligence officer for the 448th.

You're in your plane and taking off for Germany by 6:00 a.m. "When you're in the air, you don't have any time to be afraid," says Bob Voight. "All you're really worried about is hitting your mark and getting back to the base with hardly any injuries or shoot-downs." Bob Voight was the pilot of "Baby Shoes."

"It's just before takeoff and I'm waiting by the plane for the crew. The crew arrives and I brief the pilot on the status of the aircraft. I wish him and his crew luck and safe flying," as told by George DuPont. He was a member of the ground crew for "Baby Shoes." "We stayed up most of the night making sure there were no major or minor maintenance problems. After all that checked out, we fueled and armed the aircraft. We all hoped and prayed that all of our planes and their crews would return later that day."

Meanwhile, up in the air, the planes continue their flight toward the target. The nerves start setting in more as the crew grows closer to their target. Before they know what has happened, they are hit by a shower of flak. Beaten, battered, and treated like rag dolls. They had no time to recover from the flak shower when fighters started to rain in on them. The gunners are busy trying to shoot down as many as possible before their plane is shot beyond recognition.

They get past the flak and the fighters and are soon over their target. The bombs fell, hit the target and everything was over and they could head for home.

Back at the base, everyone was "sweating out the mission." Soon someone announced, "I hear them coming home!" They turned toward the sky not knowing what to expect to see. Much to their surprise, more planes than expected returned. Of course there were a few that didn't, but that was expected. The men at Seething had come to know and realize this sad but true concept.

After all the crew was off the plane, those who were not hurt or injured went to be debriefed. They would tell Bob Harper, intelligence officer, what went on in the air, how many planes were lost, and if the target was hit successfully. While the crew was being debriefed, George DuPont and the rest of the ground crew would start to immediately repair and fix the holes and maintenance problems reported to them by the pilot.

(continued on page 29)

The princess died in Bucharest, Romania, in May. In Tallmadge, Ohio, a 75-year-old man was overcome with grief.

He wasn't the only one. For Clell Riffle and many of the men who served with him in World War II, it was the end of an era.

Princess Catherine Caradja's death may have marked the symbolic end of the most painful period of Riffle's life. But it did not — could not — mark the end of a friendship that began in a cornfield in Brasov/Ploesti, Romania, in 1943.

On August 1, 1943, Riffle was one of the 560 men sent by the U.S. Air Force to bomb the oil fields of Ploesti. Only 110 of the men survived the attack and Riffle was one of them — thanks to the courage of a Romanian princess with a heart of gold.

After they had successfully bombed some of Ploesti's oil refineries, Riffle's plane was shot down. The injured men crash-landed in a cornfield. Riffle himself was hit in the knees and had broken ribs. But his worst nightmare was yet to come.

Within minutes the cornfields parted and Riffle and his comrades were greeted by German and Romanian soldiers. A German officer, not realizing that Riffle was injured, ordered him to get up. As Riffle looked helplessly on, the officer picked up a hand grenade and aimed it at him.

Just then, a handsome, distinguished looking woman strode onto the scene. "Who are

Princess' Death Ends Fairy Tale

by Thrity Umrigar
Beacon Journal, Akron, Ohio
August 2, 1993

you?" she asked the visitors.

"We're Americans."

She turned to the German officer and fixed an imperial gaze upon him. Slowly, the hand holding the grenade lowered.

The fifty-something woman turned out to be Princess Caradja. The cornfield was part of her estate. And although she was limited in what she could do for her American "boys," she continued to help them.

Riffle remembers the first time the princess visited them in the Romanian POW camp he was detained in for 13 months. "I cried," he recalls. Then, he cries again, as if it were 1943 instead of 1993.

The princess would smuggle in wire cutters, glue and other tools to help the Americans escape. When they would thank her, she'd reply, "My dear, I do what I can."

Riffle never got a chance to thank the princess again until 1955. By then, the tables had turned. This time, she was a visitor to his country and it was her fortunes that had come

tumbling down. The Communist regime in Romania had stripped her of most of her wealth and she feared for her life. She escaped from her homeland, smuggled out on a vehicle carrying refrigerator coils.

When Riffle spotted the princess on a television talk show in America, he could not believe his eyes. But he contact-

ed her and four months later, she came to visit the home of one of her boys. For the rest of her life, whenever she wanted a break from the lecture circuit she embarked upon in America, she would visit the Tallmadge home.

Until 1991. With Romania free from its dictatorship, the princess wanted to return to the homeland she had never forgotten.

"My dear," she had once told Riffle, "once these bones are finished, I hope they're buried in Romania to fertilize those beautiful plains."

And now it has come to pass. Princess Catherine Caradja died on May 26 in the Bucharest orphanage she had founded decades ago. She was 100.

Riffle says if he could talk to his beloved princess once more, he'd say: "For what you've contributed to mankind, to the true values that each human must love, I salute you."

Then he falls silent. But his teary eyes write the final eulogy for the aristocrat who had the heart of a lion.

Ed. Note: Clell Riffle was a radio operator aboard the 389th's "Chattanooga Choo Choo" on the August 1, 1943 Ploesti mission. ■

HERITAGE LEAGUE (continued)

They would work on the plane until it was ready for the next mission.

After the crew had been debriefed, they were on a four day rest before they flew their next mission. They usually went into town at Norwich, and if they had the time, into London. While they were in town, they usually made a visit to the local pub. "Sometimes we would even get a chance to date a few English girls," says George. "We would catch a movie before we head back to the base." Bob Voight says, "I'll never forget the time I was in town with a few buddies of mine when we met Cab Calloway's family. They invited us in for lunch. That's a small example of the close relationship we the soldiers had with the English people." George also says, "The English were so thankful to us for helping them in their time of need."

Although times were hard and not always pleasant, these men served our country with great pride and no remorse. They were happy at Seething for the most part. Only one person that I talked to wouldn't pick Seething if he had a choice. But that was only because of the physical layout. I myself want to say a special thank you to all the men who went and fought for me and my country. Let us never forget those who died for us. ■

Heritage League Membership Application

I wish to become a member of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF) and to support its purposes. I certify that I am eligible for membership under one of the categories indicated.

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Street Address: _____

Home Tel. _____ Work Tel. _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

2ADA Member (Sponsor): _____ Unit No. _____

Relationship: _____

Membership Category (please check): ☐ Regular ☐ Associate ☐ New ☐ Renewal

Annual Dues: Regular \$6.00, Associate \$4.00.

Signature: _____

Send Remittance To: Heritage League of the 2AD: Caron D. Veynar, 4915 Bristow Dr., Annandale, VA 22003.

Regular Members: Spouses, brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren of former personnel, military and civilian, American and British, who at any time served with the Headquarters organization of the 2nd Bomb Wing, 2nd Bomb Division or 2nd Air Division during WWII and any person who served with any bomb group or any other unit of the 2nd Air Division, USAAF, either assigned or attached. These shall be voting members.

Associate Members: Friends or associates of regular members who show a demonstrated interest in the League and who make literary, artistic, historical or other valuable contributions to the 2nd Air Division Association, the Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division (USAAF) and/or the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division. These shall be non-voting members.

FOLDED WINGS

44th

Warner B. Carter
James L. Hough
William G. Robertie

93rd

Maj. Eugene A. Flint (Ret.)
Charles A. Gaudet
Morgan K. Harris
Jack G. Parrish

389th

Col. Robert D. Brient (Ret.)
Frank C. Jacobs

392nd

Raymond R. Bianucci

445th

Robert H. Volonte

446th

Kenneth C. Cross

448th

William A. Hammes
Vincent K. Torfin

453rd

Lester C. Hardwick
Carl J. Lessing (466th)
Delmar H. Wangsvick

458th

Charles R. Carter
LtC. Warren G. Cook (Ret.)
Matthew J. Davan
Jack K. Kennedy
Arthur C. Palmer
Charles W. Roof

466th

Cloyed Boomershine

467th

Willis E. Cobb, Jr.
LtC. Leo L. Jones (Ret.)

HQ

Billy Ash Ankeny
Hal Hoerner
William Storms

SM

Nigel Bayne
Frank S. Day (15th AF)

361st FG

Duane M. Mork

*If we have missed anyone,
please let us know.*

2ADA and 445th Lose a Great Friend

by Chuck Walker (445th)

Nigel Bayne folded his wings in early March 1994. Nigel and his lovely wife, Evelyn, purchased The Old Vicarage, adjacent to the Tibenham Church, some nineteen years ago. They faithfully restored this beautiful old vicar's residence into a warm and charming home, which became the cherished gathering place for many Tibenham community affairs. Members of the 445th who have revisited the old base will fondly remember Nigel and Evelyn for the warm welcome they always received at The Old Vicarage. Our condolences go out to Evelyn and the family.

During the services held for Nigel at the old church, Dr. David Money recalled that Nigel's early years were spent in the RAF and that he flew fighter-bombers in Korea. Later he became a civil airline pilot flying large jet aircraft. His flying career ended ten years ago when he underwent surgical treatment. He met this permanent disability with patience and courage. Friends will remember his un-failing courtesy and his kindness.

Dr. Money went on to recall that

Nigel's last ten years have been years of achievement. "Repairs to this old church, long overdue, were formidable in prospect. We owe it to Nigel that they were undertaken. The chancel arch above us now had long been deformed and was cracked. It is no longer so. The top of the tower was unsafe; below it was crumbling. No longer is it so. The walls around us were drab and dirty. They are no longer so."

Nigel had laid out a master plan for continuing the restoration work that the church, part of which is estimated to be nearly 1000 years old, so badly needs. Those of you fortunate enough to have known Nigel and Evelyn, and who wish to remember Nigel's dedication to the 445th, may contribute to the Tibenham Church Restoration Fund in his memory. Please send your contributions to Charles L. Walker, 9824 Crest Meadow, Dallas, TX 75230. Evelyn Bayne plans to sell The Old Vicarage and move to Edmonton, Canada to be near her daughter. We all will miss these beautiful people. We wish you Godspeed, Evelyn. ■



Evelyn and Nigel Bayne



389th Green Dragon Flares

BY GENE HARTLEY

I remind you that a B-24, painted yellow and green, used in forming the 389th prior to leaving England for the continent, was called the Green Dragon. Flares flew from the Green Dragon. They also flew from many other sources, conveying any number of different meanings. From this Green Dragon (column) will come flares of interest, information, and nostalgia. For instance:

A FLARE FROM PINE ISLAND, FL

Here is a story about three 389th vets who wound up in the same retirement park in Pine Island, Florida.

Robert (Bob) Correll was a 20-year-old in 1942 when he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He flew 35 missions as a radio man.

Correll met Kenny Olsen at the Moose Lodge about three years ago. When he heard Olsen mention the 389th Bomb Group, up shot Correll's antenna. He wasn't a radio man for nothing.

They lived three doors from each other on Pine Island.

Olsen did his tour at Hethel on the ground as part of the important armament group who loaded bombs and fifty caliber ammunition in the planes in which Bob was flying. He also had to stand and wait each day to see how many of those planes returned from each mission.

Last winter, Correll and Sam Tipi were standing on the first tee at Alden Pines golf course and Bob's antenna was again activated when Tipi mentioned the 389th.

Sam was one of those kids who went off to war when he was only 18 years old. He was a waist gunner in another squadron during the time Olsen and Correll were there. "We were badly shot up many times, but we always made it back," Tipi said.

In 1945, all three men returned home and lived lives like everyone else in our generation. They married, raised families, and worked hard.

Robert was a tool and die maker before retiring; Sam was employed at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital as the Superintendent of Engineers. Kenny worked for a school board. Between them, at this time, there are 12 children and 25 grandchildren.

All three are amazed that after all these years, the three who served in the same outfit 50 years ago ended up in the same Florida retirement park.

A FLARE FROM RUPERT

Rupert Aubrey-Cound is one of our many English friends. He writes as follows:

"In the Winter edition of the *Journal*, you refer to the words of 'Taps.' I offer another version, the origin of which I know not:

Fails the Light, and afar

Goeth day, cometh night, and a star

Lighteth all to their rest,

To their rest.

"The spring and summer are once again before us, even in England, and I hope to see more 389th members this season. Roy Edney some time ago finished his landscape model of the Hethel base which can be viewed in the Control Tower Museum. Those who go to see it will realize the hours of patient work required to produce it. (Look! That's my hut, right there!)

"My very best wishes to all the 389th."

A FLARE FROM EL TORO

At the 13th Annual Southern California 2ADA Regional Reunion Dinner, 26 February 1994, the 389th had 19 family and members in the attendance of 330 (Lew Auger, Paul Bergstrom, Paul & Jean

Bordewich, Bill & Beverly Carlson, Charles Carlson, David Carlson (Bill's son) & Dottie Main, Bill & Helen Denton, Jack Gold, Frank Pease, Dick Peterson, Bob & Gloria Ruiz, Fred & Marchelle Tockzo).

A FLARE OF PLAIN ENGLISH

Remember our fascination with English words? Here is a combination of yesterday and today. "Lift" for elevator, "tube" for subway, and "telly" for TV. You "ring someone up" for telephoning, and you "knock someone up" by rapping on their door in the morning. "Knickers" are underwear and not 1930s golf pants. Telling a joke may give someone a "giggle." Princess Diana is quoted: "I was supposed to have my head in the 'loo' (toilet) — describing bulimia. During the Gulf War, Margaret Thatcher said to George Bush, "Now George, don't go 'wobbly' on me." Do you have a "boot" or a trunk on your car? "Bangers" and "crisps" are hot dogs and potato chips.

A FLARE FOR OUR PLOESTI VETS

As voted by those members in attendance at the Hilton Head reunion, the project of honoring our current members who were on the August 1, 1943 Ploesti mission has been successfully completed. We mailed sixty 7 x 9 inch replicas of the 2ADA Exceptional Service Award presented to the 389th BG on November 4, 1993. Each replica has the name of the individual being remembered engraved on his plaque.

Rick Rokicki of the 458th BG helped us with the individual plaques. At his suggestion, we added 50 cents to the cost of each plaque, and made a small gift to the Memorial Room in the name of the 389th BG.

A FLARE FROM DALLAS

The 389th had eleven members at the annual Southwest Regional 10th Annual 2ADA Dinner on 19 March 1994 (Oscar Boudreaux, Barney Driscoll, Reuben Duke, Geb Gebhard, Sol Greenberg, Neal Head, Felix Leeton, John Petty, Max Renov, Ira Simpson, and Robert Touby). With wives and family, we were well represented in the group of 170.

A FLARE FROM A THREE GROUP MAN

I include parts of a letter from Ed Clark as a flare rather than in our newsletter mail bag because of his membership in three different groups. Men from other groups might also remember Ed.

"Hethel was my first American base to serve as a Flying Control Officer after FC training with the RAF. I was sent to Hethel in early October, 1943. I was then sent to the 445th at Tibenham in November just before the arrival of their aircraft. Then to Old Buckenham in late December, 1943, before their aircraft arrived.

"In February 1944 I was sent to the 44th at Shipdham. I served there until we left June 25, 1945. Of course the 44th is the one I remember best since I served there most of my time.

"When I was at Hethel they still had the barrage balloons at Norwich, and we would have to call them to lower the balloons when the aircraft were to return.

"We had so many stand downs because of the weather. The weather was terrible while I was at Hethel and the aircraft losses were very high. It seemed as if we could tell how many losses we were going to have before the planes came back by the number of replacement aircraft we received while our aircraft were on missions. Somewhat of a bad omen.

"The radio in the tower had just been replaced with a modified US command set. The radio men had a hard time getting the antenna the proper length so that we would not broadcast beyond the range that we wanted.

"The mission returned and I was told that the pilot was finishing his tour. As I understood, it was the first one for the 389th. He was a Mormon preacher in civilian life.

"He buzzed the tower, dropped one wing, and clipped the tower antenna. Needless to say, the radio men were quite upset.

(continued on page 33)



491st BOMB GROUP THE LAST AND THE BEST the RINGMASTER REPORTS

BY HAP CHANDLER

SAN ANTONIO REUNION

Chaired by Ralph and Doris Saunders, the San Antonio Coordinating Committee has put together a "maximum effort" program for our October 10-13 reunion. Ringmasters will become a part of history with headquarters at the Menger Hotel, "across the alley from the Alamo." It is reported that Teddy Roosevelt recruited his "Rough Riders" while at the Menger. Earlier Robert E. Lee was a guest, as was Captain King, the founder of the King Ranch.

Registration forms for the San Antonio reunion may be obtained from Ed Watson, P.O. Box 966, Etowah, NC 28729-0966. Room reservations may be made directly with the Menger Hotel, 204 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio, TX 78205, phone 1-800-345-9285 or 210-223-4361; fax 210-228-0022.

LAST ROUND-UP

This is my last Ringmasters report after four and a half years as your vice president. Since assuming the office at Hilton Head in November 1989, the 491st, with your help, dedication and knowledge, has accomplished the following:

We have erected an outstanding memorial at the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio. At the same time we held our first stand-alone reunion at the Holiday Inn in Dayton with over three hundred Ringmasters in attendance.

We have published a hardback 304 page history of the 491st. This history has received a number of accolades for its narrative style and the personal stories of many of our group.

We returned to England in 1992 for ten days. The heartwarming welcomes at North Pickenham and Metfield were the highlights of this exercise in nostalgia. Our banquet in Norwich had as its principal speaker Roger Freeman, noted historian of the 8th Air Force.

Last September we dedicated our memorial plaque at the Air Force Academy. In perfect weather at the foot of the Rockies we recognized again our debt to those who "gave their tomorrows that we might enjoy today."

At our banquet a surprise presentation of a bronze bust was made to our distinguished World War II Commander, Major General Frederic H. Miller, USAF (Ret.) This bust has been made a permanent part of the 491st

memorial at the Air Force Museum in Dayton.

In addition we have published fifteen issues of the "Ringmasters Log," three directories, and recruited over 200 members of the Second Air Division Association.

This would not have been possible without the help and assistance of so many. Rather than risking omission of deserving Ringmasters and spouses, accept my heartfelt thanks for your patience, kindness and unstinting effort as we strove to enhance the memory of the Best and Last (Post Remum et Optimum).

"Keep those dog tags jinglin'!"

JACKSON CHAPMAN BEQUEST

Jackson Chapman died recently in California. In his will he left a substantial bequest to (1) establish a perpetual endowment for the purchase of books for the



Artwork by Darryl Burchfield, 855th Squadron; painted and drawn in 1944.

Memorial Room in Norwich, (2) a contribution to the capital fund of the Memorial Trust (British), and (3) a like donation to the American Librarian Fund.

Jack, a bombardier, and his brother "Buzz," pilot of the "Merchant of Menace," were original members of the 855th Squadron. They flew thirty-one missions with the 491st. Their crew had the distinction of being the only crew in the 8th Air Force to have two sets of brothers assigned. The other brothers were the Blake twins, Ed and Elmer.

A personal note: It was my privilege to meet Jack Chapman in San Jose, California during my tour with the "All American" in 1991. His brother, the pilot, had already died. However, Jack was accompanied by his nephew, Buzz's son. A nostalgic day for Jack and his nephew!

Why not follow Jack's example and make

one or all three of our permanent organizations a beneficiary in your estate planning? What better way to honor the memory of your gallant comrades in the 491st.

NOVEL IN PROGRESS

Darryl Burchfield, an artist and author, late of the 855th Squadron and "Tubarao," reports, "I'll soon have my completed manuscript that is about the 491st, interwoven with a love story between a radio operator/gunner and an English girl...the facts about the 491st are authentic and I've used real missions." We look forward to the completion of Darryl's novel in the familiar locale of North Pickenham and Metfield.

Darryl has also furnished some of his 1945 artwork which is being published in the *Journal* (above) and in our group newsletters.

(continued on page 33)

NEW MEMBERS

44th

Col. Dale F. Benadom (Ret.)
Ray M. Higgins
Adolph J. Hrebar
Charles S. McPherson
Col. Edward Z. Mikoloski (Ret.)
Hylan V. Simmons
Horace L. Watkins (446th)

93rd

Fred E. Anderson
Edward B. Appleman
Morton R. Ashton
Leo B. Bates
Basil E. Gynn
Norman C. Hansen
H. Reid Johnston
Dale E. McLaughlin
Desmond Mulligan
Orville S. Myers
Dominic Rigano
Raymond A. Thon

389th

Charles S. Bell
Charles D. Cavit
John Culbertson
Paul H. Ehgel
Charles L. Leamy
Mathew Mohs
Harold Morris
Alfred P. Restuccia
John H. Self
William L. Walker

392nd

Joseph M. Barnes
Edward M. Callahan
Albert R. Cooke
John H. Morse
Ltc. Joseph B. Patterson (Ret.)

445th

James O. Hodshire
William T. Minor
Alan T. Seyler
Robert W. Wright

446th

Joseph Broder
Theodore H. Nichols
Lupe H. Servin
David Vineyard

448th

Richard M. Adams
Albert W. Cain
R.J. Camburn
Jerome A. Hass
Clayton H. Johnson
Morton H. Kessler
Robert C. Klein
Howard A. Lindstrom
Vincent Luine
Martin L. Miller
Jerry L. Obermiller
John P. O'Connor
James C. Popp
Frederick E. Recuparo
Francis W. Scarbrough
Charles Susino, Jr.

453rd

Harry M. Burgy
John D. Chase
Joseph Corey
David L. Doult (467th)
Ronald M. Neumunz
Reid B. Sprague
Franklin C. Sullins

458th

Roger M. Brown
Richard M. Christensen
Adolph B. Clachko, M.D.
John L. Connors
Don E. Echols
Col. John E. Echols (Ret.)
E. Paul Hartzell
Maurice W. Kahl
Charles W. Metcalf
Rene R. Morin
Herbert K. Struck

466th

Joe Van Dyke
Charles E. Walker

467th

Francis J. Sweeney

489th

Leonard Drasner
Stanley R. Jaffe
Edward L. Pavlovich

491st

Harold C. Eske
Robert E. Kuhl
Thomas M. McEvoy
William F. Melaun
Louis J. Moriarty
Harry Orange
Richard J. Shepard
Clayton M. Storhaug
Ellis J. Tonik
Charles A. Williss, Jr.

SM

Richard L. Behnke
William W. Fraser
Doris Hyte
Michael Nawa

389TH GREEN DRAGON FLARES (continued from page 31)

"I have been back to the area several times. The people there have been wonderful. Hope to see you at a 2ADA reunion."

A FLARE FROM ENGLAND

Bill Holmes, still another of our many English friends, is instrumental in the radio net through which members of the 2ADA stay in touch with England. He writes as follows:

"As you may already know, we have a 2ADA radio net every Tuesday afternoon at 1600 hours Greenwich mean time on a frequency of 21-410 MHz. Earl Zimmerman is one of the regular attendees on the net. I wonder if you could publish these details in a future publication. All of the 2ADA who have amateur radio licenses would be most welcome."

A FLARE FROM TEXAS

As you read this column, Kansas City is behind us and our concentration now is on the 389th reunion at San Antonio, Texas, October 25-27. Write or call Jack Spooner, 12918 Queens Forest, San Antonio, TX 78230, phone 210-492-1491, for registration information.

A FLARE WITH NO FUSE

Three 2AD headquarters men were on a train from Norwich to London. The train came to a stop. One man says, "Is this Wembley?"
Second man says, "No, it's Thursday."
Third man says, "So am I, let's get off and have a drink." ■

RINGMASTER REPORTS (continued from page 32)

AFTER FIFTY YEARS!!!

The Wall Street Journal, April 22, 1994: "I am one of 33 World War II paratrooper veterans...fit and ready to jump again (on June 6, 1994)...the average age is 71...biological age 20-25 years younger...the oldest member is 83." How about it? Ready to leap off in the blue, with ceiling zero, through multi-layered clouds, and bomb Hamm marshaling yard - or "Big B" - again?

Incidentally, on 22 April 44, SO 50, AAF FTD, Coral Gables, Florida, commissioned me a Second Lieutenant. I was also rated an aerial navigator. How quickly fifty years passes!!

CHANGE OF COMMAND

When this issue reaches you, Nelson Leggette will have become your new vice president. My earnest hope is that Ringmasters will continue to give the same wholehearted support to Nelson that you have accorded me. Nelson will bring to this assignment the dedication and know-how he has so amply demonstrated as President of the 491st Bombardment Group (H), Inc., our memorial association. We can look forward to sterling leadership and superlative results. ■



BY RALPH ELLIOTT

The fourth printing of Alan Healy's *The 467th Bombardment Group* is off the press, and because of the new 63 page addendum, it is of historical importance to anyone who is interested in 8th Air Force history. Phil Day, with help from Colonel Shower, Vince LaRussa, Andy Wilkinson in England, and others, has done a masterful job of putting the addendum together to include not only in excess of 5200 names of personnel assigned to Rackheath, but many facts of group history that have not been published before. Colonel Shower has written *A Day at Rackheath* that details "a typical combat mission day at Rackheath," pages of particular interest to 467th vets. In addition to the new roster are casualties rosters listing the KIA/KLOD alphabetically, followed by a chronological listing and, finally, a casualty breakdown by squadron and air crew. The latter is especially noteworthy because it names the crew leader and the casualties by crew position (P, CP, etc.) The new book is available from: Vincent LaRussa, 8570 N. Mulberry Drive, Tucson, AZ 85704 for \$40.00. Make your check out to the "467th Bomb Group." This will undoubtedly be the final printing of the *History*.

Col. Shower was in Tucson in February, and twelve of us had dinner with him at the Davis-Monthan Officers Club: Vince & Gloria LaRussa, Dr. Eugene & Pauline Veverka, Jim & Mary Wilson, Dave & Dot Mazer, Ray & Opal Betcher, and Ralph & Yvonne Elliott.

I asked Gene Veverka if he could remember where he was on April 25, 1945. I think he figured I was a card short of a deck — until I showed him the formation sheet that listed him as command pilot with my crew as we led the 467th to Traunstein, Germany that day on the last mission of the war. The picture on page 115 of the *467th History* is of the third squadron on that mission being led by Charles McCabe's crew (in 156), ? Willis (534) to his left, Hobart Ferree (057) left of Willis, and Robert Meyer's crew (345) in the #2 slot as deputy lead. The same picture is on page 103 of Martin Bowman's book, *Fields of Little America*.

I have put a question mark before "Willis" because two of you are listed on the 2ADA and 467th rosters; William H. and William C. Will the REAL Willis check in, please — and do any of you in the formation that day remember the mission? The weather and the scenery were fantastic as we crossed the Chiemsee from the IP to the target and turned back over Hitler's Eagle's Nest in the Bavarian Alps as we headed for England — and home. This was the one we'd been waiting for — the last mission of the war.

I think my crew may also have set a 467th record for a combat crew with that mission: it was our 26th, and we had been on combat status at Rackheath for nine months — an average of 2.88 missions per month. All but the first five were as lead crew. We lost a total of one engine (the oil pressure went out), and we never had a crewman injured. With Colonel Shower as command pilot, we led the 8th Air Force fly-by for General Doolittle at the end of the war. We had been gone from the States just six days short of one year when we touched down at Bradley Field, Connecticut, on June 18, 1945 — with the same pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, engineer, radio operator, and two of the five original gunners we had when we left Muroc back on June 13, 1944. Can anyone beat this record for the LONGEST time it took to finish a single tour? We were at 26 — and still counting!

One of the most important actions taken by the Executive Committee at the mid-term meeting in Kansas City in March was the decision that ALL FUTURE 2ADA CONVENTIONS will be held in May or June. This means that group conventions can be planned so as not to conflict, allowing more members to take part in both conventions. If the group approves, future 467th conventions will be held annually in the fall — probably September or October, depending on the site selected. The site committee is already working on the 1995 location and date.

An article in the April 1994 issue of *Air Force Magazine* titled "War Stories at Air and Space" which discusses the treatment and philosophy of air power at the Smithsonian, is both informative and profoundly disturbing. The main thrust of the article is the National Air and Space Museum plan to display the restored "Enola Gay" (the B-29 that dropped the first atom bomb), "but only the front fifty-six feet of it." Additionally, some of the original display would have "depicted the Japanese in a desperate defense of their home islands, saying little about what had made such a defense necessary. U.S. conduct of the war was depicted as brutal, vindictive, and racially motivated." If you were on schedule to head for the South Pacific from England, as most of us were, you have to wonder how "the curators (can) hold the view that casualty estimates for the invasion of Japan — an alternative to using the bomb — were inflated. U.S. deaths... would not have exceeded the 'tens of thousands.'"

If you don't belong to the Air Force Association and receive the *Air Force Magazine*, it might be worth taking time to visit the library to read both the above article and one titled, "The Decision That Launched The Enola Gay." After reading them, I came to the conclusion that the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum could care less about restoring and displaying a B-24. The mission has apparently changed from preservation and restoration of aircraft to "gratuitous social commentary on the uses to which they have been put." Congress funds the Smithsonian. Maybe our congressmen need our input — and Savannah needs our support! ■

INVASION: 1944-1994

BY JOSEPH BRODER (446th)

The fly-over evokes throaty roars: pride and patriotism are mingled with heartbreak and awe as the jet's "missing man" formation whines and thunders across playing fields and spectators.

Some fifty years ago, still returning from frigid and blood filled skies, then alive with enemy flak and fighters, were real holes in real formations as our bombers struggled back to England during the early days of World War II.

But our part is played. The air battles over Ploesti and Schweinfurt and Berlin are over and dimmed.

The mantle of heroism has passed from the flyers to the doughboys as images of Omaha Beach and Utah and Juno flash before our eyes. Invasion has begun. St. Lo, and Remagen Bridge and the freezing forests of the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge are paramount.

Oh, how neat the Crosses and Stars of David lie on these European fields. ■



by H.C. "Pete" Henry

I have heard nothing but glowing reports about the 44th BG Regional Reunion in Fort Worth, Texas, 24-27 Feb. 94. I sincerely regret being unable to attend due to a severe cold and having to travel to Kansas City, MO the following week for a 2ADA Executive Committee meeting. One of the letters (from Ed Dobson) listed 43 members plus some spouses, for a total of 63 in attendance. One of the highlights was a telephone call to General Leon Johnson using a speakerphone which allowed all present to hear General Johnson's responses to comments by "Mike" Mikoloski, Bill Cameron, "Pappy" Moore and others who wanted to wish him the very best. At the 2ADA Executive Committee meeting, I made the motion, seconded by Jordan Uttal, that General Johnson be made an Honorary Life Member of the Second Air Division Association, and the motion was carried unanimously.

* * * * *

One of the stories I could not fit in the last 8-Ball column was included in a Christmas card from Bob Dubowsky (66 Sq.) On the way to Israel last fall, he was flying in a British Airways 747 to Gatwick. When the pilot came back to visit with the passengers, Bob told him that he flew B-24s out of Norwich in WWII and was invited up to the cockpit where he sat in the jump seat behind the pilot until they landed at Gatwick. When the pilot made a *hard* landing, an Englishman sitting next to Irma, Bob's wife, inquired, "Did your husband land this plane?!"

* * * * *

Wally Balla (68 Sq.) wrote in February that the city of Greenwich, CT will be designated a WWII Historic City in June 1994 and that he has been asked to donate a few of his "artifacts." He has a 44th BG formation photo and a formation of B-24s escorted by P-51s which he could not identify. When he mentioned that they had red tails with a white vertical stripe, I advised him that they were 458th BG planes.

* * * * *

Jim Auman (466th BG) has some memories of a couple of weeks spent at Shipdham a few weeks before D-Day 1944. When his crew arrived with about six other PFF crews, they were meant to supply other wing and

division groups with lead crews from a central pool. He said that they were very active for two weeks but only got credit for two combat missions before returning to the 466th at Attlebridge to fly a mission on D-Day. While at Shipdham, he met James McMurray (66 Sq.) and Al Fitch (67 Sq.), "a hard, out-in-the-rain-day-and-night Liberator maintenance man" who still lives eight miles from Jim's home in St. Mary's, PA. He also became acquainted with "Carl Brakey" (Will Lundy has it "Karl Brakey" in his Roll of Honor book), a hard luck gunner who lost his crew and was trying to finish his tour with just one or two missions to go. Karl (506 Sq.) was killed a few weeks later, 8 August 44, flying with Lt. Myron G. Jacobs in "Pregnant Peg/Flying Log" when the plane crashed near the Shipdham field due to engine failure, burst into flames, and all aboard were killed. Karl's Purple Heart and other papers are filed in the rooms of the Elk County Historical Society in Ridgeway, PA, about ten miles from St. Mary's. All four of these men are from Elk County.

* * * * *

Mel Murrack ordered a copy of the 44th BG Roster of Members in the 2ADA from me in January and advised that he had extensive reworking of his artificial hip in November and did not think he could be with us at the 2ADA convention in Kansas City, Missouri, Memorial Day weekend. He expected to be off crutches by the end of May and hopes to attend the 44th HMG reunion in Colorado Springs in October. If you'd care to drop him a line, his address is: 45 Virginia Street, Racine, WI 53405-1945.

* * * * *

Forrest Clark sent a memo in February advising that Harold P. "Jack" Harmon died in the Scarborough, Maine Veterans Home, 27 Jan. 94. "Jack" was an armorer-gunner on Lt. R.C. Griffith's crew and completed 21 missions. He was also a Swiss internee and evadee. Our condolences to the Harmon family.

* * * * *

The following message was received from Bill Rendall (66 Sq.):

"The citizens of the village of Illfurth in France are planning to erect a monument at the crash site of 1st Lt. George H. Maynard, 66th Squadron, A/C #41-29157. They have enlisted the assistance of Mr. Robert B. Prieur, Supt. of nearby American Military Cemetery at Epinal (Dinoze).

"I have supplied him with page 154 of Will Lundy's "Roll of Honor" and have located Derise L. Nichols. He tells me that Lt. Mundt died several years ago and Christmas cards to Clarence Swail have been returned for several years.

"I would appreciate any addresses you could supply from your mailing lists or any

information that you can acquire from your readers. It may be comforting to any of the families of the KIAs to know of this monument. They intend to invite any interested people to the ceremonies."

Will Lundy sent Derise Nichols' address to Bill, and Art Hand could find nothing about Swail in his phone disc listings. If anyone wishes to contact Bill Rendall, his address is: 12 Van Buren Drive, Kinderhook, NY 12106-9750. ■

BATTLE OF THE BULGE VETERANS

Turner Publishing Company, publishers of our 2ADA History, announced that they have joined forces with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge to publish a commemorative 50th anniversary history book about that event.

The Battle of the Bulge took place from December 16, 1944 through January 25, 1945. It was one of the largest battles of World War II. More than 600,000 American troops fought with the Allies in the Battle of the Bulge.

The 50th anniversary book will contain a history of the battle, histories of individual groups involved in the battle (including the First Army, the 339th Bomb Group, the 30th Infantry Division, the 2nd Air Division, the 101st Airborne, and many more), and will be profusely illustrated with maps, photographs, and charts.

In addition, the book will feature more than 1000 personal accounts from the veterans who were there. Turner invites all Battle of the Bulge veterans to submit short versions of their biographies (150 words max) covering their service, memorable experiences, family data, and current status; along with two photos, one from the time of their service and one current. All materials will be returned (we request that your name and address be put on the back of all materials) upon publication of the book. The book will sell for \$49.95, and will be available in late 1994. *You do not have to order a copy to be included in the book. If you have already had your biography in another Turner publication, they will republish it in the new book upon request.*

Turner Publishing Company, based in Paducah, Kentucky, is the country's largest publisher of military association history, having published over 200 military titles. Their address is P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101, and their phone number is (502) 443-0121 if you wish to submit materials for publication, order a book, or if you have any questions. ■

THE PX PAGE

If you have articles or items for sale that pertain to the 2ADA, they belong on the PX Page.
Please submit them to P.O. Box 627, Ipswich, MA 01938.

B-24 NOSE ART PHOTOS

These days there seems to be much interest in WWII nose art. At the Yankee Air Museum in Belleville, MI, they have a good sized collection of B-24 nose art photos in their library. These photos of returned war weary aircraft from Europe were taken at Willow Run Airport in 1945. If anyone would like an 8 x 10 black and white print, they are available at \$5.00 each. Below is a list of the photos by aircraft name and their identification, where possible.

B-24 "THE AIR WAC"
B-24 "Alley Oop"
B-24J-155-CO "Back To The Sack" 44-40249
B-24 "Bangin' Lulu"
B-24H-30-CF "Beautiful Takeoff" (aka "Satan's Sister") 42-50451
B-24J-65-CF "Becoming Back" 44-10575
B-24 "Big Gas Bird"
B-24 "Buckshot"
B-24H-2-CF "Bull Of The Woods/El Toro" 41-29136
B-24J-146-CO "Bus T-er" 44-40051
B-24J-145-CO (?) "By The Numbers" 44-40122(?)
B-24 "Censored" (formerly "Pithonu")
B-24E- -FO "Capt. Tom's Cabin"
B-24H-25-FO "Classy Chassy" 42-95198
B-24J-100-CO "Consolidated Mess" 42-100429 (2 photos)
B-24J-40-CF "Damifino" 42-50465
B-24H-10-CF "Dinah Mite" (renamed "Weaver's Beavers") 42-64466
B-24J-145-CO "D'Ni" 44-40100
B-24J-1-FO "Don't Fence Me In" 42-50525
B-24H-25-FO "Down De Hatch" 42-95016
B-24 "Dragon Lady"
B-24G-16-NT "Easy Take Off" 42-78377
B-24 "Eleanore/Little Brother"
B-24H-15-FO "E Pluribus Aluminum" 42-52390
B-24H-2-CF "El Toro/Bull Of The Woods" 41-29136
B-24 "Fearless Fosdick"
B-24J-150-CO "Feudin' Wagon" 44-40155
B-24 (no name - like Feudin' Wagon)
B-17G-85-BO "Flak Evader" 43-38317
B-24 "Flak-Shy"
B-24 "Ford's Folly"
B-24 "Frisco Trudy"
B-24J-110-CO "Gin Rae" 42-109839
B-24 "Glory Bee"
B-24 -FO "Gracie" (Gracie Field)
B-24H-2-FO "Hap" Hazard 42-7580
B-24 "Here's To You"
B-24 "I Yam Wot I Yam"
B-24H-15-FO "Knockout!" 42-94738
B-24H-15-FO "Liberty Belle" 42-52647
B-24 "Little Brother/Eleanore"
B-24 "Lonesome Lois"
B-24J- -FO "Louisiana Belle" 42-50806 (2 photos)
B-24M- -FO "The Lucky 7"
B-24 "Lus Shus Lay Dee"
B-24J-65-FW(?) "Miss America" 44-10554(?) (2 photos)
B-24 -FO "Oakland County Michigan"
B-24 "Old Glory"
B-24 "Old Ironpants"
B-24 "The Paper Doll"
B-24 -FO "Pidgeon Coop"
B-24H-15-FO "Pistol Packin' Mama" 42-52563

(more on back cover)

UPDATE ON 2ADA VIDEO CASSETTE HISTORY

Submitted by Jordan R. Uttal
Honorary President

A half century ago members of the Second Air Division were engaged in the most destructive conflict of the century. For the generations who may not have heard of the 2nd Air Division and their B-24 Liberators, who they were and what they did in the air war over Europe, there have been several documentaries shown on television in the past few years featuring recollections of the 2nd at war.

A number of productions of the Military VideoHistory Project including *Faces of the 2nd Air Division*, *Eight Candles for Remembrance*, and *Memories at War* which highlight the efforts of the 2nd AD have been aired over the past few years on holidays honoring war veterans — Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day. Channel 56 Detroit, the seventh largest television market area in the U.S. reaching audiences in states neighboring Michigan and into lower Canada as well, airs one or more productions on veterans holidays. And stations in other major Michigan cities including Lansing, Grand Rapids, Flint, Saginaw and Kalamazoo also air one or more of these productions on holidays and at other times as well.

The latest recognition of the 2nd Air Division was the showing of *Memories at War* on Channel 56 Detroit this year on the Memorial Day weekend at 7:30 p.m. prime time on Sunday, May 29. This 28-minute video features 2nd Air Division veterans who survived some of the most difficult missions of the war. Highly efficient, first-rate airmen such as fighter pilot Robin Olds, General Ramsay Potts, gunner Willie Nelson and others who were "...only doing my job..." make a significant contribution to the memory of those who died in sharing their memories of war. With clips from archival film, music and special effects, this film gives viewers an exceptional view of the air war.

Besides being selected for television commemoration of veterans' holidays, *Memories of War* as well as a number of other productions of the Military VideoHistory Project are also shown at various veterans organizations in the Detroit area, shown and discussed at state and national oral history conferences and to high school classes as well.

The Military VideoHistory Project is the effort of the Joseph G. Dzenowagis family to gather and preserve the history of the 2nd Air Division. *Memories at War* is available for \$19.50 plus \$2.50 handling from J. Dzenowagis, 4397 South Okemos Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864. Other tapes of the Project that are available are listed on page 14, Spring 1994 issue of the *Journal*. ■

KJELLER VIDEO CASSETTE

A 3 hour, 40 minute video cassette of the recent Second Air Division memorial program and dedication in Norway is available to members. This video celebrates the missions of 18 Nov. and 16 Nov. 1943 by bomber groups of the Second Air Division. The dedication was at Kjeller, Norway, and the video was made by the Royal Norwegian Air Force. It is being offered now at a special rate of \$39.00 to members of the Second Air Division. Contact:

Forrest S. Clark
703 Duffer Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34759

Letters



Dear Bill:

Robert A. Jacobs' article in the last *Journal* regarding the first mission of D-Day serves to impugn the integrity of not only the Vice President of the 446th Bomb Group, but also every member of the 446th.

No one from the 446th, from Col. Brogger on down, has even claimed to be in the first B-24 over the French coast on D-Day. Col. Brogger, however, was the designated mission commander and he flew aboard "Red Ass," designated by both 2AD and 8AF as the "lead aircraft."

Page 98 of Steve Birdsall's *Log of the Liberators* states, "Close by a 389th Group radar ship, Colonel Jacob Brogger and Charlie Ryan of the 704th Squadron droned along in Red Ass, leading the entire D-Day force. Five minutes before 6 AM clouds moved in and necessitated radar bombing for the trailing Second Division Liberators."

Page 153 of Roger Freeman's *The Mighty Eighth* states, "In company with a 389th Group H2X pathfinder, the 446th's lead ship Red Ass, carrying Colonel Jacob Brogger, led the 2nd Division Liberators over the target area at 05:55 hours...Overcast conditions necessitated the use of radar for this attack."

As mission commander, the decision to bomb by radar was made by Col. Brogger aboard the lead aircraft, "Red Ass." Even though bombing was by radar, this in no way altered the lead status of "Red Ass."

Yes, bombing was by radar, but it may not have originated with the aircraft Robert Jacobs was aboard and flown by Lester Litweiler. According to records at National Archives at Washington, D.C. the PFF aircraft on right wing of "Red Ass" was a 389th B-24, #807-N, flown by Bertelsen. Litweiler's aircraft is shown in high right element of 1st section (there were six PFF ships in 446th formation on this mission).

It is also evident that Lester Litweiler did not care enough to obtain the facts of D-Day by actually attending the 8th Air Force Symposium held at Chicago last September. He was not listed as an attendee nor was he wearing any identification as he accosted me and other individuals in the hotel foyer, finally locating Col. Brogger.

Last, but not least, even our own *History of the 446th Bomb Group* by Harold E. Jansen plainly acknowledges the fact that bombing on D-Day's first mission was by radar equipped PFF aircraft. I highly recommend this book as good reading for Robert Jacobs.

Fred Breuninger
5021 Lake Harbor Road
Muskegon, MI 49441



Dear Bill:

I concur with the article "The Truth About the First Mission on D-Day" by Col. Robert Jacobs (Ret.) that appeared in the Spring 1994 *Journal*. I was co-pilot for Don Kolb and we were with the 453rd BG, 735th Squadron. I kept a diary, and it reads in part:

"6/5/44. Took an hour in the Link this afternoon and then listened to the Col. spread a few rumors. Alerted for tomorrow.

"6/6/44. Take off was in darkness...saw hundreds of ships in the Channel and the sky was full of planes...we dropped frag bombs (cluster type) off the 389th. They had PFF...Was disappointed I could not see the coast due to clouds — felt proud to be one of the first to go...This day is probably one of the biggest in history...the Invasion is on."

We all, I am sure, appreciate the fine job you do to produce the *Journal*. Future generations will learn a lot about this period of history.

Ben Wessel
207 Ambridge Ct 102
Chesterfield, MO 63017



Dear Bill:

"Hurry up and wait" was a prevalent adage of the USAAF, right? Right. Well, Friday, April 9, 1994 in Lafayette, LA, Charlie Aillet began a usual monthly routine of leading his 20-piece band, "The Skyliners," in playing real music, from the 1930s & '40s, for a local dance club. Then someone yelled, "Stop the music!" Bob Martinez (nephew) came up and presented Charlie with an almost forgotten DFC amid



Dr. Robert Martinez (r) presents Charles Aillet (c) the Distinguished Flying Cross after a 49-year wait as his son, Larry (l), looks on.

noisy approval of 400 observers. Everyone except Aillet knew it was coming.

Charlie earned his medal in 1944-45, but never received it. Along with some of the Azon sorties, he completed 31 missions with the 753rd SQ, 458th BG as a radioman. He had hurried through his missions to get back to LA and a pretty Cajun queen, Lucille, who then became his wife. And all war connections went on hold. Recently, officers on his crew came up with the original award recommendation, and along with efforts of a state and U.S. senator, almost half a century of waiting ended. Incidentally, Charlie plays a mean sax too, but he isn't left handed.

George A. Reynolds
4009 Saddle Run Circle
Pelham, AL 35124-2625



Dear Bill:

I read Forrest Clark's article "Memorial at Lillestrom: A Healing Process" with interest. Besides Forrest (44th) and Col. Joseph Whittaker (392nd), I was there representing the 93rd, and presented two photos of our 93rd A/C 869-Q, called "Bear Down" or "The Wildcat," to the Royal Norwegian Air Force officers stationed at the Kjeller A/D. The Norway mission was my fifth mission. The photos were taken as Captain De Mont, our pilot, flew to the target and as we taxied at Hardwick after the mission. Our crew was credited with "damaging" four JU-88s as we flew out of the fjord after the raid. In Forrest's article he neglected to relate that 400 Germans were killed and several hundred were sent back to Germany in ambulances. The target was an FW-190 repair base. It was totally destroyed. Intelligence for the raid was supplied by the Norwegian resistance to 8th Bomber Command. The Germans had planned an air raid drill at precisely the time we appeared over the target. The civilian workers on the base had been given the day off. The flak gunners were firing blanks until they realized the raid was not a drill. The commanding general of the German forces in Norway was viewing the drill, with several high ranking German officers, and his girlfriend, from a hill overlooking the airfield. We weren't told what happened to him after the raid. Three Norwegian civilians lost their lives.

The night I presented the photographs we were hosted at the Royal Norwegian Air Force officers' club on the base. Col. Whittaker presented the Norwegians with original strike photos and an original copy of the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper describing the raid. I shared a liter of "Old Overholt" whiskey which received rave reviews from those partaking of its delicate flavor.

Before and after the memorial service I visited with Norwegian police as an American representative of the American Police Association. I visited Norwegian police officers in Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim. I also visited Sweden, where our crew force-landed after we were shot up over Berlin on 21 June 1944. I was so impressed by the genuine friendliness and warmth of the Norwegian people towards Americans, and Norway's countryside, that my wife and I will return to Norway for one month this summer.

Jim McMahon
2100 Mount Olive Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



Memorial at Kjeller; exploded bomb at right

Dear Bill:

There is a need to address the unusual statements made by Fred Becchetti in a letter printed in the Winter 1993 *Journal* on page 31.

He said, "...words as a purpose...aimed principally at civilians who just happened to have been in WWII and generally want nothing to do with the military."

Fred is wrong. Hundreds of thousands of civilian/soldiers and regular military types did not just happen to be in WWII. They volunteered — enlisted. His statement trivializes the service and sacrifices of many people.

I see nothing wrong or dangerous in advocating and supporting an adequate, effective and efficient military force at all times. Prior to WWII, the U.S. military went on maneuvers with broom sticks for machine guns and jeeps with plywood sides representing armored tanks. There were only a few obsolete airplanes. This is not adequate, effective or efficient and lives were lost unnecessarily.

With pride we salute the men and women who served and are serving in the armed forces. They are good people and should not be arbitrarily cast aside as something evil but necessary in a time of crisis. We are proud of them and we are not ashamed to associate with the military.

We cannot replace patriotism with fraud and deceit and burn the flag just for the hell of it.

God bless America and God bless all who serve their country with honor in a military uniform. Carl H. Kopf writes, "Whether God blesses America or not does not depend so much upon God as it depends upon us Americans." What you think, speak and do is a personal choice and it does affect outcome.

This nation is free only because of military veterans and we remember sacrifices made to preserve that freedom. I personally thank the military folks for what they are doing for me and for doing it out of love for our country — patriotism.

Ken 'Deacon' Jones
1013 Thomas Street
Janesville, WI 53545

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Dear Bill:

Reference is made to the Spring 1994 story covering Captain Ken Gilbert. I was the first bombardier assigned to his crew in Pueblo, Colorado and transferred to Lt. Frank Jordak's crew upon arrival at the 93rd B.G. where I flew seven lead missions. I was then sent to the 44th B.G. to be a Pathfinder lead bombardier and flew twenty-three missions with that Group.

The name "Missouri Sue" was given to the B-24 that I was on June 5th, the day we were shot down. The pilot, Captain Lou Mazure, was from Missouri and his fiancée's name was Nadine "Sue" Daugherty.

The command pilot on that mission was Lt. Col. Leon Vance, Jr., recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Bud Glickman
2870 Kerrisdale Ridge Drive
Medford, OR 97504

→ → → →

Dear Bill:

In response to the letter on page 33 of the Winter 1993 *Journal*: That design was used to head the "Certificate of Valor" award for the 96th Wing personnel, listing their awards and signed by General Peck and the colonels of the individual groups.

I am enclosing also some "then and now," "foreign and domestic" pictures of my crew from the 458th B.G., 754th Squadron, one of the luckiest crews in the ETO. Lt. Bob Fletcher's crew completed 31 missions from September 1944 through May 1945.

The first picture "then and there" shows the crew ready for action on a bombing mission close to the Russian border, one of several 10 hour sorties. Note "Old Glory" arm bands, .45 caliber sidearms also required. The second picture "now and here" shows four of us at the 46th Annual 2ADA Reunion at Hilton Head, S.C.

Bob Fletcher has since passed on (1 Feb. '94). All crew members are accounted for except Hugh C. Gaffney, who is nowhere to be found to date.

Santos Ortega Jr.
12076 Samoline Avenue
Downey, CA 90242

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Lt. Bob Fletcher's crew (458th B.G., Horsham St. Faith). Front row: S/Sgt. Al Lankus, tail turret; T/Sgt. Hugh C. Gaffney, flight engineer, waist gunner; Lt. Howard Berry, copilot; S/Sgt. John Hubbard, armorer gunner, top turret. Middle row: T/Sgt. Santos Ortega, radio operator, gunner; S/Sgt. Jacob Cuhn, ball turret, waist gunner. Back row: Unidentified radar operator; S/Sgt. Glen Franklin, nose turret; Lt. Robert G. Fletcher, pilot; Lt. Veto Staslinas, navigator.



Crew members reunited at Hilton Head (right to left): Bob Fletcher, pilot; Veto Staslinas, navigator; Santos Ortega, radio; Al Lankus, tail turret.

Dear Bill:

I am writing to you with the hope that you may be able to help me regarding the research which I am carrying out.

I am a member of Station 146 Tower Association, Seething, U.K., and I am researching certain specific missions involving not only the 448th B.G. but most of the 2nd Air Division during 1944.

The research I am undertaking has run into its fourth year and concerns not only the USAAF but also operations carried out by the RAF, and if I may add, is not intended to be detrimental to either service. It is my hope to eventually have the research published.

The information which I seek concerns missions flown by the 2nd Division on 26 Oct. 1944, 6 Nov. 1944, and 6 Dec. 1944; primary targets, Minden, Germany.

I am particularly interested in locating anyone who knew the Captain, 1st Lt. Frank R. Genarisky and his crew of the 715th B.S. who were MIA on the 6th November 1944.

I would appreciate any information relating to these missions, route maps, photographs, crews and group formations.

Any expenses incurred for postal charges will be refunded. Original material including photographs would be returned after copying.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your help.

Len Cairns
14 Charlton Court Road
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL 52 6JB
England

→ → → →

Dear Bill:

This is a copy of most of the letter I have sent to Jacques Willems of Belgium in response to his request on page 34 of the Winter 1993 2ADA Journal. I experienced a most difficult time in writing this letter, as it involves an emotional drain for me.

Concerning the 328th BS, 93rd BG B-24 which crashed near Bruges on 19 June 1944:

Michael Petruccioli and I were the best of friends during the critical war months of May and June 1944, during which time we and eighteen others, including Lt. Floyd Cook, shared quarters. On the mission described my crew and I attacked another target and I did not know and still don't know what actually happened. If you receive a response from a survivor of Mike's crew I would appreciate learning some of the details of their fateful mission.

On 2 May 1945 (close to VE Day) I received a reply to my inquiry from our Squadron Adjutant (Capt. Frank H. George). By that time I had completed my missions and was returned to the USA for other assignment. Captain George wrote that Mike and the crew failed to return from a mission although they were advised that Mike and Floyd were killed and that the rest of the crew were taken prisoner. At that time the death of T/Sgt. Ehrhart was not reported to our squadron.

My information at the time indicated that the plane was shot down over Ghent. I especially would like to learn where Mike is buried. Hopefully someone with information will contact you.

As to Mike and the 93rd Bomb Group, we were stationed at Hardwick air base near Norwich in East Anglia. He was a fun and loyal friend with a sense of humor which we all appreciated. He and I dated two English girls (we were in our early twenties) and I'm afraid he was seriously in love to the point that they were making post-war plans. I had the unfortunate task of advising her that Mike was "missing" and a few days later confirmed that he was killed. If I remember correctly the aircraft shot down was called "Linda" but I could be wrong about that.

If you are interested I can furnish you with pictures from my WWII scrapbook of Mike, "Linda" and the letter from Capt. George confirming Mike's death.

Murray D. Friedman
1000 Detwiler Drive
York, PA 17404

→ → → →

Dear Bill:

In need of some specific information, I can think of no other who might have it or know where to find it.

I'd like to know who was (were) the flight surgeon(s) with the 453rd Bomb Group (Old Buckenham) between the dates of August 1, 1944 through February, 1945.

As an added question, where does one locate Special Orders for that period?

Anything you can direct me to, or furnish, will be gratefully acknowledged with a large thanks.

Robert C. Jacobs
3412 Hillside
Cincinnati, OH 45204

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Dear Bill:

In the Winter 1993 Journal, page 9, 466th Bomb Group there was the report of the "Salzburg Mission, 21 April 1945" by Gene Saltarelli.

We were on that mission. My crewmate, Chuck Patnesky, and I were "drafted" as "fill ins" for two other crews of the 467th BG.

As Gene reported, the weather was horrible and we encountered intense and accurate flak.

Because it was our 30th mission we garnered another Air Medal (5 points) and because of the target location another battle star (5 points).

Ten points for one mission! At the time of determination of points toward discharge I was interviewed by a Warrant Officer and noticed that Salzburg was in a separate battle zone. When I brought this to the W.O.'s attention he agreed and I received a battle star for the "North Apennines Campaign."

Alan Healey's book *The 467th Bomb Group* does not list the "North Apennines" among the Battle Participation Credits.

I'm sure there are veterans of that mission to Salzburg, Austria, 21 April 1945 who may not be aware that they are eligible for that "other battle star."

If any are still awaiting discharge, the extra 5 points may hurry it along!

Joseph J. Huben
RD 3, Gypsy Trail Road
Carmel, New York 10512

→ → → →

Dear Bill:

I am assisting a niece and a brother of 2nd Lt. David J. Hotle in attempting to find out more about him and possibly locate someone who knew him. 2nd Lt. Hotle belonged to the 331st Squadron of the 392nd Bomb Group. His aircraft sustained five direct flak hits on 20 June 1944 and he and the rest of the crew bailed out over the coast of Sweden. Two crew members were KIA. Lt. Hotle and the seven other survivors on the crew were interned in Sweden. Lt. Hotle died in an air crash shortly after the war. More specific information:

Plane: B-24H 42-51125. Disposition of aircraft: scrapped. Pilot: 1st Lt. Leander Page, Jr. Co-pilot: 2nd Lt. LeRoy F. Qualey (Quailey?). Navigator: 2nd Lt. Charles R. Bishop. Bombardier: 2nd Lt. David J. Hotle. Radio: S/Sgt. Robert L. Moore. Engineer: S/Sgt. Robert B. Kellerman (KIA). Gunners: Sgt. Glen A. Deck (KIA), S/Sgt. Joseph A. Morgan, S/Sgt. Edward C. Kowalchik, S/Sgt. James P. Rehill.

We would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew Lt. David J. Hotle.

Roy J. Thomas
W-6722 Highway 11
Monroe, WI 53566
(608) 325-2527

→ → → →

Dear Bill:

I am seeking an actual photographic copy of the 445th group personnel photo which may have appeared in the history of the 445th BG by Rudolph Bursic. I will gladly reimburse or prepay all expenses. Thank you very much.

Robert J. Honeycutt
1434 Willow
Ottawa, KS 66067-3444

→ → → →

Dear Bill:

Reflecting on D-Day on its fiftieth anniversary, what I remember most was the loss of several of my hometown buddies whose lives were sacrificed. You always feel the loss of those more than the sordid details of personal participation involved May their efforts and all the others be a monument to the cause of liberty and peace.

Many of the GIs will return to France for the occasion. It was interesting to read that some of the paratroopers want to jump just as they did on that occasion. What a foolhardy gesture. Everyone knows that you never know what to expect for a landing — a ditch, hard pavement, tree or what. One of my friends landed in a tree and was unable to extricate himself before the Germans got to him. I was ready to jump several times but fortunately we were able to continue flying.

I do hope those who continue to revive the Holocaust will also appreciate the efforts of those who participated in their liberation.

George A. Risko
28801 Imperial A231
Warren, MI 48093

→ → → →

Dear Mr. (Hap) Chandler:

I am seeking information about a relative who was killed in World War II. The following data are listed on his grave marker located in the Hopewell Primitive Baptist Cemetery in Prentiss County, Mississippi: Troy Ryan, Staff Sgt., 853 AAF Bomb Sq., Apr. 2 1924, Nov. 26 1944.

I would like to know: the plane's name, the pilot's name, Troy Ryan's crew position, date/location of loss, circumstances of loss (how many bailed out, who, how many went down with the plane, how was the plane hit), and any published literature available on this group or squadron.

My reasons for wanting this information are two-fold. As a little girl, I heard the story of how Troy ordered everyone to bail out of the plane, but he didn't make it out. I remember his mother carrying his war mementos to town every Saturday. They were in a cigar box, and she wanted to show them to everyone. His story has always been a part of my life, but without having the circumstances surrounding his death, since becoming an adult, I have felt the story was not ended. The second reason I want this information is for posterity. I am the self-appointed genealogist of our family, and I would like to place this information in the records so that it can be preserved.

Jo Carolyn Beebe
2430 Salvatore Pl.
Hamilton, OH 45013

→ → → →

Ed. Note: The following letter was read to the membership in attendance at the 2ADA convention in Kansas City, May 28-31, 1994.

Dear Evelyn [Cohen]:

My best wishes to you, the officers and the Executive Committee. Sorry we cannot be with you, but hope the reunion is a wonderful success.

Please thank all for their many kindnesses to Bill and I over the years, and to me at this time.

May the spirit of friendship, love and caring always be a great part of the 2nd Air Division.

Hazel Robertie
Jeffreys Neck Road
Ipswich, MA 01938

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THE PX PAGE (continued from page 36)

B-24 "Python" (renamed "Censored")
 B-24H-1-FO "Poop Deck Pappy" 42-7521
 B-24- -FO "The Rabduckit"
 B-24H-20-FO "Rebel Gal" 42-94838
 B-24 "The Red Arrow 32 Division"
 B-24 "Rough Rid'er"
 B-24 "Royal Screw!"
 B-24J-125-CO "Rubber Check" 42-110023
 B-24H-20-FO "Rugged But Right" 42-94953
 B-24H-20-FO "San Antonio Rose" 42-95021 (2 photos)
 B-24- -FO "School Daze"
 B-24 "Screaming (Out) House"
 B-24J-156-CO "The Shack" 44-40398
 B-24 "Short Fat and 4-F"
 B-24J-40-FW "Slick Chick" 42-50460
 B-24H-20-FO "Slick Chick" 42-94974
 B-24J-40-CF "Solid Comfort" 42-50501
 B-24H-25-FO "Spirit of Notre Dame" 42-95102
 B-24 "Straight Shot"
 B-24 "Stripped For Action!"
 B-24H-15-CF (?) "Tail Wind" 41-29368 (?)
 B-24J-21-FO "Target For Tonight" 44-48977
 B-24J-151-CO "That's All Brother" 44-40120
 B-24 "Thirty Day Leave"
 B-24H-1-FO "Three Feathers" 42-7636
 B-24 "U-Name-It We'll-Fly-It"
 B-24 "Urgin Virgin"
 B-24J-5-FO "Wazzle Dazzle" 42-50767
 B-24H-10-CF "Weaver's Beavers" (formerly Dinah Mite)
 B-24H-25-CF "Wells' Fargo" 42-50365
 B-24J-140-CO "What's Cookin' Doc?" 42-110157
 B-24J-5-FO "Wimpy's Queen" 42-50901
 B-24H-15-FO "Witchcraft" 42-52534 (2 photos)
 B-24H-10-FO "Wolfe Pack" 42-52121
 B-24 "Working For The Yankee Doll-ah!!"
 B-24H-20-FO "You're Safe At Home" 42-94828
 B-17 "Suzy Q" 41-2489
 B-24E-10-FO, The "Captain Gene" from Jeanette 42-7085
 B-24- -FO "Destination Tokio" 49
 B-24J-CO-195 "V Grand" 44-41064

All are 8 x 10 black and white prints, \$5.00 each. Make checks payable to: **Yankee Air Force**. Mail to:

Yankee Air Force Library
 P.O. Box 590
 Belleville, MI 48112-0590

About The Yankee Air Force and The Yankee Air Museum

The Yankee Air Force was organized in 1981 to research, restore and preserve the all but forgotten history of Willow Run Airport. The first goal of the Yankee Air Force was to acquire one of the original U.S. Army Air Corps hangars at Willow Run and restore it to its original 1942 condition; and to acquire, restore and fly a B-24 built at the Willow Run plant. Longer range goals included the acquisition and restoration of many other historic aircraft and the formation of a museum at Willow Run incorporating a YAF flight line, a museum for related artifacts, equipment and memorabilia, and a library and research facility.

The Yankee Air Force accomplished its first goal by obtaining one of the original hangars. The second goal, the B-24, has proven to be a much tougher project. However, under the business name of Yankee Air Museum, the YAF does have on display several interesting aircraft, including a 1945-built C-47D, a very rare Korean War era RF-84K and an F-86L; as well as a B-52D Stratofortress, a B-17G Flying Fortress, and a B-25D Mitchell which is the only flying example of this model in the United States. In May 1983 the YAF library and research facility was opened, and is on its way to becoming one of the leading repositories of historical aviation-related material in the country.

The Yankee Air Force has made outstanding progress since it was founded, but there is much left to do on the aircraft, hangar, museum and library. If these historic aircraft and artifacts are not saved now, there will not be any left to save, and an irreplaceable part of our national heritage will be lost forever. Please join and support the Yankee Air Force and the Yankee Air Museum in these endeavors.

For further information, please contact the Yankee Air Force Library, P.O. Box 590, Belleville, MI 48112-0590, telephone (313) 483-4030. ■

THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

One of our Texas brethren wishes to call to the attention of all of you DFC holders the following information:

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society is a new organization being formed for those who received the DFC. If you qualify, and are interested, contact:

Alexander D. Ciurczak, USAF Ret.
 34552 Camino Capistrano
 Capistrano Beach, CA 92624-1232

EDITOR'S NOTE

The rear cover of the *Spring Journal* carried an item entitled "Wanted: 5 Million Names for Wall of Liberty."

It is understood that there may have been some financial difficulty with the campaign to raise funds for this wall. We have been unable to confirm. However, by calling the (800) number given, we have determined that dedication of the wall containing five million names will NOT take place as planned on June 6, 1994 as announced in the last *Journal*. The story now is that there will be groundbreaking on June 6, 1994 and a dedication of the Wall in May, 1995. Those considering a donation to this project are advised to double check its status before making a commitment.

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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