

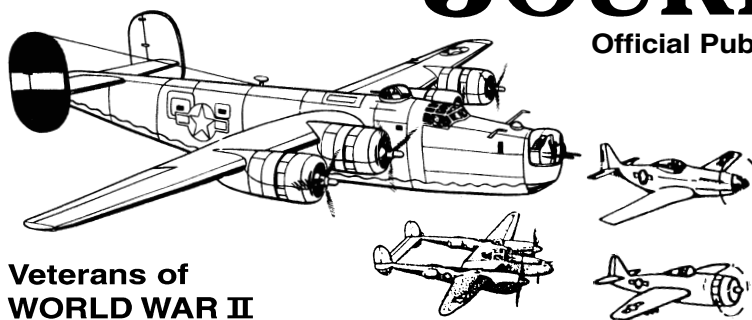
Post Office to Issue Liberator Stamp!



— SEE BACK PAGE —

THE JOURNAL

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Veterans of
WORLD WAR II



Volume 44 Number 1

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JIMMY STEWART, BOMBER PILOT

THE NEW BOOK WRITTEN BY STARR SMITH, WITH FOREWORD BY WALTER CRONKITE

*The untold story of his greatest role:
World War II bomber pilot and decorated
war hero, told by one of his fellow officers.*

Of all the celebrities who served their country during World War II—and they were legion—Jimmy Stewart was unique. On December 7, when the attack on Pearl Harbor woke so many others to the reality of the war, Stewart was already serving—as a private on guard duty at the Army Air Forces' Moffet Field, south of San Francisco. Seeing war on the horizon, at the height of his fame after *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Jimmy Stewart had enlisted several months earlier.

Jimmy Stewart, Bomber Pilot chronicles the star's long journey to become a bomber pilot in combat. Author Starr Smith recounts how Stewart's first battles were with the AAF's high command, who insisted on keeping the naturally-talented pilot out of harm's way as an instructor pilot for B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators. We learn how, by mid-1943, Stewart managed to get assigned to a Liberator squadron in the 445th BG that was deploying to England to join the Mighty Eighth Air Force—and how, once in the thick of it, he rose to command his own squadron and flew 20 combat missions, including one to Berlin. *Jimmy Stewart, Bomber Pilot* offers a fascinating, first-hand look at the making of a true American star.

Zenith Press, publisher of the book, is headed by Richard Kane, former president of Presidio Press, the renowned publisher of military books. In announcing the publication of Smith's book, Kane said: "This is not a book about Jimmy Stewart's movie star life. Starr got him out of Hollywood on the second page. It is a very human, courageous, first-hand, and personal story of Stewart's service in wartime as a pilot and military leader, and Smith's work with him as a combat intelligence officer in the 8th Air Force."

*See Walter Cronkite's foreword to
"Jimmy Stewart, Bomber Pilot" on page 17.*

Ed. Note: Stewart served with the 445th at Tibenham, the 453rd at Old Buckenham, and the 2nd Combat Bomb Wing at Hethel.



Photo courtesy of MBI Publishing Company/Zenith Press

DIRECTORY

Honorary President..... JORDAN R. UTTAL
Town Village North • 12271 Coit Road #3201 • Dallas, TX 75251
Telephone: 972-788-9041 • Fax: 972-661-3576

OFFICERS

PresidentGEOFF GREGORY
3110 Sheridan, Garland, TX 75041-4400
Telephone: 972-278-8537 • E-mail: ggregmt@aol.com

Executive Vice President.....JOHN deCANI
226 W. Rittenhouse Square #1715, Philadelphia, PA 19103-5748
Telephone: 215-735-1342 • Fax: 215-732-8494
E-mail: decani@wharton.upenn.edu

Vice President Membership EVELYN COHEN
06-410 Delaire Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114-4157
Telephone: 215-632-3992 • Fax: 215-632-8319

Treasurer E.W. (BILL) NOTHSTEIN
40 Meadow Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559-1142
Telephone: 585-352-3350 • Fax: 585-352-4201

Secretary and Director of
Administrative Services DAVID G. PATTERSON
28 Squire Court, Alamo, CA 94507-2230
Telephone: 925-837-1667 • Fax: 925-743-9940
E-mail: skyhunterK2@earthlink.net

2ADA Representative
Board of Governors..... CHARLES WALKER
9824 Crest Meadow, Dallas, TX 75230-5331
Telephone: 214-987-0467 • E-mail: b24man@aol.com

GROUP VICE PRESIDENTS

Headquarters..... RAYMOND E. STRONG
642 Cedar Club Circle, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-7215
Telephone: 919-967-2301 • E-mail: rstrong2@fusionbb.net

44th Bomb Group..... GEORGE A. WASHBURN
11505 N. Armenia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33612
Telephone: 813-932-6425 • E-mail: liberatorpilot@msn.com

93rd Bomb Group..... JOHN L. LEE
930 Preston Trail, Melbourne, FL 32940-7822
Telephone: 321-259-6861 • E-mail: jlee1922@aol.com

389th Bomb Group..... FIELDER N. NEWTON
3301 Shellers Ben #914, State College, PA 16801-3068
Telephone: 814-235-0889

392nd Bomb Group..... OAK MACKEY
6406 East Presidio, Mesa, AZ 85215-0972
Telephone: 480-641-3033 • Fax: 480-641-0506
E-mail: oakmackey@msn.com

445th Bomb Group..... CLARENCE A. LUHMANN
673 290th Avenue, Blue Earth, MN 56003-9710
Telephone: 507-773-4431

446th Bomb Group..... LINK VEAZEY
1938 Harbor Oaks Drive, Snellville, GA 30078
Telephone: 770-972-5883 • E-mail: LinkVz1@cs.com

448th Bomb Group..... KING SCHULTZ
1089 Rancho Santa Fe Road, Encinitas, CA 92024-6834
Telephone: 760-943-1641 • Fax: 760-943-0771

453rd Bomb Group..... LLOYD PRANG
2451 Willow St., Greenwood, IN 46142 • Tel. 317-885-0224

458th Bomb Group..... E.A. "RICK" ROKICKI
2605 Chapel Lake Dr. #207, Gambrills, MD 21054
Telephone: 410-721-0298 • Fax: 410-721-0283

466th Bomb Group..... JAMES H. LORENZ
5331 East Poinsettia Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85254-4716
Telephone: 480-951-0343 • E-mail: jameshlorenz@aol.com

467th Bomb Group..... JOHN E. "JACK" STEVENS
3526 Larga Circle, San Diego, CA 92110-5336
Telephone: 619-222-4639 • Fax: 619-222-4149
E-mail: Lstev72910@aol.com

489th Bomb Group..... MEL PONTILLO
837 Childs Avenue, Monaca, PA 15061-1318
Telephone: 724-774-2398 • E-mail: mel489th@webtv.net

491st Bomb Group..... HUGH M. BENNETT
11069 Ocean Spray Blvd., Englewood, FL 34224-8371
Telephone: 941-473-3095 • E-mail: HUBEA24@aol.com

492nd Bomb Group..... W.H. "BILL" BEASLEY
1525 South Garfield Street, Denver, CO 80210-3022
Telephone: 303-756-4766 • Fax: 303-759-3684
E-mail: WHBNMB492NPICK@prodigy.net

JOURNAL

Editor..... RAY R. PYTEL
P.O. Box 484, Elkhorn, WI 53121-0484
Telephone: 262-723-6381 • Fax: 262-723-7981

HERITAGE LEAGUE

President BILLY SHEELY JOHNSON
1526 Mt. Pleasant Drive, Colonial Heights, VA 23834
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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

JOURNAL



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Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ, England

JOSEPH M. DZENOWAGIS, JR.

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DAVID Q. GURNEY

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DENNIS S. WOLF

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24 Grosvenor Square, London, W1A 1AE, England

HOWDY FROM TEXAS!

BY GEOFF GREGORY (467TH), 2ADA PRESIDENT

Getting ready for San Antonio? Sure do hope so! Plans and the agenda for the Executive Committee meetings are well underway. However, for the benefit of the many new VPs who will be attending for the first time, I wish to point out the following. All VPs and officers of the 2ADA pay all their own expenses for meetings prior to the regular convention itself. This includes transportation, lodging, and incidentals. The 2ADA pays for two working lunches and one or two dinners — their option. This has been the custom for many years. We hope to have a great turnout — San Antonio is a major city for the military, and a very interesting convention city. We will be in the Hyatt Regency right on the Riverwalk; just about the best location anywhere in town. All the rooms were completely renovated last summer; I think you will be quite pleased. A word of warning, however: food and parking are expensive. Finding food is certainly no problem. There are many good restaurants in easy walking distance — one of the best is Shilos, around the corner. The Lone Star Café and Fuddruckers are also nearby for a variety of choices. The parking lot across from the hotel is \$10 per day — no in and out privileges, and there are two other garages nearby. All this information will be available at the registration desk.

We have arranged for a very interesting speaker, **Mike Radford**. He has had his own “show” in Branson, MO for over nine years, and flies his own plane around the country to speak to veterans’ groups and civic organizations. Those who have previously heard him are expansive in their praise — we feel fortunate to have him.

November 2004 was a most interesting month for us. Terry and I thought the trip to England in 2001 would be our last. Not so! Not so! When the subject of the Governors’ meeting — in conjunction with Remembrance Day ceremonies — appeared on the horizon, we said, “Let’s go!” The flight over on British Air was uneventful, but quite uncomfortable because of the new seating configuration. We were met by a motorized cart that sped us through customs, directly to the baggage area. And then it was on to Norwich. We spent most of the time at the Nelson Hotel, enjoying their great English breakfasts.

Our days and nights were fully engaged, but most enjoyable. It was so good to see so many of our longtime English friends again. Our American contingent consisted of **Joan & David Patterson, Chuck & Andrew Walker, Bud Koorndyk, and Vicki Warning**.

Bud and David kicked off our visit by hosting a delightful dinner at Dunston Hall for all of us, including many of the Brits, so the evening was outstanding and enjoyable.

On Sunday, I was pleased and honored to place a wreath on behalf of the 2nd Air Division Association on the War Memorial in front of City Hall as part of Remembrance Day celebrations. This was followed by a brief parade and then a very impressive service in that beautiful old Norwich Cathedral. The treatment accorded our 2ADA people by the officials and people of Norwich and Norfolk was, as always, most warm, gracious, and very touching. They truly HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN!

I am sure that Chuck Walker will report in further detail on the Board of Governors meeting. I just want to add that we and our wives were invited to attend that meeting; which pleased me, and I am sure David Patterson as well. It kept Terry and Joan out of the STORES! (Actually, they both felt the meeting was much more interesting than shopping.) I was pleased to be asked to say a few words to the Board. It was especially pleasing to be able to address **1st Lt. Glory Smith and Capt. Nathan Jones** of the U.S. Air Forces stationed at Mildenhall AFB. They had also been invited to attend this meeting.

The next day we were assembled at **Sir Timothy Colman’s** estate. We toured his expansive arboretum and dedicated three American species trees, presented to him on the occasion of his retirement from his official duties as the Queen’s representative in Norfolk. The trees, presented on behalf of the 2ADA, were purchased with the funds collected in Philadelphia last summer. It was the only cold unpleasant weather day we had, so a hot cup of tea with **Lady Mary** was most welcomed. Joan and Terry can fill you in on “Tea.”

After tea, we were on to the Memorial Library to dedicate a reading area to **Bernard Matthews**. In Philadelphia last year, a sizable, memorable gift was presented to the 2ADA by **Matthew Martin** on behalf of Mr. Matthews. I then presented Bernard with a painting of B-24s featuring the 466th Bomb Group. He was most pleased, and he promised that the painting would be hung on his office wall. It was, indeed, hung immediately.

(continued on next page)

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION



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 2nd 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 2nd 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 Library of the Norwich Millennium 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 2nd Air Division assigned or attached. Provisions are made for Associate (Non-Voting) memberships and also for subscribing memberships (Non-Voting).

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

We make every effort to mail your *Journal* within 45 days of the deadline listed above, with the exception of the Winter issue (October deadline) which is mailed early in January. Your receipt of the *Journal* will be anywhere from one to four weeks later, depending on the U.S. Postal Service — especially your own post office. If you don’t get your *Journal* by the next deadline, contact Evelyn Cohen immediately.

New Members of the 2ADA

93rd BG

Byron McComas

389th BG

Charles Holcomb, Jr.
James R. Morgan

445th BG

Edmund Wanner

491st BG

Franklyn Bachman

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: HOWDY FROM TEXAS! (continued from page 3)

I'm sure the 466th veterans are pleased to know this.

This was my first opportunity to see the revisions recently made to our Library. The original listings of those who had so generously given to the Memorial have been replaced by "The Tree of Life." Names are now engraved on silver or gold "leaves" on a "tree" that occupies one wall. I found it to be quite impressive. The B-24 "Witchcraft" has been moved slightly; and the pictures are hung temporarily, awaiting the installation of a new alarm system before being hung permanently. The new arrangements seem to make the library look more spacious. All will be well and most satisfactory once the pictures are actually returned to the walls as planned.

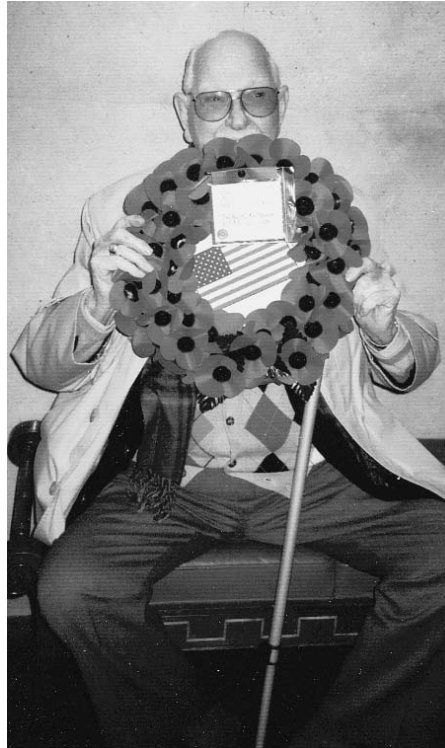
Chairman Matthew Martin and I were off to London the following day to consult with the Fulbright Commission representatives. We were joined in London by Chuck Walker, our 2ADA representative to the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust, and Bud Koorndyk, chairman of the 2ADA/FMLA oversight committee. The meeting was cordial and went well; but no definitive results ensued. We did feel we had made progress in arranging for adjustments that should be made with Fulbright. In fact, in light of our long-term relationship, these changes are inevitable and necessary.

A number of recommendations will be made in San Antonio with an eye toward more efficiency, as well as increased income. After long and exhausting discussions, I favor these recommendations.

Interspersed with all of the above business meetings, we were delightfully entertained by our English friends with delicious lunches and dinners. **Tom & Robin Eaton** treated us to cocktails and dinner in their lovely new home. How wonderful to see them again after a long hiatus. **David & Jean Hastings** — as always — provided lunch and dinner, with dinner ending with Jean's special Rhubarb Crumble! This was the twenty-fifth dinner the Hastings have hosted for the Americans during these annual meetings. We also want to thank **Matthew & Patsy Martin** for another delightful evening and delicious feast. We loved the special meat pie that **Ann Hawker** prepared for us. **Geoffrey & Ann** are **Andrew Hawker's** family.

If it sounds like we were well feted and fed, you are so right!

I would be remiss if I didn't also thank our "transportation team." Andrea and Andrew (a car each), David and Jean (a car



While in Norwich, 2ADA President Geoff Gregory couldn't wait for dinner—so he "nibbled" on the wreath!

PHOTO BY JOE DZENOWAGIS, JR.

each), and Matthew took us door-to-door to all these events! What an organizational job *that* was! Thanks also to David Hastings for guiding us through the various ceremonies in connection with Remembrance Day, and for helping this old man up the uneven steps to the War Memorial. Thanks also to the angel who broke through the crowd as I approached the first step. She grabbed me by the right elbow and just about lifted me off my feet. This angel from the crowd was the very same one who had said goodbye the previous day by hugging my neck and whispering, "Thank you for coming, and thank you for coming the *first time*." It made my day!!!

Terry and I spent a few extra days with Andrea and Andrew. What gracious hosts and good cooks they are! (They also supply the softest toilet tissue in England!) A long and interesting story lies therein. On the last day, we were whisked away by the Hawker Taxi Service to the Hilton Hotel at Gatwick, and were on our way back to the States the next morning. If this turns out to really be our last visit "across the pond," it was certainly a great one. It provided us with many choice memories, and we do indeed feel blessed to have been able to make the trip.

This has been a long report, and I thank you for reading. See you in San Antonio! ■

Folded Wings

44th BG

B/Gen. Jack H. Gibson (HQ)
Edgar O. Hamel

93rd BG

Richard R. Galvin
J.R. Hanahan
David E. Lundy (446th)
Leroy J. Marleau
Harold S. Secor

389th BG

Lyman Crumrin (453rd)
Robert L. Friedman
M.C. Hargett
Maj. Joseph W. Holub
Charles E. Norris
Joe C. Power, Jr.
Richard A. Wood

392nd BG

James M. Ackerman
Dr. Jack C. Adamson
James M. Buzick
Albin A. Gusciora
Joseph E. Micksch
Worth J. Thomas

445th BG

Thomas Florio

446th BG

James L. Payne
William G. Robison

448th BG

Emil G. Beaudry
Lester S. McGown
John Rainwater

458th BG

Rev. Leonard P. Edwards (355th)
Robert C. Frazier
Kirby Hayward
Robert D. Hudnall
Harold F. McCray (389th)
Lawrence P. Riesen

466th BG

Earl H. Beitler
DeWayne E. Slaughaupt

467th BG

Fay L. Davis
R.J. Rambosky
Jay S. Young

489th BG

Col. H. Wayne Hodges

491st BG

Arthur R. Pearce
LTC Stanley J. Pusko

492nd BG

Robert H. Kellum

The Editor's Comments

BY RAY PYTEL (445TH)

JIMMY STEWART, BOMBER PILOT BOOK BY STARR SMITH

Just so you know something about the author: **Starr Smith** is an international journalist, author, photographer, and award-winning travel writer who has traveled in



over 100 countries all over the world. He has been a correspondent for NBC Radio, a reporter for *Newsweek*, and his byline has appeared in newspapers and magazines from six continents. Five of his articles have been reprinted in *The Congressional Record*. Among his books is *ONLY THE DAYS ARE LONG — Reports of a Journalist and World Traveler*.

He covered the atom bomb tests at Bikini in the Pacific, the Berlin Airlift, the Civil Rights Movement in the South, and, at Normandy, the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. Smith was a combat intelligence officer with the 8th Air Force in England in World War II, and, later, served on the press staff of General Eisenhower at his headquarters in London and Paris. After the war, and before returning to civilian life, Smith worked in Washington on behalf of a separate and independent Air Force with the great wartime generals — Arnold, Spaatz, Eaker, Doolittle, Kenney, Anderson, and other WWII leaders. He is a retired colonel in the Air Force Reserve. From his base in Montgomery, Alabama, Smith continues his work as an international journalist. He writes books — traveling extensively, and lecturing on travel and world affairs.

LAST MINUTE INFO: COURTESY OF THE LIBERATOR CLUB

The Collings Foundation has renamed their Liberator formerly known as the "All American" and later "The Dragon and His Tail." The new name is "Witchcraft," to honor the 467th BG B-24 that completed 132 missions without an abort.

The official installation of the B-24 sculpture in San Diego's Balboa Park will take place on Veterans' Day, November 11, 2005.

Daimler-Chrysler is to introduce a new model Jeep line with the name "The Liberator." Are you ready to buy a fleet?

ANSWERS TO THE WINTER QUIZ

The following answers are 100% correct. The first set was submitted by **Alex Birnie** (SM), 237 Brickling Road, Irmo, SC 29063:

1. Browning — machine guns
2. Martin — top turret
3. Sperry — auto pilot & ball turret
4. Norden — bombsight
5. Emerson — nose & tail turrets
6. Very — pistol
7. Hamilton — props

SPRING QUIZ

"A quiz for people who know everything"

1. What is the sport in which neither the participants nor the spectators know the score until the contest ends?
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backwards?
3. Most vegetables must be planted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
4. What is the sport in which the ball is always in possession of the team on defense and the offensive team can score without

touching the ball?

5. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
6. You can buy pear brandy with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe; the bottle is genuine and has not been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
7. Only three words in English begin with the letters "dw." What are these common words?
8. There are fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar. How many can you name?
9. What are the lakes that are referred to in the "Los Angeles Lakers"?
10. There are seven ways a baseball player can reach first base without getting a hit. Besides a base on balls, what are they?
11. There is only one vegetable or fruit which is sold only fresh — never frozen, canned, processed or cooked. What is it?
12. Name six or more things you can wear on your feet that begin with the letter "S."

Answers next issue. ■

THE PEEP FROM THE VEEP

BY JOHN deCANI (489th), 2ADA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

The 2ADA calls itself a "last man" organization because of a legendary, unwritten bylaw: *The last man turns out the lights*. In fact, the organization should dissolve some time before there is a last man. By that time, our last man will be too old and feeble to muster the strength to turn out the lights.

Our organization was founded to perpetuate the friendships and associations we formed in World War II, which was for many of us the most exciting time of our lives. There are many veterans' organizations with the same purpose. Along the way, however, the 2ADA acquired an additional purpose: We endowed a unique "living memorial" to ourselves — our Memorial Library in Norwich, the English city around which many of our bases were scattered and where many of us went for recreation. There is no other memorial like ours, and the 2ADA continues to provide very generous annual support for the 2AD Memorial Library.

At present we have about 3,600 members and are flourishing, but our numbers are diminishing rapidly. Within the next year, about five hundred more of us will be gone. That's a sobering thought. In order to function efficiently, we need officers, committee members and committee chairmen. Of course, we also require members to support the organization and our Memorial Library. Hence, there are three important and interrelated questions that we must consider soon: (a) How small can the 2ADA be before it becomes unviable? (b) When will this occur? (c) How do we provide for the Library when we are no longer here? The first question is managerial, the second is actuarial, and the third is financial.

As a statistician, I can help with the second question. Because I live in Philadelphia, where Evelyn Cohen also lives, I have served for many years on the 2ADA Audit Committee and helped to audit Evelyn's convention accounts. I submitted an audit report to the Executive Committee, and along with that report I sometimes provided a forecast of our future membership. I still have those forecasts in my files; they are surprisingly consistent. (Of course, one can be consistently wrong.) Someone has suggested that about 2,000 members is the lower limit required for viability. The most recent forecasts, made in 1993, 1997, 2002, and 2004, all show that our membership will fall below 2,000 members in 2009. In 2004, our youngest members were 78 years old. This means that in 2009 those members will be 83 years old. The latest (2002) edition of *Vital Statistics of the United States* shows that the life expectancy of an 83-year-old white American male is 7.3 years.

Although about half of us will outlive our life expectancies, it is time to think seriously about the future of the 2ADA. ■

COMMENTS FROM THE HONORARY PRESIDENT

BY JORDAN R. UTTAL (HQ)

O.K.—I'm back—only slightly damaged. Greetings to you all, and sincere thanks for the many get-well messages received during my 74-day stay in the medical world (June 29 – September 11). It was due to a hip fracture, and now in January 2005 I am using a four-wheel walker and still riding a wheelchair on occasion.

In any event, I have had plenty of time to think, to remember, and to feel increased pride in what we, the 2ADA, have achieved since 1948, and our Division's creditable performance during WWII.

Bear with me please while I review the background of the 2ADA and the 2AD Memorial Library. By and large this is what I have been thinking about since last June.

What a great idea for a memorial to our fallen comrades came up during a lunch in early 1945 with B.G. Milton Arnold, 2nd Combat Bomb Wing; Lt. Col. Fred Bryan, Headquarters 2AD; and Lt. Col. Ion Walker, 467th BG. They in turn went to our Commanding General, William Kepner, who enthusiastically embraced the idea. After V.E. Day, May 8, 1945, an appeal for funds was sent out to all 2nd Air Division personnel still in England, and in a matter of three weeks, \$20,000 (\$4.00 each) was raised and turned over to Norwich officials in June 1945.

Within weeks after this, the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF was formed and registered under British law, with the three originators of the idea and two other Americans as members of the original Board of Governors.

What, exactly, the memorial was to be was not decided, but in a short while the local officials and the Board of Governors agreed that it should be a library unit that would be part of the planned new Norwich City Library.

Great idea, but it took eighteen years for the new library to be built—due to shortages of everything! In the meantime, a reading room was created in the old Norwich City Library. This room served as best it could as the 2AD Memorial Library.

So much for 1945-1963 about the Memorial. Let us look now at the birth of the 2ADA—the creation of which I have been equally proud. In 1946 in Chicago there was a nucleus of 2AD veterans who kept in touch regularly. A decision was made in August of that year to get together at the apartment of Howard and Gladys Moore for drinks prior to going out to dinner. Seven of us 2AD veterans showed up on that Friday night and had our drinks indeed, then went out to dinner where there were more drinks, after which genial Howard suggested that we return to the apart-

ment for after-dinner drinks!!

Believe it or not, we did not break up until Sunday afternoon—wow!! We had such a great time that we decided unanimously to make an effort to put on a 2AD reunion. All seven of us had served at Headquarters, with two of them having had prior 25 or 30 mission experience.

How to reach the Division? All we had were HQ personnel rosters and we were determined to make a start with these names and addresses.

It took us two years to get the job done, and in October 1948 we had the first 2AD reunion at the Hotel Sherman in Chicago, starting on a Friday and ending on Sunday. We had close to 100 2AD veterans, including General Kepner, and their wives; from all over the country, from coast to coast and border to border. We put on a Saturday afternoon business meeting, and there we decided to form the 2nd Air Division Association. We elected officers, formed committees, and decided to meet again in 1949. At that time the WACs joined us, and in no time we found veterans from every group. Our small number in 1948 grew to 8,200 in 1992, after which time the numbers began to reflect the toll of time.

Now, let us go back to the Memorial. In 1948 we stated as a primary purpose to perpetuate the friendships made during our service in the 2AD. It wasn't until 1952 that we learned from our American Governors that our help was needed to create our Memorial. From that time on, the 2ADA's most important objective was to support in every way possible the devoted and dedicated efforts of the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF in Norwich.

So much for background, all of which came popping into my mind during recent periods of reflection.

Our Association has supported the Memorial Library with donations for books and other needed physical assets, with permanent endowments for annual book purchases in memory of a loved one, and with gifts of cash to be added to the Trust Capital Fund. From the \$20,000 originally collected in 1945, our Capital Fund has grown, by my guess, to close to a million pounds. Our aim from the start was to provide perpetuity to our Memorial. I believe we are getting close.

The 2ADA has had 57 annual conventions across the USA, with eight official conventions in Norwich plus other meetings there, the most recent of which was in 2001 for the reopening of the Memorial which had burned to the ground in 1994.

What a demonstration of affection and respect the reopening was!!

Our Board of Governors continues to operate in the same efficient manner—with excellent investment policies and close communication enhanced since 1972 by the presence of a 2ADA representative on the Board. I was privileged to fill that office from 1972 to 1989 when I resigned to face major surgery. Since then the 2ADA representatives have been Bud Koorndyk succeeded by Chuck Walker. Our connection with the Governors is close, warm, and effective. I am proud of our relationship with them and with the staff at the library from its earliest days until now.

Our 2nd Air Division Memorial Library is magnificent. It is used by large numbers of Norfolk residents, including schoolchildren who are visited regularly by the current 2ADA/Fulbright librarian, a blessing for which you, the members, raised a fund of over \$500,000 during our drive for this purpose in 1988-1991.

During my reflections recently I have thought with pride of our 2ADA presidents whose service of one or two years in office has provided stability to our organization, and our long serving VP Membership, Secretary, Treasurer, and others who have added to our efficiency, especially our *Journal* Editor who every three months brings us together.

Indeed the friendships have for the most part been perpetuated. Most important, as I see it, you, by your support, have seen to it that our unique 2nd Air Division Memorial Library is there and will be there to honor our almost 7,000 comrades killed in action and all of us who served. I add my sincere gratitude. ■

It's All a Matter of Age

An extremely wealthy 70-year-old widower shows up at the country club with a breathtakingly beautiful and very sexy 25-year-old blonde who knocks everyone's socks off with her youthful sex appeal and charm. She hangs over Bob's arm and listens intently to his every word.

His buddies at the club are all aghast. They corner him and ask, "Bob, how'd you get the trophy girlfriend?"

Bob replies, "Girlfriend? She's my wife!"

They're knocked over, but continue to ask, "So, how'd you get her to marry you?"

Bob says, "I lied about my age."

His friends respond, "What did you tell her, that you are only 50?"

"No," he replied. "I told her I was 90."

The Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF

BY MATTHEW MARTIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

All photos are from the Bernard Matthews Tea Party held at the 2AD Memorial Library on 17 November 2004.

GREETINGS FROM NORWICH! We have been busy with various activities over the last few months.

Firstly, we have made some improvements to the Memorial Library. These include additional book shelving and a new Donor Board. The additional shelving enables us to have 17.5% more books available for loan in the Library. The new Donor Board is in the form of a tree. Each leaf signifies a gift. Some leaves are made of brass and are in recognition of substantial gifts which we have received. Others are made of aluminum and represent significant legacies which we are told we can expect in the future. In addition, there are separate signs in the form of rocks at the base of the tree which represent the principal gifts the Trust has received.



Memorial Trust Governors Roger Freeman (L) & Chuck Walker, with the new Tree of Life Donor Board in the background.

The tree was manufactured by a company in New Jersey. The import arrangements and all the other improvements were conceived by **Hilary Hammond**, the Vice Chairman of the Memorial Trust, and implemented by Trust Librarian **Derek Hills** and his team. We have every reason to be most grateful to them all for a lot of hard and successful work.



Trust Librarian Derek Hills (right) with Assistant Trust Librarians Lesley Fleetwood (left) and Jenny Christian.

The other main area of activity revolved around a visit from a number of 2ADA representatives and their families in November. Led by 2ADA President **Geoff Gregory** and his charming wife **Terry**, we also welcomed **Chuck Walker**, **David & Joan Patterson**, **Bud Koorndyk**, **Joe Dzenowagis Jr.**, and **Vicki Brooks Warning**. Their visit was timed to coincide with a number of activities in Norwich including the Remembrance Sunday wreath-laying ceremony in the Garden of Remembrance in the front of City Hall and the annual Service of Remembrance at Norwich Cathedral.



L-R: Hilary Hammond, Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors; Chuck Walker; 2ADA Representative to the Board; Richard Jewson, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Norfolk; Bernard Matthews, benefactor; Geoff Gregory, 2ADA President.

On the Monday following Remembrance Sunday, we held the Annual Meeting of the Memorial Trust. This was well-attended, and amongst those present were two serving officers from the USAF at Mildenhall. Their presence, during these difficult times in world affairs, was particularly welcome. Following the meeting, our American visitors were invited by **Sir Timothy and Lady Mary Colman** to attend a tree-planting ceremony at his garden outside Norwich. Sir Timothy has retired as Her Majesty the Queen's Lord Lieutenant for Norfolk. He has provided the Memorial Trust with stalwart support in many ways over many years, and gift of the American species trees was in recognition of this major contribution to our affairs.



Memorial Trust Governor David Gurney (L) and Honorary Life Governor Alfred Jenner.

Later that week we held a ceremony to name a small part of the Memorial Library as the **Bernard Matthews Reading Area** in appreciation of the magnificent gift of \$100,000 made by him. Bernard Matthews is one of the United Kingdom's most successful businessmen, and we welcomed him to the Library for the first time. A number of distinguished guests were present on that happy occasion, including Her Majesty's new Lord Lieutenant for Norfolk, **Richard Jewson**, and **Paul King**, a former chairman of the Memorial Trust who is this year's Sheriff of Norwich, an ancient and honorific civic office. A painting of three B-24s flying over Attlebridge (one of the former USAAF airfields he now owns) was presented to Bernard Matthews by Geoff Gregory.

In September we were sorry to say goodbye to **Tahitia Orr**, our 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian who rendered very valuable service to the Library during her two years with us. Tahitia is staying in the United Kingdom, and in November celebrated her marriage to David. We hope this means that Tahitia will visit us from time to time.

We welcomed **Alexis Ciurczak**, our new 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian. Alexis is a highly experienced professional librarian from Palomar College in California, and brings most welcome skills and experience to the day-to-day operation of the Library. It was most gratifying to learn how much Alexis appreciated Norwich in light of her extensive travels to date.

Looking forward, I am happy to report that we have secured another eminent speaker to deliver the next 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust lecture, **Lord Owen CH**. As **David Owen** he served

(continued on next page)

Report of the 2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust

BY CHUCK WALKER (445TH)

The last few months have been difficult but made easier by the many expressions of condolence I have received from you dear friends. My family and I thank you very much.

The November 15, 2004 Governors' meeting was a howling success. As I indicated in the last *Journal*, I was accompanied by the **Gregorys**, the **Pattersons**, **Bud Koorndyk**, **Vicki Warning**, and fellow Governor **Joe Dzenowagis**. They will surely attest to the grand hospitality received from our British friends. Food, transportation and good cheer abounded. Several of our Governors may very well attend our upcoming San Antonio convention!

Trust Chairman **Matthew Martin** opened the Governors' meeting on time and to a "full house" which included the aforementioned Americans, the County Archivist, two active duty USAF officers, the 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian, two representatives of Carr Sheppards Crosthwaite (stock brokers to the Governors), the Trust Librarian, the Auditor, Honorary Treasurer **David Neale** of the Friends of the 2nd Air Division, and **Ms. Susie Whitehouser**, 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian Advisor.

Trust Librarian **Derek Hills** reported that the Library welcomes an average of 160 visitors daily. The Norfolk County Council has given £13,000 to our Library for the purchase of new book stock. This is a much-appreciated gift. Derek also reported 4,700 books on shelf, 1,000 in reserve stock (available same day), and 400 at County Hall (odd sizes) available on three-day notice. There is also a total of 500 books in the branch libraries. **Alexis Ciurczak**, our new 2ADA/Fulbright scholar, was a delight to meet and is doing a fine job.

David Neale made a fine report on the activities of the Friends of the 2nd Air Division. Vicki Brooks Warning presented the Trust Chairman with a gift of \$1,500 from The Heritage League.

Chairman Martin announced that **Lord David Owen CH** will be the speaker at the next Biennial Lecture, to take place on November 16, 2005. Lord Owens was Foreign Secretary when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister (1977-1979). His wife is an American who is a Fulbright Commissioner in England.

Lord Lieutenant **Sir Timothy Colman** led a walk-through of his magnificent arboretum. The Governors and members of the 2ADA gave Sir Timothy three American species trees to mark his retirement and in appreciation of his many services to the Memorial Library. Following the walk-through, **Lady Mary Colman** served tea at the Colmans' Bixley Manor. The Colmans are delightful friends, and have done so much for our Memorial Library.

There have been several rearrangements in our Library. The model B-24 has been moved closer to the information desk for better visibility, the Donor Board has been replaced by a beautiful "**Tree of Life**" Donor Board on which each donor's name is inscribed on a leaf. It is really quite stunning. The reading area has been designated the **Bernard Matthews Reading Area**. Mr. Matthews attended the dedication of the area, and was a delight to talk with. The new Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk was also in attendance. The pictures replaced by the "Tree of Life" Donor Board are being rearranged in a gallery to be named in memory of **Ted Kaye**.

Now for the really big news: **MEMORIAL TRUST FUNDS NOW TOTAL \$1,132,774 AND ARE ACCRUING 4.2% INTEREST**. It finally looks like our Memorial Library is sufficiently funded to sustain it *in perpetuity*! What a wonderful achievement, and all

of you can take a bow for having contributed to the successful achievement of this goal.

My visit to England was finished off with a visit to the Fulbright offices in London. Matthew Martin, Geoff Gregory, Bud Koorndyk, and I met with **Dennis Wolf**, the Cultural Attaché and the assistant to the Fulbright Director of the Fulbright Educational Foundation. I will not delve into the outcome of that meeting, but will leave it to our Oversight Chairman, Bud Koorndyk, to report. I will, however, comment that it was a real eye-opener for me to learn how the Fulbright funds are handled. I am glad the Governors are handling our Memorial Trust funds!!

Stay well and happy. I look forward to seeing you in San Antonio in May. ■

THE MEMORIAL TRUST (continued from page 7)

as Foreign Secretary to the UK Government in the mid-1970s. His lecture will be delivered in Norwich on 16 November 2005 and will be on the theme of Anglo-American affairs in the post-war era. Lord Owen's wife is an American and serves as a Fulbright Commissioner in London.



Assisted by Matthew Martin, 2ADA President Geoff Gregory (L) presents a painting of three B-24s flying over Attlebridge (home of the 466th Bomb Group) to Bernard Matthews (R).

At the time of this writing we have yet to receive the bequest from the American attorneys handling the **Ted Kaye** estate. We are already giving some thought to the investment decisions we will have to make during the coming year. However, I do not believe that we will reach the happy state of financial independence with this gift and the other gifts we have been given recently. I do hope, therefore, that members of the 2ADA will feel able to continue supporting us and the Fulbright Foundation in the magnificent way they have done over so many years. I also hope to be able to give a report in *The Journal* in about a year's time on the progress we are making on the Trust's finances.

On a personal note, I will have served as Chairman of the Memorial Trust for two years in April. I never cease to be amazed and humbled by the steadfastness of the support I receive from my fellow Governors and those many people in the 2ADA in the United States. It is a very great honour to serve this remarkable charity and the Memorial Library of which all 2ADA members can feel so justly proud. ■

The Legacy of the 2nd Air Division USAAF and the 2nd Air Division Association

BY A NORFOLKMAN — DAVID J. HASTINGS

As the generation of Norfolk people who knew the 2nd Air Division USAAF during the war are now well past their “three score years and ten,” it is an opportune time to look back and give thanks for the great legacy that the 2nd Air Division USAAF and their Association have left to all of us on both sides of the Atlantic. Here are just sixteen items that we should be thankful for, but I am sure there are many more.

1 Without the arrival of the 8th Air Force and the 2nd Air Division USAAF in 1943 to join us in the fight for freedom, I doubt if we or our families would be here today and living in freedom. Your bravery, sacrifice and friendship are a vital part of our history.

2 Without the 2nd Air Division USAAF being with us in those dark days from 1943 to 1945, we would never have made the wonderful friendships that we enjoy today and which are now being passed on to the next generation. Your arrival was like a bright light at the end of a dark tunnel after we had endured three years of war, from the fall of France, Dunkirk and the threat of invasion, the Battle of Britain and then the Blitz.

3 Without the vision of the 2nd Air Division USAAF in 1945 to leave a “Living Memorial,” we would not have the outstanding 2nd Air Division Memorial Library that we enjoy today — the only one of its kind, and loved and appreciated by people from all parts of the world.

4 Without your Memorial Library I doubt if the 2nd Air Division Association would be as strong as it is today, and many of the friendships made during the war would have faded away. Over the years, several 2ADA members have said that your Memorial was the glue that kept your Association together. Your Library has over the years strengthened the friendships and the links between the United Kingdom and the United States.

5 Without the massive financial support and encouragement from the 2nd Air Division Association over many years, the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library would not be in the very successful and much admired position that it holds today.

6 Without the 2nd Air Division Association there would be no Heritage League, as it was the 2ADA Executive Committee that backed the suggestion from the Memorial Trust to involve the next generation.

7 Without the 2nd Air Division Association there would not have been all those wonderful annual conventions in the USA — you are a truly great family.

8 Without the 2nd Air Division Association there would not have been the conventions in Norwich which have done so much to strengthen the unique ties of friendship made in the war years. Memories that will last forever have been captured on film by the Dzenowagis family for present and future generations to enjoy and relive those amazing and memorable occasions.

9 Without the support of the 2nd Air Division Association, there would not have been the return to Great Britain in 1992 of a B-24 Liberator — a visit which achieved so much for the 2nd Air Division USAAF, the Association, and your Memorial Library.

10 Without the 2nd Air Division Association in 1995, Norwich would not have had the finest 50th Anniversary of VE Day

Parade outside London. We were the only city in the United Kingdom to recreate the original 1945 parade, thanks to all your support and hard work by your Executive Committee. Norwich and Norfolk will never forget the Parade, the Cathedral Service, your Fanfare, and the Theatre Royal show in the evening.

11 Without the 2nd Air Division Association, your Memorial Library would not be the only one in Europe that enjoys a full-time Fulbright Scholar Librarian each year in perpetuity — a gift of untold value.

12 Without the 2nd Air Division Association, there would not be the B-24 Liberator paintings hanging in so many places — on the RAF and USAF bases, at the City Hall, the County Hall, the Forum, Norwich Airport, Wymondham College and the Village Halls, all serving as a constant reminder of what you did and what you have achieved.

13 The 2nd Air Division Association has also supported many other causes: the bronze B-24 at your Air Force Academy, the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum at Savannah, and the mural in the wartime chapel at Wymondham College, to name but a few.

14 Without the 2nd Air Division Memorial in Norwich, there would not be the close links that the airmen and airwomen of today enjoy both with you, the Association, and the Norfolk community. As we have seen at USAF Mildenhall, your armed forces of today now understand why there is such a special friendship in East Anglia — and that is thanks to you, the 2ADA.

15 Without the 2nd Air Division Association and that wonderful Dzenowagis family, we and future generations would not have that amazing and historic video collection telling of your exploits, bravery, sacrifice, memories, and conventions both in the USA and here in the United Kingdom. This collection will continue to enlighten people through the ages.

16 Without the 2nd Air Division Association, we would never have had that truly memorable occasion in 2001 when the new 2nd Air Division USAAF Memorial Library was opened. Despite the terrible events of 9/11 that year, you still came over, undeterred, to see your “Roll of Honor” return home.

Finally, the outstanding vision, generosity, and hard work of the 2nd Air Division Association membership were recognised in 2001 with the award to the Association of the Freedom of the City of Norwich. You are the only non-British organisation to have received our highest honour.

Now in 2005, as we sit in your beautiful Library or stand on the runways of your old bases, we realise even more that we can never thank the 2nd Air Division USAAF enough for joining us in 1943 and for your vision in 1945 to leave a “Living Memorial” to your friends who died and those who survived during that heroic fight for freedom. In the years of peace we must also thank the 2nd Air Division Association members and Executive Committee for carrying on the support for the Memorial and for strengthening still further those unique ties of friendship between our two countries.

Look back on what you have achieved and be proud You deserve to be, as not many other organisations have this outstanding record. ■

KETTERINGHAM HALL DIVISION HQ

BY RAY STRONG

In HQ Newsletter #35, I listed all of the members of the "Pickhandlers and Homing Stations" and said a little about the "Pickhandlers" organization. No one seems to know exactly how it got its name, but everyone is certain that it was on the Queen Elizabeth on the way over. I had only one response to this, from **James T. Coulthard**. Jim seems to remember it also. I quote the following from his letter:

"Got the copy of the sketch that Ludwig Lund made of me. Nothing like a clean-up to get rid of some excess baggage! I don't have any posterity to unload it on — but thanks."

"As to the 'Pickhandlers': On our way over on the Queen Elizabeth (September '42), one of our group became engaged in a scuffle with an outsider. During the episode, Karoly was present and he yelled to our man to 'Hit him with a pickhandle.' That became our by-word."

"The only parties I am aware of were one for our first anniversary at Horsham (I was in OCS in September '43 and did not attend), and the second anniversary in September '44 when I was given the honor of cutting the cake (see photo). I had advanced from private, through the ranks to 1st Lt. thanks to OCS (4 weeks wasted creeping and crawling)."

"Sorry I don't have something more of interest for you for The Journal or Newsletter. I'm 88 going on 89 (September 14), and the memory is getting more vague each day. However, I am sending a little something for the Sugar Bowl!"

In the picture, that is Karoly next to Jim, but I cannot identify any of the others. These parties were known as the "Pickhandlers Ball."



I suggest that you get out Newsletter #35 and review the names on the list. If you can't find it, send me a note and I will send you a copy.

That is about all I have for the Spring issue of *The Journal*. You will probably get Newsletter #36 before you get the Spring *Journal*. ■

METFIELD / NORTH PICKENHAM



491st BOMB GROUP POSTREMUM ET OPTIMUM the RINGMASTER REPORTS

BY HUGH M. BENNETT

On September 11, 1944, I finished my 31st and final mission. Looking back sixty years, I remember that the pilot, copilot, engineer, and I were told we would be transitioned to fly C-47s for supply missions. After waiting around for three weeks, the engineer and I went into the orderly room and talked the captain into a three-day pass. Off to London we went. When we returned, the captain was waiting for us, threatening us with a court martial for being AWOL. It seems that the day we left, orders came through for us to ship out for the States; the C-47 idea had been cancelled. After we produced the passes signed by him, the captain admitted that he hadn't made a record of it and gave orders for us to get out and get packing.

Our next stop was Liverpool and a cruise back to New York on the *Mauretania*. Some of served guard duty for the trip

as we had 350 war brides on board who were on their way to meet and live with their new in-laws until war's end. For the first three days of the trip the weather was so bad that the ship seemed to almost roll over, making almost everyone seasick.

After a 15-day furlough at home, I reported back to Atlantic City for R&R and reassignment. I was put in charge of twelve men with orders and paperwork with the destination of Army Air Base, Laredo, Texas. I had no trouble with anyone, as they knew I had the expense vouchers.

I ended up in a class for instructors, and one thing I remember is, when speaking in front of a group, "talk loud enough so the person sitting in the back row can hear, and he may be hard of hearing."

Laredo had started a gunnery course for officers, and I was assigned to teach them everything connected with the Martin upper turret; it's one time in my life as a T/Sgt. that I outranked the officers in the classroom. After VE Day the classes dropped way down, and the instructors, in their spare time, went to classes on the armament of the B-32 bomber, which was the king-size version of the B-24. I had the opportunity to go through a B-32 when two of them landed in Laredo.

After VJ Day, all training stopped, and we spent the days playing cards until we

were discharged on October 13, 1945.



I'm in full support of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, as it is a monument to all of us who flew out of England in World War II. It is one of the outstanding attractions along Interstate 95 at the intersection of Interstate 80 in Pooler, GA. One thing that everyone in the 2nd Air Division should be behind is the upcoming B-24 exhibit in the combat gallery of the museum. Not enough emphasis has been placed on the B-24 Liberator and the role it played in WWII. The spotlight has always been on the B-17 Flying Fortress, and it's time the B-24 was brought to the attention of the visitors to the museum.

To make this possible, the B-24 exhibit has to be fully funded, to the tune of \$125,000. All donations to the museum are tax-exempt, and yours should be tagged for the B-24 project. Let's all get behind this worthwhile project and make it become a reality.



The 2nd Air Division Association convention is in San Antonio this year, and I hope to see many of my friends there.

May God bless America and watch over our troops in Iraq. ■



**BY ALEXIS CIURCZAK,
2ADA/FULBRIGHT LIBRARIAN**

While writing this, I am reflecting on the whirlwind of activities just completed a few weeks ago for the Remembrance Day celebrations. Nine U.S. veterans and other members of the 2nd Air Division Association came back to Norwich for the Annual Governors' Meeting, and it was indeed a pleasure to meet and have a chance to spend some time with all of them. I'm sure others will be reporting in these pages on the activities, but for me it was a wonderful and moving experience to be on the balcony of Norwich City Hall on November 14th in the crisp morning air, watching the wreath-laying ceremony, which was followed by a beautiful service in the Cathedral.



View of the Marketplace from Norwich City Hall

As for the Memorial Library, things are going at a fast pace. We have unveiled a new donor "Tree of Life," dedicated the reading room to Bernard Matthews and hosted a tea party, gave tours to a number of visiting groups, put up a Thanksgiving display which attracted a large number of children (maybe it was the free jelly beans!), and continued to answer reference questions and assist visitors with their information needs. I have been spending a good deal of time preparing new book orders and have been enjoying adding new titles to the library's collection. We have installed new shelving, and therefore will be able to increase our holdings by another 700 volumes.

I was also fortunate to be the Library's representative at a re-

gional conference, sponsored by the BBC, for the People's War Project, held in Bury St. Edmunds. The Athenaeum, located in that historic town where the Magna Carta was born, was a great venue for the event. The 2nd Air Division Memorial Library received one of the few awards presented, for outstanding achievement by "making a valuable contribution to the People's War Project, by helping to gather and record stories from local communities—ensuring that people's memories are captured for future generations." For more information on the project, check out the web pages at www.bbc.co.uk/ww2.

Looking ahead, I will be continuing outreach with school visits, speaking engagements, participating in other activities, and generally representing the 2AD Memorial Library to the community. Although time does seem to be going by quickly, there is a lot more to do before my 2ADA/Fulbright year is over—so with that I will close, and get back to work! ■



**HETHEL
389th Bomb Group
Green Dragon
Flares**

BY FIELDER NEWTON

As we move along in 2005, we are reminded daily of the unrest around the world and here in America. It is our duty as old warriors to live by example and to strengthen patriotism among younger Americans of all ages. God bless the USA.

Since there was little response to my request for someone to volunteer to plan a stand-alone reunion, I am going ahead with the suggestion that the 389th reunion be held in conjunction with the 2ADA convention in San Antonio, TX, May 26-30. Our reunion will start on Wednesday, May 25 with a private dinner party and an evening of fellowship. We will then have tables reserved for the early bird party on Thursday, May 26 and have our regular 389th banquet on Friday, May 27. Those who do not wish to stay for the remainder of the convention can feel free to check out on Saturday or Sunday. If we have enough members registered, we will have our own hospitality suite for comradeship. As I requested in the previous Newsletter, I need to know your intentions so I can work out the arrangements with Evelyn. It is a difficult task to please everyone, and I thank you for your understanding, consideration, and promptness.

The thought has come forth that there may be interest among our members to have some copies made of the painting of the Green Dragon Pub given to us by **Tony Burton** of Wymondham. If so, I will check on the costs to see if we might use the sale of the copies as a means of making money for our hard-working friends at Hethel. Hope to hear from you on this subject so that I can report the cost information in our Newsletter.

My concerns for the 389th remain strong. May God bless you all. Keep 'em flying. ■

458th BOMB GROUP

HORSHAM ST. FAITH



BY RICK ROKICKI

MEMORIAL/MARKER AT HORSHAM ST. FAITH

I had just completed my original column for this issue of *The Journal* on January 14th, one day before our editor's "deadline." That afternoon, I received a large package in the mail from **Christine Armes**. Going through the many pages of accounting monies — paid in and paid out, I was struck by the many charges we encountered in making the Horsham St. Faith memorial event happen. I say "we," but in reality, Christine did the work on that side of "the pond." Our function was to furnish as much of the financing as we could.

You might remember that the original plan was to place a memorial at the site of the combat crew quarters (*2ADA Journal, Summer 2003, Vol. 42, No. 2*). As it turned out, the site plan would not be publicly viewable except to the 100 or so householders who lived there. The memorial site was changed to the airport once approval by the city council and the airport management was obtained. Up until this time I was advised that we were fully funded. That obviously meant that only the marker (granite from India) plus the planned engraving would be covered by the \$9620 (at that time, the conversion was \$5744).

Christine received a total of 77 checks from our membership. Going back through to our March 2002 roster, we had 566 members then, and the above amount averaged out to \$125 per check. Actually, donations ranged from \$25 to \$750. Six of us have given \$500 or more (Headquarters gave a total of \$650). These donations were made from April 22, 2002 – October 29, 2004, the last date shown as a check deposit. A total of \$1217 was received from various British sources, including RAF veterans.

I picked out some charges from the receipts that Christine copied for me, and tried to come up with the cost of some goods and services. Just adding up the VAT (value added tax) of 17.5%, I came up with \$645 of tax money on our memorial costs. There will be more VAT after the landscaping balance of \$3760 which is still unpaid. A \$1000 down-payment was made on November 8, 2004. Trying to figure out the bank charges on the changing exchange rate (a few days ago it was \$1.81 to the pound sterling) was a little too much for me, although it is somewhere in these receipts. We could have no deferral of the VAT because our memorial is not a recognized charity in England. There is a long list of the goods and services that totals out to \$2755 and cannot be listed here because of space limitations. However, these costs seem justified when the entire event is viewed. Without pursuing the dollar cost further, it remains that nearly \$4000 remains to be paid.

My original notice of the planned memorial was sent to 566 members — the total of our membership in March 2002. In March 2003 we had 524 members; and today, we show 462 members — 104 fewer to help finance the balance. A further check of the original contributors shows that 14 have passed on.

As your group VP, I have asked for your monetary help many times — from the original request in 1980 to buy Memorial Library shelves, requests for donations for the Dayton memorial, and many in between. You've never failed to meet our need as a group. Once again I ask for your generosity, for what is probably our "last hurrah." Please send whatever you can afford, to: Mrs. Christine P. Armes, 5 Primrose Court, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0SF, England.

CORGI B-24 & FIGHTERS

In a recent telephone conversation, Amanda Streeter of Corgi Classics gave me the latest news on the B-24 availability.

Three hundred "unpainted" B-24 Corgi models were made and shipped from the factory. A dock strike and thorough container inspections and other delays have been a problem with getting this cargo to the U.S. An additional 8-10 weeks of water voyage estimates that the arrival of the Corgi models is now expected in March.

Amanda advised that 147 cards have been sent out to those who have ordered the B-24. Since that mailing, an additional 55 cards will be mailed to those who have inquired if the model was still available. Again, if you have any questions on any of the models available at the discount rate to 2ADA members, please refer them to: Amanda Streeter, Corgi Classics, 175 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1770, Chicago, IL 60604; tel. 312-302-9912, fax 312-427-1880.

Corgi Marketing is working with a distributor to handle sales. I'm inclined to believe that if you want any of their models, you should take advantage of the current offer as shown on page 19. ■



446TH BOMB GROUP

FLIXTON-BUNGAY UPDATE

BY LINK VEAZEY

As I begin this column for the Spring issue of *The Journal*, the new year, 2005, has just begun. How exhilarating it is to know that I have been allowed to exist in this wonderful world so much longer than all of my immediate ancestors. I often say, "Why me, Lord?" Memories begin to come alive, of my early childhood; my days in high school; my privilege to have been allowed to serve our great country during World War II and afterward for a total of 32 years. It has been a wonderful life, and I continue to count my blessings each and every day.

My only regret is that many of my dear friends have passed away. Just last week I attended the funeral of one of my high school classmates and teammates to whom I was very close. He was also a veteran of World War II, having landed on Utah Beach on D-Day and survived to tell about it. He was a great friend, much like some of yours, a Great American who served his country honorably. He can no longer audibly converse with me, but I have so many wonderful memories of the times we shared together. Did I mention that, pound for pound, he was one of the best football halfbacks that ever had the opportunity to play the game? What joyful memories he left behind. I shall never forget him.

You also have had friends like this, and if any of them are still living, let me suggest to you that you make an effort this year to let them know just how much they mean to you. Don't wait until it is too late. ■



SEETHING

The 448th Speaks

BY KING SCHULTZ

PICTURES FROM SEETHING



Left: Clearing drainwater ditch of Seething runway, by Waveny Flying Club. Right: The Seething Control Tower Museum with new Nissen hut adjacent.



FOLDED WINGS OF THE 448TH

The following have folded their wings: **Jack C. Barak**, Hobart "Hobe" Chester (radio operator on **John Ray** crew), **Norman Kanwisher** (navigator on **Carl Furnace** crew), **Walter Mishap** (gunner), **Eugene Petagine**, **Col. Elvin M. Sheffield**, **John W. Stanford** (copilot on **Ed Anderson** crew, 713th), **Barney Barnard** (radio operator on **Larry Dunston** crew).

448TH BG REUNION

The 448th Bomb Group's 2005 Reunion will be in Savannah, GA; Sunday, April 17 – Wednesday, April 20. We will be staying at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Bay Street. Highlights of the reunion will include a visit to the Mighty 8th AF Museum, numerous tours, boat trip, banquet, etc.

MESSAGE FROM HOLLAND

*My name is **Ruud Amkreutz** and I live in the Netherlands. I am 24 years old. My interest in WWII is great, and I am very thankful for what the Allies did for our country and for freedom!!*

*I have adopted a grave in the American Cemetery in Margraten to show my respect to the heroes who liberated our country and Europe. The grave is that of **Sgt. Donald R. Kiehn**, 715th Squadron, 448th Bomb Group. Sgt. Kiehn was from Indiana. He was killed in action on March 24, 1945.*

Please can you help me to find out more information about him, such as pictures, his age, his missions, and maybe an address for his family so I can send them a picture of his grave?

*Please send to: **Ruud Amkreutz**, Achter de Hofkens 7, 6265 AB Sint Geertruid, The Netherlands; or e-mail: ruudwar@hotmail.com.*

"BAG OF BOLTS"

The story on page 14 came from **Bob Harper** to **John Rowe** to me.

THE HERITAGE LEAGUE OF 2AD SPEAKS

BY BILLY S. JOHNSON, HERITAGE LEAGUE PRESIDENT

As pledged to the 2ADA membership in the Winter 2004-2005 issue of *The Journal*, the Heritage League of Second Air Division continues to support institutions and museums dedicated to your history. We wish to report the following monetary donations: (1) **Vicki Brooks Warning**, Heritage League Representative to the Board of Governors, hand-delivered \$1,500 to the Board in November 2004. (2) In October 2004, I had the pleasure of delivering \$1,250 to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, specifically designated for the upcoming "Mighty Sam" exhibit. (3) \$500 was contributed to the San Diego B-24 project.

I had the honor of being invited to join the 491st Bomb Group for their Fall 2004 reunion at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah. Sharing this experience with 491st members and their families was especially gratifying. The highlights were many and enjoyable, but the memorial service was a particularly respectful tribute for veterans and their fallen comrades. Thank you to **Jerry Ivice** for a well-organized activity and to **Col. Nelson Leggette (Ret.)** for graciously including me in the festivities.

As promised in the last issue, two more comments from League members follow. **Jennifer DiMola Fernandos**, daughter of **Frank DiMola** (445th Bomb Group), says:

"I attended the November 2001 reunion in Norwich with my husband, my two children, and my parents, Francis and Elizabeth DiMola. It was a memorable occasion for all of us. We've also visited the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, as well as historic WWII sites of the Allied invasion of Normandy in July 2004 for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day celebration. Remembering all of my Dad's stories and finally seeing them filled me with pride! My mother found my father's diary from the war after he died. She reads it every day; we are very grateful to have it but regret not having known about its existence earlier."

From **Steve Risley**, son of **J.A. Risley** (446th Bomb Group):

"My father was copilot on 'Mama's Lil Angel' with the 446th Bomb Group. My wife, 13-year-old son, and I recently attended a memorial dedication in Bungay, United Kingdom. We also visited the nearby air museum . . . really great people. We visited the Norwich Central Library and the American Room exhibits . . . very impressive! Thank you!"



Remember to encourage your young family members to participate in the Heritage League's essay contest. Tell them your stories!

Yes, Dear Veterans, we shall "Keep you flyin'!" ■

How The “Bag of Bolts” Got Its Name

SUBMITTED BY BOB HARPER (448TH)

It was February 21, 1944, and mission #13 for the B-24 serial number 27764 with a yellow 477 painted on its nose. The crew, with pilots **Harvey Broxton** and **Dwight Covell**, was on its seventh mission with the 448th BG out of Seething, England. The target was Hesse airfield near Brunswick, Germany, on which was located a factory complex producing fighters for the Luftwaffe. Maybe this story will put to rest the claims of the B-24's detractors and the “Hollywood Bomber's” media friends that the B-24 could not take heavy damage and punishment.

In the high right element of the 448th, it was at the IP and with bomb bay doors open, that a flak burst under #3 engine put it out of operation. Achieving a partial feathering of the prop, they slowly dropped below and out of formation.

Reaching the target on three engines, bombardier **Sharp** dropped their bombs by “guesstimating” where the main group had released. Results were unobserved, but not the five FW 190s diving on them from 5 o'clock high.

Struggling far behind the group, and unable to close bomb doors completely, the pilots all but “split-essed” toward a cloud cover at about 10,000 feet. Thinking the violent maneuver was the beginning of their final dive, a waist gunner parachuted to the snow-covered landscape below.

The cloud layer offered brief cover, but soon they were out of it, as were the pursuing Focke Wulfs. Next, the #4 engine was “knocked out” as machine gun and cannon shells riddled their B-24. The #4 prop could not be feathered and continued to windmill, causing extra drag and, later, a fire.

The sudden dive had caused the windshield to fog up. As co-pilot Covell opened the side panel for better visibility, a cannon shell entered the open window and exploded in the instrument panel. With most flight instruments gone, the pilots had to rely on needle, ball and airspeed. At about this time, shells smashed into the top turret, soaking flight engineer **Birdsall** with hydraulic fluid, but not injuring him.

Sinking fast, the crew jettisoned everything that was loose to lighten the faltering B-24. Guns, ammunition and even parachutes went overboard as #477 continued to lose altitude while still being laced by cannon and machine gun fire from the relentless FW-190s. A cannon shell ignited hydraulic fluid leaking into the bomb bay from the shattered turret.

Fumes from severed fuel lines would also collect in the back of the bomb bay and explode out the partially open doors with an ominous “whoosh.” Had the bomb bay doors been fully closed, the force of the explosion could have been fatal. Bombardier **Sharp** succeeded, with other crew members, in extinguishing the fire before more fumes could collect. The German fighters withdrew momentarily as if expecting the bomb bay fire to erupt into one huge fireball.

Still the B-24 roared on with two dead engines on one side and two at full power on the other. Cutting through columns of smoke from the chimneys of a Dutch village only a hundred feet below, one last item was jettisoned. It was a G.I. Thermos jug used by crew members when the relief tube froze. Startled Dutch citizens ran for cover as the cylindrical object smashed into their main street. Was this a new weapon or did they make tea that bad?

Tall trees, church steeples, and windmills were becoming dangerous as the five Focke Wulfs were still hammering the B-24 with tail attacks. People below watched the one-sided fight, waving encouragement to the beleaguered B-24 and shaking their fists at the German fighters.

Sometime during these attacks, the remaining waist gunner was critically hit in the back and administered to by other crew members. Having exhausted their ammunition, the German fight-

er pilots pulled alongside the battered B-24 for a closer inspection. How could it continue to fly in such awful condition?

One German pilot drew in close enough to count the twelve bombs painted below the pilot's window. Did he sense that this was their 13th mission? Pilot Broxton said he was so close that he would recognize him if they ever met again. At one time he thought, “*If I hadn't thrown my 45 overboard, I could have hit him this close!*” But then the German smiled and waved, perhaps in admiration of the dogged crew who refused to give up. Low on fuel, the FWs peeled off to return to their base, leaving the crippled B-24 wallowing along above the Dutch countryside.

Skimming so low over the Zuider Zee that their prop wash rippled the nearly frozen waters below, it seemed to fly better. No doubt being in the now known “I” zone was a factor, and the battered bomber even picked up a little precious air speed. But still another obstacle presented itself; the thirty-foot sea wall on the northwestern edge of the reclaimed land looked as high as the Alps!

Coaxing every bit of power from the two straining Pratt and Whitneys, Broxton and Covell “horsed” it over the dike with only inches to spare at the low wing tip. Then another problem! As the bomber mashed over the sea wall, it all but hit a German flak battery relaxing on the other side. Running to their guns, the Germans further peppered the departing Liberator with rapid fire from machine guns and cannon.

Still the B-24 shuddered on, splashing through geysers of water thrown up by salvos of enemy guns, until finally they were out of range. Now confronted with 120 miles of forbidding North Sea, it was a question of how long the two good engines could last, and was there enough fuel for the long haul back to Seething? For what seemed an eternity, the two engines droned on and they struggled to gain altitude. Remembering that British coastal batteries had orders to fire on anything under 500 feet, would they finally be shot down by Allied guns?

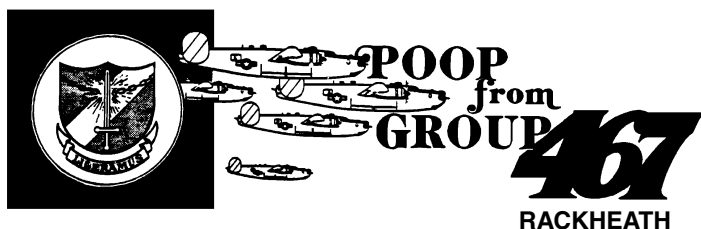
The crew further lightened their plane, and the tired pilot miraculously coaxed the soggy bomber to the required 500 feet just a few miles off the English coast. Navigator **Fauerback** had brought them back directly on course to the main runway at Seething. With no radio they reluctantly flew the pattern as the last squadron of the day's mission was in the process of landing. An unexpected application of power by the flight engineer on a short approach stood the B-24 more on its wing tip. Somehow the pilots managed to jam their cramped legs on the rudder pedals and pull back the throttles as they cleared the threshold for runway 25.

With no brakes, no flaps, and wheels cranked down manually, they slammed onto the runway and swerved into the muddy field alongside, a fire still burning in #4 engine. The critically wounded gunner was removed and the exhausted crew taken to the briefing room. No, 477 would never fly again! Over 400 holes were counted in the riddled skin of the sagging Liberator. One unexploded shell was found in one of the fuel cells. How lucky could the unlucky get? It was also noted that the right rudder cables had been severed. They had flown back with only half the rudder area so badly needed.

Bob Harper, a headquarters staff officer of the 448th Bomb Group, now a commercial artist, has done many paintings of B-24 Liberators, and his prints are quite famous. Following are his comments on his postwar research of the “Bag of Bolts.”

“I found the bombardier, **Claire Sharpe**, living only a couple of blocks from a B-17 bombardier friend of mine in Riverside, California. The wounded gunner, **Robert Hudson**, lived until January 10, 1945. **Donald Birdsall**, the flight engineer, also discovered that the waist gunner, **Henry Kubinski**, is listed as a casualty on

(continued on next page)



BY JACK STEVENS

The following men were members of our B-24 combat crew (October 1943 – September 1944): **Sgt. Benjamin Bertalot** (tail turret gunner, from IL), **Sgt. Walter Bohnenstiehl** (radio operator, from IL), **Sgt. Oscar Cushing** (ball turret gunner, from NH), **Sgt. Donald Good** (waist gunner & armorer, from MI), **Sgt. Louis Marcarelli** (flight engineer, from CT), **Lt. Wilson Rapp** (navigator, from NY), **Lt. Norris Smith** (copilot, from AL), **Lt. John Stevens** (pilot, from MA), **Sgt. Herbert Vaughn** (top turret gunner, from KS), **Lt. William Voss** (bombardier, from NY).

Sgts. Bohnenstiehl and Marcarelli and Lts. Stevens and Voss had been members of the Army's 7th Anti-Sub Squadron (7th ARON), based at Jacksonville, FL, but with its Flight and Maintenance Sections conducting anti-sub operations throughout the Caribbean area from Edinburgh Field, on Trinidad, in the British West Indies (BWI). When the U.S. Navy took over all anti-sub squadrons in the summer of '43, the two Sections returned to Jacksonville, and the 7th ARON was transferred to Mt Home AAB, ID, and disestablished. (Except for its copilots and some flight crew members, the 7th ARON subsequently became a nucleus for the 490th Bomb Group.)

The former copilots and crew members and recent aviation cadets were formed into partial flight crews and received B-24 flight transition training. (Lt. Smith was assigned to our crew as copilot.) These partial crews were then assigned to the 467th Bomb Group, which was about to begin the Combat Crew Training Program at Wendover AAF, UT, about 1 November '43. (Sgts. Bertalot, Cushing, Good, and Vaughn, recent graduates of gunnery and other specialty schools, were assigned to our crew as gunners, flight engineer and armorer.)

The 467th Bomb Group completed its training and received its B-24H aircraft near the end of January '44. Early in February, the combat crews flew their planes to Herrington, KS, for the Preparation for Overseas Movement (POM) checks. (While we were at Herrington, Lt. Rapp was assigned to our crew as navigator.)

After the POM checks, the combat crews flew their planes to Morrison AAB, FL, and then, via Waller Field, on Trinidad, BWI; Belem and Natal, Brazil; Dakar, French West Africa; Marrakech, French Morocco; and Valley, Wales; to Rackheath, its 8th AF operating base, near Norwich in England. Our crew landed at Rackheath on 15 March.

The planes were then flown to an AAF Depot for modifications necessary for participating in 8th AF combat operations in England, including navigation, identification, and communication equipment, "coffin" seats for the pilot and copilot, armor plate on the fuselage, outboard of the pilot and copilot, and a "flak suit" for each crew position. During this period, an 8th AF school of highly qualified individuals familiarized the combat crews with the special equipment, aids, operating conditions, and procedures, and the group flew several practice missions. Except for a natural worry about the unknown, the members of our crew felt that the individual, crew, and group training we had received, plus the 8th AF familiarization program, had readied us for what was to come.

The 467th Bomb Group's first combat mission was to Bourges, France, on 10 April. Our crew flew the second mission, on 11 April, to Oscherleben, Germany. We sighted enemy fighters (but received no attacks) and received flak damage (which sounded like pebbles on a tin roof). Our plane's skin had several flak holes and a control cable was cut. (Emergency repairs to the cable

were made in flight.)

The 467th Bomb Group flew missions as directed and we flew whenever scheduled in the group's rotation sequence. Our crew flew our 13th mission on 24 May and were then assigned to the 15th AF, as part of a HQS USAAF plan to combine experiences of the 8th and 15th Air Forces.

In addition to our memorable first mission, on 11 April, three other missions that our crew flew as part of the 467th stand out in my memory:

(A) On 22 April, instead of the usual early morning takeoff, the group took off at about 16:30 for a mission to Hamm, Germany. We hit the target at about 19:30 (in daylight) and arrived back over England at about 22:30, in darkness. In addition to England's total blackout, all airfield lights remained off because German fighters had followed us back and were attacking our planes and bombing our airfields. Our crew landed at Seething (448th Bomb Group) by the light of a burning B-24, stayed overnight as their guests, and returned to Rackheath the next morning.

(B) On 9 May, en route to our target at Brunswick, Germany, we had repeated fighter attacks on our tail. I could see tracers slanting down, beyond the copilot and above the right wing. Fortunately, those fighters were driven off by the group's defensive gunfire and friendly fighters.

(C) On the 29 April mission to Berlin, our squadron experienced difficulty holding formation for a short time, when we ran into contrails at our altitude. Later, the supercharger electronic control for one of our engines failed, and the engineer and I made a temporary repair that enabled us to maintain manifold pressure on all engines. As we approached the target, we were attacked by a line of fighters from 12 o'clock high and I watched (in admiration) as an FW-190 split-essed in front of us. Sgt. Vaughn (top turret) received credit for assisting in shooting that plane down, and Sgt. Good (left waist) received credit for downing an ME-109.

To be continued in a future Journal. ■

"BAG OF BOLTS" (continued from page 14)

the Roll of Honor in the 2AD Memorial Library in Norwich, and at Cambridge Cemetery. A Dutch family contacted me about ten years ago to tell me they had recovered the body of Henry Kubinski in a river in eastern Holland where 'he had either fallen or jumped from his plane.' They tended his grave for three years before it was removed to a military site.

"The navigator, **Fauerback**, later volunteered to fill in for an ailing navigator on a new crew. They took off late and were never heard from again, but I recently learned that he survived the war as a POW. The pilot, **Harvey Broxton**, was badly injured in an English train collision and was hospitalized in a US General Hospital just west of London for quite awhile. Broxton later returned to Seething and flew the rest of the time as command pilot. After the war, he returned to Alabama and was active in the Alabama Air National Guard.

"**Dwight Covell**, copilot, took over the crew and they flew their remaining missions in another famous Liberator, 'Piccadilly Lilly.' On another rough mission, a flak burst on the flight deck killed **Joe Corziatti**, radio operator. The pilot and copilot were saved by the armor plate on their seat backs. I think Broxton was also on that mission.

"The 'Bag O' Bolts' never did fly again. It was really named by a war correspondent who happened to be on the base the day of their return. Donald Birdsall is a flight engineer for Boeing in Seattle. Claire Sharpe has worked as an accountant all these years in Riverside, California. Dwight Covell is a retired Air Force colonel and lived in Annandale, Virginia. He is now deceased. Broxton still lives in Alabama, and someday I hope to see him again and hear the 'Bag O' Bolts' story once more." ■



492nd BOMB GROUP

HAPPY WARRIOR HAPPENINGS

NORTH PICKENHAM

BY WILLIS H. "BILL" BEASLEY

Editor's Note: I received the following "missive" from Norma: "Bill and I have had a bad respiratory infection, coughing like crazy for the past three weeks. We are taking antibiotics to tough it out. Couldn't get an article done."

I have taken the liberty of repeating Bill's first column as group VP. It appeared in the Winter 1990 Journal. Question: Has his column improved since then?

"MISSIVES FROM THE 492ND"

First let me say that I am pleased to have been chosen to be the new VP of the 492nd Bomb Group, 2nd ADA. In this position, I will do my utmost to serve the 492nd Bomb Group and the 2nd ADA to the best of my ability.

Congratulations are in order to E.W. "Bill" Clarey, former VP of the 492nd who is now the Executive Vice President of the 2nd ADA.

Although this may be late, I would like to add my comments on the 43rd 2nd ADA Reunion in July 1990. It is hard to put into words the overwhelming response from the people of North Pickenham when we arrived on Sunday, 29 July 1990. As soon as we could be gathered together, we went into the Blue Lion Pub for coffee and cookies before attending the church service in the North Pickenham Church. The church was very crowded. After services, we were treated to a lavish assortment of food while one of the young men from the area played 40's music on the organ. Col. and Mrs. Davis (C.O. at Lakenheath) came for the celebration. Following lunch, we proceeded to the site where the old picket post used to stand and had a short memorial service conducted by Canon Green. A memorial was erected by the townspeople in 1987 honoring the 491st and 492nd Bomb Groups, both of whom were stationed at North Pickenham. Billy Johnson, daughter of William Sheely and Lorraine Williford, daughter of Don Pytrulak spoke a few words. Both William Sheely and Don Pytrulak were former members of the 492nd BG and both men are now deceased.

It was sad to go around the base due to its state of disrepair. The Fruehoff people once owned the land and have now sold it; therefore, access was limited to the remaining buildings. Only the turkey huts sitting on the runways are reminders of what

once was there. A couple of the bomb dumps could be seen at a distance. The headquarters building now houses pigs and the adjacent grounds have been turned into a camp for youth during the summer.

Tea time with the villagers was outstanding. We were all treated as celebrities.

I received a letter from Billy Johnson in which she expresses her feelings about the reunion very eloquently. I would like to share a portion of her letter to me.

"The most special memory is of you newly made friends of the 492nd who welcomed me so warmly and took such good care of me during the reunion. I surely look forward to sharing many more memory-making experiences with you all. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for having welcomed me aboard so warmly and sincerely. As I mentioned earlier, I am confident that my dad is in heaven sharing my gratitude to you and the 492nd for having "been there for me."



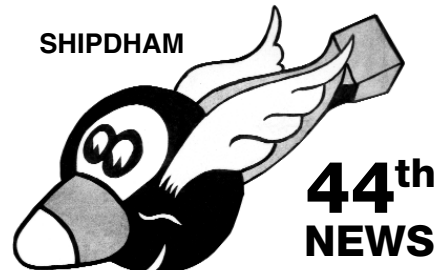
FRENCH LICK, INDIANA — October 10, 11, 12, 1990 — MIDWEST REGIONAL REUNION. It was great to have the following members of the 492nd BG, 2nd ADA attending this reunion: Bill & Norma Beasley, Harold & Mary Both, Jr., Frank & Lois Johnson, Stan & Dorothy Seger (she won a prize at bingo), Elvern & Hazel Seitzinger, Odis Waggoner, Martin Mumaw III, Russell Valleau and Joan Copeland. Brig. Gen. Kenneth E. Keene, Ret. was the M.C. Norma Beasley gave a report on the Heritage League. The Thursday night banquet featured an address by Major Gen. Philip Ardery, Ret. who is the author of the book entitled "Bomber Pilot." The "All American" was at the French Lick Airport and we all got another look at it. It is always a thrill to see that big bird come in for a landing.

Hopefully, all you 492nd BG members have your calendars marked for Dearborn, Michigan for July 3-6, 1991 for the 44th Reunion of the 2nd ADA. Let's have a big showing of 492nd members!

THE HAPPY WARRIOR, newsletter for the 492nd Bomb Group, volume 1, issue 1 was well received. Thanks for all the positive letters. The editor appreciates it!

Happy Holidays to all of you from Norma and me. ■

SHIPDHAM



44th
NEWS

BY GEORGE WASHBURN

The Fall 2004 edition of *8 Ball Tails* contained two subjects of importance to all 44thers: the upcoming 2005 reunion, and the status of the database program. We all owe **Ruth W. Davis-Morse** a huge vote of thanks for producing an excellent publication. As I sit here pondering how to put this brief article together, I can really appreciate the great effort it takes to produce an entire publication.

Regarding the database program: All 44th BGVA members will receive a computer disk after all the biographical information received prior to May 1, 2005 has been entered. By the time you read this, it may be too late to make that deadline. However, you should still submit your biographies, pictures, stories, etc. — they will still be entered into the database even though they will not be on the disk mentioned above. I have the necessary submittal forms, which I will send to anyone who requests them.

The database is a most complete source of information that can provide answers to many questions one might have, such as "who was on the crew on that mission; what other crews were on that mission," etc. December 11, 2004 was the sixtieth "anniversary" of my 35th and last mission. I went into the database and found that my flight engineer, **Vanig Abrahamian**, also completed his tour that day. I gave him a call, and we reminisced about our experiences. Curious as to what other crews flew that day, I found that our president, **Roy Owen**, flew his first mission that day. Another phone call was in order, and we remarked about the many interesting connections that can be revealed by use of this program.

The 2005 reunion being organized by **Paul Kay** promises to be an outstanding one. It will take place over Labor Day weekend in Tacoma, Washington. Some interesting tours are being planned, including the Boeing Assembly Plant and the Boeing Museum of Flight. (It is not likely that there will be a B-24 there!!!) Some members have expressed interest in combining the reunion with an Alaskan cruise. You will have to make your own arrangements for this. Paul has provided a contact number: 1-800-777-0707. Mindy of Alaska Airlines can help you book a trip.

See you all in Tacoma. ■

JIMMY STEWART, BOMBER PILOT

THE FOREWORD BY WALTER CRONKITE



We met—Jimmy Stewart and I—in an atmosphere as far removed from Hollywood's make-believe as it was possible to imagine. It was in Britain during World War II on an American Liberator bomber base. Both of us were there on business. I was a war correspondent. Jimmy was a squadron commander in the 445th Bombardment Group, assigned as were the rest of the Eighth Air Force and the Royal Air Force's entire bomber fleet to bomb Nazi Germany to its knees.

Captain Stewart had been on duty in England for a few weeks before word leaked out that this famous movie star was in such perilous action as flying bombers against the enemy. The word was probably spilled in one of the G.I. bars, perhaps a Red Cross club, by one of Stewart's enlisted men on brief weekend leave in London.

When I applied to visit Stewart's group, Eighth Air Force Headquarters pretended no knowledge that he was in the British Isles, let alone flying combat missions and commanding aircrews.

The denial stories didn't hold up for long—but an instantly imposed ban against any press visits to Stewart's base proved harder to break. We correspondents covering the air war finally broke the ban by appealing to the same modest, unselfish motivation that had caused Stewart to impose the press blackout in the first place. We simply pointed out that the courage under fire, the heroics, and daring exploits of bringing crippled bombers back to base by his combat crews were not making their hometown newspapers as was the case with all the rest of the Eighth Air Force.

I heard later from Stewart's adjutant that he was crushed when he was made to realize how his closed gates had denied the press access to his own aircrews.

But Stewart's modesty remained undaunted. He opened his base to the press, and ordered that he was not available to meet the press or submit to an interview. He yielded just a little bit on this with one or two of us, not to submit to an interview but for an occasional informal chat with a stern warning that his remarks were not for publication.

I have met a few movie stars and I've found most of them in real life not to be so different as themselves in reel life, but of them all, I think Jimmy Stewart was more like those modest heroes he portrayed. The occasional times after the war

when we met at small parties, he seemed to enjoy our short chats and the war was mentioned only when he or I inquired of mutual friends with whom one or the other of us had lost touch.

Now, journalist Starr Smith—former Eighth Air Force intelligence officer who worked with Jimmy Stewart briefing the combat crews for their daring daylight raids on German targets—has raised the curtain in this book on Stewart's gallant service as a bomber pilot and air combat commander in World War II. It's a true story of personal knowledge, keen insight, and told with skill, respect and admiration. ■

JIMMY STEWART, BOMBER PILOT

BY STARR SMITH

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A Daughter's Tribute

BY KELLY STEWART



Photo courtesy of MBI Publishing Company/Zenith Press

The Stewart family in the late 1980s. L-R: Twins Judy & Kelly, Jimmy & his wife Gloria.

My father's experiences during World War II affected him more deeply and permanently than anything else in his life. Yet his children grew up knowing almost nothing about those years. Dad never talked about the war. My siblings and I knew only that he had been a pilot, and that he had won some medals, but that he didn't see himself as a hero. He saw only that he had done his duty.

Starr Smith's book has opened a door for me into this part of my father's life. Mr. Smith conveys with great skill what it meant to fly in the Eighth Air Force during the war; to be Operations Officer of a Bomb Group; what was involved, for example, in the planning and execution of missions. Above all, Mr. Smith, who worked with my father during that time, shows us what he was like as an individual in his role of pilot and leader. I know the war held terrible memories for my father, as it must for anyone who lived through that combat. But he was also deeply proud to have served his country. He would feel honored by this book. ■

Second Air Division Association 58th Annual Convention – May 27-30, 2005

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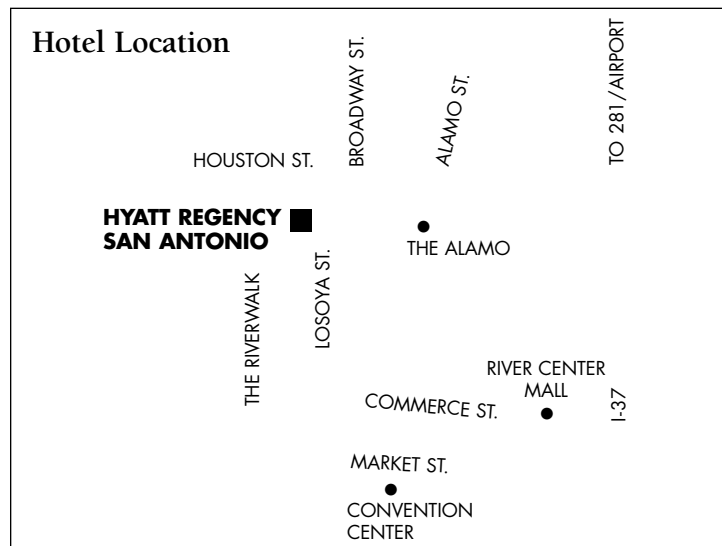
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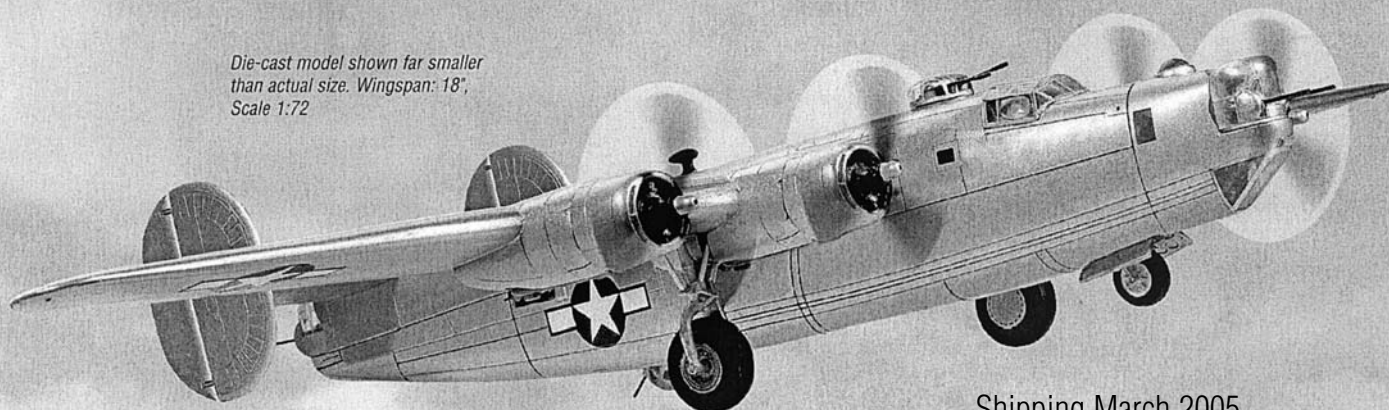
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My Combat Days in the 466th: A Reminiscence

BY ABRAHAM CLIFFORD SMITH (466TH)

Ed. Note: This is Part II of Lt. Smith's wartime reminiscences submitted by his daughter, Karyn Severson. Part I appeared on page 13 of the Winter 2004-2005 Journal, with the following message:

"My father, Abraham Clifford Smith, died on February 16, 2001. I have enclosed a copy of his reminiscences about his experiences, including those as a B-24 pilot. He was a 1st Lieutenant with the 466th Bomb Group, 787th Squadron at Attlebridge. Later he also participated in the Berlin Airlift, and in total he received 65 points for medals alone, including the Distinguished Flying Cross.

"I am more proud than I can say to be the daughter of this remarkable man. I hope you will find the reminiscences interesting. My mother, Rhea Johnson Smith, also was a World War II veteran who served during the war as a Staff Sergeant in the Marine Corps. My father was as proud of her service as he was of his own. My parents are my heroes."



I flew two training flights with the new crew before being available for combat. I do not recall the names of any of the enlisted men on the crew, and don't remember the first names of the officers with the exception of the bombardier, Hal Kren, whom I heard from a short time ago. Hartung was the 1st pilot and Gates the navigator. Kren reminded me that the 1st pilot's name was Niles Wellington Hartung: a dignified name for a "Polak" from Petoskey, Michigan. Keep in mind I started on this crew but did not finish with them.

I have no intention of giving an overall view of combat. My notes may cover details but would not convey the fear and resignation that there is no hope of survival. You try to function until it happens.

Here are a couple of comments on specific missions:

The first mission was a shocker. Four-engine planes always bomb at high altitudes. Even in training, our practice missions were always at over 20,000 feet. On this occasion, we were to open a route from Omaha Beach into France, and were to bomb at 7,000 feet. That was the first and last time we were low enough to see vehicles and people. It was a startling reminder that we dropped bombs not just on targets but on human beings. A few mis-

sions later we had an electrical malfunction — our bombs hung up and released about twenty seconds late, and we put six 500-pound bombs into a twelve-story apartment complex in the city of Rostock, north of Berlin. Not good memories.

Another mission was not a big deal, in a way. Resistance was low because we were hitting an airfield near Bonn. We had fifty-pound bombs hung in clusters like grapes on the bomb racks. At bomb release the front racks cleared properly but the racks in the rear bay had a problem. The lower racks did not release and the upper ones did, piling the bombs up in the bomb bay and blocking the controls. When the rest of the formation turned to return to England, we continued to fly deeper into Germany. After about fifty miles, using trim tabs, we finally got headed back in the right direction, managed to call in fighter cover, and lowered our altitude to where we could work without oxygen. At that point, Kren, the bombardier, and I went back, got safety pins in the fuses, and carried the bombs back to the camera hatch in the rear of the plane to dispose of them. We decided to make a game of it. We would sight with our fingers and call left or right of the flight path, pull the safety pin, throw the bombs out by hand and see who could come closest to farm houses. We were not very accurate and I don't recall who had the best scores, but we got things cleaned up. With the electrical malfunction, we did not dare leave anything loose or still hanging in the bomb racks.

The city of Hamburg was, I think, the most heavily defended city in Germany, and we visited there three times. On our last mission there, Hamburg was the target for the entire 8th Air Force — 2,000 bombers all hitting the same city. We counted nineteen bombers going down at one time as we waited for our turn in the flight pattern so we could go in and drop our bombs. There is no way to express my feelings under those conditions other than to say I was very surprised at having survived.

I may come back to specific missions in random order. Of the 43 missions I flew, I can recall many of them individually but many others merge into a blur. How many I will bore you with I have not decided.

I have had a request to put down the details of the time General De Gaulle and I were in a parade in Lille, France:

Our crew was flying a gas resupply mission, carrying gas for tanks and trucks as they advanced across France. We were landing on a field that had been a German fighter base about three weeks before. The English were operating the field and knew nothing about bombers. We were one of the first planes to land, and when we taxied to the control area they directed us to park on a dirt surface where the German fighters had been parked. We did not think it would work, and it did not. By the time we had turned off the engines and got out of the planes, the wheels of the main landing gear had sunk almost two feet into the ground. We were stuck, and it took them two days to get the planes back on concrete. By choice or not, we were in Lille, so we decided to check out the town that evening.

Several cafés were open during the evening, though food choices were limited. During the early evening, I spotted a shop with a Leica camera in the window and decided I had to make a try at getting it. The next morning I conned the English out of a Jeep, collected all the trade goods I could manage from about five air crews, and went to the city. When I arrived at the shop it was closed, the camera still in the window. I finally found a local French police officer who spoke some English and found out that the owner of the shop lived over the store. No one was at home. I had used up most of the time I could spend on the project, so decided to head back to the base. The route back was down the "Grande Concourse" which by this time must have been populated by every person in the city. I started slipping down one side of the street, being allowed on it I guess because an American officer in the town was a rare item. The area had been liberated by the English and the French police did not know for sure what to do with me. As I drove slowly, trying to fade into the woodwork, some of the crowd spotted me and yelled "Vive la American," so I called back, "Vive la Frances!" Someone called, "La cigarette?" I was carrying a bag loaded with cigarettes, candy bars and what-have-you, so I pulled over, opened a package, and distributed these items to the crowd. At that point, the applause started and I got into the spirit of the occasion, even crossing that wide street to spread a little good will over there. By the time I

got to my turn-off I was really into the spirit. It was well I got there when I did, as the De Gaulle parade was less than half a block away. I did not stick around to see if he got as warm a reception as I did.

I never did get back to Lille. It was decided that the base there could not handle heavy bombers. One note I must add: On the evening before, we had encountered a group of French teenagers. Some of them could not have been more than thirteen. They wanted to know what kind of plane we flew. They knew the "Liberator," the "Lightning," and several other planes by names, not by numbers. "B-24" did not mean a thing to them. They also bragged to us about the number of Boche or German soldiers they had killed, showing us the knives and the wires they used to strangle their victims. They each had a score, a 13-year-old indicating he had killed three men; some of the others five or six. I have often wondered what kind of adults they became. I think I would be afraid of them.

This was the first of eight supply flights we flew. We then went back to bombing missions.

Some of the most horrendous missions I flew were as a combat flight instructor taking new crews into combat for the first time. I encountered pilots who should never have been allowed in an airplane and gunners who went crazy and tried to jump out of the plane the first time they were shot at.

We flew the first day mission for the relief of Bastogne. It was remarkable from the standpoint of anti-aircraft fire. We were flying into a 130 mile per hour headwind, reducing our airspeed to about 100 miles an hour. We were under fire for 32 minutes — the longest time ever recorded by the 8th Air Force. Four hundred and twenty-five holes in our plane showed that they were fairly accurate.

The resulting crash-landing without injuries to the crew netted a DFC and a week of R&R (rest and recuperation) at a lodge adjoining a lake near Salisbury in East Anglia. This was only my second try at sailing. We had a sailboat — about a 22-footer — at our disposal, and it was a lot of fun. While sailing around the lake, we tied a fishing line to the aft sail spar and forgot about it. One of us finally noticed that the line wasn't trailing the boat, but running alongside. When we pulled it in, we had caught a 30-inch northern pike with the wildest set of teeth I ever saw. We were all bare-footed and in swimming trunks, and none of us had nerve enough to get close enough to even throw it back, so we stayed out of its way, let it lay, and had it for dinner that night. What an English cook can do to a perfectly good fish to create a

disaster lingers. They normally boil everything, and when they get away from a cooking pot they are lost. As I recall, she even wanted to boil the fish.

A situation that I have never heard discussed came up around this time. The base was "stood down" from bombing missions and we were informed that we and our planes were being prepared to drop poison gas. The base was secured, with no one allowed to leave. A convoy moved in, and the bomb bays of the planes were loaded with gas bombs and sealed. We were issued special flight gear and masks. Several other pilots and I went to the base commander and told him we would refuse to fly poison gas. We were told that our conversation would not be made a matter of record unless actual fight orders came down from Wing. If at that time we still refused to fly, an immediate court martial would be convened and we would be broken to privates and sent immediately to an advanced infantry unit at the front without basic training. It sounded like a death sentence. At the end of eleven days everything was cancelled, the bombs removed and the planes steam-cleaned. With great relief, we turned in the special flight equipment and started breathing normally again. We were told that intelligence reports indicated the Germans were ready to use poison gas on London, Paris, and front-line troops. They apparently decided they had more to lose than to gain, and we had no need for more information than that. Mail from our base was severely censored for the next month (I had to act as one of the censors).

Let's talk for a minute about planes. When we started out, we had inherited a plane from another crew that had titled it the "Feudin' Wagon." We liked the name and kept it. Have I mentioned that Gates was an artist? He had been a professor of art at the University of Iowa under Grant Wood. He also had done some commercial

advertising art, and was very good. In retaining the name, we decided to use Al Capp characters, so Gates added an eight-foot-long and very voluptuous "Daisy Mae" reclining on the nose of the plane. I selected Moonbeam McSwine to decorate my flight jacket (that I never flew in). The plane was damaged in a crash landing not too much later and the three other planes that followed were bright aluminum and no more artwork was done on them.

We had a custom at our base that no matter what the day had been like or how long or rough the mission, you were expected to shower, shave, and change into a uniform with shirt and tie. It sounds like a strange way to fight a war, but I found I liked the idea. It brought a little sanity back in our lives when mental stability was so badly needed.

I was so convinced that there was no way to live through a complete tour of duty that I would not read a magazine article that was "to be continued," for example. There was no way I would ask for anything to be sent to me from home, like a camera for instance, because I figured I probably would not be around to receive it. It was not until I boarded a super liberty ship at Liverpool and started back to the States that I changed my mind.

After 43 missions I was informed that I could go home, and if I could get checked off the base, I could leave that day. I made a mad dash and got the job done, but I wish I had had more time. I left four paintings on the wall of the room, one of them a portrait of myself. I simply forgot them in the rush. I left a pile of clothes and other items that I decided did not warrant the hassle of packing. Gates also had painted a six-foot brunette nude on the wall of the room, so lifelike that it gave everyone who came in the room a shock. I would have liked to have been around to watch the reactions of the next occupants. ■

This Will Make You Feel Good!

A college student confronted a senior citizen, saying it was impossible for the older man to understand him and his generation. "Old timer," he said, "you grew up in a different generation. Today we have television, jet planes, space travel, nuclear energy, computers . . ."

As the young man paused, the oldster broke in,

"You're absolutely right, young fellow. My generation had none of those things when we were young . . . so we invented them. What are *you* doing for the *next* generation?"

ATTLEBRIDGE TALES



BY JIM LORENZ

MAIL CALL

One of our members recently suggested that a reminder about the Presidential Memorial Certificate program would be appreciated.

This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy to honor the memory of honorably discharged, deceased veterans and has been continued

by all subsequent Presidents, under Section 12, Title 38 of the United States Code. The Veterans Affairs administers the program; eligible recipients include the next-of-kin and other relatives or friends.

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a Presidential Memorial Certificate in person or through the mail to any VA Regional Office or by writing a letter (no application form is required!) to: Director, Memorial Programs Service (403A3), National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20420. Applicants should provide a copy of any document (like the discharge papers, awards, transfer papers, etc.) which would help establish honorable military service. Your local VA regional office can also help you file.

THE FUTURE?

At our last annual meeting, May 27, 2004, at the 2ADA annual convention, we had only thirteen 466th members attend. It is a fact that we are all aging, and many of our organizations are considering just going out of business. With declining atten-

dance at the 2ADA conventions, I would expect that the 2005 meeting in Houston may well be their last one. Our 466th BGA has announced that the next meeting, May 19-23, 2005, will be their last formal meeting. We have under 200 members now; most of these pay dues to get the great *Journal* issues. Your officers will be formulating proposed plans — in concert with the 466th BGA group — to be presented at the 2005 meeting. Meanwhile, send me an e-mail or letter on your thoughts on what activities we should continue — like wreaths for our memorials, meeting with the Heritage League?, continue a newspaper, trips to Norwich, etc. My new e-mail address is jameshlorenz@aol.com.

2005 MEETINGS

The 466th BGA is meeting May 19-23, 2005 at the Red Lion, San Diego, CA.

The 2ADA convention is May 26-29, 2005 at the Hyatt, San Antonio, TX. The Heritage League of 2AD will meet there at the same time.

The 8th AFHS will be in Arlington, VA, September 27 – October 2, 2005. ■

HALESWORTH 489TH NOTES BY MEL PONTILLO

Greetings. It seems to me that the years go by faster as time goes on, and I now regard each additional year as a bonus. I was hoping to make it to 2000, and surprisingly it is already 2005. As we all have come to experience, time moves on. I hope that 2005 is a happy, healthy, and prosperous year for each of you.

At Christmas I received a rather interesting and relevant gift from my kids. They gave me a series of books — the subject matter, what else, the B-24 Liberator and the 8th Air Force. Many of the books are antiques that are out of print, but they were still available on the Internet. I didn't realize that the Net has such an abundance of information regarding the B-24!

During our annual family Christmas get-together, many of the family members were looking through the books after dinner. Someone at the table asked, of my 35 missions, which was the roughest? My spontaneous answer to this has always been, "They are all rough." But I would like to share with you two vivid recollections

that came to mind.

I reviewed my combat diary of sixty years ago for accurate detail. Combat missions #10 and #13 are definitely the two. I really do not know which of the two outranks the other, but I do know that they were both scary.

Combat mission #10 was on August 1, 1944. **Capt. Claude Allen** was assigned as our new pilot. This was his first combat mission. (Previously, we were the original crew assigned to **Bud Chamberlain**, who was reassigned to lead pilot.). Our target was gas and oil storage tanks located at Rouen, France. The flight was delayed due to bad weather over the target area. When we finally made it to the target, the weather cleared and visibility was perfect. The target was smashed and burning. Our bomb load was twenty 250 lb. G.P. bombs and two 500 lb. incendiaries. Total bomb load was 6,000 pounds.

Then the problems began. Although the flak was only moderate, it was very accurate. Our #1 engine was shot out over the target. Our right landing gear would not stay up due to bad lock. Our interphone system went out, and a number of other mechanical problems occurred. As we struggled to get back to England with only three engines, as we neared our field our #4 engine started cutting out. Then the #3 engine was throwing oil like a spout. We were losing altitude too quickly to reach our field, so our pilot went for the nearest level spot. Luckily, a landing strip was straight in front of us. The landing gears

were actuated, but the nose wheel would not go down. The plane couldn't go back up, so our pilot skidded the plane's tail on the runway. He held the plane skidding as long as possible, then nosed the plane over. Our B-24 finally stopped about ten feet off the end of the runway. All the while the plane was going down fast and skidded on the runway. **S/Sgt. C.W. Kidd** and I were in the nose compartment trying to get the nose wheel down manually. We were doing this for only a few minutes, but it felt like an eternity. The nose wheel failed to operate hydraulically or manually.

No one was injured. The plane was damaged, but not very badly. (The ground crews repaired the plane and it was put back into flying status in a few weeks.) This was a long day and a sensational ride. The crash landing occurred about ten miles from our base at Halesworth. (We finally got to Halesworth by truck at about midnight.) Our new pilot, under adverse conditions did a remarkable job on his first combat mission. This was one that I will never forget. (Flying time: 5 hrs., 5 min.)

Combat mission #13 was on August 11, 1944. Our target was Saarbrücken, Germany. Problems occurred before we were even on the plane. A truck with standing room only, taking crew members to their assigned planes, tipped over on its side while making a sharp turn. Crew members were tossed in all directions. There were some injuries. From our crew, the armorer/gunner, **S/Sgt. Arthur Langsdorf** and I

(continued on page 24)



WENDLING 392nd BY OAK MACKEY

The 58th Annual Convention of the 2nd Air Division Association will be held in San Antonio, Texas, May 27-30, 2005. There is always a wonderful turnout of 392nd folk at all 2ADA conventions, and we always have a wonderful time. Perhaps you have not attended a convention for a while. Maybe you were stationed near San Antonio during WWII. This is an opportunity to see the Alamo and downtown again, and a chance to greet old friends from the 392nd BG. Myself, I was at Aviation Cadet Pre-Flight School there, and I have fond memories. The Army was trying to teach us to become officers and gentlemen, so they wanted us to live like gentlemen. I recall the daily maid service in the barracks. We had clean linens for the beds each day, and the bathrooms, floors, and windows were kept squeaky clean for us. The chefs at the mess halls prepared gourmet foods served up by the cutest waitresses, all under 25 years of age. There were classes to attend, but they were not mandatory. Military drill and calisthenics were options for those who enjoyed such things. Sufficient exercise was provided by at least one round of golf each week. These are some of the things I recall about pre-flight school. Is my memory playing tricks on me?

Okay, back to the convention. Send your money in to Evelyn — you can't take it with you, can you? Come on down to San Antonio for some fun and relaxation!

HISTORY OF THE B-24

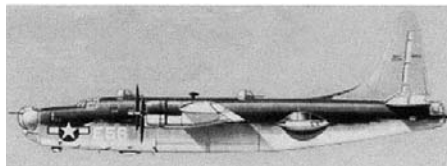
The Consolidated B-24 was our airplane at the 392nd BG. Where did it come from?

In the spring of 1938, Consolidated was approached by the Army with idea of Consolidated Aircraft Company becoming a second manufacturer of the Boeing B-17. Personnel from the San Diego plant went to Boeing's factories in Seattle to study the idea. Consolidated decided against manufacturing the B-17; instead they proposed designing and building a better four-engine bomber. Negotiations with the Army produced a contract to build such a bomber on March 30, 1939. Work on the XB-24 proceeded immediately, and the first flight was on December 29, 1939, one day under deadline. The Army had ordered thirty-eight B-24As even before the maiden flight of the XB-24, but only nine were built before they were converted to B-24C. These nine plus twenty more B-24Cs were sent to Britain in March of 1941, where they were

called LB-30s. LB was short for Liberator British, and the U.S. Army chose the Liberator name for its B-24s. In all, over five hundred B-24s went to the British, who used them as coastal and submarine patrols and a few were converted to transport versions, such as Winston Churchill's private airplane. The LB-30 designation was dropped when the B-24D was introduced. The Brits called the B-24D "the Liberator Mark I"; later B-24 models were designated Mark II to Mark IX.



CONSOLIDATED PB4Y-2 PRIVATEER



After the B-24A came one XB-24B, the first to be fitted with turbo-charged engines, self-sealing fuel tanks, and other innovations. The B-24C was equipped with Pratt & Whitney R-1830-41 engines with exhaust-driven turbo-superchargers. Armament was two power-driven turrets, one in the tail, the other atop the fuselage, each with twin .50 caliber machine guns, one .50 caliber nose gun, plus .50 caliber guns at each waist window. In the famous B-24D, the engines became Pratt & Whitney R-1830-43s. Two guns were added in the nose and a tunnel gun was provided. The "D" was produced at Consolidated in San Diego and Fort Worth, Ford at Willow Run, and Douglas in Tulsa. The Ploesti mission of August 1, 1943 was flown by B-24Ds. The earlier 8th Air Force bomb groups were equipped with "D"s. The B-24E and B-24F were slightly modified B-24Ds. The B-24G was the first with a powered nose turret with two .50 caliber machine guns. Not many were built, because Consolidated at Fort Worth soon started production of the B-24H with a Serry bomb sight and auto-pilot. The 392nd BG arrived in England as of August 1, 1943 with new B-24Hs, the first group with the nose turrets. Production of B-24Js was by now in progress at North American Aircraft Co. in Dallas, Ford at Willow Run, Douglas in Tulsa, and Consolidated in San Diego and Fort Worth. The main difference between the "H" and the "J" was the Norden bomb sight and the Honeywell C-1 auto-pilot. There were a total of 6,678 B-24Js produced, more than any other model.

The B-24L was similar to the "J" but with two manually operated .50 caliber guns in the tail. It went into production in the fall of 1944. The B-24M, which also went into production in late 1944, was the same as the "L" but equipped with a new Motor Products two-gun powered tail turret. The XB-24K was an experimental model with single vertical stabilizer and rudder. It went into production as the B-24N. Only seven were produced when the war ended.

There were two cargo versions of the B-24: the C-87 and the C-109. The first seventy-three C-87s were built by converting B-24Ds by removing all armament and bombing equipment, installing a floor through the bomb bay and into the waist, installing windows in the sides of the fuselage, and installing 25 seats. All this work was done at Consolidated Fort Worth, where an additional 214 C-87s were built from scratch. Most of the C-87s were sent to the Air Transport Command, where some were flown by pilots from American, TWA, and United Airlines, mainly across Atlantic and Pacific routes. Some were assigned to fly supplies to China over the "Hump" from India. The British converted some LB-30s to transport versions which were very similar to the C-87. The C-109 was a fuel tanker designed to carry gasoline from India to China for the B-29s flying missions from there to Japan. All were converted B-24Js and B-24Ls; bombing equipment and armament was removed; sheet metal covered spaces left from removing gun turrets. Eight fuel tanks were installed, with a capacity of 2900 gallons. Early plans were that all B-29 missions would have to be flown from China and as many as 2,000 C-109s might be needed to supply the gasoline. This plan was essentially canceled when B-29 operations moved to the Marianas and fuel could be hauled in with big tanker ships. There were a total of 218 C-109s built.

The first U.S. Navy unit to fly Consolidated PB4Y-1s was VB-101 in September of 1942 from NAS Barber Point in Hawaii. All models of the B-24 were designated as PB4Y-1 except the PB4Y-2 Privateer specifically designed for the Navy. The PB4Y-2 was seven feet longer than the standard B-24. The engines were Pratt & Whitney R-1830-94 of 1350 HP each, and the exhaust-driven superchargers were removed. Armament included twin .50 caliber machine guns in a nose turret, two turrets on top of the fuselage, tail turret, and "blister" turrets at each of the waist window locations for a total of twelve guns. The Navy used these airplanes primarily for anti-submarine patrols in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, usually at low altitudes.

If you should desire even more information about the B-24, go to your Internet
(continued on page 28)



NEWS OF THE 453RD FROM FLAME LEAP

BY LLOYD W. PRANG

A story regarding "The Peter Principle" was recently published in *The World War II Round Table Newsletter* which is edited by **Earl Zimmerman** of the 389th BG. I thought you might find it interesting.

In 1969, **Lawrence J. Peter** wrote his book propounding the great truth that in business, government, education, and the military, people are routinely promoted to the highest level of incompetence. For example, if you're a good salesman, they promote you to sales manager. If you're good at that, they make you a vice president. If you're worthless at being vice president, they don't promote you anymore and leave you in a job you have proved you cannot do. That explains, of course, why nothing works anymore — "The Peter Principle."

Well, now Peter is out with a new treatment of his great work, showing that his principle had been in operation for many years before he discovered it. He recalls that in the War of 1812 an American general named William Winder led his troops into battle against the British in Canada. He had the British outnumbered four-to-one, but he managed to lose the battle and get himself captured. The British quickly realized that a general so incompetent would do them more good on the other side, so they handed him back. Here the Peter Principle functioned perfectly. Winder was put in command of defending Washington, D.C. against British attack. This was still the same William Henry Winder. The British moved on Washington, set fire to the White House and other public buildings and moved on, and Winder didn't notice anything until he smelled smoke.



Robert E. Johnson (16169 North 158 Ave., Surprise, AZ 85374, 623-546-3410 / 623-546-5418, e-mail Robersabel@aol.com) is retired military but not WWII. He wrote an e-mail to me about an article in his local newspaper regarding veterans, which I thought might be of interest. He wrote:

"I met an 83-year-old gentleman last year and was interested when the veteran shared his military past with me. He described when as a pilot of a B-24 bomber, he was forced to crash-land his aircraft in June 1944, and was taken prisoner by the Nazis. He was forced to march from one prison camp to another during the early part of 1945, and contracted frostbite in all four extremities. I asked him

if he had been awarded the Purple Heart, and his reply was NO! I was familiar with the Army Regulations 600-45 dated 1943, 1944, and Public Law 104-106 dated February 10, 1996 that was the initial recognition for former POWs who were wounded while in captivity or while being taken captive. I assisted the gentleman with the paperwork to process the award for the medal. The package was backed by a five-page letter from a former JAG colonel, USA Retired, which confirmed my interpretation of the two AR's and the Public Law. The decision is pending.

"Since this experience, the deeper I dig into the research of this subject, the more American WWII veterans I find who experienced frostbite and who are being deprived of what is deservedly theirs. I resent the lack of attention for these veterans. It took the U.S. Government 51 years to finally recognize these POWs who were wounded. I believe the system needs someone with enough authority to finally make the decision to award these men the honor they deserve."

I was aware that **Abe Wilen**, navigator on the **Dick Witton** crew, had a similar experience when he was shot down on May 8, 1944, so I asked Abe about this Purple Heart situation. He said he had received the medal for this injury. Abe has recently written of his experience to **Steve Evans**. The letter will appear in the "Mail" section of our 453rd Newsletter. Steve was asking if anyone knew of what his uncle, **George Evans**, navigator on the **Fred Parker** crew, had experienced after they were shot down in June 1944. This is another of those situations where George refused to talk about what he had encountered before he passed away. His wife is critically ill at the present time. For years she has been wondering about what happened to George way back then. Thanks to Abe Wilen, now she knows.



While visiting the 453rd website recently, I found a request for information from **Mike Traweek**. When I responded with the information, he wrote back with his thanks and mentioned that he has a website which is a Tribute to Veterans. I went there and it's pretty good. For those of you with computers, the web address is www.costoffreedom.org.



Finally, I received a dandy Christmas card from the crew at Station 144, Norfolk, England: **Paul Layzell**, **Pat Ramm**, and **Nik Coleman**. The card had a picture of a PT-17 proudly bearing the tail colors of the 453rd Bomb Group, over Old Buckenham in 2004. I sent it to **Jeane & Wilbur Stites**, editors of the 453rd Newsletter, for inclusion therein. ■

489TH NOTES (cont. from page 22)

were on this truck when it turned over. We both got out uninjured (except for a little bump on my leg). We made it to our aircraft and finally took off.

Our route took us over the North Sea, where the auto-pilot hung up and threw the plane into an unexpected partial spin. We were preparing to bail out when our pilot finally pulled it out. Going on to the target, we went through Holland near Antwerp and south to Brussels and on to France near the German border. At the target, we had plenty of heavy and accurate flak. A piece of flak came through the right window soon after we dropped our bombs. It hit our right waist gunner, C.W. Kidd, on his steel flak helmet near his forehead and knocked him down, but other than scaring him almost to death, it didn't injure him. Finally he got up and took a few steps towards me. I was the other waist gunner. He pointed to his forehead and asked if there was any blood. My reply was no (no blood). Then he showed me his helmet, which had a big, visible dent where the piece of flak had almost penetrated through. His helmet may have saved his life or a possible serious injury.

We made two runs on the target. Part of our oxygen system was shot out. We had to double up on the remaining supply of oxygen. Jerry really had our number that day.

We landed safely back at our base. Before we left the plane in its parking area, we stopped counting after we counted thirty flak holes in our plane. I didn't see any planes go down on this mission, but one crew in our barracks was shot up so badly that they had to go to Switzerland, where they made a safe landing.

This mission was the second time we hit the marshalling yard at Saarbrücken. We took the same route we had taken on our 5th mission. Bomb load was twelve 500 lb. G.P. TNT. Flying time: 6 hours, 50 minutes.



I wish you all a nice spring and summer, and hope to see you at the 2ADA convention in San Antonio at the end of May. ■

Russian Excursion – World War II Style

BY DAVID PATTERSON AS TOLD BY HIS 445TH BG CREW MEMBERS • REPRINTED FROM THE 2ADA JOURNAL

CHAPTER ONE

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

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

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

Meanwhile, at the separate briefing held for the navigators, **Ken Branson**, our navigator, was given the map coordinates (latitude and longitude) of several newly-captured landing strips in Poland for emergency use. No maps were available, however, past the Berlin area.

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

It was a beautiful, clear day over England and the Continent — a real rarity! This made forming up and departing toward Germany a piece of cake — a nicely organized, by-the-book bomber stream, moving out from England, through the “American Highway” over Holland, and onward. Flak was light; there were no enemy fighters nearby; and we had a beautiful P-51 escort as we penetrated deeper and deeper into



Russian Air Force officers, visiting a USAAF base in England in 1945 to observe an American bomb group in action, note the I.D. band on an American crewman's sleeve prior to takeoff of 8th AF B-24 bombers for targets near the Russian lines.

Germany.

Then, a call on the intercom from Ken to pilot **Claud Palmer**: “Claud, according to my map, our section of the bomber stream is drifting off course to the left, and Hanover is dead ahead, a few minutes away!”

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

Of the four bursts nearest us (the ground gunners were aiming more carefully now!), Dick Nason, who had the “best seat in the house” (as they blew right outside his window) says in retrospect that the real close one, that rocked the ship violently and filled it full of smoke, must have been a partial dud, because on previous missions he had seen complete destruction to other ships subjected to bursts no closer than this one. It appears that by this late date in the war, neither the Nazi gunners or their ammo were first-class, for which in retrospect we give thanks!

Now, we instantly became very busy. Claud issued the orders: First, anyone hurt? Answers came back: all OK. Next, check for damage. **Bob Honeycutt** (tail gunner) called in: half the upper left rudder was missing. Charlie spotted smoke from all

engines; #1 was worst, with what looked like a gas leak, in addition to black smoke. Ken said he was OK, but his map table had been shattered by a burst. (Fortunately at that moment he happened to be looking out the window.) Lots of holes all up and down the plane made for a very cold, windy interior for everyone. But the plane continued to fly; the engines continued to function, and we held our altitude and remained in the bomber stream.

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

About then, #1 engine decided to quit. The other engines were vibrating and smoking, and showing definite signs of discouragement. Charlie made a fuel check and estimate; Ken plotted our ETA to England. From these data, Claud suggested to all of us that we’d never make it out of Germany this way, and we would be fair game for some Luftwaffe hotshot to earn himself an Iron Cross; how did we feel about turning around and heading for Russia?

We all replied yes: it was clearly the only answer. Not only were we too short on fuel, and also would be a sitting duck — but because of the condition this plane

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RUSSIAN EXCURSION *(continued from page 25)*

was in, the thing might fall apart at any time. So, fifteen minutes toward home from Zossen, we made a 180 and took up a heading toward Poland. "Dave, call the fighters and get some cover." **Dave Patterson**, copilot, got on the fighter channel and got an instant reply that they would be right over. Of course, we never saw them. Later it dawned on us that Zossen was as deep as they could go with their fuel limitation; they couldn't follow us toward Poland. But they were wise enough to fake it, and tell the world (including the Nazis) that we were being covered. Our "Little Brothers" did the best thing they could do to help us — bless 'em!

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

As we circled down, we saw fighters taking off from the dirt field we were aimed at. At lower altitude they joined us, first by making threatening passes by us (they were Russian Yaks, complete with red star insignia), then by flying level with us, looking us over. Claud told everyone to leave their guns in the down position and "don't make any threatening moves!!" Charlie got out the red flares (Red-Russia was his reasoning!) and shot them off in a constant stream until he ran out of them. Everyone donned chutes and opened the hatches, ready to jump if the Yaks started shooting us down (rumor had it that this sometimes happened).

The land in this part of Poland was flat farm land with scattered farm dwellings dotting the landscape. The earth was dry and there was no snow or standing water on the ground. The field we picked was a few miles from the front lines. It was obviously a farm field converted to flying use: dirt strip down the middle; a couple of buildings on one side; a couple of parked

planes. According to the data we had, the strip was 1400' long. As the three engines were still operating even though at much-reduced power, we chose to make a wheels-down landing, with both pilots peering out the side cockpit windows for visual guidance, as our quick let-down had iced up the windshield. With emergency brakes (we lost our regular brakes with the damage to the #3 engine) and lots of prayer, we slid to a stop with the nose just touching the ditch at the far end. I asked Claud recently how he figured he could get a B-24 into a field as short as 1400'. His reply: "To tell you the truth, I never thought about lengths of runways in those days. I always assumed they were all long enough to land on and take off of, because that's what the Army AF told me!"

As we slid to a stop, we were surrounded by a group of Russian soldiers, uniformed in rather ragged attire, but with very shiny, businesslike, unragged-looking rifles and sub-machine guns held at the ready. Claud stuck his head out of the top hatch, pointed to his U.S. Flag arm band, and shouted as convincingly as he could: "Ya Americanets!" as per the instructions on the arm band. Then we all slowly climbed out of the plane, displaying our arm bands and trying to look friendly and like Allies, not enemy. The Russians showed no signs of recognition, but held us at gunpoint (we found out later that this field had been in German hands only a few days before; that these Russians were front line troops who had never seen Americans before, and were of course very suspicious). The Russians produced from their ranks a young officer who supposedly spoke English. This attempt failed to establish communications, because, to his embarrassment, when put on the spot to talk, it was obvious that his English (what there was of it) was learned poorly in school. "Hello," "Goodbye," — that was about the extent of his speaking vocabulary. (Looking back on my school days with foreign language classes, I can now sympathize with him, because we never got practical learning in those days in the spoken language either. He, like I, could probably conjugate verbs, and spell or count to ten like a pro — but talk in everyday language — no way!)

Finally a higher-ranking Russian officer showed up, took a look at our armband verbage, understood the Russian message, and in very broken English, with the help of our Russian "student," asked us our unit, home base, mission, etc. By now, we too were on our guard, so name, rank, and serial number was our only answer. Our hosts didn't like that limitation one bit, but we saw the opportunity now to use the language barrier to our advantage, and double-

talked our way around and around, feigning confusion and "no understand." After ten minutes of this frustrating interrogation, they gave up on this tack. Next, they wanted to know who were the officers and who were enlisted men. We had heard that the Russians had a big class distinction between the two — treating enlisted personnel poorly in their own ranks — so here again we used the double-talk and "no understand" to convey that we were all the same — all officers. When it got sticky, Claud became "Captain" to show some chain of authority. Again, they finally gave up and accepted our position. (As soon as we could, we shared the gold bars and/or officer hats so that we all had a semblance of uniform rank.)

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

In the "hospital" we met the hospital staff that were to take care of us: the Russian doctor, and his nurse. (Funny, 33 years later as I write this, all the crew members I have contacted for this story remember vividly the nurse and the nurse's name, "Tanya" — but none of us can recall the Doc's name!) Tanya, a short, stocky girl, was about as broad as she was tall. She was very friendly and cheery, and had a big gold tooth which glistened when she smiled. But *was* she stocky and strong! Dick Nason recalls, "I weighed 180 at the time. One time, kidding me, she walked over and picked me up like I was a feather! She could have picked up the whole building with no strain!" Anyhow, she and the "Doc" were the complete hospital staff, and

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Ed. Note: In the summer of 1944 John White was a 448th BG airplane commander whose crew by June 22 had put thirteen missions of their mandatory number behind them. One of the dreads of any crew seasoned in combat was to be assigned an aircraft with a "jinx" reputation. The B-24 in this story was one such machine, and the following account by John displays how she lived up to that reputation.

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

We had an experience these last two days [June 22-24, 1944] that I shall never forget to my dying day. It was extremely interesting and terrifying at the same time. We were briefed for an afternoon raid on one of the airfields south of Paris, and the ship we were assigned to fly was #758, one of the "jinx" ships on the field [Seething]. Today a couple of the boys remarked how glad they were that we got rid of it!

There was a good deal of flak at the target, but we managed to drop the bombs OK after having a great deal of trouble with the #1 and #4 superchargers. I don't think we received many hits at all over Paris from the flak. About five minutes after we left the target we really hit it; we flew over some batteries and they opened up with perfect tracking fire. The fellows in the crew later said they counted 10-12 bursts that hit right under us. We could hear them very plainly and feel them rocking the ship.

I knew right away that we must have suffered some severe battle damage, so I called the boys to look her over. In the waist and tail they reported holes all over the thing, while Paladino said the engines were hit. Bush said the tail looked like a sieve and that a piece had hit him on the foot. Part of the interphone was shot out and we had what Vic said amounted to about fifty holes in the bomb bay. He also told me that gas was leaking in there, so I had him open the doors, and when I looked around, I just about fainted — gas was just pouring from the wing-tanks into the bomb bay and waist. About this time our control cables broke and I had to set up the A-5 to fly the aircraft. The servo-units in the tail had been hit as well, so the A-5 wasn't working very well. Dick knew we were in deep trouble, so he gave me a heading to the beachhead, our original intentions being to land there on an ALG. However, fire broke out in #1 and we had very poor control of the ship, so I decided it was time to leave it. It was just a question of whether we should bail out over enemy territory or wait and take a chance on making the beachhead. There was not any question in mind that she was going to blow. Looms gave me a position, so I called some P-47s who came over and

Goodbye, Jinx Ship!

BY JOHN WHITE (448TH)
(Written in 1944)

Reprinted from the 2ADA Journal,
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gave us excellent cover all through the experience. I called all the boys in turrets out of their positions and told the entire crew to stand by to bail out. Bob was flying and working his head off to keep the plane on an even keel. Everybody was anxious to leave, but I was amazed at how calm they were — our training had obviously stood us in good stead.

All this time gas was pouring out, so Vic took a big piece of cloth, walked out onto the catwalk and tried to plug the hole. We were at 21,000 feet, and despite this, he went out there without gloves or oxygen! He froze his hands, which did not do him any good whatsoever. It took a lot of guts to do that, and I am going to recommend him for a decoration for that. We started losing height and were just about to bail out, when more "Ack Ack" opened up on us. We found out later that it was British, but at the time thought it might be Jerries so we went on a little further. Only when we were sure we were over our own lines did I tell the boys to leave. Dick said he would let me know when the last man left the ship and then he would go; he duly did so and jumped, and then I told Bob to go. We shook hands and I witnessed his safe departure. Just before I jumped, I headed the ship out to sea and then I pulled the A-5 release, thinking that the ship would nose down and hit in the Channel. However, it blew up a few minutes after I jumped, and struck the ground about 200 yards from where some 9th Air Force engineers were cutting out a landing strip for their fighters. (The next day, a medical Captain took us around to the spot, and the ship was really a mess; all we saw were really small pieces. We could not identify wings, engines, fuselage, or anything.)

I delayed my jump for a few seconds — possibly as long as a minute — and found the sensation of falling was very pleasant. I tried to control my body, but it was quite hard. When I finally pulled the ripcord, the chute opened with a severe jolt and the first thing I remember is looking up and seeing the canopy. A few seconds later I noticed that I still had the ripcord, and I was very surprised at that. I remember thinking how I would razz the boys who

dropped theirs.

Another thing that surprised me was how clearly my mind functioned through the ordeal. It seemed to work perfectly, with absolutely no excitement or fear; it must be the training that does it. After the chute opened, it seemed as if I would never reach the ground. The only way I knew I was falling was the fact that I had to keep clearing my ears. I also noticed that it was very quiet all the way down. In fact, it was the most intense lack of noise that I had ever experienced, and was very pleasant and delightful.

As I neared the ground, I heard rifle and machine gun fire and later on I found out it was directed at me and the crew! I hit the ground with a severe jolt while facing the wrong direction; my head contacted the ground and I was knocked out cold. In fact, I hit so hard that I can still feel the effects two days later. I haven't any idea how long I was out, but when I woke up I was bleeding and was surrounded by American soldiers. I do remember that my first words were, "Thank God you're Yanks." We hit within four miles of the front line, and I was afraid the Jerries would get me. The fellows who picked me up were from an artillery outfit, and it so happened that some of them were at Camp Shelby at the same time I was two years before. They sent me up to a clearing unit of the Medical Corps, and there I met Bob and Bush. Bob said he had counted ten chutes, which was a tremendous load off my mind. I had heard a few minutes before that one of the officers had sprained his ankle, and I'm pretty sure now that it was Looms. We've tried to find out where he was taken, but so far without success. Everybody treated us wonderfully. When Bob and I met, there was a news-reel cameraman there to take our picture, and I can assure everybody that the smiles on our faces were genuine.

The medics were from the 104th Medic Bn attached to the 29th Division, and acted as a clearing unit while operating near the front line. The Division had seen fighting since D-Day, and these boys had been through hell. The Bn is commanded by Lt. Col. Arthur N. Erickson. They treated us as if we were kings; they have the highest respect for the boys in the Air Forces.

Of course everybody wanted to hear our story, and we had hundreds of questions to ask them in turn. They were in a good position to give us a clear picture of the fighting, and seemed awfully eager to tell it to us. They've treated a lot of Germans, Poles, Czechs, Russians, and even Japs! I was surprised by the fact that the Germans have so many other nationalities fighting for them. They told the Russian boys that Russia had surrendered, and the way they made them fight was to stand

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BY CLARENCE A. LUHMANN

I received correspondence from **Baldwin Avery**, living in Fort Myers, Florida, wanting a listing of members of the 445th so he could see if any are living near him. I sent him a list. I also received word from **Joel Gibson**, grandson of **Henry Gibson**, that his grandfather passed away on September 17, 2004. Henry Gibson flew as tail gunner on 17 missions with the 445th. He was later recalled (4-16-51 to 9-6-52) as flight engineer on a C-46 cargo plane with 345 Troop Carrier Squadron, Memphis, TN.

The next 2ADA convention will be in San Antonio, Texas, May 26-29. Hope to have a good attendance of the 445th BG.

MESSAGE FROM BILL DEWEY, KMMA PRESIDENT

On October 9, 2004 in Kansas City, the **Kassel Mission Memorial Association (KMMA)** officially turned over all activities to the **Kassel Mission Historical Society (KMHS)**, which immediately adopted the goals and purposes of KMMA. The IRS will allow KMMA to roll over the few hundred dollars left in its account to KMHS. **Marilyn & Bill Dewey** are presently filing the application for 501-c (3) nonprofit status with the IRS so that donations will be tax deductible.

Our first major goal will be to find a good place to archive members' photographs, letters, and documents as well as other Kassel Mission and 445th paraphernalia. **George Collar** and others are leaving behind incredible material, and finding a safe spot where it can be accessed securely is imperative. KMHS is currently investigating archival possibilities at several locations, including colleges and universities, the 2AD Memorial Library, the 8th AF Museum at Savannah and the AF Museum at Dayton. When the time comes, *please send your materials to be copied and/or archived to* **Doug Collar**, who will safeguard them for future research and exhibits. Mail to: Doug Collar, 322 Sycamore, Tiffin, OH 44883.

The first issue of the new KMHS Newsletter will be hot off the press this summer.

Jim Bertram has graciously accepted the position of newsletter editor, with **Aaron Elson** (author) and **Jenafer Bauerle** (Bill Dewey's granddaughter) as staff writers. *Please send your stories about the Kassel Mission as well as life in the 445th and afterwards (including reunions and other relevant events) to Jim.* Stories and pictures from the Kansas City reunion attendees are especially appreciated. Mail to: KMHS, P.O. Box 439, Glen Arbor, MI 49636, or e-mail to kmhs@kasselmission.com.

A trip back to Tibenham and Germany, possibly in August 2005, is under consideration. If you are interested in joining us for this potential trip, please contact us at the above address.

Aaron Elson has graciously turned over the Kassel Mission website (kasselmission.com) to KMHS. **Todd Bauerle** (Bill Dewey's grandson) will serve as webmaster. Watch as articles from past newsletters, *The Kassel Mission Reports*, recent news, and new links to other Kassel Mission sites show up. Todd is even looking into making the website "interactive," where interested viewers can post messages back and forth to each other about the Kassel Mission and the 445th BG.

MORE KASSEL MISSION NEWS

Frank Bertram, his son **Jim**, and Jim's son **JP** represented the 445th in Germany on September 27, 2004 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Kassel Mission. A quintet of USAF band members played taps and the National Anthems. German TV and radio conducted interviews with Frank Bertram, who did a great job, reports attendee **Guenther Lemke**. Over five hundred people attended, including top officials of nearby Ludwigsau and, of course, **Walter Hassenpflug**, the man who started it all. A German fighter pilot, **Gerhardt Kott**, who flew against the 445th, was there. About a hundred people attended the reception after the ceremony at Ludwigsau City Hall. **Richard Walker**, a British writer currently writing a book about the Kassel Mission, was at both events.

Paul Swofford recently visited the government archives at College Park, Maryland, and pulled up all the documents on the Kassel Mission. Lo and behold, he found the two missing names from our Participants List. From the Kassel Mission crew manifests printed by the Group: on his crew, bombardier **Og Mandino** was replaced by S/Sgt. **Marvin Deshazer**; and on the **Heitz** crew, S/Sgt. **E.J. Atkinson** replaced **Homer Harrison**. Swofford also secured copies of the original debriefings of the crews that returned to Tibenham, and has sent copies to KMHS for archiving.

On October 9 in Kansas City, the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion featured

the Kassel Mission at an afternoon seminar. The night before, the 445th gathered for dinner, then viewed the new **Dzenowagis** 80-minute film, *Pride of the Nation: Remembering the Kassel Mission*. After a break, **Mark Copeland** honored the nine attending surviving Kassel Mission veterans with a solemn ceremony. Also participating were **Rowe Bowen**, who led the ten 445th planes that returned to Kassel on 28 September; the sister of **Major McCoy**, **Erlynn Jensen**; and **Doug Collar**, son of George. Saturday afternoon's seminar followed another showing of *Pride of the Nation*, with all nine survivors at a long table in front, each giving their account of the battle. How wonderful to have the Mighty Eighth again recognize and honor the Kassel Mission, due in large part to the efforts of KMMA and Walter Hassenpflug.

Seventy-two people from the 445th, counting veterans and family members (some second- and even third-generation!) attended the reunion. In addition were three Dzenowagis family members (Mr. and Mrs. Joe Sr., and Joe Jr.), who registered with the 467th group that Joe Sr. flew with, authors Aaron Elson and Richard Walker, and Mark Copeland. Those six spent all their time with us; that makes 78. Add to that the members of other groups that participated in the Kassel Mission and we had quite a showing. **Dede Knox** got the 445th in the spotlight at breakfast each morning with singing.

We regret to report that **George Collar** passed away in March 2004. George was a dedicated Kassel Mission historian who left behind an amazing legacy of letters, documents, and photographs. ■

392ND BG (continued from page 23) home page. Type "Consolidated B-24" in the search box, click "search," and you will get more information than you ever wanted to know. You can do the same for info on any airplane, from the Piper Cub to the B2 Bomber.

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

Last October, **John Conrad** came to Phoenix to visit his daughter, Annette. Maxine and I met them for lunch in Scottsdale at a restaurant called The Cheese Cake Factory, and a good time was had by all. As you all know, John is a former 2ADA president and one of the few who served consecutive terms. He assured me he will be in San Antonio.

Pilot write-up in aircraft log book: "Left main landing gear tire tread worn; almost needs changing." Crew chief sign-off in log book: "Almost changed left main gear tire."

Be kind to each other. See you in San Antone! ■

NAZIS KILL 491ST BG CREWMEN

REPRINTED FROM "BRIEFING," FALL 1987

The Liberator was named "Wham! Bam! Thank You, Ma'am." It was from the 491st Bomb Group. On 24 August 1944, 8th Air Force Bomber Command attacked many targets in Germany. As "Wham! Bam!" dropped its bombs on an airfield north of Hanover, the aircraft was hit by flak and dropped out of formation.

This was the beginning of what was to be one of the most gruesome, nightmare-like incidents to befall a bomber crew in WWII, as reported in a 20-page lead article in *After the Battle*, published in England.

As the crippled B-24, #42-110107, neared the ground near Greven, some ninety miles southwest of Hanover, the pilot, 2nd Lt. Norman J. Rogers, Jr. gave the order to bail out. First to jump was Sgt. William A. Dumont, ball turret gunner, who injured his ankle on landing. Next was Sgt. Thomas D. Williams, radioman; followed by William M. Adams, nose gunner, who was wounded in the arm; Sgt. Sidney E. Brown, tail gunner; Flight Officer Haigus Tufenkjian, navigator; Sgt. Wilmore J. Austin, waist gunner; and Staff Sgt. Forrest M. Brininstool, engineer, who had a flak wound to his stomach. Last out were 2nd Lt. John N. Sekul, copilot, and Lt. Rogers.

All the crew were taken from Greven to a railway station where they traveled to a Luftwaffe airfield where they were interrogated by German officers. "They treated us decently and asked about our wounds," a crewman related.

Adams and the engineer were taken to a field hospital where Brininstool was operated on to remove a piece of shrapnel from his stomach, after which he was taken to a hospital in Munster. Adams returned to the others.

Next morning the crew was taken by train to Dulag Luft aircrew interrogation center at Oberursel, north of Frankfurt. On the 26th, the train arrived at Russelsheim, fifteen miles southwest of Frankfurt. Here the RAF had hit the town with over 400 Lancasters to knock out the Opel factory, which killed 179 of the residents.

The deaths "did not auger well for the American crewmen who arrived in the aftermath of the attack. The mood in Russelsheim that morning was ugly, and tempers against the 'terror-fliers' were running high," the article relates.

The article describes what followed:

As the railway line was blocked, the eight Americans, escorted by their three

Luftwaffe guards, dismounted from the train... For a while it seems that the guards were unsure of what to do next... for the senior man left the group and they never saw him again... The other two guards... then started to move the group off the station and across the Bahnhofplatz on the northern side of the tracks. Sgt. Dumont with his injured ankle was having difficulty in walking and was being helped along by the other crewmen.

...The American airmen soon attracted a hostile audience which very quickly grew to a crowd of 'between 250 and 300 people.' It still appeared that the two Luftwaffe guards had no idea of where they were supposed to be going, and when people began throwing stones, they made no attempt to intervene or to try to take the party back to the station.

Reaching Frankfurter Strasse, someone in the crowd threw a piece of iron, hitting Lt. Rogers on the head. This appeared to be the sign for a free-for-all to begin, and a hail of missiles began to bombard the men. As they proceeded east along the road, they passed the Park Hotel where three women came out of their shop shouting to those in the crowd to kill the airmen. The women joined in the general tumult and, as the Americans stumbled along, they were subjected to a continual rain of blows from bricks, broomsticks, shovels, or whatever came easily to hand.

...Sgt. Brown later described how "we were attempting to help Dumont, who had a broken ankle, along as best we could in the crowd, but as we moved on he soon fell to the ground; he was the first to fall, and the people pounced on him and beat him to death right there in the street."

The article goes on to describe the vicious, continual beating the crew received. After they were beaten to the ground they received additional poundings, then the crowd began to disperse.

A wagon was then used to pick up the bodies of the crew, with Brown and copilot Sekul still alive but pretending to be dead.

Brown testified later, "I saw some person, whom I can't describe, with a club in his hand, come over to the wagon — apparently to finish us off. Sekul's hand was on my shoulder and I could feel him wince as this person beat him on the head. I felt his hand slide from my shoulder as he died. Thomas Williams was also next to me, and I heard him make a sound as he

was finished off. I thought that all of the crew had been killed by this time. I could see that the flight officer had his brains beaten out and the pilot, Rogers, had his head beaten in on one side..."

The so-called "death march at Russelsheim" became one of the first war crimes to be investigated after the war. Those townspeople who could be identified with the incident were either hung or jailed. ■

GOODBYE, JINX SHIP!

(continued from page 27)

over them with a gun and make them. The Bn has had a great deal of trouble with snipers all through the campaign: I guess the Japs have been teaching them this.

The next day, one of the Captains took us on a tour of the beachhead, and it was a tremendously impressive sight. I could never hope to put into words what we saw. How the boys landed is, to me, a miracle. We saw the flooded fields, hills with tremendous pill-boxes and tunnels catacombed all through them. The Captain said they were a mile deep. We saw boats sunk on the beach, and graves of men killed on the landings. We saw landing strips literally hewn out of the woods, roads being cut where there had been nothing but trees and rocks. To see how completely organized the entire operation seemed to be, it gave one a feeling of absolute confidence in our Army, for a change.

In contrast we saw the beautiful French countryside with its large hedges along every road and highway and large herds of dairy cattle grazing in the fields as if there was no war. The expression on the French people's faces as we drove by seemed that of a liberated population. Overall it was an impressive sight, one which I will never forget.

We took a C-47 back to England, and there was an NBC broadcaster at the field. When he found out who we were, he had us talk over the radio a bit. It seems everybody on the beach had seen us bail out, and in fact one person made a broadcast of it as we left the ship; this had been heard back at Seething.

This, very crudely put, but expressing the facts of the story, is what will probably be my most unforgettable experience. ■



HARDWICK

Open Letter to the 93rd

BY JOHN L. LEE, JR.

Last October, my wife and I traveled to New York to board the fabulous new Queen Mary II. Our exciting day began with an uneventful plane ride to New York's LaGuardia Airport. My relaxed state of mind soon turned into concern that we would miss the sailing. It was Columbus Day, and the parade was about to begin. What should have been a routine thirty-minute ride turned into a harrowing trip across town. Every street the driver wanted to turn into was blocked by a police barricade. At last we reached the port and boarded with time to spare. Actually, we had loads of time to spare. The ship was supposed to sail at 5 p.m., but did not leave the dock until 9. As we sailed smoothly out into New York Harbor, Betty and I joined all the others on deck to marvel at the Statue of Liberty. She was a glorious sight. It brought to mind the time I had sailed out of New York on the original Queen Mary. What a contrast between the two. This new ship is one of the best I have been on, after more than twenty cruises.

Our voyage was smooth sailing after the first day, and activities made the time seem to fly. As we sailed eastward, we had to set the clock ahead one hour each night. As you can imagine, this caused some very sleepy mornings. But there was so much to do, we did not want to sleep in and miss anything! The entertainment and lectures were first-class. We attended lectures daily, visited the Planetarium, had tea, ate and danced the night away. Too soon it seemed we landed in England. There we spent five days touring castles including the Tower of London, seeing the famed crown jewels, and hearing the legendary stories of the kings and queens as told by the colorful Queen's Guards. Two highlights of our visit were a tour of Churchill's underground war rooms and the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. London is a thriving city with much to do and see. The double-decker buses are still in use as "Hop On Hop Off" City Tours, and we found it a great way to get around. We spend half a day at Harrods for tea and window-shopping. Quite a store.

After the hustle and fun of London, it was on to Norwich. We took a train up and enjoyed the trip. Seeing the countryside and relaxing, leaving the driving to someone else, was a smart and easy way to get there. Our hotel was near enough to the new and modern Forum that we could walk down to visit the 2AD Memorial Library. There we were warmly greeted by **Alexis**

Ciureczak, who had just begun her new tour there as the 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian. We spent time looking at the Roll of Honor and memorial books. We saw the watercolor paintings by T/Sgt. **Ludwig Lund** reflecting life of ground personnel who supported the Liberator bombers as well as scenes of Norwich. At the time of our visit, work was being done to make way for a Memorial Tree and new shelving to make use of some of the wonderful endowments that the Library had recently received. Even with all that going on, we saw several people using the computers that were available and other visitors coming and going in that section.

We enjoyed lunch with **Matthew Martin**, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust, on the second floor of the Forum. He described how the fire that had destroyed the old library had led to the rebuilding and to the expansion of this new and modern building. It is remarkable to see how well it is used. It is not only a library, but a meeting place for all. Mr. Martin urged us to visit the Cathedral in the city if our time permitted, which we did the next day.

Following our lunch, **Paul Thrower** (historian and curator of the 93rd BG Museum) took us out to Hardwick to visit that museum. He has assembled artifacts from A to Z. He says they are still unearthing some things in the fields there. We went down to where some of the buildings still stand. Much of it was a vague memory for me, but I do remember that we rode bicycles all around and that the hedgerow was high; and the weather was cold, but the tea was hot and good. We bought a wonderful print of a B-24 flying over the old control tower which was just as I remembered it. The museum at Hardwick has a website which can be viewed by going to www.93rd-bg-museum.org.uk.

For those of you who are planning to go with the 93rd to England in May, we wish you a wonderful trip. I am sure you will be warmly received and you will find it a very rewarding experience. We highly recommended that you visit the Norwich Cathedral. As I said, we spent half a day there and it was not nearly enough. On the day we were there, graduations were taking place and all areas were filled with excited young graduates. We were welcomed at the entrance by a guard (gatekeeper), who explained the best way for us to explore. It truly is a beautiful place

of worship, and certainly worth any hours that you find free to visit.

If we can be of any help or answer any questions, please call or e-mail JLee1922@aol.com). **Paul Steichen** is organizing the trip for the 93rd and can be reached at paulsteichen@comcast.net. This will be the 60th anniversary of VE Day. It is hard to believe it has been that long.

To those of you who have not sent in a story of your memories of World War II, we would certainly appreciate hearing from you. It would make my column much more interesting. ■

RUSSIAN EXCURSION *(continued from page 26)*

we never saw more than two or three wounded Russians under care in the hospital during the time we were there. In fact, medical attention seemed to take a back seat to conviviality. The doctor sang songs while he worked; Tanya, who was also the unit dentist, scurried about doing her chores, and we were accepted as friends — but always with suspicion, and we were always under surveillance. We were allowed to talk around the building and outside area within limits, but an armed guard was always somewhere nearby, watching over us.

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

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

Chapter 2 will be in the next Journal. ■

Ball Turret Removal – A Command Decision

HEADQUARTERS 2D BOMBARDMENT DIVISION AAF 147 APO 558 21 MAY 1944

SUBJECT: Removal of Lower Ball Turret in B-24 Aircraft

TO : Commanding General, Eighth Air Force, AAF Station 101, APO 634

1. Operational experience in B-24 aircraft in this Division has increased the belief that under present combat conditions, the benefit derived from the Sperry ball turret may not be commensurate with the weight and parasite drag involved in this installation. Many of the group commanders wish to have the opportunity of removing this turret in at least some of the aircraft in each formation to improve the performance and the ability to maintain tactical formation with improved altitude performance, gas consumption, engine performance, etc.
2. This Headquarters concurs with this belief and is of the definite opinion that increased overall efficiency in operations may be achieved through the removal of the ball turret.
3. Some of the facts pertinent to the decision to remove the ball turret are submitted:
 - a. An estimate of the weight eliminated and of the effect of the C.G. on B-24H and B-24J aircraft is as follows:

	<u>WEIGHT (LBS)</u>	<u>C.G. LOCATION % M.A.C.</u>
TYPICAL TAKE-OFF CONDITIONS		
(Combat crew, 6,000 lbs bombs, 6,000 rounds ammunition and 2,700 gallons fuel)		
With Ball Turret	65,445	32.3
Without Ball Turret	63,945	28.9
Weight saved	1,500	

TYPICAL LANDING CONDITIONS		
(Navigator and bombardier on flight deck, tail gunner at waist position, 6,000 rounds ammunition and 500 gallons fuel)		
With Ball Turret	46,245	29.7
Without Ball Turret	44,745	24.9
Weight saved	1,500	

Note: The ammunition expended has not been considered in the above calculations, because of its variable aspect. It is assumed, however, that this will not materially affect C.G. since uniform expenditure throughout the ship may be assumed.

- b. A statistical analysis of the combat activity of the defensive armament in this Division is as follows:

(1.) 6 MONTHS – NOVEMBER 1943 - APRIL 1944

GUN POSITION	TOTAL ENCS.	% OF TOTAL ENCS.	DESTROYED		PROB. DEST.		DAMAGED		NO. CLAIM	
			NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
NOSE	164	16.0	72	15.1	18	18.0	25	15.6	49	17.2
TOP TURRET	177	17.2	75	15.6	20	20.0	31	19.4	51	18.0
BALL TURRET	53	5.1	30	6.3	3	3.0	7	4.4	13	4.6
LEFT WAIST	158	15.6	85	17.8	13	13.0	24	15.0	36	12.7
RIGHT WAIST	158	15.6	66	13.8	19	19.0	24	15.0	49	17.2
TAIL TURRET	312	30.5	150	31.4	27	27.0	49	30.6	86	30.3
TOTAL	1022	100.0	478	100.0	100	100.0	160	100.0	284	100.0

(2.) MONTH OF APRIL 1944

GUN POSITION	TOTAL ENCS.	% OF TOTAL ENCS.	DESTROYED		PROB. DEST.		DAMAGED		NO. CLAIM	
			NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
NOSE	74	20.5	31	19.0	8	25.0	9	15.8	26	23.8
TOP TURRET	75	20.7	32	19.6	8	25.0	13	22.8	22	20.2
BALL TURRET	13	3.7	5	3.1	1	3.0	2	3.5	5	4.6
LEFT WAIST	53	14.6	30	18.4	3	9.4	9	15.8	11	10.1
RIGHT WAIST	48	13.3	19	11.7	3	9.4	9	15.8	17	15.6
TAIL TURRET	98	27.2	46	28.2	9	28.2	15	26.3	28	25.7
TOTAL	361	100.0	163	100.0	32	100.0	57	100.0	109	100.0

(continued on next page)

WARTIME ADVERTISING

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BUICK WILL BUILD THEM*

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Out of the West they have come, an army of flying men in a vast armada of planes, bent on a mission of liberation.

Conquered peoples have heard the drone of their engines, and looked up in new hope.

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It is a fitting thing that one of our mightiest weapons in this war armada is a bomber named the Liberator.

And it is a proud though sobering task to build the engines from which such planes get their power.

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of these engines have come from Buick plants, enough to power 12,500 bombers, whose battle song of liberation is heard over every American battle front.

But we know, here at Buick, that our task is not to be measured in terms of numbers so much as by the way our work lives up to the expectations of American flyers.

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And good we intend to keep it till the battle song of the Liberators is heard in triumph around the world.

SPECIAL NOTE: to families, friends and Liberator crew members — Buick will be glad to furnish you, without cost, a full color report of the adventures available for making at home. Address: BUICK MOTOR DIV., MOP, PLANT 2, MICHIGAN.

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BUY MORE WAR BONDS

BALL TURRET REMOVAL (continued from page 31)

4. Removal of the ball turret will require that the well be covered both at the skin and in the interior of the aircraft.
5. A preliminary survey to determine the extent to which the group commanders wish to remove the ball turret reveals that of the fourteen (14) groups in this Division,
 - a. Five (5) wish to remove all ball turrets,
 - b. Two (2) wish to remove ball turrets in some of their aircraft (36 in one group and 13 in another), and
 - c. Seven (7) do not wish to remove any ball turrets at this time but may desire to do so at a later date.
6. In accordance with the above, it is requested that permission be granted to this Headquarters to remove Sperry ball turrets in any B-24 aircraft as may be determined from time to time by policy set by this Headquarters.
7. If the request in paragraph 6 above is granted, it is further suggested that the following corollary policies be adopted:
 - a. Inasmuch as it is possible that it may become necessary to replace ball turrets in aircraft upon relatively short notice, it is suggested that the policy of storage be adopted which will require the storage of ball turrets on stations to the number necessary to equip all aircraft on each station. When the attrition rate of aircraft operates to the point where surpluses begin to appear, it is suggested that such surpluses of ball turrets be returned to Strategic Air Depots for storage by elements of the Air Service Command.
 - b. It is suggested that no request be made on the Zone of Interior for the elimination of the ball turret until such time as the surplus storage in Air Service Command indicates that any aircraft dispatched to this theater minus the ball turret may be adequately provided for by the storage in the Theater.
 - c. As it is not feasible to determine in advance the group to which any individual replacement aircraft is to be assigned, and as the production line methods of modification as practiced in the base depots is relatively inflexible, it is suggested that the removal of the ball turret should not be considered as part of the modification program to be performed at the base depots. The ball turret may be removed from any replacement ships without loss of time during the period of the acceptance check of any aircraft on the station.

For the Commanding General

GEORGE L. PAUL
MAJOR — AGD.
Adjutant General

~ Norwich Summer School ~ 18-22 July 2005

Two World Wars and the so-called Cold War brought U.S. military establishments to East Anglia, most notably during the 1942-1945 period when the region was the base of the largest air striking force ever committed to battle. Almost half a million American servicemen passed through East Anglia during World War II, most of them connected with the air campaign. The airfields required for this entailed the largest civil program ever undertaken in the UK.

This summer, the University of East Anglia in Norwich will be conducting a course directed by Roger Freeman, a member of the Board of Governors of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust and a leading authority on the history of U.S. air forces in the United Kingdom. Mr. Freeman lectures and conducts symposia on this subject in both the UK and the USA. Most of his sixty-plus published books are concerned with Second World War subjects. He has also worked in TV and films.

This five-day course, entitled "East Anglia and the 20th Century American Presence," reviews the American presence and purpose in the two wars: the strategic bombing campaign pursued by the U.S. 8th Air Force; the impact of the G.I. on the indigenous population; and the NATO commitment during the last half of the century to the present time. The course will combine illustrated lectures with visits to sites of specific interest within East Anglia, including the Imperial War Museum at Duxford and the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich.

The course will be held July 18-22, 2005. The fee is £850 (day rate available on request). Fee includes: accommodation in single-study bedrooms with en-suite facilities; all tuition and course materials; transportation that is part of the course; certificate on completion of the course; and access to the University library and health and welfare facilities.

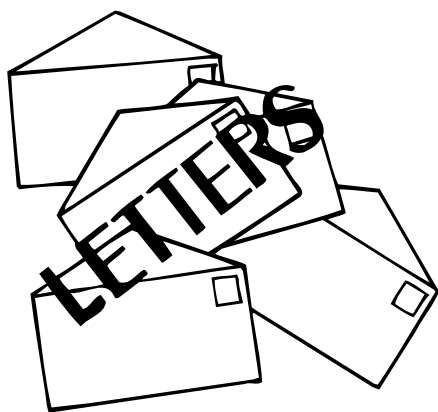
Complete the on-line application form at www.odg.uea.ac.uk/summer/ or contact: The Training Office, Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, U.K., tel. +44 1603 592340; fax +44 1603 591170; e-mail: odg.train@uea.ac.uk. ■

NOW YOU KNOW...

Why do we call a common soldier a "private"?

Because in the early days in England, the men who entered government service in any executive capacity — including those who became officers in the army — were said to have entered "public life." Others were called "private subjects." The common soldier was a private subject who enlisted or was drafted into service. Since it was presumed that he had not adopted soldiering as a career, he was called a "private soldier" as opposed to a "public officer." In time, however, "public" was dropped from in front of the word "officer" and "soldier" from after the word "private."





To the Editor:

There was a misprint in the last paragraph, back page of the Fall 2004 issue of *The Journal*. For the model I built of the "Witchcraft" the e-mail address should read andcor2@sbcglobal.net. I thought I might get some interest from the 467th, as I have all nose art info, etc. on the aircraft. My brother-in-law, Bob Dekerf, was the flight engineer for the first 27 missions on the "Witch." He was the one who drew the nose art and we have the original drawings yet.

I became interested in the plane, so I started to build models of "Witchcraft," "Pete the Pom Inspector" (assembly ship), and "Little Pete" (squadron commander's plane), in 1/48 scale. While doing research on the 467th I came in contact with an author in France who was working on a book on the Battle of Borge's, France and had decided to do a chapter on the "Witchcraft." The book is expected out this summer.

I am so proud of my brother-in-law and of all the men who took part in WWII. They are indeed TRUE HEROES.

Andrew J. Curulewski
1 W Eureka
Lemont, IL 60439
andcor2@sbcglobal.net



To the Editor:

With reference to the letter from Ron Hayne of Cheltenham, England published in the Fall 2004 edition of *The Journal*, regarding a "missing Liberator" from the base at Rackheath, Norfolk: I give below some information that might set his mind at rest about the fortunes of this aircraft.

The aircraft in question, "The Ruptured Duck," was a B-24H-15FO serial number 42-52561 which arrived at Rackheath on 21 March 1944 and flew 16 combat missions between April to June 1944. The aircraft was then declared "war-weary" and returned to the United States on 3 July 1944.

Les Willis
39 Coughtrey Close
Sprowston
Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8AT
ENGLAND



To the Editor:

I found some information on the Internet that may be useful to Ron Hayne, who had the letter on page 34 of the Fall 2004 *Journal* about "The Ruptured Duck," B-24H 42-52770.

One source says: "Call sign unknown, she was originally a 34th BG plane, then a 493rd BG plane, then flew with the Carpetbaggers for a time, flying sometime after June of 1944 for the 858th BS., and was finally transferred to the 392nd BG sometime before the end of the war. She made it back to the ZI to be scrapped at Altus, OK, on 16 October 1945. Pictured here with and courtesy of Joe LaMarre of the 801st/492nd BG Association, in the autumn of 1944. It is also pictured in the 8th AF Yearbook with the 34th BG."



From another Internet source: "No. 205, 'The Ruptured Duck' of the 324th, was flying up ahead of us in the No. 3 position of the Second Element of our Lead Squadron. The copilot, 2/Lt. Gilbert B. Willis, was hit in the neck and killed instantly by a flak burst on the right side of the cockpit while on the bomb run. Lt. Willis had been our copilot when Lt. Gaddis attempted to take me on my first mission on the 24th of August. Flak also severely injured the pilot, 2/Lt. Elbert W. Weeks. His right hand was shattered and a deep wound gouged in his left thigh. A number of arteries in his hand were severed, causing considerable loss of blood. Lt. Weeks refused any aid until they had completed the bomb run and the top turret gunner/flight engineer, T/Sgt. Henry G. Saunders, had removed Lt. Willis' body from the seat. Only then did Lt. Weeks allow a tourniquet to be placed on his arm. The same flak burst that hit Lts. Willis and Weeks also threw shards into the No. 3 engine and the landing gear. Because of the damage to the No. 3 engine, Lt. Weeks felt it wise to land on the continent rather than risk the flight back to England. Accordingly, he headed for Allied-occupied France.

Lt. Weeks, assisted by Sgt. Saunders and the bombardier, 2/Lt. Marvin G. Nachtsheim, brought the damaged plane down safely on a crater-ridden advanced U.S. fighter air strip at Merville, France. 'The Ruptured Duck' was repaired and returned to flight status with the 91st two days later."

Jim Hamilton
416 Webster Street
Marshfield, MA 02050
jim@greenharbor.com



To the Editor:

Question: How were bomb group numbers assigned? Any particular order?

Donald E. Bodiker (448th)
5850 Trailwinds Drive, #722
Fort Myers, FL 33907-8382

Ed. Note: Good question. We have no answer. This is one for the chair-bound officers.



To the Editor:

The portion of the book *Armageddon* headed "Firestorms: War in the Sky" makes frequent mention of 2nd Air Division B-24 missions during the Battle of the Bulge. Here is a description of the book (US \$30):

Armageddon is the epic story of the last eight months of World War II in Europe, written by Max Hastings — one of Britain's most highly regarded military historians, whose accounts of past battles John Keegan has described as worthy "to stand with that of the best journalists and writers" (New York Times Book Review).

In September 1944, the Allied believed that Hitler's army was beaten, and expected that the war would be over by Christmas. But the disastrous Allied airborne landing in Holland, American setbacks on the German border and in the Hurtgen Forest, together with the bitter Battle of the Bulge, drastically altered that timetable. Hastings tells the story of both the Eastern and Western Fronts, and paints a vivid portrait of the Red Army's onslaught on Hitler's empire. He has searched the archives of the major combatants and interviewed 170 survivors to give us an unprecedented understanding of how the great battles were fought, and of their human impact on American, British, German, and Russian soldiers and civilians.

The crucial final months of the twentieth century's greatest global conflict come alive in this rousing and revelatory chronicle.

The author, Max Hastings, personally visited and interviewed my crewmate, Harold Dorfman, and me. We are quoted on several pages.

Ira Wells (448th)
653 Pelton Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10310



To the Editor:

Here is a picture of General Hodges, Commander of the Second Air Division (2nd row – R to L – 3rd person), taken at a Rodeo in Norwich in 1944.

Jim Reeves (HQ)
P.O. Box 98
Moultrie, GA 31776-0098

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To the Editor:

I am interested in stories surrounding the 1944 Christmas Eve parties given for local children at Old Buckenham and other bases and the flight of the “Liberty Run” to Paris on Christmas Day. I have read some very brief accounts but would like to have as much information as possible, since I am very interested in writing a children’s book on the subject.

I have been entertaining this idea for some time now, and after telling the story to my son, decided it is a story that other children might enjoy as well. My father was a member of the 453rd BG, 733rd BS. He was a maintenance man; my understanding is that he helped maintain the runways at “Old Buc.” His memory of the events is not very clear; therefore, I would appreciate any assistance you might provide.

Tony Wyatt
6126 Mayport Road
Julian, NC 27283
Tel. 336-697-8660
wyatt@gborocollege.edu

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Ed. Note: Lorn Matelski (392nd BG) and others received the following e-mail on August 21, 2004, from Luc Dewez in Belgium:

Dear Boyhood Heroes, Dear Friends:

This week is high on emotion, remembrance, and history in Belgium.

August 17, 1943:

Two Belgians, Lambert Tilkin and his son Albert, helped Joe Walters to leave the

apple tree he was hanging in. Joe had just parachuted from his B-17 “Chug-A-Lug-Lulu,” one of the 60 Flying Forts lost that day. Targets for the day were the ball bearing plants in Schweinfurt and the Messerschmitt aircraft factory in Regensburg, Germany.

This was the first time an attacking force didn’t go back to England but went straight to North Africa.

Joe Walters is a man I am proud to call my FRIEND. He is now famous for the enlarged life-size picture of him and his two Belgian helpers which can be seen in the Escapees and Evadees section of the Mighty 8th AF Museum in Pooler, GA. This picture is probably the one and only snapshot taken of an Allied airman a couple of minutes after he landed in occupied Europe.

August 17/18, 1943:

While Joe Walters was hidden by Joseph Godin Peters in Boirs, Belgium, the British Bomber Command dispatched 596 Lancasters, Halifaxes, and Stirlings to bomb Peenemünde, the German research center testing the V2 rockets on the Baltic coast. The butcher bill was 40 aircraft — 23 Lancasters, 15 Halifaxes, and 2 Stirlings.

That means that in ONE day, the cost of the “all-around-the-clock offensive” was 100 heavies. And how many men!

Historical note: The Luftwaffe used the “schräge Musik” for the first time; twin upward-firing 20-mm guns fitted in Me-110s.

August 17, 1944:

At 1240, the Resistance shot the mayor (a collaborator) of the town of Charleroi, Oswald Englebin, and his wife and son, in Courcelles. In retaliation, thirty minutes later three rexists shot a first man who was going by that place. They started killing other people and burning their houses. Back in Charleroi, up to 150 rexists from Brussels were gathering hostages (their names were known from the collaborators). Twenty people were brought back to a house close to the spot of Mayor Englebin’s death in Courcelles. They were locked in a cellar where they could hardly stand.

At 0600 the next morning, the hostages were called by their names one by one. As they climbed the stairs they were caught by two men and shot in the neck near the road. Eighteen people were shot by the rexists.

Six days later, the Germans killed twenty “terrorists” (as they called them), one bullet in the neck, at the edge of a hole open in a wood in Jumet (close to Charleroi).

The same day, the 351st BG was ordered to bomb a railway bridge in Namur, the “pont du Luxembourg,” while other bomb groups were assigned other bridges on the Meuse River. When the alert sound-

ed, many inhabitants in downtown Namur were looking at the planes flying over them, they should head for Germany, they thought.

Many victims were caught in the open when the bombs fell in town, missing the bridge. More than 300 people died, so close to the Liberation. Two weeks later, the American army was in Namur. It was the price of FREEDOM.

Your friend from Belgium,
Luc Dewez

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To Evelyn Cohen:

I would like to thank the English people for their continued friendship and gratitude toward the American servicemen who were privileged to help them in a time of conflict and need. Especially for making us feel at home in their country.

Donovan F. King (93rd, 448th)
913 N. Harrison Street
Litchfield, IL 62056-1607

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November 10, 2004

Mr. Frederick J. Gerritz
611 South Fann Place
Anaheim, CA 92804-2623

Dear Mr. Gerritz:

Thank you for your October 9 letter expressing your continued support for the issuance of a stamp commemorating the Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber.

You may be pleased to know that the B-24 will be included on a sheet of ten stamps entitled *American Advances in Aviation* that has been announced for issuance in 2005.

Any questions regarding the availability of different formats of these stamps can be addressed with Stamp Fulfillment Services, 1-800-782-6724. A copy of the current catalog is enclosed for your review.

Thank you for your interest in our stamp program.

Terrence W. McCaffrey
Manager, Stamp Development
United States Postal Service

Ed. Note: See back page for details.

American Advances in Aviation

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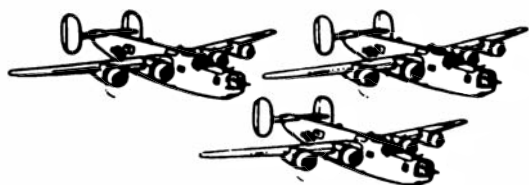
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EIGHTH AIR FORCE
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