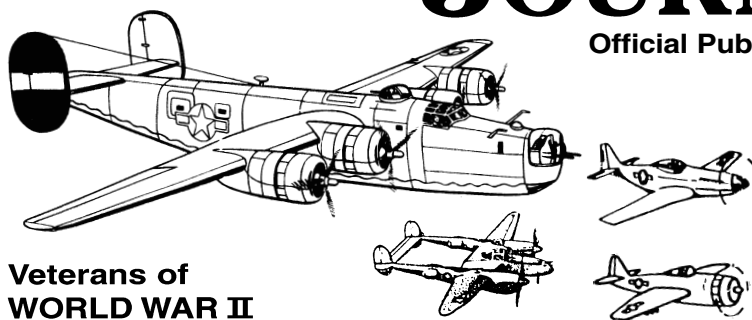


THE JOURNAL

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Veterans of
WORLD WAR II



Volume 44 Number 2

Summer 2005

AN INDEPENDENCE DAY REMINDER

The Human Cost of World War Two

The number of all WWII deaths in the military service can be estimated reasonably close except for the Soviet Union and Poland; to this must be added at least 20 million and possibly 30 or 35 million civilian dead. The estimates range from a total overall human cost of 40 million to 55 million. This is the human "toll" of World War II. The following totals were gleaned from the World Almanac, Department of Defense, and various other statistical sources and are the "most official," thus purporting to be the "most reliable." Nevertheless they vary wildly depending on the source.

<u>NATION</u>	<u>TOTAL IN MILITARY</u>	<u>TOTAL DEAD</u>
U.S.S.R.	12,500,000	8,668,400
China	5,000,000	2,220,000
Yugoslavia	500,000	305,000
Poland	1,000,000	597,320
United Kingdom	4,683,000	403,195
Australia	680,000	37,467
Canada	780,000	42,666
India	2,150,000	48,674
New Zealand	157,000	13,081
South Africa	140,000	8,681
United States	16,353,659	407,318
France	5,000,000	245,000
Greece	414,000	88,300
Belgium	800,000	22,651
Norway	25,000	3,000
Netherlands	500,000	7,900
Denmark	15,000	6,400
Czechoslovakia	180,000	N.A.
Brazil	200,000	N.A.
Philippines	105,000	N.A.
TOTAL ALLIED POWERS	51,183,000	13,180,000
Germany	9,200,000	3,250,000
Japan	6,095,000	2,565,878
Italy	4,000,000	380,000
Romania	600,000	300,000
Hungary	350,000	200,000
Finland	250,000	82,000
Austria	800,000	280,000
Bulgaria	450,000	18,500
TOTAL AXIS POWERS	21,745,000	7,100,000

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

JOURNAL



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HOWDY FROM TEXAS!

BY GEOFF GREGORY (467TH), 2ADA PRESIDENT

Well, here we go again; betwixt and between! This is being written about eight weeks before our San Antonio convention in May. However, you won't read it for a long time. Again, we find ourselves with little "timely" applicable information due to our scheduling of publication. We really should look into this problem — perhaps in San Antonio.

Speaking of the May convention, we, as I write this, expect a goodly contingent of our British friends to be joining us in San Antonio. Regrettably, **Bernard Matthews**, one of our recent benefactors, will not be in attendance. We had hoped that our members would be able to thank him in person for his generosity. However, in your names, we have purchased a wonderful gift for him. (FYI — Bernard is the gentleman who made his fortune raising TURKEYS. The connection is that he built his turkey farms on some of our air bases in Norfolk!) We could not find an appropriate TURKEY figurine (yes, we DID search the Internet!) However, we found a "bird" of a different feather — one of the most beautiful sculptures of a Bald Eagle I have ever seen. The bird is in full flight, with talons extended above a salmon directly in its sights. We hope Bernard likes it, because we surely do appreciate him, and are grateful for his generous donation.

Although he is not as mobile as in the past (how many of us are?), it was great to welcome back **Jordan Uttal** to conduct the Candle Lighting Service as he has done for many, many years. No one does it quite like Jordan.

It may be anticipatory at this writing, but I feel certain that a great time will have been had by all in San Antonio in May. The location of the hotel made the River Walk easily accessible to all, including the handicapped. Since this was probably our last visit as an organization to Texas, let me say that it was a pleasure to have welcomed you to our Great State.

I am sure I can say at this time, that the meeting of your Executive Committee was held in the spirit of cooperation and that much was accomplished. We should have voted on the future handling of the 2ADA/Fulbright money to provide for growth and income. However, "due to our scheduling," I am unable to report, at this time, the results of that vote.

I am also assuming that our participation in the new presentation of the B-24 in the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah will have been approved. The results of the survey I made of the Executive Committee showed that a large percentage of the committee favored helping to raise funds for this project. We began this project when I placed my signature on a letter sent by the museum to all on their mailing list. The purpose of this letter was to kick off direct solicitation of funds to the museum for this new presentation of the B-24.

Further information from the May convention will have to wait until the NEXT *Journal*. (Have I made my point that our timing needs to be improved? Perhaps we may have accomplished that in San Antonio!?)

This will be my last *Journal* contribution as President. I am proud to have represented you, and have enjoyed the opportunity to serve. I hope I have made a worthwhile contribution. **John de Cani** is raring to go, and I wish him good fortune. I know him well. I know you will be pleased with his tenure as your president.

Care for each other; you are special people. ■

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, and 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.

Folded Wings

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Howard D. Landers (492nd, 392nd)
George B. Villella

389th BG

Bernard L. Dispenza
Earl F. Krause
Harold H. Lane
Maj. David B. Powers

445th BG

David G. Patterson
William V. Tumelavich

446th BG

Marvin A. Finger, Jr.

448th BG

Nick P. Rabagia, Jr.
Leroy H. Bloom

453rd BG

Roy W. Carlson
J. Neil Crowley
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Robert E. Mauriello
James A. Mossbarger
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458th BG

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Harold M. Knox

467th BG

Helmer L. Hansen
Robert A. Meyers
Robert M. Stone, Jr.

489th BG

Ann L. Chamberlain (Mike)
(AM)

491st BG

Robert D. Buck

492nd BG

Lester E. Anderson (467th)
Clyde S. Hatley

CONVENTION NOTICE

The 2006 Convention of the 2nd Air Division Association will be held in Washington, D.C. on or about October 14, 2006 when the Air Force Memorial will be dedicated.



BY CLARENCE A. LUHMANN

I received a letter and this picture from **Richard F. Parker** of Mora, New Mexico, of a very happy air crew and ground crew mechanics who had just landed at Bradley Field, Connecticut coming home from England on May 23, 1945.



Now for some history of the 1200th Military Police Co. Det "A" (Detached Service to 445th BG, Tibenham), courtesy of *Bomber Legends*, Volume 2, #1.

MP'S HAD FUN TOO!

from the monthly unit histories of the 1200th Military Police Co. Det "A" (Detached Service to 445th BG, Tibenham) from microfilm reel AO336. Submitted by Kelsey McMillan

January 23, 1944 — Pvt. Lupo cleaned a few pistols because he fired his through the roof of his gate hut (he was hearing noises again).

February 14, 1944 — Lt. Kelsay picked St. Valentine's Day to give a lecture on the M-1 rifle, as if anyone cared. Everybody was more interested in something else. Sorry to report no proposals received.

March 8, 1944 — Sgt. Jo Collie borrowed Pvt. McCormick's bicycle, went to the pub and wrecked it coming back. "Mac" blew his stack.

March 18, 1944 — Lt. Kelsay went to sick quarters for some cold medicine and they kept him there for three days.

March 28, 1944 — T/Sgt. Hereth and Pfc Jones returned from furlough with pictures of themselves in kilts. Very attractive.

April 1, 1944 — Pfc James Edwards on Post #7 "gave the alarm in case of fire," telling of his hut burning down, but to no avail. Being April Fool's Day, no one believed him. Hut burnt to a shell.

April 14, 1944 — Maurice P. Monynahan to hospital. Poor Mony never got over that last Pub mission.

May 4, 1944 — Those boys at the motor pool really do keep us hopping. They report-



From left: (3) Robert Hollis, tail gunner; (6) Bombardier, unknown; (7) F.O. Robert Donegan; (8) F.O. Bob Alams, co-pilot; (11) F.O. Richard Beasley, navigator; (14) Ralph Mitchell, waist gunner; (16) Richard Parker, waist gunner; (17) Gerner Hagen, nose gunner; (18) Charles Bishop, radio operator. All the rest were ground crew.

ed a Jeep missing from the motor pool, which we found at the motor pool.

May 9, 1944 — Statistics on stolen bicycles show that most of them can be found outside Officers' Mess. No other comment.

May 15, 1944 — Pfc Cox reported gas on his post. Just a poor GI sick on too much mild and bitters.

July 1, 1944 — Two attached men came in late on pass and were in no condition to go on duty.

July 3, 1944 — Cpl. George F. Hyde, while on patrol, picked up two officers who were having a helluva swell time firing their flare pistols.

July 5, 1944 — Water shortage. No baths. Some men are pleased with the situation.

September 1944 — Who says we're a bunch of lazy louts? Starting early in September we have calisthenics five days a week. Two 45-minute periods are conducted daily by Lt. Poorman, the detachment commander and Acting First Sergeant Holland. (Okay — so there was a little bitching about it at first. But that's all gone now. The few who still dislike it have a greater dislike for the full field pack hikes that follow as punishment for failing to appear.)

October 18, 1944 — will be one year in the ETO for the whole company. The boys at Hethel have invited us to a company get-together and party on that date. The entire NCO Club on that station (AAF 114) will be ours for the evening. WAAFs, ATs, and civilians are invited. (AH!)

Sgt. Holland has devised a not-too-popular point system for the barracks inspection. Three points means no pass for the

following week. (Oh my dusty shoes.)

October 19, 1944 — One year in the ETO! Had a helluva party at Hethel on the night of the 18th. HQ 1200th MP Co. showed us a bang-up affair in NCO Club at that station. We had a picture taken at the beginning which turned out very well. There weren't as many women as promised, but what few were there kept our spirits high.

December 16, 1944 — On the 16th, the 200 Mission Party was held. It was just another day of duty for us — in fact it was a day of extra duty. Just goes by that old saying that when others are having a good time, the MPs have to work. We had extra posts and patrols out in a rather futile attempt to keep things orderly. The only serious trouble we had was a missing Jeep. Someone ran off with Lt. Kelsay's Jeep and he jumped in the first one he saw to chase the culprit. Consequently, two Jeeps were reported stolen and were found simultaneously. By 2430 things were fairly quiet, and any noise the next morning was not too pleasing to all those who were wishing for ice packs and black coffee. We received compliments from the station's high ranking officers on the way we handled the situation.

December 17, 1944 — On the 17th we had our "200 Mission" celebration. Capt. Cassidy had saved enough beer for us to make an interesting afternoon and evening.



By the time you read this, the 2ADA's annual convention in San Antonio, Texas will be over, and I hope I saw a lot of you there. Have a good summer. ■

THE PEEP FROM THE VEEP

BY JOHN deCANI (489th)
2ADA Executive Vice President

THREE POEMS ABOUT FLYING

Let Crits and other snobs might call it bad poetry, but for many of us, **John Gillespie Magee's** "High Flight" is such a favorite that we can recite it from memory. I have seen it, framed in glass, on officers' club walls from Thule to Tachikawa. It is the first of three poems reprinted on this page.

The reference librarian at the Rittenhouse Square branch of The Free Library of Philadelphia found the following on Google:

The poem "High Flight" was written by a young fighter pilot during World War II. Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, Jr. was an American citizen who was born of missionary parents in Shanghai and educated in Britain's famed Rugby School. He went to the United States in 1939, and at the age of 18, won a scholarship to Yale. Like other Americans of the time who wished to aid in the cause of freedom, he decided to enlist in the services of a nation actively engaged in war. Magee enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in September 1940. He served overseas with an RCAF Spitfire Squadron until his death on active service in December 1941.

His poem, composed in September 1941, was scribbled on the back of a letter which he mailed to his mother in Washington. Pilot Officer Magee was killed a few months later when his Spitfire plane collided with a bomber-pilot trainer on approach to the airport over Lincolnshire, England. He was 19 years old.

Randall Jarrell enlisted in the Army Air Force in 1942 but washed out of pilot training and became an instructor in celestial navigation in Tucson, Arizona. By this time he was already a published poet. I found his poem "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," which is in the second edition of Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry*, brutal and easy to memorize. It is the second of the three poems reprinted on this page. Like John Magee, Randall

Jarrell died suddenly and accidentally. At age 51 in 1965, he was struck by an automobile while walking alone at dusk.

The third poem reprinted here, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" by **William Butler Yeats**, appears in the second edition of Louis Untermeyer's *Modern British Poetry*. Yeats was born on June 13, 1865, so that by August 1914, when Britain entered World War I, Yeats was 49 years old and could not have served in the British armed forces. Since Yeats died in 1939, his Irish airman must have flown in World War I.

It is difficult to understand this airman's motivation unless it is a love of flying:

*"Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;*

*.
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;"*

Speaking for myself, in 1944 I did not share the emotions of the first pair of quoted lines, and bomber crews don't have the lonely impulses of the second pair. Nonetheless, I like Yeats and I like this poem very much. It wouldn't be here otherwise. ■

High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings,
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark or even eagle flew.
And while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.
1922-1941

The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

Randall Jarrell
1914-1965

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor.
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.

Not law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

William Butler Yeats
1865-1939

Notes & News From the Honorary President

BY JORDAN R. UTTAL (HQ)

Greetings, comrades! Hope all is as well as it can be with you and your loved ones. I am still on the four-wheel walker and looking forward to our San Antonio convention in just a few weeks. (It is now mid-April.)

Before getting down to some 2AD history, I take pleasure in passing the word to you all that **Paul King**, a long-time friend of the 2nd Air Division, former Chairman of the Board of Governors of the 2AD Memorial Trust, and presently the Sheriff of Norwich, has been further honored. At a recent special dinner marking 100 years of Rotary Club existence, Paul was the recipient of the Paul Harris Fellowship Award. This further evidence of the esteem of the Norwich community has given pleasure to Paul's friends and family.

And now to a bit of history of our Division's steady improvement in operational efficiency. I have a copy of the Statistical Summary of Operations of the 2nd Air Division which was prepared for our Commanding General William E. Kepner and presented to him on 8 May 1945 for for-

warding to 8th AF Headquarters.

I want to focus on the subject of bombing effort and results. Whatever our jobs, we all remember the difficulties in getting to the target and delivering the bomb loads.

Let us look this time at the percentage of sortie aircraft (the number taking off) which actually dropped the bombs on enemy targets, primary or otherwise. We all remember that weather, mechanical difficulties, personal error, flak and enemy aircraft all prevented us at times from getting the bombs down as we wanted. Still, let us consider the results.

In 1942 (in only two months of operations, November and December), the two groups of the 2nd Bomb Wing made only 79 sorties, of which only 38 of them dropped on the enemy — 48%.

In 1943 (in eight months of operations), 68% of our sortie aircraft dropped their bombs. In two of those eight months, May and September, we reached 85% — but the average was 68%.

In 1944 (in twelve months of opera-

tions), 78% of the sortie aircraft dropped. Here again, in October and November we scored 89% and 90%.

And in the four months of 1945, our results rose to 84% bombing enemy targets. We got to 93% in April 1945.

The total 2AD bomber effort was 94,441 sorties, with 74,396 of them delivering destruction to the enemy, with the total of all operations achieving 79% of effective sorties.

This represents continued improvement in the efforts of the ground crews who provided serviceable aircraft and the combat crews who did their jobs with great courage and skill.

Bless them all, and the rest of our personnel who actively supported the efforts of the ground crews and the flying personnel.

Perhaps in the next issue I will be able to present the figures on the actual bombing accuracy — i.e., the percentages of bombs which landed within the two categories of efficiency during World War II.

I salute you all. ■

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

BY CHUCK WALKER (445TH)

Ray Pytel, our esteemed editor, tells me I am late getting my article to him, for which I apologize so I will get right to it.

Our Memorial Library has seen some changes of late. The B-24 model has been moved closer to the information desk for better display. The new Donor "Tree of Life" is in place. Each leaf is inscribed with a donor's name, and believe me, it is really quite a stunning display. The "Donors Book" is complete; it contains a complete list of donors including book donors, and will be located on a trolley next to the "Tree of Life."

The bequest of **Ted Kaye** (445th BG) has been received by the Governors. It is a magnificent sum of \$408,792. What a wonderful tribute in honor of those who served in the 2nd Air Division. Although a member, Ted was not active in the affairs of the Association but certainly his heart was with us. A picture gallery has been created within the Library in honor of Ted.

I attended the April 2005 Governors meeting and enjoyed typical English weather. Cold, wet, and windy; but still a fine trip. Our 2ADA/Fulbright Scholar, **Alexis Ciurczak**, is doing a fine job and will be

turning the job over to her replacement, **Glenn Gray**, at the end of August. Glenn is coming from the University of California, Fresno where he has been active in archival work. He is married and has a two-year-old son. **Dennis Wolf**, Cultural Attaché and Governor, will be returning to the States in July and will be replaced by **Mr. Michael Macy**. **Richard John Ashton**, **Ted Inman's** replacement as Director of Duxford Air Museum, was inducted as a Trust Governor.

The Trust Governors Finance Committee presented the budget for the next year, and it shows a surplus of £380. Let's hope we actually realize that meager surplus.

Lord Owen's Biennial Lecture is to be held on 16 November 2005. His subject will be "NATO Is Not Out of Date." This lecture is sponsored by the Memorial Trust.

Trust Chairman **Matthew Martin** is doing a superb job and is working with an extraordinary group of Governors. We are indeed privileged to have these fine ladies and gentlemen managing our Memorial Trust. They are all volunteers!

I cannot conclude this report without paying tribute to **David Patterson** for all

the years of dedicated service he gave to the Second Air Division Association. I was privileged to have known Dave for many years as a fellow 445th veteran. We will all miss him and say a prayer for Joan and their family. ■

In America, It's De Guts

A thief broke into the Louvre in Paris and stole several paintings. He would have gotten away in his van had it not run out of gas only a few blocks from the museum.

Obviously he had considerable skill to mastermind getting past the museum's security and pulling off such a dangerous caper. The police asked him how he could possibly have done so, only to make such an obvious error as not having gas in his get-away vehicle.

"Monsieur," he replied, "I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."

Ed. Note: If you thought I lacked De Gaulle to tell a joke like this, you were obviously wrong!

The Editor's Comments

BY RAY PYTEL (445TH)

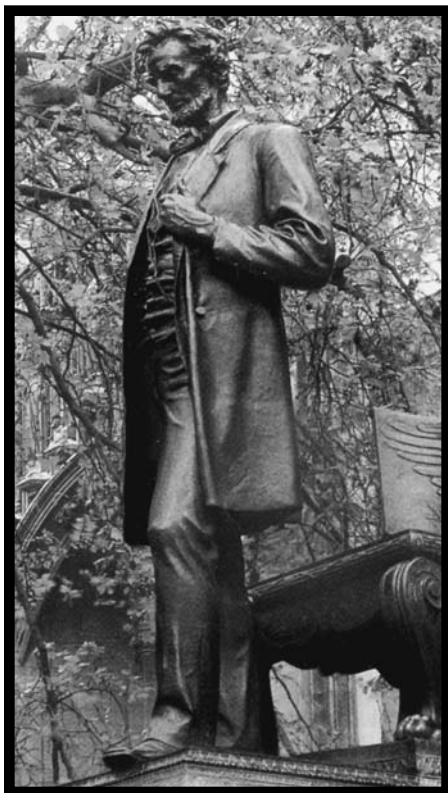
ANSWERS TO THE SPRING QUIZ

1. Boxing.
2. Niagara Falls (3 feet per year).
3. Asparagus and rhubarb.
4. Baseball.
5. A strawberry.
6. The pear grew inside the bottle. Bottles are placed over the pear buds when they are very small and wired in place. When ripe, they are snipped off at the stem.
7. Dwarf, dwell, dwindle.
8. Period, comma, colon, semi-colon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation marks, brackets, parentheses, braces, and ellipses.
9. In Minnesota (where the team used to be the Minneapolis Lakers).
10. Hit by a pitch, passed ball, catcher interference, dropped third strike, fielder's choice, designated pinch runner.
11. Lettuce.
12. Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, stockings, snowshoes, skis.

SUMMER QUIZ

U.S. Independence Day should stir your "patriotic knowledge" of what we Americans consider some of our most celebrated and common institutions:

1. The picture below shows a statue of



GOODBYE, OLD FRIEND...



The Pattersons and the editor enjoy a joke at the 1999 2ADA convention in Austin. Condolences to Dave's wife, Joan, and the Patterson family.

a well-known American. Name the individual, the location of the statue, and what it purports to represent.

2. Another statue of the same individual is at the doors of the University of Wisconsin's "Bascom Hall" (otherwise known as the administration building), except that

he is sitting down. What is the campus legend in regards to this particular statue?

3. Do you know the words to the music known as our National Anthem? When and where was it first sung, and by whom?

4. When did we officially adopt it as our National Anthem? ■

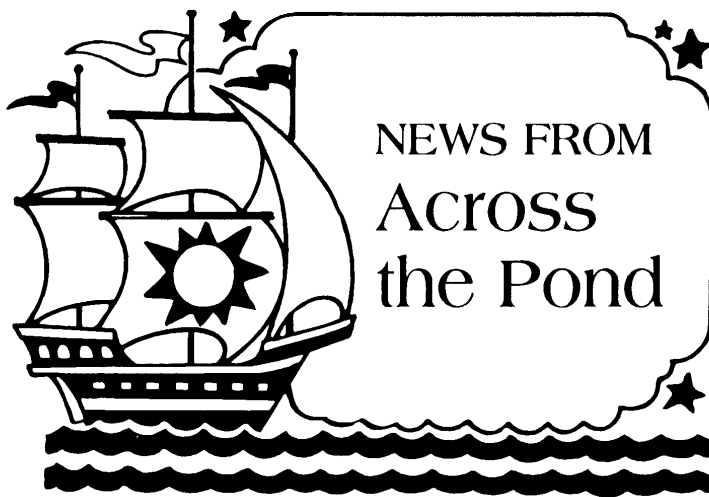
Sixty Years Later, London's War Can Still Be Found

BOOK REVIEW BY RAY PYTEL

World War II in Europe ended sixty years ago, on May 8, 1945, and delirious Londoners poured into the streets, cheering, dancing, lighting bonfires, and generally sharing their relief that for them the war was over. Even so, many parts of the city lay in ruins, devastated by German bombs. Today's traveler can get an intimate sense of what London's war was like, and despite the changes of the last sixty years, what reminders and memories of the war can still be found! They are all in *London's War: A Traveler's Guide to World War II*.

London's War views the metropolis through the historic lens of the home front experience — remember Westminster Abbey piled high with sandbags, Parliament Square strung with barbed wire, St. Paul's rising above the smoke and flames, victory gardens planted in the moat of the Tower of London? Ever wanted to find a real air raid shelter sign? Or sing wartime songs in a bomb shelter? Or walk in the footsteps of Winston Churchill? The twenty walking tours of *London's War* guide the traveler to all these, illustrated with over 180 black & white photos and clear maps. This is the perfect book for your favorite Anglophile, veteran, military buff, or for anyone planning a London trip.

So raise a glass of mild and bitters in honor of those who fought — and won — the war sixty years ago, and especially to those who survived the bombings, shortages, and stresses of London's home front. It is their story you'll find in *London's War: A Traveler's Guide to World War II*, by Sayre Van Young (Ulysses Press, 2004; \$16.95 paperback), available from the publisher (800-377-2542), from amazon.com, or by order from your local bookstore. ■



Librarian Activities

BY ALEXIS CIURCZAK, 2ADA/FULBRIGHT LIBRARIAN

While writing this, I am amazed at how fast the year is passing as the second six months of my Fulbright year in Norwich begins. I have been especially busy with talks to community groups, including talks at the Parish Hall in Strumpshaw, the Women's Rotary in Cringleford and Norwich, the United Reformed Church, a cycling club, and the Probus Club in Fakenham. As a result of the Cringleford talk, the entire Inner Wheel group of women Rotarians are making a visit to the 2AD Memorial Library in June.

After having been invited by one of the professors at City College, I addressed her history class, "America in the 20th Century," and introduced the students to the 2AD Memorial Library's collection and services. In addition to the Library's brochures, a subject "pathfinder" and various selected bibliographies were also distributed.

Trust Librarian **Derek Hills** and I have visited two of the wing collections so far (Long Stratton and Attleborough) and spoke to the staff about possible training needs and collection maintenance. I plan to make a visit to Sprowston as well, and to Dereham before

that library opens its new building.

The 2AD Memorial Library recently joined the British Association for American Studies (www.baas.ac.uk). With our membership, we will receive a yearly subscription to *American Studies in Britain* and will be listed on their website as an American studies resource. To increase our web presence, I have been contacting various on-line directories and requesting that links be made to our website. We have recently been added to the AMATAS (Americanisation and the Teaching of American Studies) website, www.uclan.ac.uk/amatas; as well as ARNet (On-Line Resources for American Studies), www.americans.org.uk, and the Polish Association for American Studies (PAAS), <http://paas.org.pl>.

The 2AD Memorial Library continues to serve as a regional center for the collection of war memories, in connection with the BBC "People's War Project." I attended another meeting for the East Anglia region and shared the 2AD Memorial Library's plans in relation to this project. As a result of this meeting and previous contacts, the Director of the Learning Centre in Wymondham invited me to teach an on-line interactive class, at their facility, beginning in late May. The evening class will concentrate on using the 2nd Air Division website www.2ndair.org.uk and the BBC People's War website www.bbc.co.uk/ww2 to research Wymondham in World War II. The course outline has been submitted and the Learning Centre will begin publicizing the course for their next term.

We continue to have many group visits to the Library and are looking forward to the visit of a large group of 93rd Bomb Group veterans and their families in May. It is especially enjoyable to be able to participate in Norwich and Norfolk Millennium Library events. In connection with the "Love Week" activities in February, I was interviewed twice on BBC Radio Norfolk, and was pleased to be able to promote the 2AD Memorial Library on air.

As for related activities, this year the British Fulbright Scholars Association (www.bfsa.org), of which I am an honorary member, is holding a celebration at Fettes College in Edinburgh in April, to mark the centenary of **Senator William J. Fulbright's** birth. The evening will begin with a reception in the old college building, accompanied by a piper, followed by a traditional informal ceilidh. I am looking forward to attending. ■

THE HERITAGE LEAGUE OF 2AD SPEAKS

BY BILLY S. JOHNSON, HERITAGE LEAGUE PRESIDENT

Members of The Heritage League of Second Air Division are looking forward to joining with veterans and their families during the May 2005 2ADA convention in San Antonio. We always welcome an opportunity to visit with you.

A general meeting of the League will be held on Friday, May 27. During this meeting we shall have the pleasure of honoring the winner of The Heritage League Essay Contest, **Ray Bohuslav**. Ray is the grandson of **Alan Senior**. We look forward to having Alan join us for this tribute.

The Heritage League will meet prior to the 2ADA convention in order to conclude a three-year strategic planning process. Some of the topics to be discussed include:

1. Heritage League sponsorship of reunions welcoming veterans of the 2AD and their spouses, family and friends.
2. Inclusion of veterans or their surviving spouses for life-time membership in the League, thus enabling uninterrupted receipt of Heritage League newsletters.
3. Willingness of The Heritage League to assume the responsibility of perpetual wreath laying and memorial marker maintenance programs, at the request of individual bomb groups as they

prepare their legacy policies.

The leadership of The Heritage League of Second Air Division acknowledges that it surely is the decision of the 2ADA Executive Committee whether they will amend the Heritage League's succession in overseeing sound investment practices in the Fulbright Foundation's funding for the American librarian in Norwich. Be assured that we stand ready to undertake this and/or other roles which will enable the League's continued pledge to honor and remember, into perpetuity, the services of you veterans and the supreme sacrifice made by your comrades during World War II for the cause of freedom.

Once again the League reaffirms its desire to meet with the 2ADA and with individual bomb groups for as long as it is practical for your organizations to meet. Please feel free to call upon the League if we can assist you in any respect as more and more of you are realizing the need to hold final official meetings of your groups. We exist to serve you and to ensure that your service is NEVER FORGOTTEN! We can more ably serve you if you have made your wishes known to us; so please help us "KEEP YOU FLYIN'!" ■

60 Years Later, the "Mission" Was Complete!

BY MAURICE LEE WATSON (458TH)

HORSHAM ST. FAITH, 16 January 1945: **John W. Moran's** crew took off for "Target Magdeburg, Germany." On board were three extra guests: **Major David H. Phillips** as command pilot; **Major Fred J. Vacek**; group bombardier; and as lead navigator, **Lt. Traskin**.

Twenty-six Liberators from the 458th Bomb Group participated in this mission. The target was the Krupp Steelworks. At this time the Allied ground forces were on the Rhine and the Soviets were in Poland, so Germany was being squeezed on all sides, and the strategy was to bomb out all the munition plants that were supplying the German army.

Just a few seconds before "bombs away,"

sight and crashed.

Soon thereafter the French F.F.I. gathered us all up together and, after much deliberation, determined that we were not Germans. After that decision, they fed us and called the American authorities in a nearby town, Auxerre. We were taken to Paris and were back at our base, Horsham St. Faith, just five days after we started, January 21, 1945.

The crash site of the plane was the small village of Ferrieres, near Andryes, about twenty miles from Auxerre, and no one gave any more thought to the abandoned B-24 and its disposition as far as the crew was concerned and the French locals in need of everything tore it apart.

and plaque is foremost dedicated to the memory of two young airmen whose parachutes did not open, S/Sgt. Richard Smith and S/Sgt. Harold Jones, so that we will never forget that they died fighting Nazism and defending our freedom."

The dedication was attended by eleven Americans and about 200 French locals, including two members of the French government from Paris, an American Air Force major representing the U.S. Embassy in Paris, a colonel and captain from the French air force, plus many other dignitaries.

The ceremony was impressive, and in the opinion of the eleven Americans who made the trip, the French people still love us! ■



Moran's plane was hit between engines #3 and #4 by fierce 155mm flak, and fire quickly resulted, but the fire was successfully extinguished when the engineer, **Ted Urbano**, cut off the fuel supply to that side of the ship. The ship then quickly fell out of formation and became very difficult to handle, so the crew's regular navigator, **Frank Adams**, proposed a southwesterly heading into the middle of recently liberated France and to take advantage of the 100% cloud cover over that area.

With only engines #1 and #2 functioning, we eventually dropped to 11,000 feet in about two hours, and when we broke out of the overcast and could see the ground, try hard as we did we could not locate any suitable landing site. Worst of all, we had no idea where we were; and just a short time later, that's when engines #1 and #2 ran out of fuel and we were ordered to abandon ship at 4,000 feet. All eleven members of the crew bailed out; the pilot, John Moran, being the last, and his chute had barely opened when he hit the ground. The parachutes of two gunners, **Richard Smith** and **Harold Jones**, did not open and they did not survive. Our B-24 glided out of

Now the time shifts to about 1990, and up to that time no one in that area had thought to research the event or the plane. But then the Assistant Mayor of nearby Andryes, a **Mr. Maxime Vilde**, inquired through the U.S. Embassy and finally found out that it was a Liberator from the 458th BG. They were able to locate a **Mr. Darin Scarza**, son of a 458th BG navigator. Scarza checked the 2AD records and located me and gave my address to the mayor of Andryes.

The mayor advised me that a dedication ceremony was being planned at Ferrieres and he invited me to the ceremony. Feeling obligated to notify all the crew members or their families, I located the navigator, Frank Adams, and Richard Smith's brother, Rayburn. Major Vacek's son, Karl, and Ted Urbano's widow were also located. No one else was found.

Now, sixty years later, the ceremony was held on March 12, 2005, giving closure to the mission that took place back in 1945. Mayor Maxime Vilde dedicated a plaque with all the names of the crew, and in his speech said in part:

"The inauguration of this monument

Above: The ceremony and plaque dedication. Below: The plaque lists the names of the crew of the beleaguered plane.



Where Were You on September 11th?

BY AL CIURCZAK, FATHER OF OUR 2ADA/FULBRIGHT LIBRARIAN, ALEXIS CIURCZAK
REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM *BOMBER LEGENDS*

No . . . I'm not referring to the terrorist attack in New York City, which I also watched all day long on 9/11/2001. My September 11th was one of my most memorable days. It came in 1943 on a bombing mission to Paramushira in the northern islands of Japan.

I was a T/Sgt. Photo Gunner with the 404th Bomb Squadron (H) in the 11th Air Force. I flew with a different crew on just about every mission the squadron was involved in, since we were short of photographers. On 9/11/43 I was flying with the J.J. Jones crew. On the plane that day were: Lt. Jerome J. Jones, pilot; Lt. Raymond K. Underwood, co-pilot; Lt. James S. Elliott, navigator; Lt. Roy L. Lemons, bombardier; S/Sgt. Walter E. Rodd, top turret; S/Sgt. Vale W. Wright, radar operator; S/Sgt. Jack Lefler, tail gunner; S/Sgt. Charles Beech, gunner; T/Sgt. Dwight C. Lambe, engineer; T/Sgt. John Stroo, radio man; and T/Sgt. Alexander D. Ciurczak, photographer.

We took off on the 10th of September, 1943 from Adak Island and headed to a forward base on Attu Island at the end of the Aleutian Island chain. The idea was to give our B-24s the necessary range to the target by using an extra bomb bay tank for the long overwater Bering Sea flight.

On September 11, 1943 at 0800 we took off along with every available B-24 and B-25 of the 11th Air Force and headed west. This was not like an 8th Air Force mission. With two dozen aircraft, this was one of the largest show of bombers in the North Pacific theatre of operation. No fighter escort, just lots of gunners manning .50 caliber guns from two turrets on each plane (we had no belly turrets on the B-24s), two waist guns and two flexible guns in the bombardier's compartment and two forward fixed guns mounted under the deck operated by the pilot from the cockpit.

The following is taken from my diary:

September 11, 1943: Took off at 8 o'clock for Paramushira. Trip was uneventful on the way out, but after the bombs dropped on the target our flight was attacked by a flock of Zeros. We all headed for the deck, and when we got there we stayed at about 50 feet. Major Gash's ship on our right wing crashed in the water not over a hundred feet from us due to enemy fighter action (Feuer was the photographer on that ship). It sure was a shock to see them hit the water, for I knew the crew well since I flew with them on other missions,

especially Walter Feuer whom I have known since I first joined the Army.

The Zeros kept coming. We got hit above the bomb bays. All our radios were knocked out and another shell put a big hole in our de-icer tanks and hydraulic system. It's lucky we didn't blow up. I went up to the flight deck to tell Lambe (our engineer) about the de-icer tanks. Just as I stuck my head in the door, two 20mm shells hit the top hatch and went off when they hit the armor plate of the top turret. The plane was filled with smoke. When it cleared a bit I climbed in to talk to Lambe, who was standing behind the pilot and copilot. Just then a shell hit the front windshield, hitting the co-pilot in the face. Lambe and I got the co-pilot out of his seat, sat him in the corner and Lambe got into the co-pilot seat. I took care of the co-pilot. He was bleeding like a stuck pig. I ripped open all the first aid kits I could find and put on all the bandages, but the blood kept on coming. I then ripped off my winter underwear, for it was the cleanest thing I could think of, and wrapped it around his head and face leaving an opening near his mouth so he could breathe. The blood slowed up so I gave him some sulfanilamide tablets. He was sure taking it well, didn't squawk one bit, even when I gave him a shot of morphine in the leg to ease the pain. A shell hit alongside me, just above the radio table, and the felt lining of the plane caught fire. I put it out by pulling the felt loose. The Zeros finally left and was I glad, and so was the rest of the crew, especially the pilot for it was a hard job flying the plane with one hand (the shell that came through the front windshield had also hit him in the right arm.) It's a good thing that Lambe, our engineer, knew a lot about flying and he really helped the pilot. When we were sure the Zeros had gone for good, Lt. Lemons, our bombardier, came up to the flight deck, and we cleared the empty shells from the top turret and made a place for the copilot to lie down. We had a few blankets and bed rolls in the plane so we wrapped them around him to keep him warm.

Then I left the flight deck and went to the back of the ship where the gunners were talking about the Zeros they had shot down. Rodd, the top turret gunner, found a hole made by a 30 caliber bullet in the bill of his hat (he wore it with the bill turned up.) There were a lot of happy gunners, four Zeros to the ship's credit.

(Top turret – one; fixed nose guns – one; tail gunner – one; left waist gun – one.) Our happy spell didn't last long, for when the engineer tried to transfer fuel from the bomb bay tank to the wing tanks, he found that the pump wouldn't work. That meant that we had about one chance in ten of making it back to Attu. The pilot gave the order to toss everything out of the plane that was loose. Everything went out the bottom hatch; machine guns, cameras, radio equipment, and we even chopped the armor plate out alongside the gunner's position and tossed that out the bottom hatch. We all put on our life vests and went up forward so the ship would fly better. I don't know about the others, but that's when I started to pray and think. I guess this was the hardest I ever prayed in my life. The thought that kept running through my mind was not being able to see Kitty, my wife, again. The engineer and I climbed into the bomb bay and tried to fix the fuel pump. No use; we didn't have the tools. All we could do was pray. According to the gas gauge, we had enough fuel left in our wing tanks to fly until 6 o'clock. The navigator told us we would hit land at 5:55. I relaxed a little, for I knew if the weather was clear we could find the field. At 5:15 we were told to go to the back and prepare for a crash landing. We packed our sleeping bags against the rear bulkhead. While this was going on, the radio operator was helping the pilot fly the ship. We all stuck our noses to the windows to look for signs of land.

At 5:55 we spotted land and our hopes went up. Fog was rolling in, no sign of the airstrip. The ship banked sharply and headed away from shore. We didn't know what was going on, but found out later that the pilot couldn't find the Attu landing strip and headed for Shemya, sixteen miles away. It was 6 o'clock and our gas gauges read empty. We were flying on borrowed time. Landing gear went down. We heard the wheels hit the end of the strip and we all jumped out and hailed a Jeep, sending the driver for an ambulance. We all helped the co-pilot out of the ship and waited for the ambulance. The mission was over. Looking the ship over later, we found that it was full of holes, and it's a wonder it didn't fall apart.

I'll always remember the co-pilot as we helped him out of the ship at the end of the flight. His head was covered with my

(continued on next page)

KETTERINGHAM HALL DIVISION HQ

BY RAY STRONG

I have been advised by the editor of *The Journal* that I have only a few days to get something to him to put on the Division Headquarters page of the Summer *Journal*. Since I haven't received any information, stories, pictures, etc. from any of you, I will just ramble a bit.

I am sure all of you realize that the membership of the 2ADA is declining. At one time, we had almost 8,500 members. Today, I am guessing that it is less than 4,000. Attendance at the annual conventions has also declined. I believe that the most people we ever had at a convention was the year we went to Las Vegas and about 1,600 showed up. I am writing this in early April so I don't know how many will be present in San Antonio, but it will be less than 300. Time marches on!

I suspect there will be no more than two or three additional 2ADA conventions. And we have some things that need to be completed before we ring down the gavel for the last time. These are:

1. Making certain that there is enough money in the endowment funds for the Second Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich to fund it in perpetuity. I understand that we are very close to having enough funds for this project.

2. Making certain that the 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian is fully funded and ensuring that administrative arrangements for handling these funds is approved. We need more money in this fund to ensure that it will last in perpetuity.

3. We need to support the efforts to improve the 2nd Air Division display, including *Fightin' Sam*, at the 8th Air Force Museum. We need to raise a substantial amount toward the \$125,000 needed to fund this project. All of us need to contribute to this project.

Those are my thoughts as of today. Maybe I will know more when I return from the meeting in San Antonio at the end of May. If so, I will include it in the next Headquarters Newsletter.

Please give whatever you can afford to these projects! Send it to the 2ADA Treasurer, E.W. Nothstein, 40 Meadow Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559-1142. ■



HARDWICK Open Letter to the 93rd

BY JOHN L. LEE, JR.

Many of us have recently been remembering events that occurred sixty years ago as we served our country in far-away places. As one of my correspondents, **Bob Boersma**, said: "Memories of our younger years are sometimes more fresh than those of our later years." Still, as we have been remembering the end of World War II, most of us are probably somewhat surprised that we are still around. We also are grateful that our country is still strong and free.

Looking back over the changes of the past sixty years, one thing that comes to mind is the advancement in flight. What remarkable progress has been made. I remember seeing the first jet fighter planes. They were the ME262s that attacked our formations on several missions. At this time it is difficult to remember the exact missions when we experienced this advanced aircraft, but I do recall the ME262 coming in at 9 o'clock high on one occasion. This was most likely during one of our missions in April 1945. We flew that month on the 4th through the 7th and the 9th & 10th, with 15 and 17 April being our last missions. The speed of the ME262 was the part of the experience that was impressive. It was difficult to track as we could see the smoke pouring out of the rear end of the enemy aircraft. At the same time, the enemy in the ME262 was not able to concentrate his fire power on our planes because he was moving so fast it seemed. Our crew flew a total of nineteen missions starting on 2 March 1945. On 15 March we flew to Berlin, which was one of the heaviest flak days I can remember.

I received a letter on 22 March 2005 from Bob Boersma that caused me to think about an experience whereby a crew from our 409th Squadron was lost in the English Channel. I do not remember all the details, but I do recall that a plane was lost. As best I can remember, our crew was on a training flight that day with other crews from the 93rd. We apparently went out over the Channel and returned individually. As we crossed the coastline, it was required of each crew to send up flares of the day to indicate friendly aircraft. It was the radio operator's duty to carry out this responsibility, as well as I can remember. The Germans had reconstructed downed B-24s and used them to raid locations in England, and this was the reason for proper

identification of any aircraft crossing the coastline.

Bob's brother was killed when his plane went down while on such a practice mission. In reading the accident report which has now been declassified, it seems their flares were never fired. Bob has since joined The Heritage League, and he and his wife visited England and viewed his brother's name on the Wall at Madingley. They visited Hardwick, the Memorial Library, Norwich, and much more. He also received a bronze grave marker from the military, which he has placed on his parents' graves here in the U.S. He was only 13 at the time of his brother's death and doesn't remember much about it, except he does remember his parents' grief. He feels that being able to place the marker on their graves provides a sense of closure. Each of us no doubt has our own memories as we observe the anniversary of one of the most important victories in the history of our country.

REUNION IN SAN DIEGO

We hope that all who are near (and able) will consider attending our reunion in San Diego. The check-in date at the Hendlery Hotel is November 10 and check-out is on the 14th. We are waiting for details from the hotel for making reservations. The plans are for us to attend the dedication of the Bronze B-24 and a possible visit to a Navy carrier docked in San Diego. When plans are firm, registration forms will be in the *Ball of Fire*. Hope to see you there! ■

WHERE WERE YOU ON SEPTEMBER 11th? (continued)

he wanted to pee. Someone said, "Pee in your pants." He said, "Are you kidding?" The ambulance came after he relieved himself near the nose wheel and climbed onto the stretcher. They slid him in and away they went. Although I had tossed out the cameras when we got the word to lighten the load, I kept the exposed film magazines and headed to the base photo lab. Great pictures. Wasn't able to keep a set ("Classified").

I will always remember September 11, 1943.

Editor's Note: Retired U.S. Air Force Capt. Al Ciurczak received two DFCs during his Aleutian Island tour. ■



WENDLING

392nd

BY OAK MACKEY

FIRST 8TH AIR FORCE BOMBER OVER BERLIN

Not so long ago, I got a nice letter from Alvin J. Stasney, who was the navigator on the Joseph Darnell crew. Their very first mission was to Gotha on February 24, 1944. A week later, on March 3, they were flying on the first-ever mission to targets in the Berlin area. According to the *Mighty Eighth War Diary* by Roger Freeman, the entire 8th Air Force was dispatched to Berlin that day. The weather was terrible, extremely cold at flight altitudes and clouds built up to 30,000 feet or so. The 28 crews from the 392nd BG got their B-24s airborne at 0730 hours and proceeded across the North Sea, much of the way flying formation in the clouds. Windows frosted over due to the cold, and gun turrets refused to function. Approaching the coast of Denmark while flying in the overcast, the Darnell crew became separated from the formation. At about this same time the entire 8th AF was recalled, but because of difficulties with their radios, the Darnell crew did not hear the recall message and they flew on toward the 392nd's assigned target at Oranienburg, just north of Berlin. Stasney navigated as best he could and is sure they were over Berlin at the appointed time; however, the ground wasn't visible and he couldn't pinpoint their exact position. Assuming the above is true, and it is, the Darnell crew flew the first ever 8th Air Force bomber over Berlin. They turned back toward England and in the Heligoland area encountered some flak while flying at 12,000 feet. They had no damage and proceeded on to Wendling. Stasney's feet were frozen and an ambulance took him directly to the base hospital. He was never debriefed, so nothing was ever entered into the 392nd Group official records regarding their flight over Berlin. If any of you were on this mission or know anything about it, contact Alvin J. Stasney, P.O. Box 379, Crosby, TX 77532, or call him at 281-324-3769.

MACKEY FLIES AGAIN!

In April of 1944, I completed cadet flight training flying the North American AT-6. Now, fast-forward to December 2004: My son, Randy, and his wife, Susan, bought me a front seat flight in an AT-6 for Christmas. What a nice surprise!

On the appointed day, Maxine, Randy,

Susan, and I traveled to the Casa Grande Airport, about fifty miles south of Phoenix, for my flight. There I checked in with American Warbirds, Inc. and showed them my log book which recorded my AT-6 flying time from sixty years ago, and my pilot's license which is still current. A photographer from Warbirds took video pictures of the four of us by the airplane, then pictures of me climbing into the front cockpit, getting my parachute buckled on and seat and shoulder straps secured. I got a refresher cockpit check-out from a pilot, who was also the photographer, and he took some pictures of me in the cockpit as well. This AT-6 was equipped with three



video cameras, one on the tail aimed forward, one on the right wing trip pointed at the cockpit, and one in the cockpit aimed at my face. From the photographer's camera and these additional cameras a VCR tape would be made which I could keep for a wonderful souvenir.

Now it is time to go fly. The pilot in the rear cockpit, who has been there all along, taxis out to the runway and is talking to me on the interphone. He will make the takeoff, make a low pass over the airport, and then I will take the controls and fly the airplane. On returning to the airport, he will make the landing. I say that sounds like a good deal to me; let's go. So after takeoff and the low pass, I take the controls and he says to fly straight east to the practice area and climb to 4,000 feet. The AT-6 is a stable airplane yet very responsive to control inputs. Sixty years ago I could toss it all over the sky; today we will keep it slow and simple. At the practice area, I start with shallow turns with a 20-degree bank, then steeper turns of a 45-degree bank, and I find I still keep it on airspeed and altitude just like long ago. This is fun! The pilot suggests a barrel roll, which he demonstrates. Nose down to pick up speed to 160, pull the nose above the horizon, then full left aileron with the control stick and over and around we go. Now it's my turn. I fail to keep the stick all the way to the left as we roll, and it turns out to be a sloppy mess. Next time, I keep the

stick all the way left and it's a nice roll. On the way back to the airport I do a couple of rolls to the right, and this is just like old times. In the airport traffic pattern, the pilot takes over and lands the airplane. There is a fair crosswind from the left and he bounces a bit. He says they won't write any books about that one. He was a good kid, a good pilot, and I think he got a kick out of showing an old-timer how to do it again.

Randy and Susan had been taking pictures with their video camera whenever the airplane was in sight, so there were pictures of the takeoff, the low pass, and the landing. This flight was well recorded. It was a great day!

THE LEGENDARY LIBERATOR GALLERY

You have all read in the 2ADA *Journal* and in your group newsletters about the *Second to None: The Legendary Liberator Gallery* which is proposed as a tribute to the B-24 Liberator and the Second Air Division. You have read that the budget for this project is \$125,000, and that the work to build it within the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum will not begin until all the money has been collected. You may have already sent a donation. I did. I'm a confirmed tightwad and I sent \$100. I will send another donation later this year; perhaps you can too. Mail to: E.W. Nothstein, 2ADA Treasurer, 40 Meadow Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559-1142. Be sure to mark your check and specify that your donation is for the *Second to None: The Legendary Liberator* exhibit. Donations are tax deductible.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Sometimes your junk e-mail contains words of wisdom. Consider: "Never play leap frog with a unicorn." Or: "If you can't be happy where you are, it's a cinch you won't be happy where you ain't." And: "Never accept a drink from a urologist." From Ben Franklin: "Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults." Gandhi: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

That's it; I can't write no more. Take care of each other. Cheers! ■

Russian Excursion – World War II Style

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

Editor's Note: Chapter One appeared on page 25 of the Spring 2005 Journal.

CHAPTER TWO

The second evening we were there, the base C.O., a Russian Colonel, had a party for us. We assembled in the other of the two buildings, a old two-story wooden affair which was BOQ, HQ, and all else for this Russian AF unit occupying the field. Downstairs in the building there was a hall; one of the first doors led into a large conference/dining room. It was a bare room with a long table and chairs down the middle. A kitchen adjoined. In addition to our crew (8), there were about fifteen Russian AF officers, including the Doc and Tanya.

Our crew were all seated at the Colonel's end of the table. We were served a borscht-type soup, thick with vegetables, some strange fresh-cooked meat, black bread, and *real* butter. Empty water glasses were at each place; pitchers of water and "soda-pop" looking bottles of clear liquid were placed up and down the table. The Colonel poured his glass half full of the clear liquid, and filled up the glass with water. As everyone else in the room did the same, we obediently followed suit. The Colonel stood up. "Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill!" All glasses were raised, and all went bottoms up. Wow! Did that burn! The "pop" was pure 100% alcohol! Now, the glasses (at the Colonel's direction) were refilled, this time to toast the same leaders, but in different order. "Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill!" Charlie had had an upset stomach from the effects of our trip, so quietly faked it and filled his glass with water only. Suddenly, there was a silence over the whole room. We looked at the Colonel, who was glaring at Charlie, insulted that he was refusing to drink with his Russian ally.

Poor Charlie! Visions of starting an international breach in Allied relations crossed his mind! But his stomach couldn't take any more — he was already about to double up in pain. A hurried explanation to Art was conveyed to the doctor in German and finally to the Colonel. A smile of OK, and the toast was carried out with Charlie using water! As the evening progressed, the Russians got delight and laughs at our incapability to keep up with their drinking. Toast after toast was proposed, with all possible combinations of Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, Zuckov, Eisenhower, Patton, etc., etc., etc. When Dick Nason, in desperation, tried to add more water than alcohol, he found his glass mysteriously and constantly becoming fuller and stronger with alcohol. He was seated next to the Colonel — finally he saw out of the corner

of his eye the Colonel reach over with the "pop" bottle of 200 proof stuff and pour Dick's glass full each time he thought Dick was looking the other way!

After dinner, we staggered, while the Russians walked, outside, up the outside stairs, and into a big upstairs room. There, with the music being furnished by two or three of the group who played guitars and the like, a dancing party concluded the evening. The dancing was Cossack style, men with men partners (except for the Doc, who danced with Tanya), and of course we were wheedled into joining. This created great merriment not only because we had no idea of the dance steps required, but because of the vast (vast to us, not to them!) quantities of vodka we had consumed. Ed Vaughan must have been in better shape than the rest of us, because he remembers them playing the "beer barrel polka" in our honor as one of the numbers. How we ever got back to our quarters is a mystery, but we did get there. I suspect our "keepers," the Doc and Tanya, probably helped lead, carry, or drag us to our beds!

The next few days gave us insight into several things. For one thing, despite our constant pleas to have our plight communicated to the U.S. Forces, it was obvious nothing was being done in this regard. In fact, the Russians were using the same "double-talk" methods on us that we had used on them to "explain" why they hadn't carried out our wishes — at the same time hinting broadly that we ought to join their Air Force and fly for them. To them, this made sense: In addition to the Yaks, they had several U.S.-made planes, including C-47s, and a P-39, operating in and out of the field — all with Russian markings. What more natural than U.S. flyers to fly U.S.-built planes! We found that the C-47s were used as medium low-level bombers. The rear (side) door was removed, a hand-swivel machine gun was mounted just inside the door, and light bombs were stacked like sacks of potatoes on the floor. In addition, primitive wood racks carried a few bombs under the wings. A crude sighting device was used up front; when sighted in on a target, the "seat belt" light was flashed in the waist, indicating time for "bombs away," and a couple of men rolled the bombs out the door and pulled wires that released the wing bombs. "Low level" meant *really* low level: the machine gun was used to strafe the ground troops during the bomb run!

We learned that the P-39 was the Colonel's plane. We also discovered that in Russia, when you became an Aviation Cadet,

you went right into combat as a co-pilot and got your entire training that way — while being combat-useful. If you survived enough missions you became a first pilot. It was obvious that this resulted in less proficient flyers than we were used to in the States. I remember early morning take-offs for combat by Yaks, TU-2s (twins somewhat like a large version of our AT-11s), and C-47s. It was "start engines, taxi out, and takeoff." No warmup, no check lists. It appeared from what person-to-person contacts we had with the Russian pilots at that base that the usual "warmup before takeoff" was a few drinks of vodka the pilots gulped down prior to boarding their planes. And landings were a reflection of this type of "training," too. That old AF quip, "On that landing, your fourth bounce was your best one!" was no quip here!

Emergency facilities were minimal at this base. We saw a Yak come in to land, tail too high. He hit the brakes, and finally skidded to a halt with the nose in the dirt, tail up in the air. From an old rickety shed across the field came the sound of someone trying to crank-start an engine. This failed, then several men pushed (by hand) out of the shed an old square-built ambulance, World War I vintage. With one man steering, and three or four pushing, they pushed this "emergency vehicle" over to the wrecked plane. They dragged the pilot out, put him in the ambulance, and again hand-pushed it, this time to our hospital. Fortunately, the pilot was no worse than bruised and shaken up. We never saw any medical equipment in the "hospital" — we assumed a few bandages and lots of vodka solved all problems.

On our third day, the remnants of a U.S. bomber crew came straggling in on foot. They told us they had been hit over Berlin, and chose to proceed into Russian territory. Not far from where we were, they were attacked by Russian Yaks and shot down. Two of their crew were killed. Later, another U.S. flyer from a different crew appeared. This was a strange case that caused us to have questions and doubts, which we kept to ourselves. He arrived in a flight suit, carrying a large B-4 type flight bag. Said he was shot down — the only survivor of his crew. Then, out of his bag he took a full, nicely pressed, Class "A" uniform, complete with major's insignia, ribbons, the works. He took out a full stocked travel kit, with shaving kit, personal care items, etc., and proceeded to spruce up and change into the fancy uniform. He looked ready for a parade. He became very uncommunicative

(continued on next page)

ATTLEBRIDGE TALES



BY JIM LORENZ

BASE STATUS

Several of us have heard rumors about some possible changes at Attlebridge base, now owned by **Bernard Matthews** who operates a turkey farm on the old 466th base. The familiar old concrete runways are still there, as are the concrete revetments where we parked our B-24s. These areas serve as the base for many oblong buildings where the turkeys are raised. The base

is closed to visitors, as turkeys are very susceptible to our many germs. However, whenever we veterans are visiting, we are allowed to walk the runways and relive some of our most exciting times — trying to lift off our 60,000 pound monster before we ran out of runway.

A local friend has told us that there have been some discussions on the possibility of a developer buying some or all of the base property for upscale housing. Of course, this is private property and we are not at all involved — just an item of interest. Most of the Division's old bases do have commercial owners by now. Just a note of interest for now.

INQUIRIES

We continue to find quite a few queries on both the Heritage League website, www.heritageleague.org and the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum website, www.mightyeighth.org. Both have sections where visitors may post a message or question. These are checked quite often and the questions are directed to the proper Group VP. Most often these inquiries are from family members of veterans — seeking more information on their relatives' activities or just try-

ing to find out what happened. I plan to continue with this activity — it's a very rewarding pastime to be able to help more than 70% of the inquirers.

One recent query on the League website came from **Rick Dedrickson**, whose dad, **Warren L. Dedrickson**, was a gunner on a crew that flew *Galloping Ghost* #41-29439. Rick told me that Warren had died around Thanksgiving in November 2004. He was a member of the 2ADA and 466th BGA. My reply noted to Rick that his dad flew with crew #716 (**McGregor**) and crew #733 (**Baker**). I will now refer him to the 8th AF Museum, as they have a great research library.

THE FUTURE

Wish we could tell you what will happen next. Some BGAs are already having their "Last Mission" and others are discussing the future. The 466th BGA did announce that their last big meeting was to be in San Diego in May 2005. We will be in contact, hopefully by letter, as soon as we can work it out.

The 8th Air Force Historical Society will be meeting September 27 – October 2 in Arlington, Virginia. ■

RUSSIAN EXCURSION – WORLD WAR II STYLE (continued from page 13)

tive and aloof thereafter. We often wondered how and why he travelled on a bombing mission with a large bag, and why it contained a fancy uniform rather than survival gear, etc. — but he kept his distance from us, and his secret.

On several occasions, when we became impatient with our situation, Ed Vaughan, our radio operator, went out to the ship and tried to use our radio to signal someone, anyone, of our plight and location. But in short order the batteries ran down, ending this hope of communication. Getting to the plane, by the way, was no easy task. As Bob Honeycutt, who accompanied Ed to the plane, recalled, "it was guarded by this *huge* Mongolian soldier, carrying both a rifle and a submachine gun, with a big ammo belt strapped over his heavy coat. His orders were to let *no one* go near the ship — we always had to get a Russian officer to go out with us to give the OK. Even then, he would glare at us and look menacing. We moved very carefully so as not to get him upset!"

Other remembrances: The rifle cartridges with wooden bullets strewn about the grounds (it was explained that the Germans used wooden bullets at close range to inflict hard-to-heal wounds) . . . Art Fetskos's ability to communicate using gestures and "body-English" to supplement his halting German: he even convinced some local farm ladies to wash all our clothes for us, which they did using a large

wooden tub, cold water, and an old broken boat oar for stirring . . . Trash piles of Polish money (now worthless) . . . German uniforms, helmets, and fighting equipment (we all brought home souvenirs) . . . Propaganda leaflets (by the Russians, dropped when the Germans occupied this field, telling the Germans to surrender, as they were doomed) . . . When our supply of U.S. cigarettes ran out (which we had shared with our Russian friends), the Russians in turn furnished loose, but poorer quality tobacco, and showed us how to use the leaflets as makeshift cigarette wrappers.

One morning, after about a week of what was now becoming more and more obviously confinement, with no intention by the Russians of releasing us, lo and behold a C-47 with U.S. markings circled the field, landed, and taxied up. ATC, the pilot said, made a practice of touring every week or so up and down these areas, looking for downed crews. They saw our B-24, and came in for us. Little more was said; we hurriedly got our stuff together and climbed aboard. We didn't wait to say any "good-byes" to the Russians, because we weren't sure we'd get away if they got wind of our intended departure. That pickup of our crew by the C-47 was what the airlines nowadays like to label as a "quick turnaround." Taxi in, board (in this case with engines still running), taxi out, and leave! (In all fairness to the Russians, they were a front line combat unit, flying daily combat

from a few miles behind the front lines; they had more pressing matters to attend to than providing us with the immediate service we desired. It may not have been their intention to forcibly detain us; they might have gotten around to our needs eventually. But we weren't about to let this opportunity go!)

The C-47 took us to Poltava, Russia, a U.S. shuttle base. There we were washed, deloused, and issued clean Class "B" uniforms. We were issued orders marked "Secret" directing us to proceed by the best and most direct military means possible to 8th AF HQ in England.

Our return trip was interesting: it included stops at Teheran, Cairo, Libya, Athens, Rome, Naples, Marseilles, Paris, and finally London and then our base at Tibenham, all of this courtesy of U.S. Air Transport Command. Because of ATC flight schedules, we stayed over at several of these places, sometimes for several days each, and, whenever we had time, were able to sightsee by borrowed Jeep or tour vehicle, courtesy of the USAAF. (Sightseeing in Paris, by the way, included such sights as all-night nightclubs, etc.!)

Upon our return to our base at Tibenham, we first rescued our belongings (the items which hadn't mysteriously disappeared, that is!) from the MIA storage room, then got new quarters assignments, and reported for operational duty. We resumed bombing flights shortly thereafter — almost a month to the day of the Zossen raid. ■

458th BOMB GROUP

HORSHAM ST. FAITH



BY RICK ROKICKI

MEMORIAL MARKER AT HORSHAM ST. FAITH

After my last appeal to you for further help regarding the remaining costs, I received word from **Christine Armes** that she is pursuing other avenues in England for assistance.

She found a Grant Organization headquartered in London that assists in establishing war memorials. They mainly advise how to go about doing this and help with grants to organizations that seek help to establish said memorials. Our memorial didn't qualify under the British rules for their Registered Charity, but this organization is independent of government rules. However, the big difference which is presently in review, is that our memorial is already established and, for the most part, almost fully funded. They have agreed to "entertain an interest" if they can have copies of expenses and number of individuals who have already donated funds and services. The fact that we have had several years and dedication to our "Marker" is a plus for us. All information has been sent, and whatever comes of this effort will be reported in a future *Journal*.

I would encourage your continuing support to complete our balance to the memorial expenses. Please send whatever you can afford, payable to Christine P. Armes, 5 Primrose Court, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0SF, England.

CORGI B-24 MODEL

Finally, the Corgi B-24 models arrived during the last week of March. **Amanda Streeter**, the Corgi representative who is handling the 2ADA account, sent nearly 200 advisory cards to all who have ordered and/or previously paid for their B-24 model. If you did not receive word from Corgi regarding your order, please call or write to Ms. Amanda Streeter, Corgi Classics, 175 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 1770, Chicago, IL 60604. Her phone number is 312-302-9912; fax number is 312-427-1880.

As mentioned in my column in the Fall 2004 *Journal* (Vol. 43, No. 3), Corgi closed their Connecticut warehouse and now sell only through their dealers/distributors. However, if you have not previously ordered or expressed interest, you can still get in touch with Amanda and she will make arrangements to forward your request to a nearby dealer at our special rate if you identify yourself as a 2ADA member. In a late-March call to Amanda, she advised that 130 models had been shipped, an additional 15 were being shipped in mid-April and there were at least 20 more awaiting reply. So, if you desire Corgi's model B-24, this may be your last chance to contact her before the balance goes to their dealers inventory.

ON FINAL

We presently show 433 members on our roster. This includes 50 associate members (AM). A far cry from the nearly 750 members we had ten years ago. **Evelyn Cohen**, 2ADA Membership VP, sends all group VPs an annual list of those who have not renewed their dues after the second notice. Most VPs then generally write to those in an effort to remind them. This year I received a list of 26 names; 9 of whom reinstated, 2 had passed away, and 15 did



Pre-Unveiling of the 458th Memorial Marker at Horsham St. Faith.
PHOTO BY DAVID HASTINGS

not reply. Generally we used to think that they may have moved and left no forwarding address, but since none this year were returned for this reason, it's likely that those members have passed away and no one has advised us. I went back through my records from 2002 through 2004 checking on these three years of previous notices and found that (combined) 62 received third notices, 12 were reinstated, 6 had passed away, and 44 did not reply.

Charlie Freudenthal, past 2ADA president and former 489th Group VP, sent me a newspaper article from the *Herald Mail*, a Hagerstown, MD newspaper, relating to **Maurice "Lee" Watson's** flight to Andryes, France for a dedication. The story appears on page 9 of this issue of *The Journal*. ■

NOW YOU KNOW...

"Those Crazy Pub Signs"

Back when Britain thrived under Roman occupation, a thirsty traveler could always spot a wine shop because of the bush hung out as a sign. Until fairly recently, of course, the great majority of Englishmen could not read. Through the centuries, public houses offering rest and refreshment have signified themselves by the pictorial description of their name on the signboard hung outside. In the 14th century, King Richard II (1367-1400) went so far as to make them compulsory.

Historic events (The Rose & Crown), occupations (The Shepherd's Crook), famed noblemen (The Duke of Wellington), and assorted fauna (The Speckled Trout) all provide common pub names. Sources of others are less easy to identify: The Slug & Lettuce or The Pig Sty. And then there's the place where Prince Charles took his first drink, The Queen's Arms.

Ed. Note: It appears that an ideal name for a pub, tavern or bar should be "Inn Moderation." It seems that just about everybody advises you to drink "in moderation."



NEWS OF THE 453RD FROM FLAME LEAP

BY LLOYD W. PRANG

This story is from **Bill Norris** and is dedicated to all who flew behind round engines.

We gotta get rid of those turbines; they're ruining aviation and our hearing. A turbine is too simple-minded. It has no mystery. The air travels through it in a straight line and doesn't pick up any of the pungent fragrance of engine oil or pilot sweat. Anyone can start a turbine. You just need to move a switch from "OFF" to "START" and then remember to move it back to "ON" after a while. My PC is harder to start.

Cranking a round engine requires skill, finesse, and style. You have to seduce it into starting. On some planes the pilots aren't even allowed to do it . . . Turbines start by whining for a while, then give a lady-like *poof* and start whining a little louder. Round engines give a satisfying *rattle-rattle, click-click, BANG*, more *rattle*, another *BANG*, a big macho *BURP* or two, more clicks, a lot more smoke, and finally a serious low-pitched roar. We like that. It's a GUY thing.

When you start a round engine, your mind is engaged and you can concentrate on the flight ahead. Starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan — useful but hardly exciting. When you have started your round engine successfully, your crew chief looks up at you like he'd let you kiss his girl too! Turbines don't break or catch fire often enough, leading to aircrew boredom, complacency, and inattention. A round engine at speed looks and sounds like it's going to blow at any minute. This helps concentrate the mind.

Turbines don't have enough levers or gauges to keep a pilot's attention. There's nothing to fiddle with during long flights. Turbines smell like a Boy Scout camp full of Coleman lamps. Round engines smell like God intended machines to smell.

"Pass this on to an old WWII pilot, or to his son who flew them in Vietnam in remembrance of that 'Greatest Generation.' I made up a few things, and there's some I forgot. But the life and the tellin' are both real to me. It all runs together and turns out to be a semi-true story." **Jimmy Buffet**.

Regarding this story, **David Hastings** wrote: "Thanks, Lloyd. This is from a pilot who flew behind round engines. I was tickled in 1992 when we landed the *Diamond Lil* at the U.S. Navy base at Keflavik on three engines, to hear the U.S. Navy engineers who offered to help us with the engine change say they were 'so pleased to

be working on a round engine.' "

Another comment via the Internet was: "No one will ever replace the romance of double-row, prop-swinging, oil-dripping, spark plug fouling, smoke-belching, round airplane engines. Those things had mixture, throttle, turbo boost, and prop controls. You even had to switch your own fuel tank sequence. They had constant speed props that weren't, an auto-sync feature that didn't, and anti-detonation injection that wouldn't. Aviation and the fine art of flying are lesser for their passing."



Abe Wilen called to say that **Pat Ramm** has had health problems lately but that he's doing alright now. These problems didn't stop him from continuing to jump out of airplanes — with a parachute, of course. However, during their conversation Pat expressed one regret to Abe. It seems that very few of our 453rd people have been visiting Old Buck. He'd like everyone to know that he's still extremely able and willing to show you around the airfield or the Second Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich. If you or any of your family are planning a trip to our old air base or to Norwich, please contact Pat via e-mail at patvramm@aol.com or by phone at 11-44-1-953-483-396. His address is: Common Farm, Little Ellingham, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1JU, England.

Here's a word to those who insist on jumping out of perfectly good airplanes. A skydiving instructor was going through the question-and-answer period with his new students when one of them asked the usual question: "If our chute doesn't open and the reserve doesn't open, how long do we have before we hit the ground?" The jump master looked at him very seriously and said, "You have the rest of your life."

George Ion, the nose gunner on the **Salvatore Mauriello** crew, sent this note to Mo along with his dues for 2005: "I will be canceling my membership after this year. All my crew members have died and I will not be attending any more reunions. It has been fun and rewarding while it lasted."

George's words regarding reunions have been echoed by several of our members. Traveling to anywhere has begun to be a chore rather than an enjoyment. Even so, seventy of our people have chosen to ignore these difficulties and their "old bones." They have registered and are coming to what might well be the "Final Flight" for

453rd reunions this coming October. If you've never been to a reunion or if you'd like to be a part of this one, we invite you to join us. Check the back two pages in the March Newsletter for details, or contact me. But please do it real soon — like immediately!

"Old bones" or not, nothing stops **John and Josephine Vercler**. They were one of the first to register for the "Chicago" reunion to be held this October. They simply plan to hop on their trusty electric steeds, as they did at the Kalamazoo reunion, and join us again and have a darn good time.

Nuff said! Hope to see you in October for a trip back to the good old days. ■

453RD'S PAT AND AGGIE RAMM JUMPED TOGETHER FROM 10,000 FEET

SUBMITTED BY JIM REEVES (HQ)

I receive the Old Buckenham Newsletter which is published by Friends of Old Buckenham (the base of the 453rd BG – Station 144). They are a very lively group with much activity year-round. Here is a clipping from the current issue, about Pat & Aggie Ramm, who are very active in this group. Pat and Aggie have attended most of the 2ADA conventions in recent years.



L-R: **Geoff Tucker**, **Aggie** and **Pat Ramm**, and UK parachute instructor **Andy Page** after the jump.

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD COUPLE DOWN — or is that up? Local legend **Pat Ramm**, our much-valued airfield historian, does like to keep his Para Wings up to date even at the age of 71, with a tandem jump once or twice a year — however this time round he took his wife with him! "**Aggie**" **Ramm** got her first Tandem under the belt strapped to instructor **Geoff Tucker** and declared the unique dual jump "incredible!" Now we're waiting for former Marine Pat to take the whole family. ■

Asleep at the Switch – The Extra Long D-Day

BY ROBERT A. JACOBS (389TH) • REPRINTED FROM THE 2ADA JOURNAL

At 0230 on 5 June 1944, the crew of *Liberty Run* was awakened to fly its 24th mission. Our crew, originally from the 93rd BG, was selected for PFF (pathfinder) training with the 564th Bomb Squadron of the 389th BG, Hethel, in March 1944. We flew our last 18 missions out of Hethel as a PFF crew leading or flying deputy lead for various bomb groups but most often with the 93rd. Howard Hinchman gave us our final pre-operational flight check ride upon completion of the PFF training. The crew was composed of the personnel named under the photo shown on this page. The mission of 5 June was to the Pas de Calais area, short and uneventful with no fighters and little flak observed.

Upon returning to Hethel, we received word that hot water was available at the “Ablutions.” This was an infrequent occurrence, so we made a dash for it. While in the shower, our crew was paged on the Tannoy and told to report to the briefing room immediately ready to fly — which we did — to Bungay, home of the 446th BG. When we landed, we were met by armed MPs, taken to a secured building, and informed that D-Day was 6 June, the following day. We spent the remaining time at target study and flight planning. I think we were given some coffee and sandwiches but cannot recall the details of that particular meal. To say that we were excited would be a gross understatement. This was what we had been waiting for. Our mission was to lead the 446th BG to bomb the invasion beaches of Normandy immediately prior to the ground assault. We had been selected to be the first heavy bomb group to cross the French coast on that day.

We took off at 0220, climbed to 10,000 feet and circled in our prescribed forming area firing specific flares as the 446th aircraft assembled in formation behind us. The mission went precisely as planned except for an undercast which necessitated bombing by radar. As we approached the French coast, the radar navigator called me over to look at his PPI scope. It clearly showed the vast armada of the invasion fleet standing just off the coast of Normandy — a thrilling sight even on radar. Bombs were away at precisely 0600! We led our aircraft back to Bungay via Portland Bill and returned to Hethel. Much to our surprise, no flak or German fighters were observed. Our fighter cover was everywhere.

As we started to undress to get some rest, we were again paged and told to get over to Bungay for another mission. During the course of the briefing, the flight surgeon gave each aircrew member a pill with



Standing (L-R): Lt. George F. Doell, co-pilot; Lt. Leon S. Campbell, bombardier; Lt. Lester J. Litwiller, pilot; Lt. John Heisl, radar navigator; Lt. John Brown, pilotage navigator; Lt. Robert A. Jacobs, D.R. navigator. **Kneeling (L-R):** T/Sgt. Warren Harding, flight engineer; S/Sgt. Lewis Critchelow, waist gunner; S/Sgt. Oscar Otto, ball turret; S/Sgt. James Maynes, waist gunner; T/Sgt. Fred Barnes, radio operator; S/Sgt. Earl Brooks, tail gunner.

instruction to take it only “when you feel you can no longer keep awake.” We had been up since 0230 of 5 June, and it was now the afternoon of 6 June, some 36 hours later — we were running on reserve energy.

Shortly after takeoff, my eyelids began to get very heavy. Since we were again leading the 446th BG and I needed to have all faculties clear, I took my pill. Shortly thereafter, all signs of weariness disappeared and I was again able to perform my navigation efficiently. We flew to our briefed target, Coutances, dropped our bombs, and returned to the English coast above a solid undercast. At landfall, I gave the pilot a heading for Bungay and relaxed. It was all over but the landing, or so I thought.

The next thing that I recall was being shaken violently by my engineer, T/Sgt. Bud Harding. He finally managed to get across that the pilot was calling me over the intercom. The pill had worn off and I had fallen soundly asleep! Les Litwiller, my pilot, informed me that he had been instructed by the British for circle and let down below the overcast so that our formation could be identified visually. There was some fear of German intruder aircraft. The formation was now at 1,000 feet and Les wanted a new heading for Bungay. There I sat, the lead navigator, feeling half drugged, without the foggiest notion of our position. I told Les to contact the deputy lead and obtain a heading from his navigator while I attempted to fix our position. We were apparently too low to use GEE, because I could not pick up any station clearly.

The heading obtained from the deputy lead put us on a track due east. In the meantime, I found our exactly when the formation letdown had started and was able to compute an approximate D.R. position around which I drew a circle. The radius of this circle was determined by the maximum distance we could have travelled from my D.R. plot. I figured we were somewhere in the circle, about 50-80 miles due west of London. Noting our easterly heading, I asked the pilot to monitor channel 6440 for balloon barrage squeakers because, according to my rough position, we were heading straight for Rainbow Corner. By now it was dark. Pilotage navigation was out because of the blackout.

I continued to work with the GEE set and was finally able to pick up one station. About that time, the pilot called to tell me that he had picked up the balloon barrage squeakers. I immediately gave him a new heading for Bungay, away from London. Then, for the first and only time, I used the GEE homing procedure that I had learned at Cheddington when our crew first arrived in the U.K. It worked beautifully, and we came across the blue perimeter lights of Bungay at 500 feet just as the GEE blips lined up — just as we had learned in the classroom at Cheddington.

A quick peel-off and we were on the ground at Hethel at 2345. It had been a long two days! As you can imagine, I was on the receiving end of many “asleep” type one-liners by my crew and other friends as word got around in the days that followed. ■

The Ploesti Trip by the Roy Braly Crew

BY NORBERT N. GEBHARD (389TH)

REPRINTED FROM CLEBURNE TIMES-REVIEW, WORLD WAR II • MAY 27, 2004

My name is Norbert N. Gebhard. I enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps on June 10, 1941. We were sent to aircraft armament school in Denver, CO, and then to an aerial gunnery school in Las Vegas.

While there, I took tests for aviation cadet and was accepted in the pilot program. I graduated and was commissioned in class 43C on March 10, 1943 at Roswell, New Mexico. I joined a B-24 crew as a co-pilot in the 565th Squadron of the 389th Bomb Group at El Paso. We flew the northern route across the Atlantic to our base at Hethel Field near Norwich, England.

We were immediately sent to Benghazi, Libya, in Africa to fly a mission to Ploesti, Rumania, a 2,400-mile, 13-hour round trip. The Ploesti oil refineries were supplying a third of Hitler's overall fuel requirements, including more than half of the Luftwaffe's high octane aviation gas. The attacking force consisted of three B-24 groups from England and two groups from Africa, all the B-24s available at the time.

One hundred seventy-eight B-24s took off from Benghazi on Sunday morning, August 1, 1943, for the mission which was later known as "Black Sunday." The smoke stacks of the refineries were approximately 200 feet tall, so we bombed at low altitude, from 250 to 500 feet. Of the 178 airplanes, approximately 162 made it to the target, and 54 were shot down. Eighty-eight planes did make it back to Benghazi, 55 of them heavily damaged. Only 33 airplanes were fit to fly a mission the next morning.

Our crew was lucky to be in one of these, and we didn't receive a scratch or injury. Our group only lost six airplanes, and two of these made it to Turkey. The Ploesti target was out of commission for six months and never did make it back to pre-mission capacity. Of the total crewmen, 446 were killed, missing in action or imprisoned and 130 were wounded, their crippled aircraft unable to make it back to their African bases. Seventy-nine aircraft were interned in Turkey or down on Cyprus, Malta or Sicily. For lack of airplanes, no more missions were flown to Ploesti until April to August of 1944, when the refineries were finally completely destroyed. These missions were flown from Italy at high altitude with a loss of 314 bombers and 111 fighters. Ploesti turned out to be one of the most expensive targets of the war.

On August 23, 1944, Rumania revolted against the Germans, causing bitter battles



and air raids against the innocent people of Bucharest and on the hospitals of the prisoner-of-war camps. August 31 and September 1, in just two days, 1,185 Allied airmen were rescued from 400 miles behind German lines, with specially equipped B-17s, without a single casualty.

The Ploesti mission resulted in approximately 2,500 decorations, including five Medals of Honor and 430 Purple Hearts. Every combatant on the mission received a Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, or at least a Distinguished Flying Cross. This was one of the 25 missions I flew during my combat tour in World War II. ■

Norbert Gebhard upon his return from his last mission. Note the grin!

A Salute to David G. Patterson (8/13/1920 – 4/12/2005)

BY JORDAN R. UTTAL (HQ)

As one of the seven organizers of our 2nd Air Division Association and as Honorary President since 1989, I was asked by Editor Ray Pytel, Governor Chuck Walker, and President Geoff Gregory to honor Dave Patterson in this manner.

With the above credentials I had the opportunity and the great satisfaction of working with and for every one of our Association leaders. I say without reservation that there have been few who equalled the dedication, the ability, and the splendid results which Dave demonstrated.

He was elected president of the 2ADA at our San Antonio convention in 1981, and shortly after his term of office he has served as 2ADA Secretary and Director of Administrative Affairs. In the latter capacity he was responsible for organizing the program of the Executive Committee meetings at all of our conventions once they had been established by the current president each year. Here again Dave served with distinction.

He always exhibited the ability to listen to his fellow members with an open mind and a strong desire to have them feel that their views were welcome and would be considered.

Dave and his wife, Joan, always extended the hand of friendship not only to their friends in Dave's 445th Bomb Group but also to all with whom he worked on the Executive Committee and to the friends we have made in Norwich.

Dave flew as a co-pilot with the 445th, earned the appropriate decorations, and made close friends within the group. He even crash landed in Poland while on a mission to Berlin. He was interned by the Russians and ultimately released to return home.

He had left college in 1942 to enter the service, and upon returning home after the war, he returned to his studies and graduated from Stanford with degrees in engineering and an MBA. He had a most successful business career. This is reflected in the number of entries in the Donors Book at our Memorial Library in Norwich in the Patterson family name.

Dave truly gave evidence of having strong affection for his fellow members of the Division, the Association, and our friends in England.

With a heavy heart, but also with great appreciation and affection, I end this salute with warm greetings to Joan and the family. ■

24th Annual Second Air Division Association of Southern California Regional Reunion Brunch

BY DICK BAYNES (466TH)

We returned to the Phoenix Club in Anaheim on Saturday, February 26, 2005 for a daytime brunch.

We had a double-barrel program this year, with our **FAVORITE PIN-UP GIRL**, legendary star **JANE RUSSELL**, and **WAR-TIME MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S AIR FORCE SERVICE PILOTS, VI COWDEN**. Jane entertained us with a few remarks and then sang an old-time favorite, "It Had To Be You!" Vi Cowden told us how a 5 foot 2, 100-pound (barely) young girl from South Dakota became one of 1,078 women, out of 25,000 applicants, who earned her wings and went on to fly 19 different kinds of aircraft while on duty as a WASP.

As members arrived for the function, they were welcomed at the registration table where **Agnes Rowe** (448th) checked them



Together once again at the annual Second Air Division Regional Reunion event, the original golf foursome who planned the early annual reunions. Shown (L-R) are Dick Boucher (445th), Harry Orthman (492nd & 44th), Chuck Walker (445th), and J. Fred Thomas (392nd). Chuck Walker moved to Texas and Fred Thomas had to stop playing golf, but Dick Boucher and Harry Orthman continue playing each week, now joined by Dick Baynes (466th).

in and handed out name tags. **Barbara Stoll** (448th) and "Mike" **Chamberlain** (489th) assisted. **Patti Quintana** (466th) and **Beverly Baynes Tomb** were at the raffle table encouraging members to buy raffle tickets.

C.N. "Bud" **Chamberlain** (489th), past president of the 2ADA, conducted opening ceremonies. **Congressman Ed Royce** led the Pledge of Allegiance, and **Maria Gunnarsson**, wife of **Frank Grew** (448th), led us in singing the National Anthem. **Malcolm "Mac" Dike** (466th) gave the invocation. The traditional lighting of Eight Candles of Remembrance concluded the opening ceremony with **Dick Peterson** (389th) and the following participants:

Air Offensive – Europe: **Ken Barnet** (448th), **Willard Levin** (392nd), **Jack Stevens** (467th).

Ploesti Campaign: **Fred Sparrevohn** (93rd), **Bob Young** (389th), **Julian Ertz** (44th).

Normandy Campaign: **Amador Espinosa** (445th), **King Schultz** (448th), **Rex Tabor** (466th).

Northern France Campaign: **Nick Kuklish** (466th), **Byron Calomiras** (491st), **Bob Jones** (458th).

Ardennes Campaign: **Ed Laszcz** (448th), **John Foster** (489th), **Fred Gerritz** (466th).

Rhineland Campaign: **Dick Boucher** (445th), **John Gately** (44th), **Bill Cagney** (446th).

Central Europe Campaign: **Mac Meconis** (466th), **Harry Tanzer** (467th), **Peggy Learman**.

All Comrades & Loved Ones Lost in the War and Since: **Jim Stoll**, USMC, **Evelyn Lingenberg** (489th), **George Welsh**, *Bomber Legends*.

After a fine brunch, our master of ceremonies, **Delbert Mann** (467th & 491st), introduced our honored guests, **Congressman Ed Royce, Jr.** and his father, **Ed Royce**, member of the 3rd Army, WWII.

Dick Butler (44th), past president of the Second Air Division Association, then brought us up to date on the Second Air Division Memorial Library. **George Welsh** of The Liberator Club re-

(continued on next page)



Vi Cowden, Women's Air Force Service Pilot (WASP), being thanked by event chairman Dick Baynes (466th BG).



L-R: Congressman Ed Royce, 40th California Congressional District; Edward Royce, Sr., 3rd Army, WWII; legendary film star Jane Russell; event chairman Dick Baynes (466th).



HETHEL 389th Bomb Group Green Dragon Flares

BY FIELDER NEWTON

The 2ADA convention will be over by the time you receive this *Journal*, and I trust that all of you who attended enjoyed the time of fellowship.

B-24 SCULPTURE

Received an e-mail from my friend **Craig Harris**, former president of the 8th AFHS, which should be of interest to all of us. You are probably aware of the effort of **Al Asch** (93rd BG) and others to have a bronze sculpture of a B-24 placed at the entrance of the Udvar-Hazy Center. Since this was denied by the Smithsonian no further effort had been put forth. Craig, who calls himself "an old B-17 driver," did not give up on this idea and went directly to Mr. Hazy for his support. While Mr. Hazy appreciates the interest of those men involved with the B-24, he leaves all decisions regarding the Center to the Smithsonian. It is my hope that Craig does not give up the fight and can muster help to convince the Smithsonian of the necessity to include the B-24 as an important part of WWII aviation history at the Udvar-Hazy Center.

THE LEGENDARY LIBERATOR

I have received two letters concerning the Second to None: The Legendary Liberator project at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. The museum proposes to design and build a gallery around the front fuselage section of the B-24 Liberator *Fightin' Sam* which is on loan from the American Air Museum in Duxford, England. It has been confirmed that the original *Fightin' Sam* was assigned to the 389th Bomb Group.

The budget for this project is \$125,000, and the museum asks that you consider a gift to this project that will give our B-24 the place in history that it deserves. Please read the appeal from 2ADA President **Geoff Gregory** and **Major General Ramsay D. Potts (Ret)** on page 35 of this issue. I encourage you all to support this project with whatever tax-deductible contribution you can afford, and mail it to the 2ADA Treasurer, E.W. Nothstein, 40 Meadow Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559-1142. Make your gift out to 2ADA and mark it for the "Second to None Gallery."

Three pictures of *Fightin' Sam* are shown in this issue of *The Journal*. Two of these, the one below and one on page 21, were



War-time photo from John Woolnough's 8th AF Yearbook 1980.

apparently taken during wartime. The other picture on page 21 shows *Fightin' Sam* as it appeared in the Duxford Museum.

A brief history of *Fightin' Sam*'s 389th history indicates that there were at least two. Here are two separate backgrounds gleaned from the 1995 version of the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation's "Project Bits and Pieces" historical survey of B-24s in the 8th AF, 2nd Air Division, plus a third background by Gene Hartley.

(1) B-24 240738, 566th Squadron, St. Nazaire mission – December 5, 1943. Failed to return — anti-aircraft — crashed at Painbosuf, France. Pilot **Lt. Harvey B. Mason** — 9 KIA — 1 POW — MACR 2351. Ref: Read Roger Freeman's *Airfields of the 8th — Then and Now*. Roger Freeman's *Mighty 8th War Diary* reports only one 389th B-24 lost that day.

(2) B-24 240807, 567th Squadron, Gotha mission – February 24, 1944. German fighters — failed to return — crashed at Massbach, Germany. Pilot **Lt. John E. Gold** — 6 KIA — 4 POW — MACR 2940. Ref: See picture on page 168 of John Woolnough's *Eighth Air Force Yearbook 1980*. Roger Freeman's *Mighty Eighth War Diary* reports seven 389th B-24s lost that day.

(3) The most likely candidate appears in Gene Hartley's 389th newsletter article which I have submitted; it is reprinted in part on page 21 of this issue of the *Journal*.

389TH HISTORY BOOK

Received an e-mail from **Paul Wilson** to let us know that his book on the history of the 389th is in the hands of the publishers and he is expecting the proofs back shortly for checking. The book will be in Schiffer's autumn catalog so it can be ordered from them. Sadly, Paul's health is such that he cannot be with us in San Antonio. He sent his regrets and stated that he would miss seeing more of Texas and his friends from the 389th. He will be missed.

MY LAST REPORT

This is my last report for *The Journal*, and I want you to know how proud I am to have been given the opportunity to serve as your VP. The memories, fellowship, and great times will not be forgotten as I look forward to many more get-togethers in the future.

Keep 'em flying. ■

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL REUNION

(continued from page 19)

ported on the campaign to raise money for the **B-24 Memorial – San Diego**, the project to place a bronze B-24 model in Balboa Park, San Diego, the home of the B-24. **Fred Gerritz** (466th) reported on the B-24 Liberator Stamp which will be issued in July 2005. **Shawn Caldwell** described the production of the movie *Beautiful Dreamer*, which features a B-24. **Irene Hurner**, past president of The Heritage League, described a limited edition CD available through The Heritage League.

After the program, a very successful raffle was held with some great prizes. Raffle chairman **J. Fred Thomas** (392nd), past president of the Second Air Division Association and originator of the Regional Reunion Dinner, had a fine committee of **Harry Orthman** (492nd & 44th) and **Richard & Peggy Learman**. Richard and Peggy Learman conducted the raffle. Proceeds of the raffle will go to the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich, England; the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA; and the B-24 Memorial – San Diego.

Committee members who planned the dinner were: Chairman **Dick Baynes** (466th), **Bud Chamberlain** (489th), **Amador Espinosa** (445th), **Mac Dike** (466th), **Julian Ertz** (44th), **John Rowe** (448th), and **J. Fred Thomas** (392nd). ■

What's All the Fuss About "FIGHTIN' SAM"?

BY GENE HARTLEY, 389TH BG NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Left: The original 389th "Fightin' Sam" at Hethel. Right: Originally at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, England, the "Fightin' Sam" nose section is now at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia.

I have gotten ensnared in memories invoked by the picture of the B-24 *Fightin' Sam* in the 389th BG's 64th Newsletter. Memories have resulted in an unbelievable collection of *Fightin' Sam* stories. In light of differing memories, these stories might well be true, but in light of verifiable facts, they can't all be accurate.

Because of a suggestion that I write something for the *Fightin' Sam* exhibit being developed at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA, it is important to come down hard on verifiable facts.

Sam was first brought to our attention (inadvertently) when Dick Peterson offered his Video History of the 389th to us in the 5th Newsletter, Fall 1989. He incorrectly stated (because of Harley Mason's poor memory) that *Sam* was shot down on December 3, 1943 over St. Brevin, France. No corrective comment was forthcoming from our members.

Our 44th Newsletter, Summer 1999, featured a story from the people of St. Brevin who had erected a monument to pilot Harley Mason, the sole survivor of the December 1943 crash. Because of a letter written by Orville Powers, a member of *Sam's* ground crew, including a picture of *Sam* still flying from the same Hethel hardstand, it was recognized that *The Oklahoman*, not *Fightin' Sam*, was shot down.

Even when the nose section of *Sam* was displayed at England's Duxford Museum, some veterans of the 389th posed for pictures with *Sam* under the impression that the plane had serial # 42-40738. Not so! The B-24D *Fightin' Sam* to be displayed at Savannah had serial # 42-40506.

In 1992, "Project Bits and Pieces" was the title of a database supported and copyrighted by the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation. Compiled by Paul Andrews and Willis Adams and with a foreword by Roger Freeman, noted author and authority on the 8th Air Force, the database has some 16,000 records detailing various bits of information.

A first printing of this project (1992) on page 22 lists A/C serial # 240506 without a name. On page 23 this draft lists A/C # 240738

twice, once with the name *Fightin' Sam* and a second time as *The Oklahoman*. Obviously, inaccuracies were already prevalent.

A later updated version lists A/C # 240506 as *Fightin' Sam*. It also lists A/C # 240738 twice, once with the name *Fightin' Sam* and a second time as *The Oklahoman*.

I gave our member John Petrocelli a call. "John," I said, "give me the serial number of your '*Fightin' Sam*.'"

"240506 A," he replied.

John Petrocelli was the crew chief for A/C # 240506 A+. The A+ was the call letter for the 566th Squadron. His plane was named *Fightin' Sam*.

The plane became John's responsibility when he was assigned to it as crew chief in 1943 at Lowry Field, Colorado. He crewed the plane until it was transferred out of the 389th to the 801st Bomb Group. The plane flew the low level Ploesti mission, was never shot down, and never aborted a mission. John Petrocelli was awarded a Bronze Star for his work with *Fightin' Sam*.

There can be no doubt that the B-24 nose section to go on display at the Mighty Eighth Museum is that of A/C # 240506. If further verification is needed, John told me that the plane was transferred to the 801st Bomb Group (Carpetbaggers). The plane is remembered in a "Mail Call" letter from a pilot in the 801st BG on page 26 of the December 2004 "8th Air Force News."

Fightin' Sam is pictured (twice) on page 8 of the September 2004 issue of the "8th Air Force News." One can note that the number of bombs and swastikas painted on the plane is identical in the two *Fightin' Sam* pictures. Incidentally, the lone bomb painted at a 45° angle to the left of the others indicates the Ploesti mission, still another proof that this nose section is indeed the original *Fightin' Sam*.

The 389th BG will always be linked with the great Liberator bombers of our era through *Fightin' Sam*.

Any additional information will be most welcomed by your group vice president and no doubt the Journal editor. ■



491st BOMB GROUP POSTREMUM ET OPTIMUM the RINGMASTER REPORTS

BY HUGH BENNETT

By the time you read this article, the 2nd Air Division Association's 58th Annual Convention will be history. As usual, I will be disappointed with the attendance from the 491st. Since 1983 I have missed only one of our conventions (in 1996 due to a very sick wife). As our membership ages, we find it more difficult to get around, and elect to attend our own stand-alone group reunions. The so-called "golden years" aren't what we had in mind when we retired.

In an April 5, 2005 update from **Judy Walker**, Director of Development at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, she gave the status of the *Second to None: The Legendary Liberator* campaign. The campaign committee has raised \$17,660 for the exhibit from 62 gifts. The largest gift was \$5,000 and the smallest was \$5. Letters were mailed out to over 2,300 members and friends of the B-24 Liberator, so everyone should be aware of this outstanding exhibit planned for the Combat Gallery of the museum.

It is hopeful that there are individuals out there who can make a big difference with a gift of \$500 or more. All donations are tax-deductible and need to be mailed to the museum. The campaign will run through the end of the year, and our goal of \$125,000 must be met or the whole project will be a failure. Let's not let that happen. The people who visit the museum need to know that there was a B-24 bomber and that it was, in all respects, just as worthy and maybe a little bit better than the B-17 Flying Fortress.

Has the museum received your contribution for this wonderful exhibit? If we can get 1,250 donors at \$100 each, we have it made.

The 491st Bomb Group will be having its reunion in San Diego in October 2005, and we should have a good attendance there. The area has many attractions, including Howard Hughes' *Spruce Goose* and the original *Queen Mary*. And it's possible that the Bronze B-24 will be in place in Balboa Park.

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



NORTH PICKENHAM

492nd BOMB GROUP HAPPY WARRIOR HAPPENINGS

BY WILLIS H. "BILL" BEASLEY

What began as a personal history of their father, **Charles Arnett**, **Paul and David Arnett** have developed as a website for the 492nd Bomb Group. It is of the utmost importance to their father to get the Group history on the website as soon as possible. In order for Paul and David to devote their efforts full-time, Charles and Anna Arnett have assumed their cost of living expenses. Please visit the site and see what a tremendous job these two men are doing. Go to www.492ndbombgroup.com. They will appreciate any photos or other documents pertaining to the 492nd Bomb Group that they can scan. All material will be returned.

492ND BOMB GROUP REUNION

The 492nd Bomb Group will hold its second "stand-alone" reunion in Tucson, Arizona from May 18 to May 22. At this writing there will be 110 attendees. The theme of this reunion is to have fun and renew friendships. On the program for the three days is a trip to the Pima Air Museum, AMARC tour, lunch and a visit to the Mission San Xavier del Bac. The Tucson Prunes II, a ladies tap dancing group (ages 50 to 80) will entertain us on Thursday night. This is the 61st anniversary of the mission to Brunswick, Germany when the 492nd Bomb Group suffered heavy losses. There will be several members in attendance who became POWs as a result of this mission. To celebrate their safe return we are having a Thanksgiving Dinner.

A trip to Sabino Canyon and a visit to the de Grazia Museum is scheduled for Friday, May 20. **Alan Cass**, Director of the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado, will present his program following the banquet on Saturday night, May 21. The Elite Honor Guard from Davis-Monthan AFB, will post the colors led by a piper. We are pleased that our granddaughter, **Madeline Beasley**, will play Taps following the ceremony. All eight daughters of **Bernie and Rae Murtaugh** plus their children and grandchildren for a total of 20, are attending.

FOLDED WINGS

We were sorry to learn that **Duncan Greene** passed away in January, **Clyde Hatley** and **Rudie Bartel** in March, and **Andy Anderson** passed away on April 10, 2005. They will be greatly missed, and our deepest sympathy goes out to their families.

The untimely death of **David Patterson**,

Secretary of the Second Air Division Association, has deeply saddened **Bob Cash**, Norma and me. We three enjoyed a long working relationship with David on a business level as well as a personal level in conjunction with the 2ADA. Bob, Dorothy, Joan, David, Norma and I had many a good time together. There was always the friendly bantering about the Denver Broncos versus the Oakland Raiders as to who had the best or worst team. At one time we were members of the now-defunct Possum International Corporation; that was a great spoof several of us participated in.

David will be greatly missed because of his friendship, his wit, his generosity, and his many capabilities. Our hearts go out to Joan and family. David is a tough act to follow. Godspeed to your next assignment, David!

MEMORIAL DAY WREATHS

On Memorial Day, May 2005, **Enrico Schwartz** and his friends will be laying wreaths for the 492nd Bomb Group and the 2nd Air Division Association in Margraten (Netherlands) and Henri-Chapelle Cemeteries. **Ferdinand Dessente** will lay the wreath for the 492nd BG and the 2ADA in the Ardennes Cemetery. Our grandson, **Matthew Beasley**, is in London on a Mountbatten Fellowship and will lay a wreath for the 492nd BG on Memorial Day in the Cambridge Cemetery.

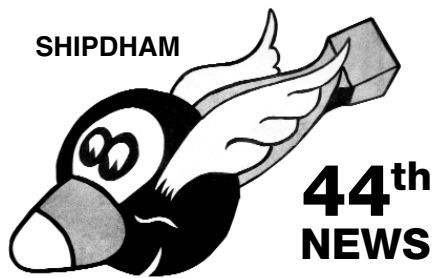
BUGLES ACROSS AMERICA

On May 21, 2005 (Armed Forces Day), 600-800 buglers will come to the Corning/Steuben County (New York) area from all around the country to perform a truly unique tribute to our deceased veterans. Brass players will line 41 miles of road between the Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira, NY and the Bath National Cemetery in Bath, NY to play Taps.

The project is called *Echo Taps, Honors Between Two National Cemeteries*. The primary objectives for Echo Taps:

- Honor and remember our soldiers and veterans;
- Preserve the tradition of playing Taps;
- Raise awareness of the need for live buglers to play the final military honors of Taps at veterans' funerals; and
- Foster a new generation of buglers to carry on this solemn tradition.

More information is available on the website www.echotaps.org. ■



BY GEORGE WASHBURN

The Board of Directors of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association met at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania on March 30 and 31. The meetings were held at the General Ridgeway Library, opened in 2004, as the first new building in the planned development of a 56-acre site for the United States Army Heritage Museum and Education Center.

Attending were **Robert Lehnhausen**, Immediate Past President; **Richard Lynch**, Treasurer; **Ruth Morse**, Secretary; **Will Lundy**, Historian; **Lee Aston**, Awards Chairman; **George Washburn**, 44th Group VP for the 2ADA; and **Paul Kay**, First Vice President, who chaired the meetings, filling in for our President, **Roy Owen**, who was unable to attend.

All of us, including wives and guests, were given a comprehensive tour of the facility, which contains more than 14 million personal papers, photographs, and historic objects such as uniforms, swords, etc., all connected to some individual. We were shown how they receive, inventory, catalog, preserve, and store the various

items and how all this can be retrieved and viewed. The enthusiasm and dedication of all the Army and civilian staff was most impressive.

Will Lundy, our faithful and dedicated historian, has long been looking for a facility that would take his large collection of photographs, documents and other materials, and also would properly preserve it and make it available to interested parties. This was the facility that impressed him the most and the one that was most anxious to obtain such things. They presently have very little on the Army Air Forces, and this will give them a great start on a collection. The board approved the entrusting of Will's collection to this museum and library. **Arlo Bartsch** gave the museum staff a demonstration of our Database Program, which greatly impressed them. They will be given copies of the CD for their library. It was most gratifying to all to see Will's happiness in knowing that all his efforts will be preserved and made available to future generations.

Paul Kay has made the arrangements for the 2005 reunion of the 44th BGVA. It will be held in Tacoma, Washington, September 4-7, at the Doubletree Hotel – Seattle – Tacoma Airport. A tour to Mount St. Helens is planned. **Ruth Morse**, in her Winter 2005 edition of *8-Ball Tails*, included a picture with a caption that reports that Paul has a team pouring ice cubes on the crater to keep it cool for our arrival!!

Walter Fitzmaurice, radio operator on our crew, sent this interesting account:

This has to do with the night we all went to the base movie and on our way over, going by Lehnhausen's hut, we noticed that he had received about a cord of wood. You remember how cold it was, so someone suggested (I think it was Balla or Woody — not me, of course) that each one of the crew pick up a stick of wood from Lehnhausen's pile. It was very dark as we went by the hut on our way back. We all lifted a stick of wood. We figured that the good Major would never notice a few sticks missing. Our allotment of two pails of coal a week had been exhausted, and you know how cold it can be. Well, the next morning when we were not flying, the good Major called the enlisted men into his office. He asked us how we were feeling and how we liked England and if we were getting our mail, etc. A lot of small talk to put us at ease. Then he asked if we slept well last night and if we were warm enough. A lot of questions to make us think he really cared. Then he said, "You know you guys lifted some of my wood last night." We all looked at one another and tried to figure out how the hell he knew. He looked at us with a grin and said, "You guys can go now."

We never did figure out how he knew. He was so good about it. He left us all with a guilt trip. What a commander. I will never forget him. To clear my conscience, I think I will mail him a stock of wood from my wood pile.

Fitz's little story sure demonstrates the quality of our leadership in those days. ■



BY MEL PONTILLO

I was deeply touched the other evening while watching the evening news, at the sight of another military funeral and the grief experienced by the surviving family members. These graphic scenes need no commentary, no explanation, nor would words be adequate to convey the sense of the moment. Often we speak of our experiences during World War II in terms of missions, maps, campaigns, and Generals. But as you and I have matured over the years and our perspective of life has deepened, the sight of a burial flag being passed across a military coffin to a surviving mother overshadows all notions from history books and Hollywood movies. What must

it have been like for our fathers and mothers to send their sons off to such a massive and encompassing war effort? What must it have been like to send not one, but two, three, four, or even five sons into combat against a determined enemy?

Such was the experience of my own family during World War II. The Pontillo family of Clearfield, Pennsylvania sent five sons off to war. My four brothers as well as myself were all in the service during the war. Frank, drafted in 1942, served in the U.S. Army Infantry, New Guinea and Guadalcanal. Joe, drafted in 1943, served with the U.S. Army Medics on the West Coast. Carmen, drafted in 1942, served with the U.S. Army Field Artillery in France and Germany. Vincent enlisted in 1943 and served in the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division (gliders) in France and Germany. And I enlisted in 1942 as an Aviation Cadet and went to the 489th Bomb Group in England where I was a flight engineer/gunner on B-24 heavy bombers for 35 missions and received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

My family's experience was not unique. According to research from the Internet, families with two, three, four, or five sib-

lings in the service were not uncommon. In fact, Internet reference is made to some family member groups of seven or eight! However, military records from World War II do not categorize family groups, and we risk speculation in specific numbers.

Certainly, the most celebrated family group of the World War II era was the Sullivan Brothers. "We stick together" was their motto. In that spirit they arranged to be stationed together on the *U.S.S. Juneau* despite Navy policy to the contrary. The Sullivans became instant celebrities. But wars can and do produce tragic realities, and such was the case of the Sullivans. All five Sullivan brothers were lost at sea when the *U.S.S. Juneau* was sunk in action by a torpedo during the Battle of Guadalcanal, November 13, 1942. The saga of the Sullivan Brothers is often described as the single greatest sacrifice by any one family during World War II and in U.S. Navy history. News of the deaths of the five brothers from Waterloo, Iowa provided great inspiration across the nation and a rallying point for the war effort. Immediately, they became national heroes, immortal-

(continued on next page)



SEETHING

The 448th Speaks

BY KING SCHULTZ

FOLDED WINGS OF THE 448TH

Emil G. Beaudry, James F. Wagner, George H. Jepson, Lester S. McGown (St. Louis Park, MN), **John R. Rainwater** (Ft. Collins, CO), **Howard F. Whitney** (Morehead City, NC), **Richard P. Tustin** (navigator, DFC, POW), **Joseph B. Starek** (Scottsdale, AZ), **Glenn W. Bettes** (navigator).

THE MISSION OF MARCH 25, 1945

Dan McGriew of the 714th Squadron provides this additional information on the famous March 25, 1945 mission to the Hamburg area: "This mission wasn't so good. The 8th Air Force put up only 240 Libs and 240 Mustangs & Thunderbolts. Our targets were oil storage tanks near Hamburg. We saw lots of flak, but the RAF was getting most of it. About seven to nine ME-262 jets got into our formation. The first time they came through, the B-24 just to our right blew up right away. Some others were damaged. The ship to our left was hit and started down, but gained control. The group had about forty ships on the mission and lost six. Later, a group behind ours was attacked. I saw three large flames going down which must have been different planes. We got back without a scratch. Flying time: 7:00."

THE BALLANTRAE DISASTER

With the war in Europe having ended in the previous month, in June 1945 the personnel at Seething were making preparations to return home and hand the base back to the RAF. All four squadrons drew lots for those who were to go home by air. Twenty airmen were allocated to each B-24: ten air crew and ten ground crew in each bomber. It was cramped but practicable.

On 10 June the first departures started. The route home was via RAF Valley in Anglesey, then on through either the Azores or Iceland depending upon the route weather. During the following twelve days, 64 bombers of the 448th BG, complete with 640 airmen aboard, took off and days later arrived back safely in the U.S.

The sixty-fifth and very last B-24 departed a little after daybreak on the morning of 12 June, pounding down the 2,000 yards of runway 24 for the last time as **Capt. Jim Blank** eased the 27-ton bomber into the air. His orders were to avoid the RAF Valley route because of poor weather brewing up in the west. He was directed instead to fly via Prestwick, Ayr. So he set course from Seething for Splasher Beacon at Louth in Lines, and on to Marske Beacon and then Middlesborough, achieving excellent reading on each radio compass. However, as he approached Cheviot Hills on the Scottish border, weather and cloud conditions began to deteriorate rapidly. Inside the aircraft, the occupants could hear the heavy rain battering the fuselage as the doomed B-24 droned on through the eerie mist towards its destination.

The pilots could no longer get a satisfactory reading on the radio compass. They sensed that the wind had probably backed and that their estimated drift had changed. The navigator, **Lt. Bernard F. Pargh**, advised that they should continue on course and await improved visibility. Prestwick reported low clouds and rain, with more to come.

The bomber collided with a hillside four miles southeast of Ballantrae whilst making a controlled descent on instruments. Disintegrating as it went, the Liberator slid along on its belly for some 125 yards, scattering debris along the way and throwing some of its packed occupants out onto the moor as it came to

an abrupt halt. Only the tail and center bomb bay sections were still recognizable as aircraft components; the rest of the aircraft was totally wrecked.

Of those on board, only four had survived the initial impact, and all were badly injured. After laying unconscious for a considerable period of time, one of the four passengers (all of the aircrew were dead), **S/Sgt. John R. May** awoke to find a scene of utter devastation. All he could remember was that just prior to impact, someone had yelled, "Hey! There's the ground!" Shortly, in great pain he lapsed into unconsciousness and only recovered that evening. He was able to establish that there were three other survivors in addition to himself. Everyone else had been killed. During the night, one of the survivors, **Pfc. George Gaffney**, died.

As soon as he could muster the strength, Sgt. May, despite the acute pain he was experiencing from a broken back, attempted to hobble down the hill, tripping and lapsing into a state of unconsciousness after he fell and struck some rocks, which created a gaping hole close to his temple. Eventually he was found by a gamekeeper for the Lagafater Estate. The RAF and police were informed, and ambulance teams were soon on their way. **Dick Pokorny** and **Ken Nelson** together with Sgt. May were rescued and taken to Prestwick Hospital. While there, T/Sgt. Pokorny had a visit from an English Land Army girl, returning his wallet which had been found at the crash site, still with his money inside. "Our British allies are very honorable," he remarked. Irony often plays a part in tragedies such as this.

The pilot, Capt. James Blank, prior to takeoff had placed his wife's and baby daughter's photograph above the instrument panel. Then, after his usual request over the intercom of "no smoking in flight," he added, "This is one mission that we want to be perfect." Perhaps the aircraft crashed at the height of only 1400 feet on Pildinny Hill because the waters of Loch Ryan were mistaken for Ayr Bay. The accident report states an occasional sight of water prior to the crash. Perhaps a stronger-than-anticipated tail wind caused an underestimated ETA at Prestwick and they thought they were on the final approach for the airfield. Whatever the cause, the consequences were tragic, as another seventeen of America's finest lost their lives.

Crew Members: **Capt. Jim Blank** (pilot), **Lt. John K. Huber** (co-pilot), **Lt. Bernard F. Pargh** (navigator), **Lt. Frank Y. Pollio** (bombardier), **T/Sgt. Morris L. Kanerak** (radio), **S/Sgt. Louis Menred** (gunner), **S/Sgt. Cris C. King** (gunner), **S/Sgt. John Wildman** (gunner), **S/Sgt. William T. Harriman** (gunner).

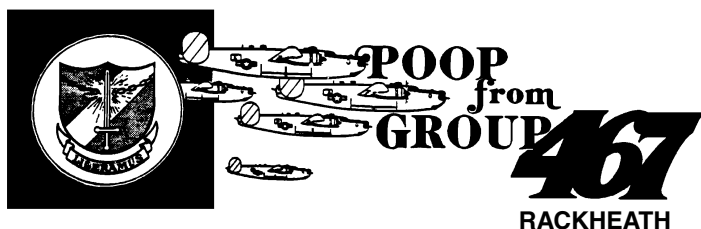
Passengers: Ten enlisted men and two officers, **Capt. Harold L. Earmant** (713th Squadron pilot), **Lt. Col. Heber T. Thompson** (448th BG Ops Officer, a very experienced top veteran who had come over with the original unit in 1943 as a young 2nd Lieutenant pilot). ■

489TH NOTES *(continued from page 23)*

ized in American history and cast in our minds forever. Likewise etched in our thoughts, the passing of yet another burial flag five times over.

By contrast, at war's end fate's fortune delivered the five Pontillo brothers back home. Those we had left behind there were spared that telegram from the Department of Defense, that knock on the door from military personnel accompanied by a clergyman. The flag was never passed. Yet after many years I have come to realize the anguish and fear ever present as a son or sons leave for war. The maternal instinct never rests. The apprehension and fears pass an imaginary flag constantly in their hearts and minds as they anxiously wait at home. During the war, profound courage was exhibited by Americans fighting in the foreign skies, oceans, and lands. But, the thought occurs to me, the overseas battlefields weren't the only places of great courage.

Hope to see you at the next reunion. ■



BY JACK STEVENS

Editor's Note: The following is Chapter Two of the experiences of Jack Stevens' crew in the 8th and 15th Air Forces. Chapter One, covering their time in the 8th AF with the 467th BG, appeared on page 15 of the Spring 2005 Journal (Vol. 44, No. 1).

COMBAT OPERATIONS IN THE 15TH AIR FORCE

After our crew's thirteenth mission, to Melun, France on 24 May 1944, we received orders transferring us to the 15th Air Force in Bari, Italy — an effort by Headquarters USAAF to combine the experiences of the 8th and 15th Air Forces. Early on 27 May, we were packed to go. **Col. Shower** had breakfast with us, wished us the best, and asked me to say hello to one of his classmates who was in the 15th AF. **Lt. Charles Grace** and a partial crew flew us, in a group B-24, to New Quay in southwest England. An ATC crew flew us in a C-87 (with airline seats) to Casablanca, French Morocco, where another ATC crew was set to fly us in a C-47 (with bucket seats) across North Africa, to Tunis, Tunisia, and to Naples, Italy. With ten of us just sitting in that C-47's waist compartment, we got bored on the first leg of the trip and had our US-born **Sgt. Marcarelli** and **Lt. Rapp** (who had just taken a quick course in Italian while recovering from a medical grounding at Herrington) teach us some words and phrases they thought might come in handy in Italy. Later, just for mischief, one by one each of us slowly moved to the front of the waist compartment. Then, after a ten-minute wait, we all ran back to the tail. A few seconds later, the co-pilot, with an obviously concerned look on his face, opened the cabin door — only to see ten faces grinning at him from the back end of the compartment. A relieved grin came over his face, and for the rest of that flight and the next day's hop to Naples, thirteen of us were on real good terms.

At the Naples airport, I met the Base Weather Officer — a close friend I hadn't seen in four years. Before we could get caught up on each other's activities, the PA system called our names to report to the passenger counter. An Australian crew had been located to fly us to Bari.

At Bari, I reported in to 15th Air Force Headquarters, and two days later (Saturday, 3 June), a GI driver drove us, in a 2½-ton truck (with wooden-slat seats) to the 98th Bomb Group, located on an Italian Air Force base near Lecce, down in the "heel" of Italy. (That ride, with an impatient driver and a series of unhurried Italian farmers, with horse-drawn wagons, on a narrow two-lane highway, was probably the most hair-raising and dangerous part of our combat tour.)

The 98th Bomb Group Headquarters was located in the Italian Air Force base headquarters building. I reported in to the group commander, **Col. Marshall R. Gray**, who welcomed us and asked that I report back to him after four or five missions with any observations and/or recommendations I might have. Later, our crew members helped me with their suggestions for this task.

One squadron was located in a "castle" on the base, while each of the other three squadrons was located separately around the base. Each squadron had its own operations, supply, administration, mess hall, officers' club, enlisted club, etc. We were assigned to the 344th Bomb Squadron. Our tents (officers in one area and enlisted men in another) were quite close to our squadron's various offices and sections, which were housed in several long, one-story, white plaster-covered buildings. The group and its squadrons had been overseas since July of '42, and the permanent-party personnel were friendly and carried out their routine duties efficiently.

Then, on Tuesday, 6 June, our crew was scheduled to fly that day's mission. Briefing was held at Group Hqs and, in general, was similar to, but less formal, than that at Rackheath. The day's target was a refinery at Ploesti, and one of the squadron's top pilots was assigned to our crew as a check pilot. He sat in the co-pilot's seat. I handled ground operations, takeoff, bomb run, and landing, and we worked together on the other, routine, pilot duties.

Approaching the target area, we encountered intense, heavy flak and saw that the target was surrounded by hundreds of smoke streams that rose and merged to form a moving cloud over the target and surrounding areas. Consequently, that was pretty much an area-bombing mission, with no opportunity to observe results. On our return flight we received word that the Allies had invaded Europe, and I felt regret at not being in on that operation. Our first Ploesti mission lasted 8¼ hours.

For the next week or two, our crew members were engaged in several discussions concerning the relative "roughness" of 8th Air Force versus 15th Air Force targets. We talked about the frequency of enemy fighters we had encountered on 8th AF missions and they cited the numbers of heavy flak guns at each of their usual 15th AF target areas. At times, the discussion got quite excited, pro and con. During one discussion, I asked if the lead pilots used their auto pilots en route to and from the target and/or on the bomb run. One bombardier stated, "Our pilots do a better job than the auto pilot and, because of all the flak we get at our targets, they take evasive action on the bomb run until thirty seconds before bombs away; then, they level out and we hit the target every time." (When I met with the group commander after our fifth mission, you can guess what one of my recommendations was.)

Normally, there was a relaxed atmosphere in the squadron area. Some squadron duties were assigned to combat crew members on mornings when we wouldn't be scheduled for a mission. For leisure times, there were bus runs to Lecce, a city of about 60,000. Most of us went to see a Roman amphitheater there that had been partially restored during the Fascist regime. There was an active USO Club in town, and the officers had the former German Air Force Officers Club (which previously had been the Italian Air Force Officers Club), with its three-piece band and female singer. On some afternoons, we could get a Jeep and drive to a beach on the Adriatic Sea for swimming and sunbathing. And, next to the beach, was a large vineyard with lots of delicious grapes. Frequently, in town, there was instrumental music and singing outside houses in the evenings. I remember one street concert where Lt. Rapp, with his "in-depth" Italian proficiency, started talking with an Italian man about the music and music's "universality" and offered him a cigarette. Each of them apparently enjoyed each other's company and that evening's music, conversation, and cigarettes.

Our missions took us to a large number of targets throughout an arc of southern Europe, with targets, such as Cannes, in southern France, on the west; Genoa and Trieste in northern Italy and Munich, in Germany, to the north; and, on the east, Budapest, in Hungary, and Ploesti, Bucharest, and Constanza (on the Black Sea) in Romania, and a large number of targets throughout Yugoslavia.

On 19 July, we bombed a target in Munich and I checked off Number 36 (toward the required 50-mission total). We weren't scheduled on the next few days, but on 22 July, when **Lt. Smith** (co-pilot) and I woke up, **Lts. Rapp** (navigator) and **Voss** (bombardier) were gone. Operations told us that Lt. Rapp and **Sgts. Marcarelli** (flight engineer), **Bohnenstiehl** (radio operator), **Cushing** (ball turret), and **Bertalot** (tail turret) were in the lead plane with **Col. Van Sickle**, and Lt. Voss was in the Number 2 plane, with **Lt. Guynes**, on another Ploesti mission.

When the group returned that afternoon, the lead plane crashed at our base. Lt. Rapp reported that they had been hit over the target — one engine knocked out and another damaged, the regular crew waist gunner's hand was blown off when he threw some chaff out, a fuel tank was punctured, and fuel and hydraulic lines

(continued on next page)

COMBAT OPERATIONS IN THE 15TH AIR FORCE

(continued from page 25)

were cut off. Crew members had reported that the Number 2 plane (with Lt. Voss) was hit over the target and went down and that several parachutes had been seen. On the way back, first aid was administered to the waist gunner, aircraft damage was checked, and Sgt. Marcarelli monitored the fuel situation and transferred the remaining fuel to minimize loss.

As they approached the field, Sgts. Marcarelli and Cushing cranked the main gear down; then, Marcarelli kicked the nose gear out, moved to the bomb bay entrance, and exchanged the AOK signal with Cushing, in the waist. On their landing approach, they ran out of fuel and the nose dropped. The nose gear hit a stone wall at the edge of the base, tore off, and flew back, hitting

Marcarelli into the bomb bay and killing him. The plane ended up on the runway; there was no fire or explosion; the injured man was assisted away from the plane; and, except for some bumps and bruises, the other crew members were all OK.

A few days later, the remaining eight members of our crew served as pall bearers for our highly-regarded T/Sgt. Louis J. Marcarelli, and were then sent to a Red Cross Rest Camp for a short period. On 31 July, we flew a 7½ hour mission to Tarsavista (nation unknown).

The following day, I was writing letters in the Officers Club when the Operations clerk came rushing in and said, "Lt. Voss is down at the flight line." The two of us rushed down to the flight line, where people were milling around a bunch of 98th combat crew members who had been lost on bombing missions to Romania dating back to 1 August 1943. And, there was our Bill Voss. He looked very happy and he started smiling when he saw us. The rest of our crew was there and we all threw questions at him: "What happened when you were shot down? How did you get out of the POW camp? When did you get out?" The ex-POWs and the rest of us were all talking and laughing and questions and answers were going back and forth.

Bill said they got hit in the wing and he knew it was bad. The pilot immediately rang the bell and told them to bail out. Bill said that all our practicing really paid off — get the chute and hook it on, pull the two red nose-wheel door handles, and go out. But, it seemed too quick, and he checked: chute, door handles, and started to go out, but got stuck in the opening. The navigator kicked him out and came out after him. He waited to pull his ripcord, and after the chute opened, he got scared because everything was so quiet and it seemed he wasn't going down. He landed in a dry stream bed and was immediately picked up by the military.

Of course, we all wanted to know how they got out of the POW camp and back here. He said that a colonel, the senior POW, had told them he had a plan worked out that would get them all out. Bill and others figured that was just a story to keep morale up. But, one day, a lot of P-38s and P-51s appeared and kept flying over the area. Senior POWs told them to move to the nearby military airport, and pretty soon they saw a formation of B-17s flying toward them. One B-17 came down and landed, and twenty POWs ran out and into the B-17, which took off and headed west. As each of the other B-17s landed, twenty POWs ran out and into it and it took off. All of the POWs were brought out of the camp, including some British military. The B-17s flew to Bari and the POWs went through a processing — delousing, medical exam, debriefing, uniform items, and lots of good food; and today, those ex-POWs were flown to their old organizations.

Bill also said the senior POW had talked a Romanian pilot into flying him to Bari. And, after they landed, he went to 15th Air Force Headquarters and laid out his plan. They bought it, and it worked.

We asked about conditions in the camp, and Bill said it was a POW camp — bare minimums, with rats, lice, etc. Usually, their food was potato soup (with few potatoes). But, he said, that's all the guards had, too. Bill lost forty pounds in the forty days he'd been a POW. He assumed he'd have to finish his missions, but we learned that ex-POWs were not allowed to fly missions in the same theater.

Because our crew had been used as fill-ins for other crews, seven of them needed only three missions to complete their fifty missions. Operations scheduled us to fly those last three missions, with bombardier and gunner fill-ins, and the eight members of my crew went home together early in September. Operations then assigned another crew (whose pilot had been hospitalized) to me. And we would finish our tours together.

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Stay tuned for Chapter 3 (the last one), which will include the story of the release of other POWs, a bit of a travelogue, and one of those "You'll never believe it" coincidences. ■



446TH BOMB GROUP

FLIXTON-BUNGAY UPDATE

BY LINK VEAZEY

I would like to share this article that has come across my desk. The author is unknown, but the words express "a truism."

The Military Aviator

I think I've known a million lads, who say they love the sky, Who'd all be aviators, and not afraid to fly, for Duty, Honor, Country; their courage I admire! But it takes more than courage, son, to get to be a flyer.

When you are only twelve years old, of course you want to fly! And though you know not what is death, you're not afraid to die. But of the million, more or less, all must have perfect eyes; so only half a million now, can dream of future skies. Then comes high school, science and math; some choose the easy way, football, cars and dating girls, teen pleasures hold their sway; and of the quarter million left, one half go on to schools; the other half will dream and drift, and never learn the rules. Now comes the day of testing, eight hours of Stanine Hell; on every subject known to man, four-fifths will not do well.

The one in five who pass this test, apply for flying schools. The application boards will now eliminate the fools. Then comes two days of nakedness. Flight Surgeons poke and prod; to pass this flying physical one needs to be a god! And now, five hundred lucky souls will start their Pre-Flight days; endure demerits, hunger, cold, as upper-classmen haze. One half survive this mental game, and go on to primary schools, but only half will hack this course, move on to basic rules.

Two hundred fifty now will try to pass those basic tests; formation flight soon separates the "Tiger" from the rest.

One hundred twenty-five will then pin on those pilot wings; the best become "Top Gun" jocks, the rest fly other things.

Some will die while learning those essential combat skills, some will die in combat, some will score their "kills." But they have learned a lesson, sometimes lost on you and me: We must always fight for Freedom, because Freedom is never free!

He's a knight in shining armor, that the cruel tyrants fear. He's that deadly drop of venom, on the tip of Freedom's spear. Engaging him in battle is a course that only fools would choose. He's the world's fiercest warrior, for he has the most to lose.

So when you see that aviator, standing at the bar, taking out the garbage, or tuning up his car; You'd best walk up and offer him your thanks and extend your hand, because he's that rare "one in a million" who protects this sacred land.

"KEEP ON KEEPING ON." ■

Memories of a Non-Hero

BY FRED PORTER (467TH BG), CORPORAL, ORDNANCE SECTION, 790TH SQUADRON

As the United States prepared to go to war, I was employed by a metal fabricating company which built industrial equipment such as paint spray booths, industrial ovens, dust and fume collection systems, and general fabrication items. As the war clouds formed we provided facilities to help convert Detroit's factories into the "Arsenal of Democracy." Under the direction of General William Knudsen at the War Production Board, all industry was required to support preparations for war. Some of our customers were: Chevrolet in Buffalo and Tonawanda, New York; Packard in Detroit; Nash/Kelvinator in Kenosha, Wisconsin and Allison in Indianapolis (aircraft engines); GM Aeroproducts in Vandalia, Ohio (airplane propellers); and Chrysler in Detroit (tanks). As a result, whenever my draft number came up, the company manager would write a letter explaining how important I was to the war effort and I would be deferred. Eventually an old colonel at the induction center told me, "We won't take you this time, but we'll get you the next time." Since my younger brother was already in flying school and I was embarrassed at having my mother having to explain to her friends how important I was to the war effort, I told the colonel "Let's get it over with." I was inducted into the service on June 4, 1943 and entered into active service at Ft. Custer, Michigan on June 18, 1943.

From Ft. Custer I went to Lincoln Air Base, Nebraska for basic training. Doing open order and close order drills and calisthenics in what had been a Nebraska corn field soon whipped us into shape. Everyone qualified with the carbine whether they could hit the target or not.

At Lincoln I was offered an assignment to teach English to Spanish-speaking draftees of Mexican descent. I didn't feel this was much of a contribution to the war effort and turned it down. While at Lincoln there were several outbreaks of food poisoning. One was so widespread that there was not enough room in the base hospital to accommodate all of the patients. The medics came to the barracks to treat us.

From Lincoln I was sent to Ordnance School at the Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia, California. The race track had originally been taken over by the Army as a detention center for people of Japanese descent. Eventually the West Coast Command decided that this location was too close to the coast and moved the Japanese inland.

The Army enclosed two areas of the grandstand and converted them into the-

aters. We had the pleasure of seeing many stars do their radio shows. Some memories are: Bob Hope with Frances Langford and Stan "Madman" Kenton, and Kay Kaiser and his Kollege of Musical Knowledge with Ishkabibble.

Our instructor at Santa Anita was T5 Raskin. He told us that he had been offered a higher rating if he would move out with a combat unit. He was too smart to give up a sweet assignment — passes to Hollywood every weekend.

One of our classmates was stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco. He was a bomb disposal man and would have to dispose of any unexploded bombs the Japanese might drop on the West Coast. This was a cushy assignment and he could work on the docks as a stevedore on weekends. There were a few jobs like that in the Army.

At Santa Anita the horse stables were our barracks. Before we could go on weekend pass we were required to GI the barracks. Naturally we did not like the effort, so we would pour water in the horseshoe indentations in the macadam stable floors. When the inspector complained that the floors hadn't been cleaned, we would point to the water in the dents. It worked.

While at Santa Anita I had a tooth problem. First a lieutenant tried to pull the tooth. He couldn't. Next a captain tried. He couldn't. Finally a major pulled the tooth. Fragments of the tooth were still working out of my jaw when I reached England.

At the end of our training we did a week of KP where there were reportedly 5,000 troops to feed. And then we spent a week in the desert sleeping in fox holes. At night the field mice would come visiting, looking for any food that we might have in the fox holes with us.

From Santa Anita I was sent to a replacement pool in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Army had a theory that everyone was a potential gunner. In spite of being six feet tall, I had to get into a ground-mounted ball turret and shoot a few rounds at a target. Fortunately I never had to shoot in combat, because I always had difficulty identifying airplane silhouettes. While at Salt Lake there was a meningitis scare. We were confined to the barracks for several days.

After I was inducted into the Army I was told at every location that I would never go overseas — my eyes were too bad. From Salt Lake City I was shipped to Wendover, Utah where the 467th Bomb Group was in the third phase of training — really playing soldier — wearing helmet liners and carrying carbines. There were two master sergeants on the shipment to Wendover.

They kept reviewing their medical records to make sure they showed that they had had syphilis. Apparently they wouldn't go overseas if they had had the disease.

My stay at Wendover was brief and the Group was shipped out. The squadron commander, Captain Fred Holdredge, came around and said he would see us over there. He didn't tell us where "over there" was; perhaps he didn't know. Our executive officer was James Ritter. The train trip across the country to Camp Shanks, New Jersey was a miserable experience. I have never been able to sleep on a train, and the food from the field kitchen was barely edible.

At Camp Shanks the Army suddenly realized they were shipping me overseas without the required two pairs of GI glasses and the gas mask inserts. In England, at Sy Deneroff's mail call I received sets of glasses for several weeks.

We were loaded onto the USATS Frederick Lykes. The accommodations were similar to the old slave ships. The bunks in the hold were five high and the man on top was always seasick. We ate at tables standing up. As the ship rocked, the meals would slide from side to side. You never knew whose meal you were eating. The showers with cold salt water didn't do much to refresh us.

The Lykes was a liberty ship which had apparently been built on an assembly line. In civilian life I had been an engineer in a fabricating shop, so I knew what reliable welds looked like. The Lykes looked like it had been welded by amateurs, so I was relieved when we made it all the way across with the boat intact.

I was fortunate enough to pull deck watch detail. The main duty was to see that there was no smoking on deck. The glow from a burning cigarette could make us a target for a German U-boat. The advantage of this assignment was that it gave me an opportunity to get away from the stench in the hold.

When we were part way across the ocean the ship broke down. Naturally, the convoy didn't wait for us. We were left in the middle of the Atlantic with a destroyer escort to watch over us. The ship was eventually repaired, and we proceeded to Scotland.

I was on deck duty the night we reached the Firth of Clyde. There were submarine nets across the entrance. A voice from the darkness said, "Ahoy, Lukes, show your colors." Apparently there was some confusion on the ship, as no colors were produced. The voice became more and more nervous as the command was repeated. I

(continued on next page)

MEMORIES OF A NON-HERO

(continued from page 27)

was concerned that they might start shooting at us. Apparently the ship's crew got their act together and showed the required colors, and we proceeded up the Clyde.

On the trip up the Clyde the ship yard workers lined the banks and shouted "Heighy hi" and we responded "Heighy ho."

For some unknown reason, I have no recollection of the trip to Rackheath.

At Rackheath we were housed in Nissen huts. These were arched sheet metal structures similar to American Quonset huts. They were heated by a small coal-burning stove in the center of the hut. Coal was rationed at one small bucket per hut per week. Needless to say, that resulted in a lot of scrounging for combustible material to keep us warm. Some people rigged up a system to burn airplane fuel in their stoves. We ordnance people had access to heavy wax-impregnated bomb shipping bands. They provided a lot of heat in a hurry.

Although Rackheath had been an RAF base, there was not enough pavement to satisfy the U.S. requirements. My first detail at Rackheath was laying concrete. The British shipped cement to the job site in semi-porous cloth bags. After a day of unloading cement from the lorries, there was no question about what detail you had been working on.

The first U.S. detachment at Rackheath was the guard squadron. However, many of the members of the guard squadron ended up in the guardhouse. My next detail was with the guard squadron where I chased the prisoners around on work assignments. For the first time in my Army career I was issued a .45 caliber automatic. Needless to say, I never told the prisoners that I didn't know how to use it. I got out of that duty as quickly as I could. Bruno Arena took the duty for the duration.

The ordnance section was divided into two units. One worked days and the other worked nights — switching every week. We loaded bombs at night under blackout conditions. People from the Chemical Warfare Detachment were assigned to work with us since the chemical weapons were never loaded. The night crew was fed a meal at midnight. If there were fresh eggs for breakfast, we would stay up for our fourth meal of the day.

One night it was so foggy that even the birds were walking. We knew the mission would be scrubbed, so we stayed on line knowing we'd have to unload the planes. We were incredulous when the planes started to take off. When two of the first planes crashed, the mission was finally scrubbed.

On another morning we were called out to the line to unload two planes that had cracked up at preflight. During preflight

the crew chief checked out the plane, including revving up the engines. This time a crew chief, who had been out pub-crawling the night before, forgot to set the brakes. The plane taxied across the hardstand and into another plane. Both were a total loss. It was a quick way to go from master sergeant to buck private.

When we first arrived at Rackheath, we went to the air raid shelters when there was an alert. Eventually this became a nuisance and we would ignore the alerts. Officers were assigned to make the rounds to be sure that everyone went to the shelters during an alert. The shelters were areas encircled by mounds of earth. There was no protection from a direct hit, but we would be protected from the blast of a near hit.

The B-24 had not been basically designed to carry 2000-pound bombs. However, there was a special rack which could be installed to carry the big bombs. When our first mission carrying the 2000-pound bombs was returning, the tower called us to get off the runway so the rest of the mission could land. One bomb had failed to drop on target and had been jarred loose by the impact of the landing and skidded along the runway. Since no one knew the condition of the bomb — armed or not — no one was anxious to pick it up. A sergeant told me to take a man and pick up the bomb. Obviously we were successful in taking it back to the revetment.

Time-delay bombs were never fuzed until it was certain that the mission would fly, since the fuzes were equipped with a ratchet device which prevented their removal. Regulations called for an officer to fuze the time-delay bombs. In our section, the lieutenant would order some corporal to fuze the bombs.

The most difficult bombs to load were the 20-pound fragmentation bombs. They were held together on wire frames in groups of six. This meant that each plane could carry 312 bombs. Each bomb was fitted with a light-gauge sheet metal fin which cut up the hands of the people handling it. One mission carrying these bombs was intended to support U.S. ground troops. It was very disheartening, after working all night loading the bombs, to read in *Stars and Stripes* that the bombs had actually been dropped on U.S. troops because of a foul-up in planning. The wind had blown the signal flares back over the American troops so the bombs were actually aimed at them. Ernie Pyle reported that the bombs rattled as they fell, a sound different from the usual sound of falling bombs. I read later that General Omar Bradley had opposed this operation, but the Air Force convinced General Eisenhower that it was a good plan.

One rainy Sunday morning, we stood formation in the rain so the group ordnance

officer, Captain (later Major) Paul Geske could receive a Silver Star because a mission had never been delayed by failure to have the bombs loaded on time. It is my belief that he earned this decoration in the officers' club, since we never saw him when the bombs were being loaded.

On a rotating schedule I pulled CQ in the group ordnance office. Wing would call in a list of the planes to fly and the load they were to carry. I would write this information on a piece of paper and call the squadron ordnance people to pick it up. This seems like a crude system by today's standards, but it worked.

The Group's 200 Mission Party was spoiled when a newly converted fighter pilot tried to buzz the field. He crashed and was killed near our PX.

B-24 bombers were capable of carrying the following loads:

- 312 20# fragmentation bombs
- 52 100# general purpose bombs
- 52 100# fragmentation bombs
- 20 250# general purpose bombs
- 12 500# general purpose bombs
- 8 1000# general purpose bombs
- 4 2000# general purpose bombs

Various incendiary, propaganda, chemical, or napalm bombs

One mission included a propaganda bomb on one plane. We took some of the leaflets out of the casing. They were counterfeit German ration stamps. They were apparently intended to disrupt the German supply system by allowing some of the German citizens to get more meat than planned by the Nazis.

We ordnance people realized that the requirements for our duties were a strong back and a weak mind. We were well-qualified. People whose names I remember are: George Allen, ? Allard, Charles R. Birdsong, Alfonson Bolenda, Orvin Brommer, Ernie Clyma, Daniel I. Coursey, Billy B. Davis, Paul Goldstein, Albert Hall, Sidney Kaplan, John Kotema, Bob Lang, "Tippy" Larkin, "Shorty" Maderios, Harley Norvele, Ralph J. Palmer, Carl Rogers, Dean Shuey, Harry Sobansky, Mike Soloboda.

Most historians report that armorers loaded the bombs. At Rackheath the armorers serviced the guns, gun turrets, and bomb racks. Ordnance and Chemical Warfare people actually loaded the bombs at night under blackout conditions. One colleague compared our status to that of janitors in an office building. Everyone is aware that someone does the work, but they don't know who and don't care as long as the work is done.

So far as I know, there was only one fatality among the ground personnel at Rackheath. When a mission was returning one evening, a German plane mixed in with our formation and dropped a bomb at the

end of a runway. A member of the Quartermaster Detachment was killed. Orvin Brommer of our group suffered severe injuries to his arm when a pulley used to hoist bombs into the bomb bay was improperly installed and a cable dropped on his arm.

Since chemical warfare was never used, the chemical warfare people were assigned to work with us, loading GP bombs.

Pulling KP was a very enlightening experience. Almost every day, mess sergeant John Upchurch would take off for town with a generous supply of butter or some other goodies from the mess hall for his lady love.

Our ordnance officer was Merle H. Brown. He had been a master sergeant in the regular army and became an officer at the beginning of the war. He maintained the regular army attitude. Other officers knew that whenever it was his turn to be officer of the day or convoy officer or some other special duty, he would be away on pass. He got on the ball during a period when there was an opening in the TO for a captain. When the promotion went to the armament officer, Lt. Brown reverted to his old ways.

We had a battle station during air raid alerts. It was a .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a pipe stand. I could never figure out how we were expected to shoot planes down with a gun equipped with a peep sight. Thanks goodness for the ATS GIRLS who were better equipped to protect England.

My brother Don flew the B-26 bomber with the 9th Air Force in England. He managed to fly his plane, *Pink's Lady*, up to Rackheath from his base. The rationale which permitted this was that he brought their chaplain from his base to confer with our chaplain. I later received information from home that he had been shot down over France. He spent some time with a French family and was finally picked up by the Germans. He was put in a POW camp and finally liberated by Patton's army. He stopped in at Rackheath on his way home.

The Germans used the first wartime missiles against England. The first missiles, the V1s, were small, unmanned, jet-propelled planes. When they were overhead they made a sound like an outboard motor. When the sound stopped, you knew it was coming down someplace. These slow-moving missiles could be spotted on radar and could be shot down by RAF Spitfires.

The second missiles, the V2s, were larger and more sophisticated. These were rockets which traveled much faster than the V1s and gave no warning of their approach. As the war ended there was a race between the Russians and the Americans to capture the scientists who had developed the German rockets. Fortunately the Americans won.

In a bomber operation it is difficult to

identify a hero, so in the 467th the plane *Witchcraft* was the designated hero. For no apparent reason I was assigned to fly home on *Witchcraft*. I was very apprehensive about flying across the Atlantic in a war-weary B-24, but decided this one was probably airworthy since crew chief Joe Ramirez and assistant George Dong were also on the plane. The trip home proved to be much less aggravating than a trip on a troop ship.

On June 12, 1945 there was one false start for home when we were headed for Iceland. We had to return to Wales because the crew received word that Iceland was weathered in. We finally flew to the Azores, Gander, Newfoundland, and then to Bradley Field, Connecticut on June 14, 1945. One of our ordnance people had a .45 automatic which he had intended to smuggle home. When the rumor circulated that there would be a strict customs inspection in the States, he turned in the gun. There was no customs inspection.

After a month at home, we went to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. One day while we were killing time, Colonel Shower, minus any insignia, asked if we were "Rackheath Aggies." Although I had never heard the designation before, we admitted we were. He then asked how many of us were going to re-up for the new B-29 outfit. The silence was deafening and embarrassing. No one was going to volunteer. Fortunately, Harry Truman dropped the bombs and the war ended.

At Sioux Falls I was put to work on a pants presser in the base laundry along with some German prisoners of war. Each pair of officers' pants was carefully pressed with creases down the sides.

The Army planned to send the highpoint people to Alabama to be discharged. When the troops heard this, there was a near mutiny. The Army then decided to discharge us from Sioux Falls. I was discharged on October 23, 1945.

Although I was never close to a battle, I was awarded the EAME Campaign Medal with six battle stars in addition to the Good Conduct Medal and the Victory World War II Medal. I have considered this a farce, but each battle star did count for five points toward the 85 needed for discharge. I continue to be skeptical of military decorations.

On returning home, I returned to my former job. Miss Connie Louis was still employed there, and we were married on April 28, 1946 and still are. We have three sons, three daughters-in-law, five grandsons and three granddaughters.

After changing jobs several times, I went to work for the Ford Motor Company as an environmental engineer. I retired in 1985. We live a quiet life of retirees in St. Johns, Michigan. ■

The Ploesti Raid Through the Lens

by Roger A. Freeman

BOOK REVIEW

BY CARL V. BATZKALL (AM)

The mission known as Operation Tidal Wave began on Sunday, August 1, 1943 when 179 B-24 Liberators of the 44th, 93rd, and 389th Bomb Groups of the 8th Air Force and the 98th and 376th Bomb Groups of the 9th Air Force took off from their bases in Benghazi, North Africa. Their objective was to bomb the seven major oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania, which would eliminate 40% of German's oil supply and cause a crippling blow to the Third Reich's ability to wage war.

As the book's title implies, author Roger A. Freeman gives us a refreshing viewpoint as we see Operation Tidal Wave take shape, from the planning stages to completion of the mission, "through the camera lens."

Having done exhaustive research, Freeman has written a book rich in riveting detail. He tells a very engrossing story of men at war, while along the way we experience violence, heroism, and shocking loss — both in men and aircraft due to problems encountered during the raid.

Also researched and presented are the names and fates of all known airmen involved, each bomb group's detailed listing of all participating aircrews, aircraft and their final disposition. A "highly-detailed" post-raid analysis and a six-page section of the awards presented, including five Medals of Honor, are featured.

Enhancing the text, which is 160 pages, are 230 photographs plus 60 maps, diagrams and sketches, many of which have never been published before. Also interspersed throughout the text are quotes from the individual bomb group sortie reports as expressed by various pilots.

(Note: For all those who have often wondered, we learn the nicknames of all 179 Liberators involved.)

In closing this review, *The Ploesti Raid Through the Lens* is definitely a "must have" and a "must read." ■

A Recollection of "Gentleman Jim" General James Isbell

BY JULIAN S. ERTZ (44TH)

When I read in the Winter 2004-2005 *Journal* about the passing of General James. H. Isbell, I recalled when I first saw him and when I later talked with him.

The first time was in the 1930s when I was in high school. The second time was in the summer of 1943 when, as a navigator of a B-24 crew at Wendover, I was working on the ground learning to operate the bomb sight. I was sloppily dressed — in improper uniform. As I leaned over the instrument, a voice behind me said, "Good morning, Lieutenant." There stood a large, handsome Colonel.

"I'm Colonel Isbell, your new C.O. I see you're learning to use the bombing equipment. Good. Navigators must be ready if the bombardier is killed or wounded. Lieutenant, do you believe you are in appropriate uniform?"

"No, Sir." What else could I say?

"What will you do about it . . ."

"Sir, it won't happen again."

About then, my memory kicked in. In the 1930s I was a guest of a friend who was then a student at Penn State. That evening the U.S. Military Academy basketball and boxing teams were in town to compete against Penn State.

Army's heavyweight boxer was Cadet James Isbell. He also had been a 225-pound tackle on, and captain of, Army's football team. The Penn State heavyweight, a 185-pounder, was the Eastern Intercollegiate heavyweight boxing champion. Although outweighed by forty pounds, he was such a superior boxer that they stopped the fight in the second round.

The Colonel was very pleasant in lecturing me about the importance of proper uniform, etc. for pride and discipline. He wished me good luck.

I then took a chance on his being a good sport. I asked, "Colonel, weren't you Army's football captain in the early '30s?"

"Yes," he smiled.

"And you were also Army's heavyweight boxer at West Point?"

Again, a yes.

"Well, Sir, when I was in high school I spent a weekend at Penn State and saw you box against Izzy Richter."

The big, handsome Colonel smiled and said, "Lieutenant, we're not going to talk about that."

Godspeed, Gentleman Jim. ■



Touché Mine Sewer

An officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve was attending a conference that included Admirals from both the U.S. Navy and the French Navy. At a cocktail reception, he found himself in a small group that included personnel from both navies. The French Admiral observed that, although Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English.

"Why is it that we have to speak English in these conferences rather than you speaking French?" he asked.

Without hesitation, the American Admiral said, "Maybe it's because we arranged it that way — I know we did it twice before so that you don't have to speak German."

Norfolk's own aviator

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As Hollywood celebrates the life of aviation pioneer Howard Hughes in *The Aviator*, Norfolk's very own veteran pilot has scooped a top international award for more than forty years of service to flying.

Seventy-two-year-old **David Hastings** may not have the youthful looks of Leonardo DiCaprio, who stars as Hughes in Martin Scorsese's Oscar-tipped film — but he could outfly the Hollywood heart-throb any day of the week.

The Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom nominated the Salhouse flyer for the 2004 Tissandier Diploma from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale. The award, which was rubber-stamped by aviation bigwigs at a ceremony in Madrid, is given to those who make significant contributions to aviation over a number of years.

Mr. Hastings will be presented with the award by HRH the Duke of York, who is the president of the Royal Aero Club, at the National Army Museum in London on Thursday [February 3, 2005]. He said: "I am overwhelmed, highly touched, and honoured to receive this award.

"I love flying. There is nothing else quite like flying above the clouds into a different world. It is magical. Every flight is a

Veteran Norfolk pilot David Hastings, a Governor and former Chairman of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF, is the recipient of the 2004 Tissandier Diploma, a top international award, from the Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom.



High flyer: David Hastings, recipient of the 2004 Tissandier Diploma for his forty years of service to aviation, is pictured in his garden at Salhouse. PHOTO: DENISE BRADLEY



Ready for takeoff: David Hastings in the cockpit of a Spitfire in 1993.

wonderful memory, although particular highlights are my first flight in the Tiger Moth and crossing the Atlantic in the B-24."

Mr. Hastings dreamed of taking to the skies at an early age and has flown more than forty types of planes. He said: "My father, Stanley, used to take me to the Norfolk and Norwich Aero Club at Mousehold Heath before World War Two. Then in 1938, I experienced my first flight on a tour around Norwich — it was absolutely wonderful. As a schoolboy I would spend my holidays with a crew of the 2nd Air

Division of the United States Army Air Force at Hethel Airfield, and I loved it."

From 1950 to 1952, Mr. Hastings did two years of national service with the Royal Air Force, working in Air Movements. He said: "I was thrilled to be posted in Germany and although I wasn't working as a pilot, I got lots of experience of flying in my spare time. I would have loved to have stayed in the RAF, but my family's shoe business, Dougill and Hastings, brought me back to Norfolk."

Mr. Hastings also spent seventeen years on Broadland District Council, including a stint as chairman from 1989 until 1991. He also became director of the Norfolk and Norwich Aero Club.

He said: "I was also one of the two original club pilots chosen by wing commander Ken Wallis for the Aero Club trials on his unique Wallis Autogyro. Flying that plane was like a breath of fresh air and very different from a fixed-wing aeroplane."

In 1968, Mr. Hastings joined the 1000mph Club and in 1992 was one of the four pilots

to fly the famous B-24 Liberator bomber *Diamond Lil* across the Atlantic from Fort Worth in Texas to Norwich Airport, becoming a colonel in the Confederate Air Force.

In 1980, he became a Governor of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF and with the Trust has flown more than 29,000 miles across North America. He said: "I feel very lucky to have flown over the friendly skies of America. The scenery is spectacular, and I was also able to photograph a UFO."

Mr. Hastings also spent from 1965 to 1978 passing on his amazing experiences to youngsters, as an assistant county commissioner (air) for Norfolk Scouting.

Although Mr. Hastings has now retired from the skies, he is still the honorary operations group commander of the 100th Air Refueling Wing of the United States Air Force at RAF Mildenhall, as well as a Freeman of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators, a member of the Royal Aero Club, the Air League, and president of the Norfolk Vintage Pilots Association. ■



To the Editor:

In the last *Journal* a reader asked how bomb group numbers were assigned. Here's a simple explanation.

Back in World War One, the U.S. Army found it more operationally and administratively efficient to organise combat squadrons into groups. Numbers ran from 1 on up. In between the wars the small Army Air Corps sustained these group and squadron numbers, but with the colossal expansion planned for the Army Air Forces when war broke out in Europe, squadron numbers were duplicated so that they did not run into four figures. Instead a difference was established by the duty tag. For example, the Eighth Air Force had both a 334th Fighter Squadron and a 334th Bombardment Squadron. Combat group numbers were not duplicated regardless of duty. Combat groups were Pursuit (later Fighter), Observation (later Reconnaissance), Bombardment, and Troop Carrier. From the twenty or so existing groups in the AAC, nearly another three hundred would be added before the end of WWII. The numbers between 101 and 300 were not used and reserved for National Guard groups but most never used during hostilities.

When it was desired to form new groups, this was usually a case of assigning a bunch of consecutive numbers for whatever quota was required at one time. Thus one of the first batches of fighter group numbers ran from 49 to 59 and for heavy bombers from 90 to 308, jumping from 100 to 301. Many of the 8th and 15th Air Forces' heavy bomber groups were in an early 1943 batch of twenty-nine which ran from 444 to 472. The last wartime combat group was the 509th Bomb Group, although the numbers stretched to a half dozen more in the immediate post-war days.

There were Air Transport Groups and Photographic Groups which, apparently due to being viewed as non-combat organisations, started out with group designations starting from 1. This was unfortunate, as both Air Transport and Photographic groups were not long in turning up in war

theatres and the designations could cause confusion. And for some inexplicable reason, when Air Commando Groups were formed, these too started out from 1. But then in the immediate post-war years the powers that be started a continual shuffle of designations and even got into four digits for combat units. I always think there was a little office tucked away in the Pentagon where a fellow felt he had to keep busy playing with designations just to keep his job, regardless of the fact that changes helped push unit pride out the window.

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To the Editor:

Once upon a time I was doing some "hangar flying" with a former cadet buddy. He was a pilot and checked out in a B-17. Let me tell you what he told me, and maybe some of you four-engine jocks can confirm this story.

Maybe we were shooting the breeze at Santa Ana AAB, maybe it was in Columbus at Rickenbacher Air Base after WWII, or maybe — well, where do you think?

Here's the story (and originally I thought it was from KT Waters, a 43K buddy of mine). The other pilot was trained to fly solo in an old, war-weary, stripped-down Flying Fortress (weren't they all?) After takeoff he would set up the auto pilot and head for Germany. The unique thing is that the ship was heavily loaded with explosives and guided by a mother ship controlling the Minneapolis-Honeywell (?) flying higher and somewhat behind.

When the pilot was convinced that the 17 was flying remotely as planned toward a German target, he'd strap on a second parachute (his backup), go back to the bomb bay, and dive out. At this point he parachuted over Allied-occupied France, as the unmanned 17 continued to Germany. At this point the mother ship would probably dive the bomber into the target. Meanwhile, maybe our parachutist is sipping champagne with a French farmer's daughter! *C'est la guerre!*

Here, my recall gets a little foggy and I think my pilot only made three jumps. Perhaps hitting a valuable target in Germany with a derelict B-17 was not a successful idea. Now I wonder how many missions he got credit for, per jump. I wouldn't be wild about bailing out, but considering the odds of parachuting from most bomber crews'

position, it might be a pretty good deal.

By the way, this idea may be the fore-runner of UFV (Unmanned Flying Vehicles) like the Predator. Anyway, if some of you can confirm this possible bit of history, let us know.

Edmund A. Wanner (445th)
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Laguna Woods, CA 92637-1818

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To the Editor:

My deceased father, Sergeant Thomas Vaughan (no middle initial), served as a B-24 mechanic in a group located, in his words, "near Norwich." He was in England from March 8, 1944 to July 6, 1945. I don't know if he went over with a group or as an individual. All I have are his discharge papers, and the 2AD Memorial Library could not help.

I am going to London in the fall and would like to visit my father's old base, if I could obtain enough information either from someone's memory or a wartime group roster or group history as to the group number and location which he said was "near Norwich." Can you help me out? All I need to know is if my father served in your unit. My two sons would also like to see where their grandfather served.

Brit Vaughan
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To the Editor:

The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association will hold their Annual Reunion at the Double Tree Hotel at the Seattle-Tacoma Airport in the state of Washington. The meeting will run from September 4-7, 2005.

Tours include a trip to the Boeing Museum of Flight; an optional trip to the Muckleshoot Casino; to Mount St. Helens and/or to the sights in Seattle — the Space Needle, Pike's Market and Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection. There is a tour to downtown Tacoma, visiting the Dale Chihuly Museum of Glass and other sites unique to this Northwest area of our country.

Further information is available from:
Ruth Morse
2041 Village Circle East
York, PA 17404
Tel. (717) 846-8948
rewdm@blazenet.net

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To the Editor:

I have been getting rid of a lot of my personal WWII stuff this past winter. I had saved most of the mail I had received, and

it was interesting to read again. Meanwhile, a couple of *Journals* arrived in the mail.

Item 1 that came to my attention was about the AGO ID cards. I received my card in December 1943. Across the top of the card was printed "FOR IDENTIFICATION." How many of the guys out there remember that? I remember that every once in a while during a bull session the question would come up about what was printed at the top of the AGO card. Most times the answer was "FOR IDENTIFICATION." But a lot were like mine.

Item 2 is a follow-up on the Dornier Do335 article in the Summer issue. Enclosed is a photo of another odd plane. It is here in Kalamazoo, being restored for the Smithsonian. At present it is not available for public viewing, so I have not seen this XP-55 which is the last of the ones built. They used to let the public into the rebuilding section but have stopped that.

I enjoy the *Journal*. Keep up the good work. I was with the original group of the 467th Group. Our crew was in the 788th until most of the guys were shipped out to the 801st Prov. Grp. We went to the 789th for the rest of our time in England.

Henry P. Lemmen (467th)
2740 Chesapeake Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49009-9151

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To the Editor:

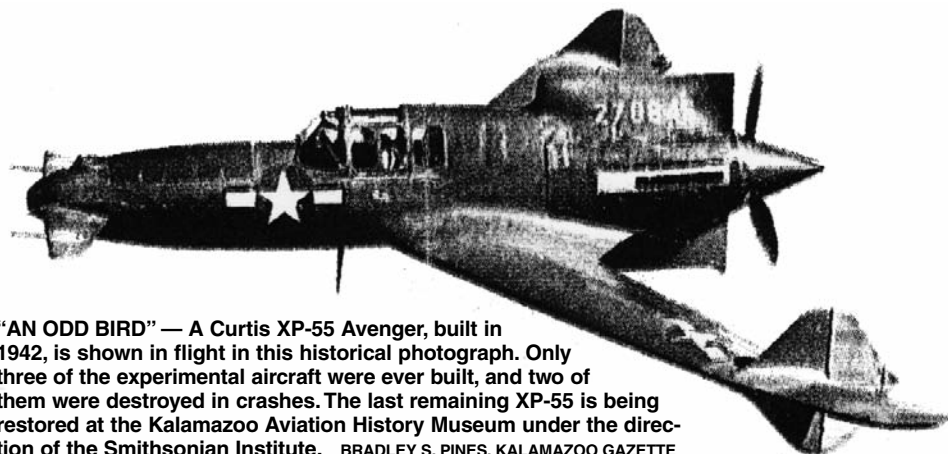
A look over our shoulder:

September 18, 2004 marked the 57th Anniversary of the United States Air Force. It became separate entirely from the U.S. Army and came into its own as the nation's primary deterrent to a third world war.

After fighting for decades to command its own destiny, the nation's air arm became independent on September 18, 1947, inaugurating a new era in national defense.

In his presidential office aboard the C-54 *Sacred Cow*, President Harry Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947, officially establishing the U.S. Air Force as a separate service.

Before becoming a separate branch of service, the Army Air Forces had many great leaders. General H.H. (Hap) Arnold was one of the nation's first military aviators and became the founding father of the Air Force. General Arnold was a giant in the field of aviation and was considered the right man for the time. During WWII, he guided the swift creation of the most powerful military air arm in history with a paltry force and expanded it to more than 70,000 aircraft and 2.4 million personnel. He helped shape and oversaw military operations that played a major role in defeating the Axis powers in Europe and drove



"AN ODD BIRD" — A Curtiss XP-55 Avenger, built in 1942, is shown in flight in this historical photograph. Only three of the experimental aircraft were ever built, and two of them were destroyed in crashes. The last remaining XP-55 is being restored at the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum under the direction of the Smithsonian Institute. BRADLEY S. PINES, KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Japan to surrender in the Pacific — along with support of all branches of the services.

Each of you know of the important part that our own Second Air Division played in achieving victory in Europe. We can all be proud that Lt. Colonel George S. Brown — whose last assignment in Second Air Division was in Operations at Headquarters — Ketteringham Hall. I was privileged to work for Lt. Colonel Brown during this time. Colonel Brown became a four-star general and was Chief of Staff of the Air Force and later was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

When we assemble in San Antonio for our 58th convention we will probably set a record as a veterans' organization. Our many years of great friendship and camaraderie have been a plus for each of us. Our Memorial Library in Norwich, built in honor of the nearly 7,000 comrades who made the supreme sacrifice, stands as the greatest tribute of any veterans' organization in existence today.

Aren't we proud of our achievements?

It was President Kennedy who wrote, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors and the men it remembers."

James H. Reeves (HQ)
Chairman, 2ADA Group Relations
Box 98, Thomasville Road
Moultrie, GA 31768

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To the Editor:

The Tuskegee Airmen are responsible for my having achieved my life's ambition.

As a child I had always wanted to be a railroad brakeman and conductor.

After returning from a combat tour in the 8th Air Force, based in England in 1944, I was stationed at Sellman Field, Monroe, Louisiana.

When the European phase of WWII ended, the black pilots of Tuskegee Airmen were sent back to the United States and some of them were stationed at Sell-

man Field. Segregation was still a way of life in the South, and some of the pilots were from the North, so in order to keep peace the pilots were given the best of everything on the base in hopes that they wouldn't go into town and upset things.

In the course of events, some of the white troops were moved to less desirable quarters and our dining facilities were not of the best quality. Complaints were answered with the suggestion that the complainants elect to transfer to a B-29 bomber base and go bomb the Japanese.

Another bombardier and I transferred to the Mountain Home Army Air Field at Mountain Home, Idaho. The air base had B-32 bombers, and we figured that the B-32, being a newer type bomber, would take longer to train a crew and become combat ready than if we went to a B-29 base for combat training. On our arrival the B-32s were shipped out and B-29s were brought in. While we were training in the B-29s, the Japanese war ended.

The Boise newspaper carried a want ad from the Union Pacific Railroad, seeking switchmen, firemen, and brakemen. I gave them a call and they said that as soon as I got out of the service they would hire me. I changed my home address from Des Moines, Iowa to Boise, Idaho, was transferred to Gowen Field in Boise, and was discharged on a Sunday. I went into Boise on Monday, took a railroad physical, and was put on a passenger train that evening. Upon arrival in Pocatello I filled out my personnel record and on Wednesday began my first trip as a student brakeman.

My thirty-two years of railroading ended in May of 1977, at which time I retired.

I will always feel that I owe a debt of gratitude to the Tuskegee Airmen for their pointing me to a railroad career which fulfilled my life's ambition.

Paul Anderson (389th)
Box 688
Glenns Ferry, ID 83623

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To the Editor:

A happy B-24 Liberator stamp issuance year to all B-24 enthusiasts!

In the year 1999, Bill Hendrix started a petition to the United States Postal Service for issuance of a B-24 Liberator stamp. The petition met with disapproval. Two or three other petitions originated by members of the 2ADA of Southern California also met with disapproval.

In October 2002, I was deeply perturbed when I read in my local paper, the *Orange County Register*, that a stamp was being issued for a "first class hero," a surfboard rider. I mailed to the Postmaster General, Jack Potter, a package of B-24 Liberator historical information accompanied by a cover letter appealing for issuance of a B-24 stamp. This letter was signed by Dick Baynes, Bud Chamberlain, George Welsh, and myself.

During the following two years, some 3,000 petitions were distributed to members of the 2ADA of Southern California at monthly luncheons and at the annual dinners in February. The petition also appeared in the *Briefing* magazine of the Liberator Club, courtesy of George Welsh, and in the *2ADA Journal*, courtesy of Ray Pytel. It was intended that copies of all the aforementioned petitions be made by recipients and distributed for signatures and mailing. The response was stupendous!

Reports were received from members distributing as many as 500, 700, and 2,000 petitions. One member had them in all the barber shops and the library of his town. One report had four air museums in our Northwest states distributing petitions to all visitors.

As a result of all feedback, it is conservatively estimated that some 20,000 petitions were received by the "Stamp Selection Advisory Committee" of the USPS.

This time they could not ignore us.

Everyone involved in the B-24 Liberator stamp petition drive should reach back and give themselves a "hearty pat upon the back" for a job well done. THANK YOU!

Fred Gerritz (466th)
"The Stamp Man"

Ed. Note: Upon his becoming 2ADA president, Earl Wassom appointed Bud Chamberlain to chair a committee to raise the profile of the B-24 by celebrating its 60th anniversary in 1999. An important portion of the committee's effort was devoted to an impassioned appeal to the U.S. Postal Service to issue a postage stamp featuring the B-24. After months of pursuing this apparently fruitless task, the then stamp chairman, Bill Hendrix (466th) resigned from the committee. Then, out of nowhere, Bud heard from Alan Senior (446th), who

expressed a great deal of interest in the project and who volunteered to help, and help he did! He pitched right in, contacting not only the U.S. Postal Service, but all of those countries that may have been host to the Liberator. This, of course, included Great Britain and the Isle of Man which finally accepted Alan's proposal and issued a B-24 stamp. So, Fred Gerritz merits much credit; however, Alan Senior deserves to be recognized for the expansive effort he added to the successful venture. Both Fred and Alan deserve a 2ADA award.

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To the Editor:

You and your organization helped us with the sale of our 2005 B-24, B-17 and B-26 calendar. We hope the response you received from your members in regards to the calendar was positive.

As promised, we closely tracked the sales of the calendars, and are sending you \$1.00 for each calendar purchase that referenced your group. We have also added an additional \$10.00 donation as a small token of our appreciation.

As you're probably aware, in addition to the calendars we also produce *Bomber Legends* magazine. Our goal is to continue to capture stories and letters from veterans and their families for future generations.

How can you help?

(1) Distribute *Bomber Legends* magazine for free at your bomb group reunions or meetings. If you'd like to receive a package of magazines for this purpose, please contact me toll free at 1-866-788-3624.

(2) Place an ad in your newsletters to inform your members of *Bomber Legends* magazine. There is a special \$20 rate for veterans. New subscribers will also receive five issues for the price of four.

(3) Let your members know that we are seeking high quality photographs and historical information for three 2006 calendars: B-24 Liberator, B-17 Flying Fortress, and a Bomber Legends Calendar. The Bomber Legends Calendar will feature all WWII bombers and will be widely distributed to mainstream bookstores such as Barnes & Noble.

Thank you for your support of our organization. We look forward to sharing your group's stories and experiences with the younger generations to come.

George B. Welsh
Editor-in-Chief
Bomber Legends Magazine
1672 Main Street, Ste. E-124
Ramona, CA 92065-5257
www.bomberlegends.com

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

BUT HE DID!

Life in this small Midwestern town slows down after sundown, and the city lights are turned down after midnight, for no one ventures out that late.

Our local hero stayed a wee bit too long at his favorite place of fun and frolic, and at the customary closing time of one o'clock he had to cut across the local cemetery in complete, 100% darkness. Unknowingly he veered off the customary well-beaten path, and stumbled into a freshly dug grave all ready for the next day's occupant.

No matter how hard he tried, he could not climb out of the deep hole, and finally resigned himself to sitting down in a corner and waiting it out until morning.

Soon he heard approaching footsteps in the complete darkness, and heard someone fall into the same hole he was in. He heard the person struggling to get out, but as with his own experience, it was with little success.

Finally he heard the person breathing hard as apparently he was all "tuckered out" for a moment. As the person began to struggle again, he said, "It's no use, you can't get out of here." But almost instantly, the struggling person did! ■



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NOW HEAR THIS: Your 2ADA President Speaks!

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to share with you **Second to None: The Legendary Liberator**, a very special project at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. The Museum is now the home for the front fuselage section of the B-24 Liberator, *Fightin' Sam*. This exhibit is on loan from the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, England. The original *Fightin' Sam* was assigned to the 389th Bomb Group, Second Air Division, at Hethel, England. The Museum proposes to design and build a gallery around the *Fightin' Sam*.

The **Second to None: The Legendary Liberator Gallery** will be the focal point of the Combat Gallery of the Museum. Here visitors will learn about the flight and ground crews who loved the B-24. The design includes a Type T2 hangar surrounding the nose section with a large format screen displaying original B-24 combat footage. Exhibit cases will display painted A-2 and B-15 jackets from B-24 crew members. Interactive elements will include a touch-screen monitor and B-24 flight simulator. Photo murals and graphics will complete the gallery. Visitors will learn the strengths of our great aircraft and what it was like to serve on B-24 crews.

The budget for this dynamic project is \$125,000. We ask you to consider your gift to the **Second to None: The Legendary Liberator Gallery** and send it to the Museum today. Your contribution is tax deductible. We have one year to raise the \$125,000. We have made this our mission for 2005. The Museum will process all donations and place them in a restricted account. The project will begin only with successful completion of the fundraising campaign. Should we fall short of our goal, the Museum will refund all donors.

"As a pioneer B-24 pilot, I flew the Liberator, aptly named by our British allies, in training and combat. With the 93rd Bomb Group, I flew the low level Ploesti mission. Lt. Col. Addison Baker and co-pilot John Jerstad received the Medal of Honor for their leadership on that mission. Their gallantry was an exemplar for all who flew the B-24. I urge you to support the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum's initiative to tell the stories of all who flew the B-24 with the new exhibit — Second to None: The Legendary Liberator."

— Major General Ramsay D. Potts, USAF, Ret.

Let us rise to the occasion and showcase the B-24 by supporting the **Second to None: The Legendary Liberator Gallery**. You are invited to join General Potts and your fellow B-24 veterans in this campaign. Your gift will help us to meet our goal. Join your comrades in arms on our mission to accord the B-24 the recognition and stature it rightly deserves.

Geoff Gregory
President, Second Air Division Association



Make your gift out to: **2ADA**. Be sure to specify that your donation is for:
Second to None: The Legendary Liberator Campaign
Mail to: E.W. Nothstein, 2ADA Treasurer, 40 Meadow Dr., Spencerport, NY 14559

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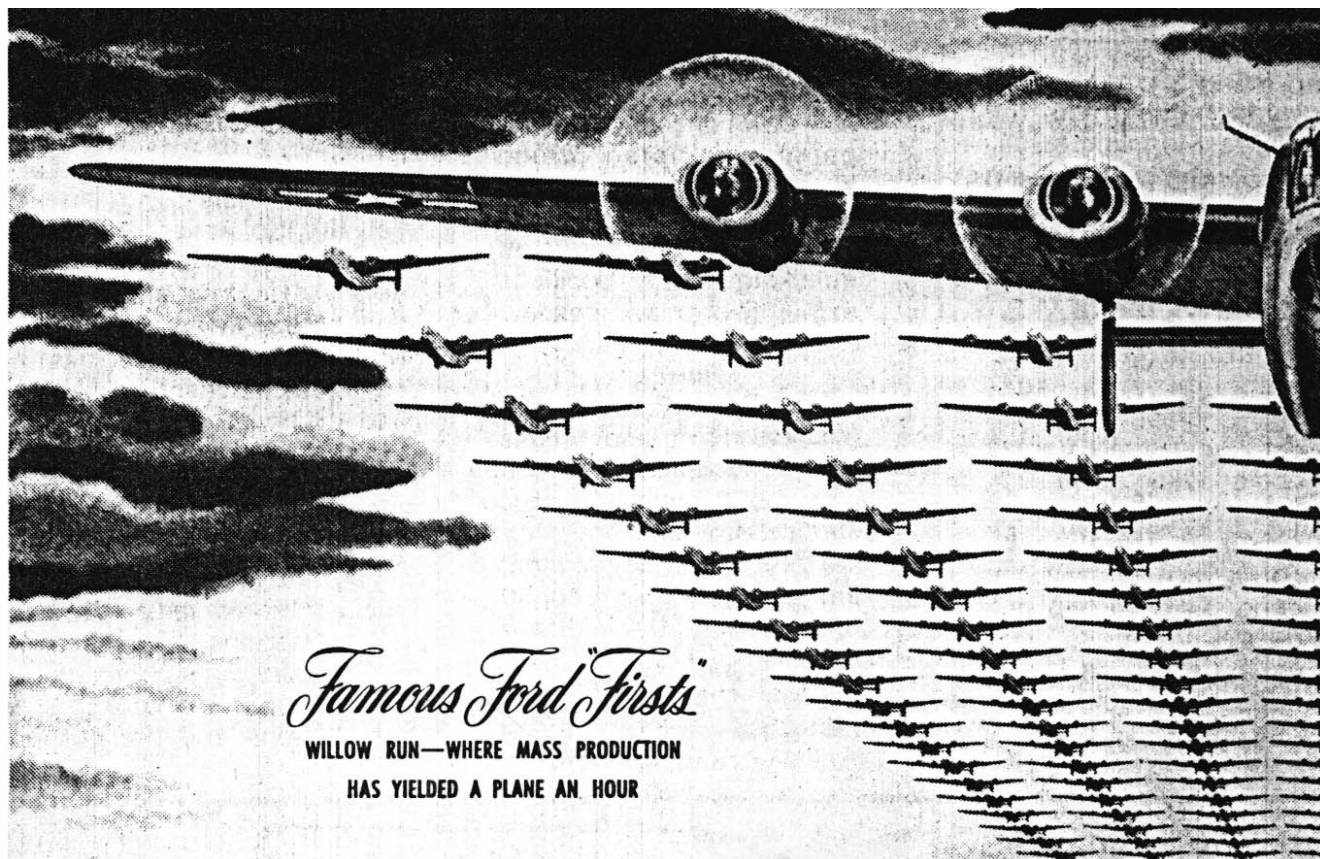
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system. Important shortcuts were developed at every turn. In the case of the center wing section, for example, the construction time of standard aircraft methods was reduced 94%.

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