44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION







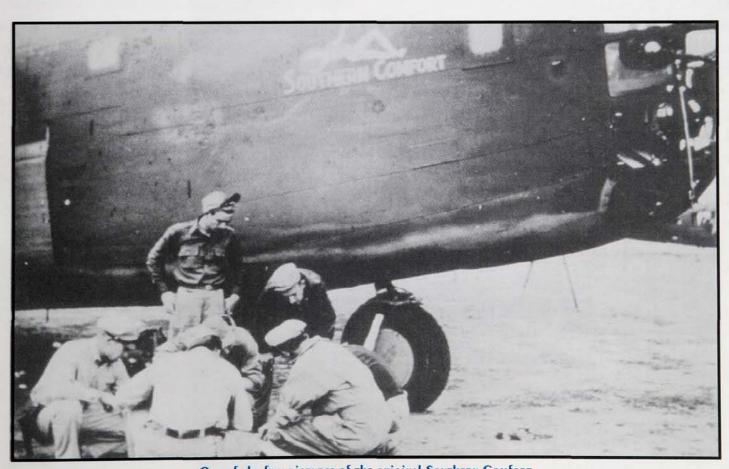
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Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association Spring, 1999

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B-24J-5-FO 42=50896 Bar R "Southern Comfort III" 506th Bomb Squadron, 24 March 1945, with the crew of 2nd Lt. Max E. Chandler aboard departing the English coast on the low-level supply drop mission to Wesel, Germany in support of the Allied Forces Rhine River Crossing. Shot down by ground fire in the drop area, she was never to return. She was the last of four 506th Liberators bearing this name, all lost in the WWII Air War over Europe. The cost was terrible: 17 gallant crew KIA, 21 more taken POW and four aircraft, but never did the enemy turn these men back from their assigned mission.



One of the few pictures of the original Southern Comfort.

Believed to be members of the Austin crew doing a little Pre-mission review before a training mission at Benghazi.

The Saga of Southern Comfort

By Roy Owen

In our last issue the cover story featured the March 24, 1945 low-level supply mission to Wesel, Germany in support of the Rhine River crossing. The heartbeat of that story was the ground fire shoot-down of the 506th Squadron B-24J-5-CO #42-50896 Bar R named "Southern Comfort III" and the miraculous survival of Waist Gunners Louis DeBlasio and Bob Vance in the fiery crash. Since their aircraft was the last of four 506th aircraft which bore the name Southern Comfort, it seemed appropriate to bring closure to that story with some background on their airplane and a fill-in accounting for the three Southern Comfort predecessors of SC III.

B-24D-95-CO 41-40778, was one of the first replacement Liberators assigned to the 506th Bomb Squadron. At deployment from Lincoln, Nebraska, she was assigned to the 1st Lt. Horace W. Austin crew, who in deference to their pilot who hailed from Virginia Beach, Virginia, promptly named her Southern Comfort (a revered Southern liquor) and ferried her to Shipdham, arriving to join the 44th on 14 March 1943. The Austin

crew was one of the first augmentation crews to the 506th. #778 was sent to Langford Lodge for combat modifications; they rejoined the 506th prior to the North Africa deployment. We find no evidence of any combat mission activity until after deployment to North Africa. Presumably the Austin crew flew some low-level training missions in preparation for the Benghazi deployment. On 6 July 1943, the Austin crew flew the combat debut of

#778, Southern Comfort, in support of the Sicily invasion. They flew her again on July 13 in support of the Sicily invasion; against the Marshalling yards at Naples July 17; the Littori M/vards at Rome July 19; Ploesti August I and Weiner Neustadt, Austria August 13. The war ended for the Lt. Austin crew and the original Southern Comfort on the 16 August 1943 raid on North Airfield at Foggia, Italy when, after a previous raid had experienced light flak and little in the way of fighter defenses, the Germans had quickly deployed substantial numbers of FW 190 and Me 109 fighters. The 44th ran into a fury of fighter defense which resulted in the loss of seven aircraft which included Suzy O, Buzzin' Bear and Southern Comfort. All of the crew except Lts. Paul S. Singer, Navigator and Sheldon Finder, Bombardier successfully bailed out. Although both Singer and Finder escaped the aircraft, apparently their parachutes were too badly shot up to deploy and both were found dead at the point of impact. All of the remaining crew were held as prisoners but later made successful escapes and returned to England.



B-24H-1-FO 42-7522S Bar R Southern Comfort (2) B-24H-I-FO 42-7522S was transferred from the 392nd BG but had flown no combat missions prior to arrival at Shipdham on 9 October 1943. Assigned to the 506th, she was named Southern Comfort without a suffix #11, although she was the second 506th aircraft so named. The 39 combat missions flown by this Southern Comfort (2) ranked her second among her SC sister ships. The crew of 1st Lt. John D. Money flew 19 of those missions and were aboard on their 20th on 4 Nov. 1944 when on the bomb run against the fiercely defended Junkers assembly plant at Bernburg, Germany. The bomb bay doors were solidly iced and could not be opened, so they attempted to drop their load of fragmentation bombs through the doors. The bombs did not penetrate the doors and apparently detonated, causing a raging fire in the bomb bay. As the aircraft rolled over before break-up, four crew members were seen to bail out; however, only Lt. Money and the two Waist Gunners, S/Sqts. Don Young and Wallace Kirschner survived and were taken prisoner.



The second Southern Comfort, Call Letter S. This photo was taken after a landing at Thurleigh, a B-17 Base near Bedford, probably coming off a mission with bad weather at AF 115.

B-24J-125-CO 42-110034 Bar R Southern Comfort 11 (3)

The third aircraft to bear the Southern Comfort name, as a result of some confusion, had Roman numeral two (II) added to her name. She arrived at Shipdham about I April 1944. The Lt. Jack J. Wind crew took her over and flew 19 of her 31 missions. In her combat record she struck such important targets as the Pas de Calais V-I sites in France; the Oil Plants at Politz, Germany twice; Berlin, the Krupp Aircraft factory at Magdeburg and the Junkers Aircraft factory at Bernburg. SC 11 met her demise on 21 July 1944 with the Lt. John W. Allen crew aboard. The 44th had just attacked the armaments factory at Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany in the Munich area and were withdrawing; at this point the Missing Air Crew Report becomes confusing. One report says SC Il was under attack by a twin engine German fighter, while Lt. Dan Healy stated the aircraft was shot down by an AA Battery despite strong evasive action by Lt. Allen. At any rate, the aircraft was mortally damaged and all hands except Radio Operator John J. Kempowicz, Jr. successfully bailed out and were taken prisoner.

B-24J-5-CO 42-50896 R Southern Comfort III (4)

The last of the SC's arrived at Shipdham in August, 1944. She was flown by a number of different 506th crews in amassing a total of 47 combat missions to lead the SC derby by 10. Among them the Lt. William M. Smith crew, your author as Co-Pilot flew her twice - once on 2 February 1945 briefed to strike Nurembera. Germany which was recalled; and the other on 23 February 1945 (the 300th mission for the 44th) against the rail center at Weimar, Germany. The targets in the latter stages of the war were synthetic oil plants, railway marshalling yards and rail centers, and junctions to cut off the supply routes supporting the German counterattack in the Ardennes, and finally, for Southern Comfort III, the low-level

supply mission to the site of the Allied forces crossing of the Rhine River into the German homeland at Wesel.

Badly struck by ground fire in the drop area SC III went out of control and crashed. The miraculous survival of Louis DeBlasio and Bob Vance allowed them the opportunity from their hospital beds to watch their German captors become American captives.



The last of the Southern Comfort named Liberators M/Sqt. Ralph C. Jorgenson was Crew Chief on all.



Southern Comfort III engines running, ready to taxi.



The Southern Comfort Ground Crew. L to R S/Sqt. Alex Januszyk, Sqt. Don Powell Sqt. Don Swem Presumably, M/Sqt. Jorgenson took the picture.

In all of the stories we have related in the past five years that dealt with our combat missions, we have lauded our brave combat crews and those magnificent maintenance men I call "Knucklebusters," (did you ever see one without a skinned knuckle or two?). We've talked about the deeds of valor by our aircrews fighting a vicious high altitude air war and watching in terror and anguish at seeing comrades being shot out of the formation and praying for the bailout and counting the chutes. We've also talked about those lonely hours after mission launch that our ground crews go through the vigil of waiting for the mission return; then the anxiety of the returning airplane count, looking for their own. We've talked some about the relief of seeing their own ship coming down finally, but we haven't talked much about the terrible anguish of the wait and the gut wrenching mixed emotions of hope after the main force has landed, that she is limping in late, and fear that she is not coming home, and you will never again see that beautiful young crew. In my conversations over the years with the Ground Crews that have been through the combat experience of losing an aircrew and plane, all have told me once is enough.



When the same pilot or crew is assigned to one's airplane, a natural bonding takes place which is a fertile pot for friendship to blossom and grow. The first loss, however, changes that friendly comradeship and a guarded, impersonal relationship takes its place. Fear of the anguish, should another loss of a pilot or crew you have come to care for occur, brings down a curtain of professional relationship and respect but no display of emotion. The hurt is too great to take the risk. "Yes, Sir" and "No, Sir" or "How about this, Chief, or Sarge" gets the job done and makes it easier to keep what might be taken for tender feelings of friendship down deep where they won't flare up if the going gets scary. I've also talked to some pilots who have never figured this out. You'll hear them say something like: Have you flown Sgt. Brown's airplane? Man, he is some kind of grouch! Unless it is something about the airplane, he will hardly give me the time of day! It is a strange human phenomena, but if the pilot or crewman understands it, then all it takes is a warm thank you for an aircraft that performed for you. You can then believe there is a big grin inside that inner protective shell that is saying thanks, I appreciate that, but I just have trouble showing it. After four losses, I'm sure M/Sgt. Jorgenson and his ground crew would know what we're talking about here.

FROM THE NEWLY APPOINTED EDITOR

Ruth W. Davis-Morse

Roy Owen's desk is overflowing, so please start forwarding your information to me. Besides, he has more projects going than the CIA. Everybody has a story worth telling and worth publishing. Send it!

I am holding a beautiful picture of the Queen Mary when she steamed into New York Harbor in 1945 carrying the victorious veterans home from the War. Can anyone who went over on the Queen Mary or anyone who came home on her, give me a little information about how he/she felt on those awesome and glorious days?

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Well, in the language of the Military, I must say:

"Pay attention, this is no drill!"

In the Winter issue President's Corner, I

explained how it was that I came to be still occupying the seat of the president. It is with mixed emotions that I now tell



you the time has come to pass the gavel. I know you all join me in my sorrow for Mike Mikoloski and his family because his daughter Peggy lost her courageous battle with cancer last November 30. The outcome of her struggle, if you will recall, was to determine the length of my extended service as your president.

In mid-January I talked with Mike to see how he was managing with the sorrow of his loss. After talking through the emotions, he seemed relieved and I opened the dialogue of when he might feel ready to assume the responsibilities of the president. The reason I call him "Iron Mike" came shining through when he replied: "Roy, I think it is exactly what I need to direct my focus away from the tragedy of my personal loss and toward the good of the 44th BGVA. which I love!" Little else can be said except that I feel confident with Mike taking the lead. While I have some sad feelings about stepping down, it has been a great ride, guiding our association from near extinction to the strongest Bomb Group in 2nd Air Division and perhaps in 8th Air Force.

We have agreed on June 1 as the effective date for my resignation and his ascendancy to the president's chair. This will be confirmed by the Board in a meeting to be held in conjunction with the 2nd AD Convention in Austin, Texas May 29-June 1.

I am obliged, in passing the gavel, to discuss the highlights of our current and near-term past projects and financial condition relating to those projects. This summary has been provided in an earlier report to your Executive Board as my closing report.

Starting with the longest on-going project we called the "Arrow Air," in which we entered into an agreement with the Shipdham Airfield operator to match-fund the construction of an addition to their facility, which would be a combination Pilot's lounge/44th Bomb Group Museum. Under the agreement we were obligated to grant \$6k to the project. After almost two years of vague planning and futile attempts to get outside grant financing, the facts came to light that Arrow Air was only a step ahead of bankruptcy (they have since filed) and the owner of the airfield intended to deny extension of the airfield lease. In December, 1998. Arrow went out of business. Forewarned. in October, I directed our Treasurer to withdraw our funds from the English bank holding the account and transfer the funds to our U.S. account in Salt Lake City. That project is history.

In 1997 we received a letter from the Shipdham chapter of the British Legion that there was a local project afoot to finance and install a stained glass window in the Shipdham church. The British Legion offered to raise the funds for the window if the window theme would be to memorialize Shipdham Veterans killed in WWI & II. It was then that the 44th BGVA was approached to participate. In response, the 44th volunteered to assume 10% of the cost (\$640.) We were recently informed that Shipdham has a new, young Vicar who opposes any suggestion of war in the church, thus the Window project is history, and the allocated \$640 awaits in our treasury for reallocation to a future project.

In early 1997, a 44th delegation went to Barksdale AFB, LA for the dedication of a memorial plaque in the 8th Air Force Memorial Park. While there, we were invited to take part in a re-paint of the B-24J 'Laden Maiden' to mark the aircraft in 44th identity. After almost two years of inactivity, our project officer Clem Haulman visited Barksdale and found no progress had been made on the re-paint and additionally, two engine cowlings were beyond repair and needed replacement. One side of the horizontal stabilizer was sagging and was propped up with a wooden timber. Col. Haulman also obtained correspondence from the 8th Air Force Vice Commander which stated that Air Force budget constraints would not allow re-hab maintenance on museum aircraft. He urged the Museum Director to encourage the donation of repair funds from "interested agencies' which, (as concerns the B-24J we intend to re-name 'Louisiana Belle,") is the 44th BGVA. The estimate of \$7,000 for repairs is two years old. I have recommended to the Board that we Help us here undertake the repair.

We covered the successful completion and dedication of the Ploesti display in the Mighty 8th AF Museum, Savannah, GA in the last issue of the 'Tails." Financially, we had a \$640 overrun on the \$3000 estimate for the diorama, and to our great surprise, a \$4600 bill for the display case, which we were

told there would be no cost. Both amounts have been paid by some very skillful reallocation of budgeted funds by our Treasurer. Immediately after the dedication in Savannah, we listened to a recommendation by the museum staff that we put up a guard rail around the display and provide text panels on opposite sides of the display which would give an overview and some statistics on the Ploesti Raid for the visiting public to better understand the mission. The museum staff has completed plans for this addition with a cost of \$2,000. and we have instructed the museum to proceed with that addition. Except for some thoughts for a future addition of a voice overlay giving the details of the mission, that project is complete. The museum staff tells us that already, our Ploesti display is the most popular one in the museum.

The biggest and, what has become the most important of our current projects, is the 8th Air Force Heritage Database we have written extensively about in the last two issues of the 'Tails." I am happy to report that our Database Team headed by Tom Shepherd is underway.

One of our early concerns is that our members have been very slow submitting their personal biographies. This data is being entered into the program by our own member volunteers. The archival data (missions, aircraft numbers, etc.) has been extracted from the National Archives by Tony Mastradone and transmitted via Will Lundy to the contractor for data entry.

As you should rightfully expect, the 44th is once again the leader of the 2nd AD in becoming its first group to adopt and undertake

this magnificent 'living history' of 8th Air Force. While we felt certain that between the individual donations so far made by the members, coupled with the funds retrieved from the "Arrow Air" project, we had money in the treasury allocated to fully meet the original estimate for completing the entry of the archival data. We are, like most projects, experiencing overruns which are being funded from our treasury reserves and will be addressed by the Board.

As to funding for the living and recently deceased 44th Veterans for whom we have records, we are covering by collection of a small fee from each member as he submits his or her Personal Biography. Future search for 44th Veterans with whom we have had no contact will, no doubt, require additional future funding. Again we ask our living membership to not forget those who have gone before us. We must do our level best to see that EVERY 44th Veteran dead or alive takes their rightful place in the "living history" database. We need whatever you can give. For those contributing \$100 or more, you will receive your own compact disk containing the 8th Air Force Military Heritage Database.

7

folks, this is our

last chance to

leave our mark

on the pages of

World History.

At the very least, when you complete your own Personal Biographical Data and send it in with the applicable \$10 or \$15 data entry fee, send along an additional \$30 to cover a couple of Biographical forms for those who are no longer with us or those who can't afford the fee.

Remember, in the historical sense, we in the 44th, will never knowingly leave our dead on the battlefield. They will always belong to us! The future search for the records of those deceased or we have otherwise lost contact will, no doubt, require VA, Social Security, Air Force, Army and family records search, which will involve telephone calls and correspondence, which all means more future funding. Help us here folks, this is our last chance to leave our mark on the pages of World History.

In closing, I am very pleased to report that our financial condition has (in our resurrected life) come from the empty cash drawer legacy of the HMG to the best bank balance in our four and a half year history. We just emerged from a very successful reunion to the credit of our Reunion Chairman, Mike Yuspeh. Gratefully, we are headed for another great reunion under his stewardship in his home town, New Orleans.

I will continue to serve our Association from the seat of the Immediate Past President. I have promised my help, advice and counsel to Mike and to Ruth Morse, your editor of this, her first issue of your Association journal.

Lolly and I thank you for allowing us the honor of serving you as your President and First Lady. We love you and will see you in New Orleans.

Please note: Hairs are getting grayer and ranks are getting thinner.

The 44th Bomb Group needs new members.

You've been telling stories to your children and grandchildren for years; and when you are gone, the memories will dim. Right now the unbelievable experiences of WWH are a fascination for all generations.

Sign up family members to the Bomb Group, and keep the memories alive.

44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

DUES FOR 1999
•Dues are \$20. •Outside U.S. \$25

•Life Membership Dues 60 and over \$125 •Life Membership Dues 40 to 59 \$150

Join now so you don't miss the next issue of the 8-Ball Tails!

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44th Bomb Group Veterans Association P.O. Box 712287

Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287



H.C. "Pete" Henry Pilot, 44th Bomb Group

For his many years of dedicated service to the 2nd Air Division Association and to other members of his Bomb Group.

This letter to Dick from the Trust Librarian speaks for the success of the "Pete Henry" Endowment fund and its perpetual tribute to the remarkable man we honor with it.



The Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division U.S.A.A.F.

Judith A. Jerome. American Fulbright Librarian

David J. Hastings, Vice Chairman The 2nd Air Division USAAF Memo

Paul R. King. OBE. DL. Chairman I Lime Tree Road.

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9 March 1999

DHIPAS

Richard D Butler 16494 Wagon Wheel Drive Riverside CA 92506-5850 USA

Lenclose details of books purchased on behalf of The 44th Bomb Group in honor of Pete Henry under the Reis, Claire R. - Composers in America: Biographical Sketches of Contemporary Composers with a Dear Mr Butler 1997/98 endowment programme.

Dale, Nelson W - Who Speaks for the President? : The White House Press Secretary from Cleveland to

Eisenhower, John S D – Agent of Destiny: The Life and Times of General Winfield Scott Record of their Work

Finler, Joel W. - Hollywood Movie Stills: The Golden Age

McNeese, Tim - Illustrated Myths of Native America: The Northeast, Southeast, Great Lakes and Great

Although this allocation was made some time ago I have yet to receive specific instructions re wording for If you would kindly provide me with the required wording I will send you a copy of the bookplate as soon as

the bookplates.

possible. With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Derek Hills Trust Librarian

Remembering the "Yanks"

Roy Owen

My first experience with a British post-war demonstration of the admiration and gratitude they hold for the American armed forces was when Lolly and I went over for the 40th Anniversary of "D" Day, June 6, 1984.

Our tour was planned, insofar as possible, to follow the invasion path of the Americans, so we were scheduled to depart Weymouth on route to our "invasion" point at Cherbourg. As our tour bus got in the bus line to board the ferry, looking over to the automobile and truck line, I couldn't believe my eyes seeing the assembly of almost every type of vintage WWII U.S. Army vehicles I had ever seen. Personnel carriers, weapons carriers, jeeps, six-by trucks, ambulances, staff cars, and motorcycles with side-cars. Except for tanks, you name it and there seemed to be at least one of everything. Amazing also was the great shape they were in; almost every one of them looked like it had just left the motor pool! Equally amazing was almost to the vehicle, they were occupied with Brits dressed in authentic U.S. Army Uniforms. On the ambulances were English women in U.S. Army Nurses uniforms. Also there were Army WACs and WAFS. It truly looked like an invasion force.



We all had an incredible party on the four hour crossing and admittedly a rather shaky invasion, as all were debarked and true to form. There were some vehicle breakdowns on the highway climbing the palisade out of Cherbourg causing a realistic invasion bog-down.

This spirit is still alive and well, Dick Butler found out during his November attendance at the 2nd AD Executive Board meeting in Norwich. Not only do they love Americans and their war relics, but they love the 44th Bomb Group and its 68th Bomb Squadron, as illustrated by the photo of Dick and this wonderfully maintained jeep owned by Keith Thomas, active member of The Friends of 8th Air Force. One can be certain it is a proud Brit who owns one of these cherished vehicles and the uniform to go with it.

WILL SEZ

Compiling a listing of Folded Wings three times a year is difficult in more ways than one. Obviously, time marches on and more of us "fold" our wings. But it is often times very hard to locate any data within the records that I possess to find suitable material to do justice to any person on the new listings. Surely there must be some means to build up our records to permit anyone to learn more about those that served with us.

With the initiation of our recent efforts to computerize our history, utilizing the Computer Generated Data Program, we will be able to have immediate access to our operational history. That is a huge step in the right direction, but we still have only the names of our members, with little personal data. True, the program has the capacity to accept and produce personal experiences, both by written and spoken words. But again, we still will know very little about the man himself (or woman).

What we really need from each of you is data about vourself - and how do we get that? Why, the Bios form that has been included in this newsletter in the last two issues. Hopefully, we will have the space to once again make it available to you, and this time please do not put it aside and forget it. Remove it from the newsletter and put with our bill paying drawer or envelope, etc. THAT'S RIGHT, DO IT NOW!! And I hope that later you will come back to read why it is so important. It may appear to be complicated and/or extensive, but it really is not. There is ample space provided for a more complete response to the question, but often you can utilize more paper to fully complete a story or experience. Get your family or friends to help you if necessary. BUT, please get it done!

Why is this so important? Because in our records you are only a name, not a person.

Your bios will make your records come alive. That is, you will be a person not just for the present, but for as long as our history is available for future generations to read and appreciate what you accomplished before, during WWII and afterwards.

One more thought too, before you finish this column. As evidenced in the Folded Wings, we are losing members, many of them were combat crew members. These men are gone and consequently cannot prepare a bio for themselves, so we must find some way to get it done for them. If you have ideas how to obtain them, please advise us. Until then, I'd like to suggest to you remaining crew members (or to any other person who has lost 44th friends or buddies) to check your old addresses and try to contact the widows or their children. even other crew members, to have them help prepare a form as completely as possible. They could have photos, diaries, orders, form 5, etc. with which to obtain many answers. Each of you crewmen could offer to help them, too, to help with answers.

The form need not be complete to be submitted. Those of us on the Bios team can attempt to get more answers that may be in our Official Records. We will do as much research as our records permit. Many crewmen have submitted diaries and stories to me in the past, so these are also available. If you have, please remind us, so that they will not be overlooked. Let us make this a complete team effort -- let us all get involved so that our 44th Bomb Group can be set up as a shining example for all to see and admire. We have a big job to do, so let us once more pull together and get it done right.

THANK YOU! Will Lundy

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STATUS REPORT ON BEVA MEMBERSHIP and MASTER HERITAGE DATABASE PROJECT By Tommy Shepherd

This report is being presented in a questionnaire format, for it is - YOU - the membership that can best respond to the core question: Just how much do you really want posterity to know about the men and women of the 44th Bombardment Group during World War II?

Do you know of the thousands upon thousands of hours that over the past FIFTY-SEVEN (57) years such 44thers as: Will Lundy, Art Hand, Tony Mastradone, Webb Todd, Norm Keifer, Jerry Folsom, Arlo Bartsch, Roy Owen, Steve Adams, Bob Lehnhausen, Bill Cameron, Ursula P. Harvell, and many others, have contributed to recording in book form YOUR history?

Do you know that because of the efforts of these fellow members that all data from the sorties flown by OUR groups from 1942 to 1944, inclusive, is already entered in the NM? Do you know that only sorties for 1945 have not yet been entered? BUT - do you know that this data is only the IMPERSONAL data and text of our total history?

Do you know at this point that we are still waiting for a great many biolgraphies, all of which are important. Do you know, included in the 8BT edition is, again, the Biography Form awaiting YOUR completion? Certainly you are not waiting for someone else to complete YOUR biography. Are you? Can anyone else complete as well as you "Personal Memories, Experiences and Stories", or the other section, "Specific Mission Comments"?

For you attending the New Orleans Reunion there will be special times for your viewing the most up-to-date version of the @. Do you want to see what some of your fellow members said about our 44th? How about the ground support member that said, "My crew busted our butts hour upon hour in the cold and wet Jolly Ole' because we wanted our airplane to do its BEST for the BEST combat crew buddies; and by God, they did their BEST - even in North Africa in all that damn sand and wind." Then what Combat Air Crew Pilot said, "I thank God for the opportunity to fly with some of the bravest people on earth ... I feel lucky too, to have made it through without any serious problems." Do those 'memories' sound like some of yours?

Please note: Art Hand and Norm Nutt are currently working on securing all possible biographies from family members of those deceased. If you know of a former member, now deceased, and would like to assist Art and Norm, why don't you pass that information along to them? Let us all pitch in and help this super fine effort.

Don't you feel that all of us have yet One More Duty to Perform, and that is to record for posterity all of our experiences and memories for generations yet to come, and do it in a form and manner that all can see and read about our 44th BGP? Well, how about it?

What are you waiting for?



When you have completed this form, if you have no pictures, mail it with \$10; if you have two photos or one photo and an extra page of text (single spaced in 12 point font), mail the form with \$15 to:

44th BGVA, P.O. Box 712287, Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287.

8th Air Force Military Heritage Database

Personal Biographical Data — Your "Living Monument"

It is our goal to assemble a complete record of all personnel who at one time served with the 8th Air Force during World War II. The records of those who were on flying status will be obtained from declassified group mission reports which have been stored in the National Archives. From this, a matrix has been developed which will allow for the search and retrieval of the following information: who flew on what mission, with whom, in what plane, to what target, on what date, enemy opposition, aircraft and personnel losses, and hundreds of cross referenced bits of detailed information.

To make this database come "Alive," your stories, memories, photos and voice recordings are essential.

Cassette recordings of your memories should be limited to 2 minutes or less per each incident.

Please provide a "Then and Now" photo of yourself and a Crew photo, if available.

A Master Copy of this multi-media database is now a part of the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA. Other copies will be available to Museums, Libraries, Universities, Schools and on the World Wide Web Internet. You may also have your own copy of the full database, on a CD, to run on a home computer.

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Engineering: ☐ Mess Hall: ☐ Supply: ☐ Intelligence: ☐ Other Duties or Assignments:
Your Contributions Must Not Be Forgotten, Please Provide Details:

Here is a wonderful story condensed from a speech by Leo K. Thorsness, a recipient of the Medal of Honor. It is about United States Air Force, Navy and Marine pilots in the Hanoi Hilton prisoner of war camp and what the Flag, Freedom and America meant to them, and Mike Christian in particular. Sadly, after Mike Christian was freed he died in a fire.

Mike Christian's US Flag

You've probably seen the bumper sticker somewhere along the road. It depicts an American Flag, accompanied by the words "These colors don't run." I'm always glad to see this, because it reminds me of an incident from my confinement in North Vietnam at the Hao Lo POW Camp, or the "Hanoi Hilton," as it became known. Then a Major in the U.S. Air Force, I had been captured and imprisoned from 1967-1973. Our treatment had been frequently brutal. After three years, however, the beatings and torture became less frequent. During the last year, we were allowed outside most days for a couple of minutes to bathe. We showered by drawing water from a concrete tank with a homemade bucket.

One day, as we all stood by the tank stripped of our clothes, a young Naval pilot named Mike Christian found the remnants of a handkerchief in a gutter that ran under the prison wall. Mike managed to sneak the grimy rag into our cell and began fashioning it into a flag. Over time we all loaned him a little soap, and he spent days cleaning the material. We helped by scrounging and stealing bits and pieces of anything he could use.

At night, under his mosquito net, Mike worked on the flag. He made red and blue from ground-up roof tiles and tiny amounts of ink and painted the colors onto the cloth with watery rice glue. Using thread from his own blanket and a homemade bamboo needle, he sewed on stars.

Early in the morning a few days later, when the guards were not alert, he whispered loudly from the back of our cell, "Hey gang, look here." He proudly held up this tattered piece of cloth, waving it as if in a breeze. If you used your imagination, you could tell it was supposed to be an American flag. When he raised that smudgy fabric, we automatically stood straight and saluted, our chests puffing out, and more than a few eyes had tears.

About once a week the guards would strip us, run us outside and go through our clothing. During one of those shakedowns, they found Mike's flag. We all knew what would happen. That night they came for him. Night interrogations were always the worst. They opened the cell door and pulled Mike out. We could hear the beginning of the torture before they even had him in the torture cell.

They beat him most of the night. About daylight they pushed what was left of him back through the cell door. He was badly broken, even his voice was gone. Within two weeks, despite the danger, Mike scrounged another piece of cloth and began another flag. The Stars and Stripes, our national symbol, was worth the sacrifice to him.

Now, whenever I see the flag, I think of Mike and the morning he first waved that tattered emblem of a nation. It was then, thousands of miles from home in a lonely prison cell, that he showed us what it is to be truly free.



MISCELLANEA

THE NEWS FROM ENGLAND

The 44th Presence At Mildenhall

Mainly through the efforts of our U.K. Representative, Steve Adams, we have for some time had a very supportive and friendly relationship with the USAF 100th Air Refueling Wing and Headquarters 3rd Air Force based at RAF Mildenhall, the only active USAF base remaining in Norfolk.

You may recall in 1997 the 3rd AF
Headquarters building was dedicated and
named General Leon W. Johnson Hall,
honoring him as the first 3rd AF
Commander. Steve Adams furnished most of
the archival photography that now decorates
the building interior. After our 44th History
was published, it seemed appropriate that
our WWII history should be made available
for the young people of today's Air Force to
help make them aware of the importance of
the Norfolk region as the home of the 2nd
Air Division and it's B-24 bases and Bomb
Groups such as Shipdham and the 44th.

Steve Adams contacted M/Sgt. Mark E. Brotherton, Chief, Logistics Training Flight of the 100th ARW, a friend and strong supporter of the 44th BGVA, and requested that he represent us in making the presentation of our history to the Base Library.

Pictured below is the presentation with L to R, Colonel Jeffery Kohler, 100th ARW Commander, M/Sgt. Mark Brotherton and Mr. Neil Ahern, Base Librarian. Col. Kohler and Mr. Ahern have expressed their gratitude for embellishing their History Section with our own. We have likewise presented a copy of our history to the Shipdham Village Heritage Center and 2nd Air Division Memorial Room, Norwich Central Library.





More Library News

Back in 1997, Pete Henry stepped down from the position as the 44th Group Vice President to the 2nd Air Division, Dick Butler. Dick replaced Pete and organized funding of a Memorial Library endowment to honor Pete for the eighteen years he served both 2nd AD and the 44th BG. The drive netted \$2795. An endowment was established and the funds invested with the earned interest were used to perpetuate the purchase of books pertaining to a better understanding of American history and culture. Each of the books purchased would bear this bookplate on its flyleaf:

Presented To
2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room
Norwich Central Library
By 44th Bomb Group 2nd ADA Members With Gratitude
In Honor Of

This photo was taken on Remembrance day in the Shipdham Church yard with Don Dodd, local leader of the Shipdham chapter of The British Legion assisting Dick with the laying of the wreath on the 44th Memorial Stone.











Memory Lane



September 18, 1998

Dear Roy,

Have had the enclosed photo for your Memory Lane page printed from my old negative. Having a girl friend who worked in 'high places' I was able to take the view from an advantage point.

A store called Debenhams had been built on the remains of the bombed buildings in the bottom foreground in the picture, when I attended the 1992 reunion in Norwich staying at the Hotel Nelson with the 44 BG Vets, and where I met Mike Neri again.

You may be wondering how an Englishman like myself has

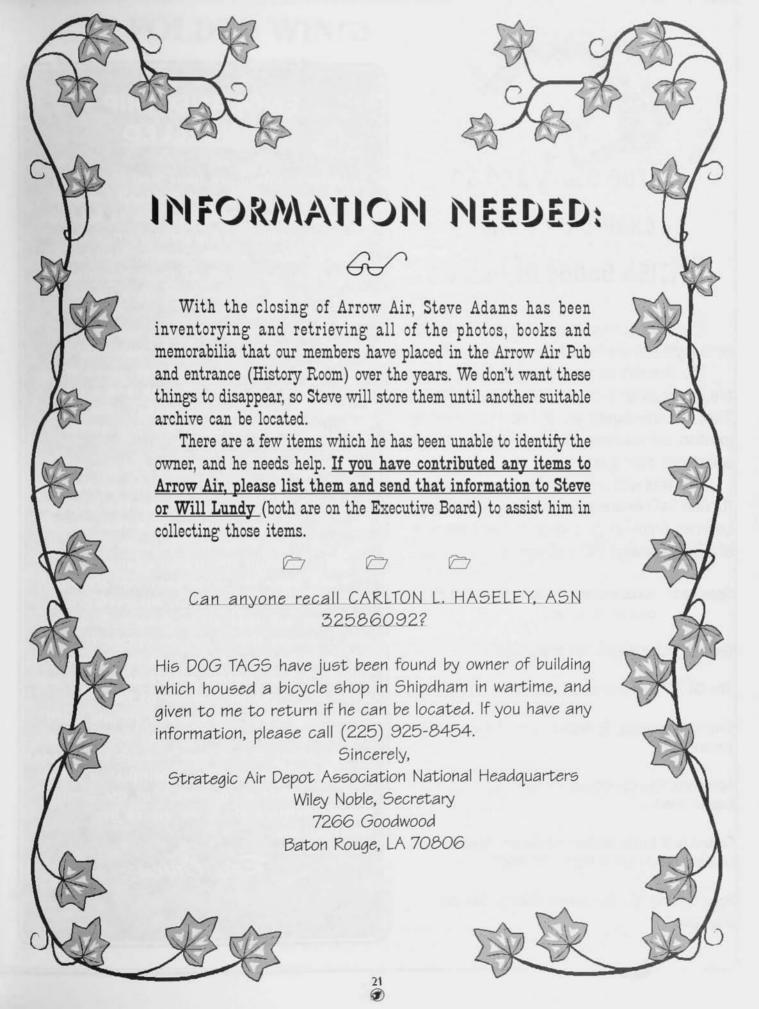
come to be so closely associated with the 44 BG. It is not widely known that all newly constructed airfields for the USAAF, even those actually built by the U.S. Army Engineers, were initially opened by ground staff of the RAF. This ensured that when the ground crews of the Bomb Groups arrived, there was accommodation, food and communications all in place for their use. Flying control was manned by staff who had checked out the recently installed equipment. RAF Signals personnel continued working alongside their newly arrived counterparts explaining navigational aids, etc., that were already in place. Other staff explained how the UK telephone and teletype network operated and in this respect I got to know Mike Neri and the late Richard Bottomley. Later I went on a mechanics course and maintained the British teleprinters both at Shipdham and Wendling.

I can claim that I was at Shipdham first, arriving on 14th August 1942 and leaving on 29 July 1944, after American made teletypes had replaced the British machines I had maintained.

Hope you have a good reunion with Steve this year with whom I am continually in touch. Kindest regards to Lolly and yourself, from Olive and me.

Peter Broadley

5 Station Road • Hampton Wick • Kingston-Upon-Thames • Surrey KT1 4HG UK • Telephone: +44 181 977 1373





This story comes from a United Airlines pilot on a flight descending into Frankfurt Airport.

The German controllers at Frankfurt Airport are infamous for being a short tempered lot. They not only expect you to know your parking location, but also how to get there without any assistance from them.

So it was with some amusement that we (United 747) listened to the following exchange between Frankfurt ground control and the pilot of a British Airways 747 (call sign Speedbird 206).

Speedbird: "Good morning Frankfurt, Speedbird 206, clear of the active."

Ground: "Guten Morgan, taxi to your gate."

The BA 747 pulls onto the main taxiway and stops.

Ground (brusquely): "Speedbird, do you not know where you are going?"

Speedbird: "Standby ground, I'm looking up the gate location now."

Ground (with typical German impatience): Speedbird 206, have you never been to Frankfurt before?"

Speedbird (coolly): "Yes, several times in 1944, but I didn't stop."

ENGLAND TRIP CANCELLED

Unfortunately we have had to cancel the Summer '99 trip to England for lack of participation. We only had 14 sign ups. This was really disappointing after the show of hands at the General Membership meeting in Savannah of those wanting to join the trip. We counted more than enough to fill one bus.

There are still a few who are planning to go on to Europe on their own this Summer, but it is too bad our group travel folded. We put a lot of work and a fair amount of our treasury money into planning and promoting the trip all for naught.

Let's face it, we haven't got too much time or endurance left to make overseas travel, so that may have been the last one we will attempt. I understand that those who wish to celebrate Y2K with travel are already flooding the travel agents.

I will leave the door open for 2000 only if those who are seriously interested in a trip, that will first go to France, Belgium and Germany then have an option to return to England for a visit to Norwich and Shipdham before returning home, will write or e-mail me a letter of FIRM intentions (not reservations) to join such a trip and tell me where they would prefer to visit, then if I receive enough responses to make a trip feasible, I will plan a small tour to satisfy a consensus of the group desire. Write early if we are to get reservations.

Roy Owen

FOLDED WINGS April, 1999

Appelin, Carl W.....

12/98	67th Squadron. T-125238. Carl was a navigator for the Lt. Frank Hurst crew
	that arrived at Shipdham on 19 July,
	1944, completed their tour and
	departed for the U.S. on 18 May, 1945.



Bata, Frank B 5/28/98	Frank was a gunner assigned to the E.J. McKenney crew when it
	arrived at Shipdham in early August, 1943, then immediately flew to Africa arriving too late for the Ploesti mission. This crew was broken
	up at this time. Cannot identify missions flown by Frank without sortie
	reports. Later Frank was assigned to the John K. Winchester crew, flew
	many missions with them. Then when Lt. George Insley returned to the
	44th for his second tour, this time with the 506th Squadron. Frank
	joined them as a tail gunner. As this was a lead crew, missions were less
	frequent, flown mostly in bad weather. The last identified mission flown
	by this crew was 15 Feb, 1945. In essence, Frank flew the equal of two
	tours as did most of the Insley crew. They all were exceptionally brave
	and patriotic men. Frank remained in service after WWII until he
	retired. He was buried in Arlington Cemetery on 7 July, 1998.

Brandt, Daniel F 11/98	0-701552 67th Squadron. Dan flew as a navigator for the Robert J.
	Gunton crew. This crew arrived on 14 May, 1944, quickly flew 34
	missions, with most of the crew ending their tour in September, 1944.

Brown, Norman D 08/97	Pilot, 67th Squadron 0-768430. Norman was a co-pilot on the Ernest
	G. Holmer crew when they were assigned to the 44th Bomb Group in
	August, 1944. Later he was assigned his own crew and flew as a 1st
	pilot until April, 1945. He brought his crew back to the States in A/C
	#44-48821A.

Fairchild, Kenneth L 03/01/98	67th Squadron S/Sgt. Fairfield was a waist gunner for the Edward C.
	Yatkones crew which arrived at Shipdham on 8 June, 1944. This crew
	quickly completed their tour in November, 1944 except for the pilot,
	who was ill for a short period, his crew flown with other crews.

Falls, Billie D Unknown	67th Squadron S/Sgt. Falls was a tail gunner on Lt. Ralph E. VanEss
	crew in early October, 1943. He was part of the echelon on DS to
	Africa on 23 Sept. 43. Cannot confirm his combat missions at this time.

Farnham, Dale F 09/27/98	Dales served with the	1132 QM and the 1646 Ordnance Units.
	Reported by his wife,	Lorraine.

Folland, George W 10/05/98	0-823344 George served as a co-pilot for Lt. Condray and then as 1st
	pilot on his own crew. The Newton E. Condray crew was assigned to
	the 67th Squadron in July, 1944, flew many of their mission in 049 O-
	Bar, Fearless Fosdick. George became a 1st pilot after 32 missions with
	the Condray and Crandell crews and completed his tour of 35 by flying
	his last three as a lead crew pilot.

Long, BG Robert F Unknown	General Long served with the 18th Weather Station on the base at Shipdham.
	67th Squadron 11046207. S/Sgt. NcNamara was one of the early ground crewmen to join the 44th BG at Barksdale Field, LA. He was part of the ground echelon that sailed to England on the Queen Mary on 5 September, 1942. He served as Assistant Crew Chief on "Suzy Q," went to Africa in September, 1943 (second trip) as a Crew Chief on aircraft #779, "4-Q-2." Ray returned home in June, 1945. Ray served again in the Korean War, having been recalled as a reservist. His wife of 51 years, Mary, and he, suffered severe strokes in mid-December, both of them succumbed within 18 hours of each other.
Petrosky, John J 07/29/98	67th Squadron. He was a tail gunner on Lt. Jefferson's crew. This crew was listed on the 67th roster on 28 December, 1943, flew their first mission on 1 January, 1944. The crew went to a Rest Home for a week on R&R on 24 April, and completed their tour on 11 May, 1944.
Pauly, Bruce H Unknown	0-434434. He enlisted in the USAAC in 1941 as an Aviation Cadet and was assigned to the 44th BG at MacDill Field, FL. In December, 1941, he served as a 44th BG Engineering Officer from February, 1942 to November, 1943. He was a member of the Flight Echelon, flew to England as a passenger on A/C #41-23786 piloted by Lt. James Dubard. He served in S-4 at Shipdham from November, 1943 to April, 1944. He then became Director of Maintenance, 2nd Air Division from April, 1944 to May, 1945 Maintenance Division at Wright Field, OH, where he retired in November, 1980.
Pschirer, Albert, Jr 12/26/98	35217311, 68th Squadron. He was the Flight Engineer on the Robert G. Seever crew which arrived in the 68th Squadron on 15 August, 1944. Mission #1 was flown on 25 August, 1944 and their 30th was completed in April, 1945. Many of their later missions were flown in lead crew positions.
Sheetz, Elvin N 10/96	. 68th Squadron. Cannot confirm his pilot or crew, but 68th Squadron records reported that he completed his tour of missions on 15 October, 1944.
Strug, Emil J 12/3/98	. 02-009015. 67th Squadron Navigator. Lt. Strug flew about half his missions with Newton E. Condray crew until they finished their tour. Then he flew with various other crews, including Roger S. Markle and Norman Brown. He was classified as a PN (Pilotage Navigator).
Stanley, Tyrus J 11/25/98	. 17110585. 68th Squadron. He was a Tail Gunner on the Harold C. Morrison crew. This crew assigned to the 66th Squadron on 28 February, 1944, with Tyrus becoming part of the crew shortly thereafter. He was with them when they were transferred to the 68th Squadron on 20 April, 1944. Luckily, he was not with the crew when it was shot down on 7 July 1944 on their 35th mission. Harold Morrison had completed his 35 mission tour on 4 July, so Lt. Wilson was 1st pilot replacing Lt. Morrison.

ground echelon that went over on the Queen Mary to England in September, 1942. John was rapidly promoted and by December, 1944 was a Master Sergeant in Flight "A" reporting to M/Sgt. Morton. One of the planes that he crewed was #42-50761, A+ and later F+, "King High" which had operational missions from October, 1944 to end of war.

Thompson, Clarence W. ... 01/20/99 "Tommy." 0-1297615. Navigator on Russell G. Erickson's crew. Assigned to the 68th Squadron on 25 October, 1945, flew their first mission on 5 November 1944. This crew flew the last mission of the war on 25 April, 1945 in E - 806, Louisiana Belle, and also flew the same plane back to the States. Tommy obtained a college degree, was a safety engineer. Survived by two sons and a daughter.

Van Epps, Elwood A. 12/46 (Auto Accident) 506th Squadron. Was a Radio Operator for Lt. John w. Jones' crew. On 7 October 1944, when this pilot was very seriously wounded by enemy action. Elwood probably saved the pilot's life by quickly applying medication and bandages to stop the bleeding, and removed him from the pilot's seat, so the wounded co-pilot could have help flying the plane. He earned the nickname "Doc" for his skillful actions. Elwood flew his later missions with Lt. Horsley and then finished his tour with Lt. Zitzman.

Crewmen from the Charles S. Herring Crew:

Lt. Charles S. Herring • 0-813512 • After the war, killed in aircraft accident. Major James C. Holcolm • 0-761099 • Co-Pilot 1989 Prostate Cancer. Lt. Bernard L. Fisher • 0-699065 • Navigator 1978 Leukemia. T/Sgt. Frank J. Gerbe • 20251385 • Engineer 1984? Heart Attack.

The above crew information received from John L. Rhodes, tail gunner for the Herring crew. This crew was organized in December, 1943 at March Field, California. They flew their tour of missions from 18 June to October, 1944.

The 8-Ball Tails (c)

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc. (c)



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Due to space limitations and to ensure the clarity and brevity of submitted material, the Publisher/Editor reserves the editorial license to add, cut or otherwise modify all submitted material so long as the original context of the material is maintained.

A "Cold" Cold War Story

By Roy Owen

This story begins in the Summer of 1958 during the great glory days of Strategic Air Command (SAC), the General Curtis E. Le May Cold War answer to the USSR threat of nuclear war. I was a young Captain, Aircraft Commander of a three man Combat Crew of a Boeing B-47 Stratojet bomber in the 22nd Bomb Wing at March AFB, outside of Riverside, California.

Looking back, these were the halcyon days of my flying career. I was born and raised in Southern California, and after a WWII combat tour flying B-24 Liberators in the 44th Bomb Group with 8th Air Force out of England, a discharge, return to college and a Korean War recall, I had progressed through the SAC buildup flying B-29's, B-50's and, in a bomber pilot's dream fulfilled, along with Captain Mel Cooper, my Co-Pilot and Lt. Ron Gingold, my Radar Navigator/Bombardier, I was flying our nation's first line jet bomber. Further, being raised as a warm weather beach boy, I was close to home and flying in a climate I loved.

About the airplane; the B-47 was a sleek,

swept wing six engine beauty that, while not supersonic, had both the best characteristics of a bomber (range and payload) and a fighter (speed and maneuverability). It had some unforgiving traits such as twin truck landing gear in tandem alignment. A careless touchdown with the front truck first, could lead to a porpoising bounce. A stall at the top of a porpoise bounce and a stalled wing dropping either way could be fatal. There was also a high altitude performance "coffin corner" where the wing lift coefficient

curve and the altitude curve met wherein the aircraft was liable to experience a high speed stall and a state of unaccountability. Aside from these "Red Caution" areas, the airplane was a joy to fly, and when not carrying auxiliary, long range fuel tanks hung under the wings, it could perform rolls and even an Immelmann maneuver well within it's structural limits. When mated with a KC-97 propdriven tanker, it was tough to air refuel at the slower speeds required (that is another story), but mated with a KC-135 at higher altitudes and compatible speeds, it was an air refueling romance.

The United States doctrine in the "Cold War" was one of a retaliatory nuclear strike in the event of a pre-emptive attack by Russia. The SAC war plan of the day was to rotationally maintain a nuclear trained and equipped wing of SAC bombers on 90 day tours at bases in England, Spain and Guam. Each combat crew was assigned a specific USSR target on a single sortie individually launched from it's overseas base on a programmed generation scheduled to begin at "A" (Alert) hour.

Thus was our life, fly training missions, keep current on our assigned target, and deploy about once a year on a 90 day tour to the Wing's assigned overseas Emergency War Order (EWO) launch base. In that summer of 1958, technical



advances in nuclear weaponry on both sides was manifested in smaller, more destructive weapons no longer requiring hours of pre-launch testing and loading procedures meaning quick reaction times with weapons able to be pre-launch loaded on the aircraft. As Huckleberry Finn mused "Times', they is a changin'."

For us in the B-47 Combat Crew business we began to hear terms like "quick reaction," "Alert Pad" and "MITO" (minimum interval take-off) soon followed by training in positioning aircraft on what was the formerly named "warm-up pad" now renamed "Alert Pad" just near the take-off runway. The aircraft, loaded with training nuclear weapons, where pre-flighted and pre-take off checklists were run up to the point of pushing the first start button at the instant the ground power unit (GPU) put power on the aircraft main bus. We then began to spend 3 or 4 twenty four hour days in some make-shift buildings near the "Alert Aircraft." We trained in fast reaction procedures by responding to a Klaxon Horn signal like firemen to the Fire Bell, dressing and scrambling to our aircraft, quickly climbing aboard donning helmets already connected and reporting "Ready to Launch" to the Command Post. Our response time goal from Klaxon to take-off roll was 15 minutes. The Command Post response could be "This is an 'Alpha Alert' you may terminate the alert, return to the Alert Pad, re-cock your aircraft and return to quarters" or "This is a 'Bravo Alert,' start engines and report when ready to Taxi, after call-in terminate," etc. Or "This is a 'Cocoa Alert,' start engines, taxi to take-off position and report 'Ready for Take-Off,' then taxi to the first turn-off and return to the Alert Area and terminate," etc.

In the remaining Summer months and into Fall, we trained in these procedures until all the crews were 15 minute response capable.

Concurrently, we trained and were tested on the current Nuclear weapon (Mk 41 Bomb) we would carry and in procedures for an actual EWO launch. This involved the Wing Command Post issuing a Top Secret coded launch message to be decoded and authenticated by the crew. Once certified in these procedures the Wing was ready for it's alert assignment.

During the B-47 era at March AFB (1954-64) the 320th Bomb Wing (a Korea recalled Air

National Guard outfit from New York), also B-47 equipped, shared the base with the 22nd. They were also "Alert" trained.

Rumor had it the 320th was to be assigned to Eilson AFB, Fairbanks, Alaska for its alert commitment (code named Reflex) and the 22nd was to go to Andersen AFB, Guam. To a Beach Boy/Bomber Pilot like me, this sounded like a perfectly sensible choice. New Yorkers were accustomed to cold and snow and warm blooded Southern Californians would function well in a tropical climate.

I have heard that, in the lexicon of Air Force Planners, it is said "If you don't have a plan, you have nothing from which to deviate!" Alas, this proved itself when the alert assignment came down with both the 22nd and 320th committed to each place 6 aircraft on alert at Eilson AFB.

For the combat crews this meant approximately three 23 day alert tours year which, with a deploy and re-deploy day on each end, had a crew on alert 4 days and off 3 days through three cycles. My crew was not scheduled for the first couple of alert rotations and, while my memory is dim on the exact date of our first rotation, I remember well that it was November and the Alaska Winter was in full swing. On deployment day we preflighted the aircraft and took off in high 70's weather, having donned Artic Flight Clothing just after pre-flight. I landed on a snow-packed runway at Eilson on a clear day in minus 20 degree temperature and about 3 feet of frozen snow on the ground. I was directed to park the aircraft in a maintenance area on the apron, where the maintenance team could clear the two or three minor write-ups I had entered in the Form 1. That completed, the Weapons Team would load the Mk 41 weapon and the Crew Chief would supervise the installation of the Jet Assisted Take-Off (JATO) collar. At that point the aircraft would be positioned in the alert line and I would be called with my crew to pre-flight the aircraft and weapon then "cock" the aircraft; relieve the crew we were replacing and assume the alert responsibility for our EWO target assignment.

The entire Reflex operation was housed in an immense wooden, arch-roofed flight line building called the "Birchwood Hangar." The ground floor housed the Command, Maintenance and Admin. Offices around the inside perimeter. Each of the

12 Alert Combat Crews had its own Weapon Carrier Vehicle with a ground power unit GPU) attached to the trailer hitch. These were parked on the hangar floor in order and in a diagonal line pointed toward the flight line door. Located on the second level were the Combat Crew, Crew Chief and Assistant, sleeping quarters, alert mess kitchen and dining room, Recreation Room and Reading Room and Shower/Latrine facilities.

At the sound of the Klaxon the Alert Combat and Ground Crews would dress, scramble to their vehicle, start the GPU then drive out of the hangar to their aircraft. The aircrew scrambled up the ladder into their cockpit position while the Crew Chief and Assistant hooked up the GPU to the aircraft bus. When power and radios came on the Aircraft Commander would report in and await instructions.

Our first night in the Birchwood Hangar gave us the opportunity to ask questions and listen to the other crew members who had some experience with the alert business at minus 20 degrees F., such as: <u>n-e-v-e-r</u> touch bare metal with bare skin. In these conditions there are many do's and don'ts that are not always covered in your checklists.

It seemed the natural order of things that when an alert sounded it would be the Aircraft Commander who would jump into the alert vehicle drivers seat, start the engine and drive the crew to the aircraft. There were two very important things that could not be taught in the Birchwood Hangar or on the warm March AFB ramp. The first was to teach a Beach Boy/Bomber Pilot how to drive a Weapons Carrier with a GPU hitched to the rear in packed snow with a glaze of ice on the surface. Or how cold an oxygen mask and ear pads in a jet helmet can get when left overnight in the cockpit.

We didn't have long to wait to gain that experience! About 1000 hours the first day of our Alert duty, the Klaxon sounded and away we went! I took the drivers seat and as soon as the GPU was started and all were aboard, I drove out into my first artic day. I was headed for the alert line in a column of alert vehicles, and as I approached our aircraft I pulled out of the line and steered toward the #4 and 5 engine pod ready to turn left and pull the GPU close to the aircraft external receptacle. I put on the brakes to

slow down, the wheels locked and we went into a sideways skid headed toward the double engine pod. I swear, the vehicle accelerated the more I pumped the brake pedal. I had also lost most of the steering as the front tires were sliding on the ice. Aghast, I sat furiously attempting to brake and steer as we slid toward what appeared to be an inevitable crash into a nuclear bomb loaded aircraft. Suddenly, at the last split second, the vehicle made a sliding left turn and stopped in perfect position to plug in the GPU. My crew chief came running forward and with a wild-eved look of amazement and shouted "Great job. Sir!" As I jumped out of the vehicle and started for the crew ladder, I think I noticed a bit of a shake of his head.

As I was regaining my breath, I scrambled up the ladder into the Pilot's seat, grabbed my helmet from the control column (where we had learned to leave it at sunny March AFB in our practice alerts) and pulled it on and snapped on my oxygen mask. It only took an instant to realize that my headset ear pads and rubber oxygen mask were frozen solid. All I could hope was we would get lucky with an "Alpha" alert and I could report "Ready to Start" and get released before my ears and cheeks also turned to ice. Fortunately this was the case for our first Reflex alert. Before we shut power down, I asked on the interphone if Cooper and Gingold thought it would be a good idea if we unplugged our helmets and took them with us in the Alert vehicle to the warmth of the "Birchwood Hangar." No Objections.

When we got all settled down with the other crews in the "Rec" room another pilot came over to us and commented how red our ears were; this brought howls of laughter from the rest. It seems that on the first Winter alert tour they had all been through the same torture and it had become a sort of "rite of passage" into the alert business. Thus mention of keeping helmets and oxygen masks in the alert vehicle was not an item to be covered in alert indoctrination. It was "learn the hard way!"

Some introduction of a warm weather Beach Boy/Bomber Pilot to Artic Alert. I can attest to the "Cold War" being just that. To this day I detest a cold climate!



More Good News from the Mother Country.

Dick and Ardith Butler made more good points for the 44th while in Norwich by inviting our good friend Andrew Doubleday and wife Debra as their guests at the 2nd Air Division Executive Banquet with many other honored Norwich dignitaries. Andrew, for those who have not had the pleasure of meeting him, is now the owner of the old Rix Farm which has the remains of the 14th Combat Wing Headquarters. Thanks to our Good Will ambassadors, Dick and Ardith, here is a letter I received from Andrew just after they had attended the dinner.

Dear Roy,

I saw Steve Adams about 3 weeks ago when he came over with Veteran Bob Dubowsky. He gave me the article and kind letter you sent. Thank you so much.

Since we last met my life has changed for the better, having been on my own for some 10 years. I am now living with my partner Debbie of Hillcrest. We have both been looking at the article with great interest and thank you for this and your kindness in your letter.

We feel it is a great privilege and honor to own the 14th C.W. Hq. And will always be pleased to offer hospitality to members of the 44th B.G. Vet. Assn. through our good mutual friend Steve Adams.

When I first purchased the property I had little spare cash and we set about some restoration work on some of the buildings I needed for the business (nursery). There is, however, much to be done just to halt "the ravages of weather" in a few important areas. The most urgent of these is perhaps roof repairs to the old kitchen area behind the War Room where the wall is, alas, deteriorating fast. We would very much like to adapt one of the buildings into a small chapel and museum dedicated to the 44th but this may be some way off as I am sure you will understand that site is primarily our private home and much effort has been needed this last year to upgrade the house.

I must say here that all our ideas are of a private nature and while we hope to see as much of the 44th Veterans Association as possible, we have no desire to open the site in any way to the general public. We have enjoyed a good relationship with Steve who phones us when he has a visitor. It goes without saying that we hope you can make much more use of the site at reunion times and all stay longer on your next visit. We had such little time to prepare last year (1997). We greatly look forward to seeing you all again and

there will be a warm welcome at the site; Stars and Stripes flying on the new flag pole (provided by Steve Adams). Last night we both had a wonderful celebration dinner in Norwich with the 2nd Air Division as guests of Richard and Ardith Butler who had paid us a visit at Hillcrest during the day. With kind regards,

> Yours Sincerely, Debra & Andrew Doubleday



"Pete" Henry, Veterans Corresponding Official, 44th Bomb Group

Dear Mr. Henry,

Your name and address has been given to me by the Air Attache's office of the American Embassy in London. I am trying to find an American serviceman who passed through the air base at Perranporth in Cornwall UK in 1943/44.

I have learned from the Royal Air Force Museum that the 44th Bomber group passed through Portreath enroute to North Africa in 1943. At Perranporth the only sighting that I have found is a USAAF B17 carrying a special courier from North Africa, which landed at Perranporth on June 1st, 1943, having overflown Portreath, and departed the following day. I don't know which squadron it belonged to.

The reason for my search is that in the summer of 1943 an American serviceman saved my sister's life. She was six years old, and while playing in a cove, got her foot trapped under a girder, which was used for sea defenses. The tide was coming in rapidly; and without help, she would have drowned. Her only companion was me, the baby of the family, who was totally unable to lift the girder. I went for help and found this young serviceman who not only listened to a very small child, but immediately went down the steep cliff and rescued her before the water was over her head. He may not even have realised that he saved her life, but he did. He was with other servicemen who just may remember the incident too.

It has made a lasting impact on the lives of my sister and myself; and very belatedly, we would like to thank him. Is it possible that you could put this story in a newsletter, if you have one? Any information or help that you can give me, I would be so grateful for.

Yours sincerely, Jan Zuckerman Mather

From the Editor: If this letter reaches the right person, or if anyone knows the airman who helped the child, please notify Pete Henry, 164B Portland Lane, Jamesburg, New Jersey 08831. Please let the 8BTs know, also.

44th Bomb Group Reunion

ITINERARY



Thursday,	September	2

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Registration Hilton Hotel Airport. 8th Air Force Military Heritage Database

Meeting.

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Reception at Hilton Hotel — cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, finger sandwiches.

Dinner on your own.

Friday, September 3

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

9:00 a.m. 12:00 noon 12:30 p.m.

12:30 p.m. 6:00 n m

6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 4

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon 1:30 p.m.

6:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 5

10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

6:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Monday, September 6

Board Meeting Hilton Hotel.

City Bus Tour approximately two hours. First bus leaves Hotel for Country Club. Ladies Luncheon Chateau Country Club. Men's Luncheon Hilton Hotel.

Cash Bar.

Squadron Dinners.

Annual Membership Meeting.

Walking Tour French Quarter. Cash Bar.

Banquet (seated meal) • Present Colors • Candle Lighting Ceremony • Speaker.

Tours: 1/2 Day Plantation Visit.

Harbor Tour with visit to Aquarium.

Cash Bar.

Buffet Dinner • Masquerade Dance •

Entertainment by Tulane Students.

Leave for Home.

SHARING WITH Lost Name	O Comment	OW	Sheet	Lost Nome	i'd like to make reservations at the New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Hwy, Kenner, LA 70062, (504) 469-5000:	AATH BOMB GROUP V ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2-6.
3	Em Date Slanahue	State		PARS	vations at the New line Hwy., Kenner, L	44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2-6, 1999
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	NON-SMK	KING DBL/DBL	Please circle Type of Room and Rate Requested:	can be made up to time of check-in without pend Any changes after check-in will result in the Feo Assessment.	Departure Date:Time (Circle O Before 7 am. 7.4 am. 9.11 am. 11 am.	Arrival Date: Time (Circle O 2-4 p.m. 4-6 p.m. 6-8 p.m. 8-10 p.m. 10 p.m. midnight after midnight
	OR		of Room	o time of check-ir	e: o am o applied retated o	8: 4-6 p.m. 6-8
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Hospitality Room Hours

Open: Thursday, Friday, Saturday ~ All Day • Sunday ~ After Annual Meeting Closing: Closing Time of Hospitality Room is to left up to the members-in-charge.

\$175 Registration Fee includes (does not include tours):

Reception; Ladies-Men's Luncheon; Squadron Dinner; Banquet; Masquerade Dinner, Dance, Entertainment; Tote Bag (1 per couple or if single, 1); T-Shirts (1 for each); and Hospitality Room.

(*All tours are not refundable, unless they can be sold to other people. We need at least 20 people to make the tours.)

Bal Masque

Your last evening in New Orleans will be a memorable one. Because New Orleans is identified with festivals, we have planned a Bal Masque (Masquerade) for the closing banquet. Come dressed as anyone you wish; remember while the temperatures may be warm, the hotel is cool and that is where the event will be held.

We have an "Andrews Sisters" type trio backed by an eight piece band for your listening and reminiscing pleasure. You will get a taste of Mardi Gras, coupled with the nostalgia of the 40's for an evening to be remembered.

Martin Richard & Mike Yuspeh, Reunion Co-Chairs



44th Bomb Group Reunion

September 2-5, 1999 New Orleans, Louisiana Hilton Airport Hotel (Kenner, LA)



Registration Form

Please Print or Type, All Information Must Be Complete.

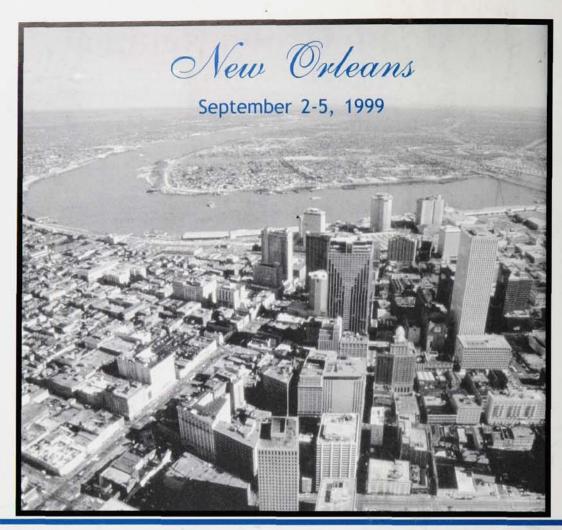
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Last Name	First Name (Tag)				
Spouse	Squadron				
Address		12 1			
City		State Zip	Code		
Phone					
Guests & Relation					
Number to Attend: \$175/each					
Tour #1:					
Friday, September 3 ~ Complete City Tour by Bu	ıs (approxin	nately 3 hours).			
Time: Bus leaves hotel 9:00 a.m.	\$23		Amount: \$		
Tour #2:					
Saturday, September 4 ~ French Quarter Walkin	g Tour (app	proximately 2 miles).			
Time: Bus leaves hotel 1:30 p.m.			Amount: \$		
Tour #3:					
Sunday, September 5 ~ 1/2 day Plantation Tour	(Oak Alley				
Time: Bus leaves hotel 9:00 a.m.	\$36		Amount: \$		
ALTERNATE TOUR Tour #4:					
Sunday, September 5 ~ Harbor Cruise with Aqu	arium				
Time: • Depart hotel 10:00 a.m. • Aqua	rium 10:45	a.m. to 12:45 •Boarding B	oat 12:45 to 1:15 p.m.		
•Cruise Harbor 1:15 to 2:45 p.m.	Board bus	for hotel 3:15 p.m.			
	\$35	# Attending:	Amount: \$		
			_Total Amount: \$		
T-shirt size and number of each size required:	JSmall #	☐Medium # ☐L	arge #		

Registration must be received by August 1, 1999. No registration will be taken after that date. We would like to firm up reservations as soon as possible. Please send this registration form with your check at once to:

Mail to: Mike Yuspeh • 7214 Sardonyx Street • New Orleans, LA 70124-3509

Phone: (504) 283-3424 • Fax: (504) 283-3425 (pick up at 6 rings).

1999



REUNION

44th Bomb Group
VETERANS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 712287
Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287



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