

# 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS

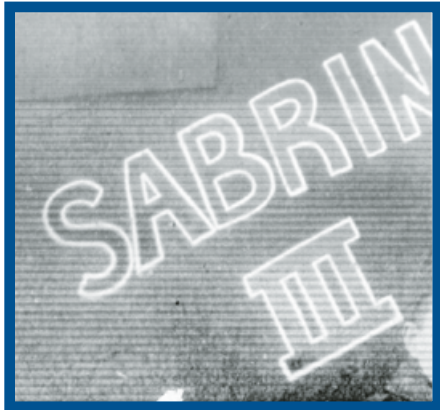
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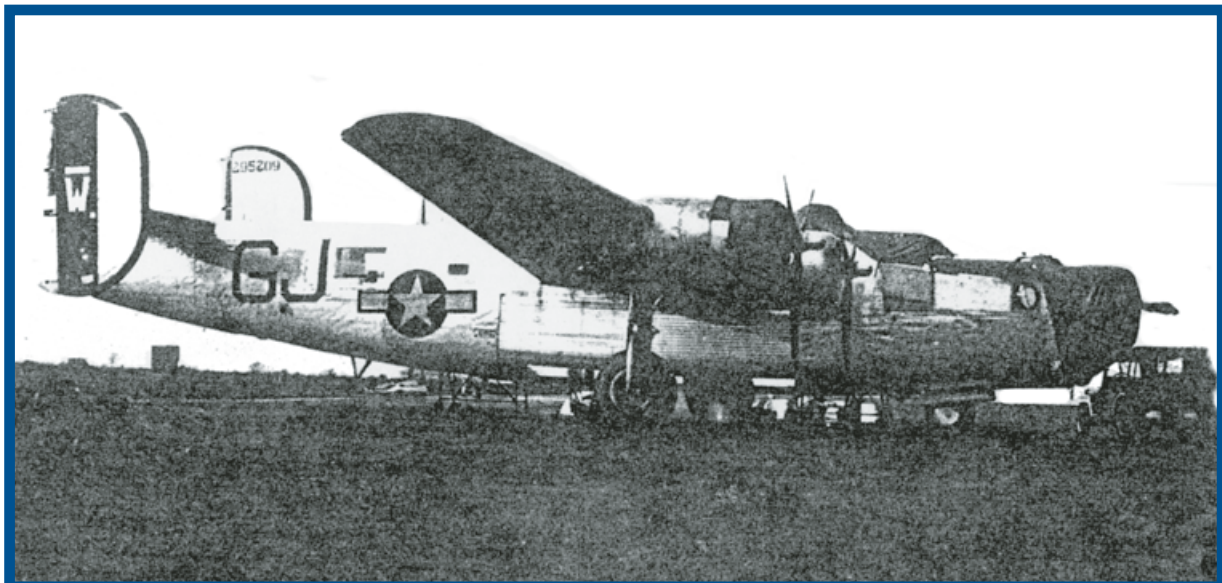


Reporting on this beloved plane is a study of the hair-raising stories of 41 crews who flew it in the period from 3 June 1944 to 20 April 1945. Assigned to the 506 Squadron, many notable members of the 44th, pilots and co-pilots, sat in the cockpit of this plane that managed to chalk up 106 missions.

The **Richard Hruby** crew flew the most missions in *Sabrina III* (13); the **Louis Confer** crew flew nine; the **Ogden Hill** crew flew seven; thirty eight other crews climbed aboard for their awesome rides in this lucky airship.

On D-Day the *Sabrina III* flew two missions, first to Colleville/St. Laurent in support of the invasion troops; later to a railroad yard in Angers, France, holding back the Wehrmacht from reinforcing their comrades at Normandy.

The Hruby crew had something that no other crew at Shipdham could claim: a pair of identical twins, **Fount** and **Thomas Bartley** of Keystone, Oklahoma, serving as Waist Gunners.



Sabrina III

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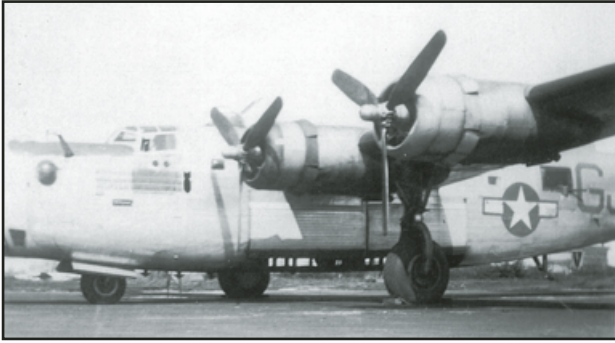
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## SABRINA III



Plane showing bomb markings

*Sabrina III*, #42-95209, 506 Sq. was built at the Ford Willow Run plant and first flown in combat by the **Richard Hruby** crew. Her 106 missions were an amazing record for any B-24 at a time when 15 missions were about average.

Brad Wallingford, nephew of the Bartley twins, has done considerable research on his uncles' craft. Quoting from the diary of '**Doc** **Blanchard**, Radio Operator, Wallingford wrote that on a mission to an airfield at Laon, France, (23 June 1945) the hydraulic system was shot out by flak, and had no brakes for landing. The two waist gunners tied their chutes to the waist guns, to aid in stopping the plane.

Four days later the **Fred Stones** crew flew the plane to the marshalling yards at Creil, France. Flak hit the #3 booster pump connection to #3 gas tank, causing fuel to pour out into the slip stream. Believing the spray to be smoke, Sgt. **William Strange**, RW Gunner, jumped out, parachuted safely to the ground, then was captured and was a POW until May 1st.

On July 6 on the mission to Kiel, **Fount Bartley** got hit on his right leg by flak. It was his 30th mission, so his twin brother finished his missions with another gunner. T/Sgt. **David H. Appenzellar** flew with the Hruby crew as an observer on 15 June 1944. The target was a bridge in Tours, France. His dramatic description of the events appeared in the Spring 2002 issue of the 8 Ball Tails.

"FW 190s swept into Liberator formations and cascaded 20 mm shells into flights of the heavy bombers as they attacked military targets in eastern France. I flew in a plane piloted by 2nd. Lt. **Richard J. Hruby**, and, while the youthful pilot put his Liberator through violent evasive action, I watched the bullets from the top-turret guns of T/Sgt. **Cletus C. Clark** turn one FW 190 into a smoke-trailing, uncontrollable loss to the Luftwaffe. In other sections of the French skies I saw furious dogfights between P-51 Mustangs, P-47 Thunderbolts and German fighters. I saw at least one of the enemy ships hurling down to destruction.

"The mirror-clear June day made the skies an arena of incredible beauty as the planes continually clashed in violent battles. The opposition failed to interrupt the bomb run, and I watched the heavy explosives speed down toward their objectives in patterns that were the acme of symmetry and accuracy."

"Flying in the waist of the Liberator were the twin brothers **Fount "Boyd"** and **Thomas L. "Lloyd" Bartley**, manning the guns. Mustangs and Thunderbolts hovered about in defense of the formation. As they approached the coast, flak became their next enemy. Hruby brought *Sabrina III* safely through ; and to everyone's relief, the coast of England came in sight."

That was the best part of the mission, of course. As Appenzellar remembered: "The patchwork of the English fields never appeared so lovely and serene as when they passed smoothly beneath us on the return to base. As we neared our airfield, we looked down, and silhouetted upon the light, half-transparent clouds was the shadow of our Liberator, completely circled by a perfect rainbow of most brilliant reds, blues and yellows. The entire crew watched it with awe, forgetting now the earlier encounters, the deadly guns and the load

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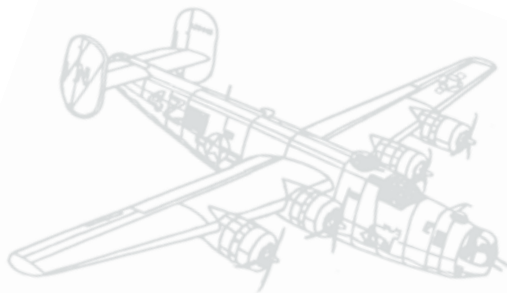
our cargo carried as we left the base some hours earlier. The shadow and rainbow glided along beside us, disappearing finally as the airfield pushed into view. Lt. Hruby slowly let the bomber down as we headed in to land."



PHOTO TAKEN AFTER MISSION

15 June 1944

L-R Top: David Appenzellar, Observer; Eddie Rosenberg, Navigator; Tom Smith, Co-Pilot; Richard R Hruby, Pilot; Herman Flugman, Bombardier; Doc Blanchard, Radio Operator/Gunner  
L-R Bottom Robert Petkoff, Tail Gunner; Fount Bartley, Right Waist Gunner; Lloyd Bartley, Left Waist Gunner; Cletus Clark, Top Turret Gunner; Dog "Malfunction."



Left: Fount Bartley; Right: Lloyd Bartley  
Can anyone identify the Ground Crew man in the center of this picture?



## THE OTHER SABRINAS

The first *Sabrina* #42-95209, returning from the German port of Bremen, crashed in a clump of trees at Shipdham in 11 November 1943, the victim of enemy fighters.

The story of #42-52611, *Sabrina II*, is a mystery. The Database has no record of missions.



The late Paul Kay

With great sorrow and regret, we must report the death of our beloved President, **Robert Paul Kay**. Paul had heart surgery, had survived his post-op experience, had been through cardiac rehabilitation, and was ready to go home for the Christmas holiday. He passed away on December 24, a victim of a blood clot.

When he was preparing for surgery, he spoke to **Bob Lehnhausen**, Past President and Adviser to all presidents. Bob made a very profound statement. He told Paul that 'going into heart surgery is like going on a mission. You start out with high hopes, but you never know what will happen when you get there.' How true.

Paul had laid out a good plan for the 2007 Reunion at Carlisle, a plan which has been placed on file for the 2008 Reunion.

Because the *8 Ball Tails* was near completion at the time of his passing, we are retaining his Presidential Briefing.

## PRESIDENTIAL BRIEFING

We were so happy to see all of you at the Reunion in Washington. To our delight, more than a hundred people from the 44th arrived, including second and third generations. Those of you who couldn't make it, please believe that we missed you.

Fortunately, the weather was on our side for the unveiling-blue skies and hardly a cloud. Needless to say, there was no veil over the monument. The three spires reach 270 feet in the air, and resemble the take-off pattern of three jets. The celebration was a short walk from the Pentagon, and we passed vehicles and armament that were two generations past the equipment of WWII. The President's speech was appropriate-that the Air Force was the only service without a memorial. He said, "Looking from this promontory to a place once filled with smoke and flames, we remember why we need them."

We were happy to see the P-51 Mustang fly over, the F-86 Sabrejet from the Korean era, the Viet Nam F-4 Phantom; and we were dazzled by amazing performance of the Thunderbirds. To me, none were more impressive than that beautiful B-24 that modestly passed over our heads. It was flown by General Bodycombe, a Liberator pilot in the 15th AF.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at our 2007 Reunion. We expect it will be in Carlisle, where our memorabilia will be on exhibit. More information will be available to you soon.

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER**

To simplify the bookkeeping, the 44th BGVA, members will receive their registration notices in January; and they will be considered late in March. Do not send dues at odd months, as was done in the past; you will be getting a bill the following January.

*Our newly catapulted member to the Presidency is George Washburn. George was out of the country when he received the message of Paul's death. For those who don't know George, you will meet him in the Spring issue of the 8 BTS.*

## **2nd LT. RICHARD J. HRUBY'S RENOWNED FEAT He ditched in the Channel, and everybody survived.**

Returning home from bombing the Friedrichstrause Railroad Station in Berlin, 29 April 1944, 2nd. Lt. **Richard J. Hruby**, flying # 41-29513, had come through heavy and intense anti-aircraft fire and damaging attacks by many enemy aircraft. It is believed that flak damage caused a leak in either the main gas tank or gas lines. The prop-governor stuck at 2500 rpm, and #2 engine was surging as much as 600 rpm. In addition, the formation was nearly 45 minutes late on the flight plan, prior to reaching the enemy coast on the way out.

On the return, as they were leaving the Dutch Coast, Sgt. **Cletus Clark**, Engineer & Top Turret Gunner, reported that all gas gauges registered nearly empty. Determined to bring his A/C back to Shipdham, Hruby cut back his RPM on all four engines. He instructed his crew to throw out all possible equipment, and told Clark to switch all engines to cross-feed fuel, to keep all engines running as long as possible.

The men assumed ditching positions. The VHF radio equipment malfunctioned, so they were not able to transmit their dilemma.

Flying at 5500 feet and with the English coast barely in view, all four engines quit!!

Hruby and his Co-pilot, **Thomas Smith**, lowered one-half flaps and put their plane into a dive to maintain airspeed. As they neared the water's surface, Lt. Hruby leveled off; and after skimming off one swell, settled down into the next one in a slightly nose-high position. The nose of the A/C buried itself for approximately 30 seconds; then the plane came to rest on the surface - floating and intact.

The pilots hit the water so skillfully, not only was the plane not visibly damaged, but the plexiglass in the nose turret remained unbroken. No member of the crew was injured!

The crew exited the upper hatch and released the two life rafts. One of them was unserviceable; the other would only partially inflate. The plane slowly sank and was gone in approximately fifteen minutes. One man got into the raft, the others clung to the ropes and remained in the water. In about one half hour, luckily, a British minesweeper arrived and picked them up.

*Ed. Note: One other pilot in the 44th BG was able to ditch without casualties. Who was that?*

## **THE 44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION JOINED THE SECOND AIR DIVISION IN A GREAT BIG CELEBRATION IN WASHINGTON**

The 44th BG showed up in flying colors to see the soaring spires of the U.S. Air Force Memorial, a monument long overdue; and well worth the long, long wait. It honors the Air Force and its proud predecessor, The Army Air Corps.

The three silver spires, mirroring the bomb burst maneuver of the dashing Thunderbirds, are representative of the core values of the Air Force—integrity first, service before self, excellence in all that is done.

The Thunderbird's smoke designs on the blue sky were amazing, but the breathtaking moment came when a beautiful Liberator streamed from the west and proceeded over the heads of a dazzled audience. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld spoke with genuine respect and gratitude to those who have flown in honor and defense of our country.

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### **At the Marriott**



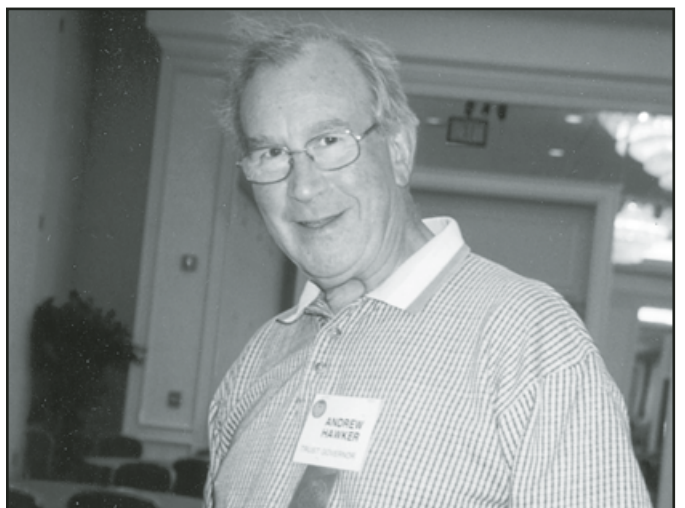
Dick Lynch, Treasurer and George Washburn, Vice President of the 44th BG chat after the General Meeting.



Pilot Christopher Spagnola (Center) met with two crew members, Lee Aston, Navigator, and John Gately, Gunner.



Will Lundy, Sterling Dobbs and Kevin Lundy emerge from the meeting. Dobbs was elected Director of the Board.



Andrew Hawker from Norwich, England, a member of the Heritage Trust of the Memorial Library.

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The Aerospace Museum was a backward look at planes from WWII, Thunderbolt and Mustang and more, with a forward look at progress since.



Cynthia Harmonowski, **George Washburn** and Beryl Apgar viewed a German fighter plane. This brought bad memories for both girls, natives of Norwich. During a raid in Norwich, Cynthia flattened out on wet ground to escape a German dive bomber.



**Syd Paul** stopped by a fighter on the balcony of the Aerospace Museum

**Perry Morse's** side trip to the White House hit unexpected snags; but nevertheless, a hundred people from the U.S., Canada and UK gained entrance. At the last minute, by e-mail we were able to collect passport numbers. It became a family assignment. Ken Kelly, his son-in-law, directed the flow, getting everyone qualified for entry. Daughters Nancy and Ellen pushed wheel chairs and extended a helping hand at every juncture. Only one person was nervous about the outcome - that was Perry.



## **THE SQUADRON DINNER WAS LIKE A 44TH REUNION all in one big room, with impressive award presentations.**

The 2nd Air Division Banquet was an event for all 440 attendees, 147 of whom were from the 44th . Many of our English friends were present, representative of the great group who oversee the care of the Memorial Library in Norwich.

### **Scenes at the Banquet**



**Perry Morse, John Lee and Richard Butler** lit the candle, honoring the heroes of the Ploesti mission. **Bud Koorndyk** was at the podium.



With great enthusiasm, Granddaughter **Julia Folsom** embraced **Beverly & Jerry Folsom**. Julia is a Banquet Cook at the Marriott, working with the renowned Sr. Sous Chef **David Nvodjo**.



**Lowell & Jackie Roberts, Lois & Tony Cianci**.



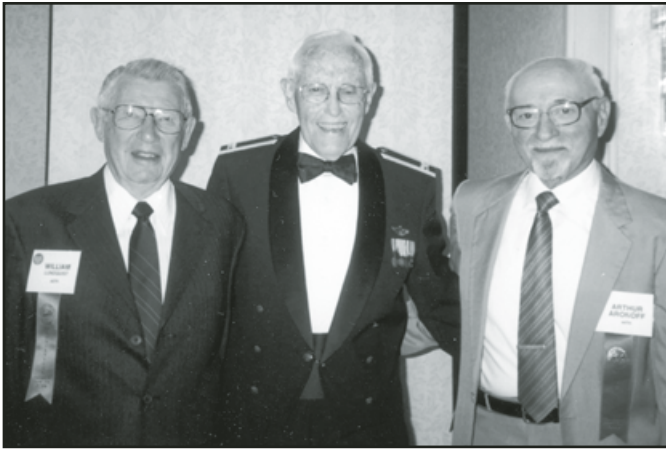
**Irma & Bob Dubosky**



**Frank Schaeffer** dined with **Robert and Roberta Johnson** .



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L-R Pilot **Clay Roberts** (center) was joined with **William Lundquist** (Co-Pilot) and **Arthur Aronoff** (Navigator) at the Banquet. Robert's special interest at the Aerospace Museum was the renowned B-29, Enola Gay. Roberts flew a B-29 in the Cold War. Since his 'Blues' still fit, he decided to wear them.



Matthew Martin thanked the Americans for library support; but more, for joining the battle against the Nazis in WWII. Martin is Chairman of the Heritage Trust for the 2AD Memorial Library in Norwich, England.



The *Enola Gay*



Ardith Butler and Granddaughter Kayla presented roses to Evelyn Cohen, Reunion Chairman.



### **A PROFOUND THOUGHT**

"Heroes are like mountains. You have to move a distance away from them before you can realize how big they are."

Col. Gerald E. Otterbein, U.S. Air Nat'l Guard

*These words were spoken at a Veteran's Ceremony Nov. 11, 2006 in York, Pennsylvania. How true. It was at the 50th Anniversary of D-Day that Tom Brokaw named WWII Veterans the 'Greatest Generation'. Now, twelve years later, those words are resounding louder than ever.*

## 44TH BGVA AWARDS, DECORATIONS & MEMORIALS

### R. Lee Aston, Director

Three recipients of belated decoration for valor and bravery in combat received awards



2nd Lt. Delmer F. Phelps, Pilot, ASN 0-743272, 66 Sqdn, 44th Bomb Group, 8th A.A.F. ca. 1943

at the October 2006 Reunion in D.C. Two of the three recipients, 2nd Lt. **Delmer F. Phelps** and 1st Lt. **Edgar J. Spencer** have "folded their wings" and the medals were presented *post humus* to family members. The third recipient, Capt. **Edwin M. Lavitt** was present and very much alive to receive his decorations. Colonel

**Charles Hughes** presented the medals with Mary Aston assisting, as **R. Lee Aston** read the citations.



L to R: Sgt. Kevin White, Col. Charles Hughes, and Capt. Robert Lee Aston

**Delmer Phelps** died in 1976. His wife Luella is very much alive and actively employed in the Santa Clara, CA, school system, but could not be present. Their grandson, Sgt. Kevin White, a member of the New Mexico ANG was present to receive his grandfather's decorations. Lt. Phelps was the co-Pilot on the **Richard W. Bridges'** crew. Flying from their base at Benghazi, Libya, Phelps' aircraft was shot down on his 5th mission to an aircraft factory at Wiener-Neustadt, Oct. 1, 1943. Phelps and 5 of his crew became POWs for 20 months. Sgt. White received, for his grandfather, the Air Medal, POW, Mediterranean Theatre, and WWII Victory medals, the Presidential Unit citation with 2 stars. Phelps was a member of the 66th Bomb Squadron and was promoted to a 1st Lt. while a POW.

Lt. **Edgar J. Spencer** died July 4, 1998 at age 80. He was survived by his wife, Estelle Voelker, and a son Thomas Spencer, both of whom were present to receive th *post humus* decorations for Lt. "Jay" Spencer. Lt. Spencer completed a tour of 37 missions. His widow, Estelle, and son received for husband and father, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and two Oak Leaf Clusters to his Air Medal. His co-pilot was Lt. **Frank J. Colella**.



1st Lt. Edgar J. Spencer, Pilot, 67th Squadron; 8/03/1944 to 12/31/1944



L to R: Lt. Spencer's son Thomas, widow Estelle Voelker, receiving 1st Lt. Spencer's *post humus* DFC and AM from Mary Aston, Col. Hughes, R. Lee Aston at 44th BG's Reunion, October 2006

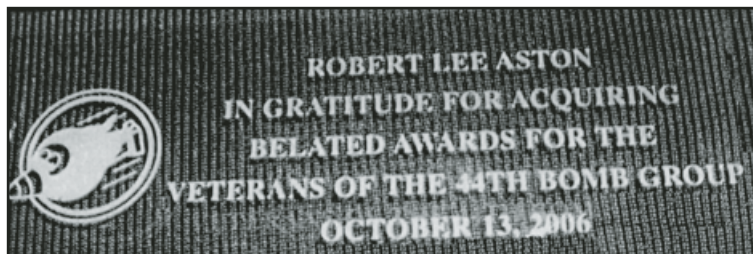
## Distinguished Flying Cross (2+3) and Air Medal for Capt. Edwin M. Lavitt, 67th Squadron



L to R: Mary Aston, Capt. Lavitt receiving Distinguished Flying Cross OLC #2 and #3 and Air Medal OLC#4 from Col. Hughes, and R. Lee Aston with medal citations.

Capt. Edwin M. Lavitt, Ellington, Conn., was a Lead Pilot from the 67th Squadron. He flew a tour of 27 missions with 20 lead missions from 9/22/44 to 4/18/45. Capt. Lavitt flew lead missions for Group, Wing, 2nd Air Division, and one 8th AAF lead.

## Lee Aston Receives an Appreciation Award



At the 2006 Reunion, Paul Kay, President of the 44th BGVA, presented Director of Awards and Decorations R. Lee Aston with an appreciation award. The award was a glass, two-pen desk set etched with the above shown word of appreciation for Aston's acquiring belated WWII combat medals for some 24 veterans of the 44th Bomb Group over the past three years. Lee Aston looks forward to continuing his work in being able to obtain more belated medals for more veterans that should have received them during their combat time.

## Will Lundy Receives an Appreciation Award

At the 2006 D.C. annual Reunion, after the belated medal presentation, Mary and Lee Aston presented a 67th logo suncatcher to Will Lundy, on behalf of the 44BGVA in appreciation of Will's many "labors of love" as Historian for the 44th Bomb Group, and for his recent Roll of Honor book. (Will Lundy was a member of the 67th Squadron.)



L to R: Mary Aston, Will Lundy, Charles Hughes, Lee Aston

(2006 Reunion photo credit to John Gately, 67th Squadron)

## AMERICAN EX-POWS IRWIN STOVROFF'S SPECIAL PROJECT

"It's the most fulfilling work I have ever done," states **Irwin Stovroff**, who dedicates his life to helping ex-POWs get the entitlements that the government provides.

Stovroff and his associate, Mitchell Cohen (also an ex-POW), provide the means for deserving veterans to get services for which they are qualified to receive.

Stovroff was a member of the Millikin crew whose plane went down on August 13, 1944 at the Falaise Pocket near Caen, France. As a POW who happened to be Jewish, Stovroff saw the worst of the German hatred. He can empathize with those who seek his help.

"EX-POWs suffer from alcoholism, depression and denial, and may not even relate their problems to their POW experience. In our office, the goal is to help those who cannot help themselves. Government services are available to them; and 95% of the time, we are able to get the help they need."

Historically, his clients have been POWs from WWII, Korea and Viet Nam. "We aren't getting any from Iraq. The Iraqi fanatics kill their captors," he noted.

His clients have amazing stories. In WWII, Stanley Willner, a young Merchant Marine officer, was blown off an exploding ship. He was picked up by a German destroyer in the Far East, and held on board the German ship for two months. When his captors were ordered to return to Germany, they dropped him off in Singapore where he became a prisoner of the Japanese. He spent 4 years in slave labor as part of the group who were building the bridge over the River Qui.

Another client, equally notable, was Lt. Col. Mel Pollack, who was flying an F-14 Phantom in the Korean War. He was shot down on his 78th mission, and became a guest in the Hanoi Hilton. His cage mate was none other than Senator John McCain.

Irwin Stovroff has a clear memory of the plight of the POW. On August 13, 1944 the

*Passion Pit* and 24 other B-24's were sent on a mission to bomb the road junction between Le Havre and Rouen, France. Germans were trying to escape from an area described as horse shoe shaped. General Bradley's plan was to entrap this large group of German soldiers, preventing them from coming to the aid of those who were still fighting at Normandy. The *Passion Pit* was hit by flak, and went down in a fiery burst. Fortunately, all ten of the crew parachuted safely, only to be captured by the waiting German Army. Stovroff's POW experience will live with him forever.

In a major interrogation center outside Frankford, Germany, he was questioned by a German officer who spoke excellent English. To his astonishment, he learned that the interrogator had lived one street away from Stovroff's family home in Buffalo, New York. In fact, Stovroff had been his paper boy!!!

The former neighbor did make a minimal effort to help his American captive by putting a question mark on the form designating religion. However, at Stalag #1, Stovroff was separated from his original group and placed with a number of Jewish prisoners who were slated for execution.

The lives of Stovroff and other Jewish prisoners were spared by the courage of two POW army officers, Col. Zehmke and Col. Spicer. They vowed to their German captors, that if they killed the Jewish prisoners, they would pay a heavy price after war.

Stalag Barth was situated near the Polish border. When the Russians came through, Stovroff and his fellow prisoners were freed. However, their liberators had a dubious plan for their liberation - take them to Russia and release them there. Fortunately, the 8th Air Force sent a special mission to deliver them safely to England and then back to the States.

Living in West Palm Beach, Florida,

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Stovroff volunteered to help Ray Knisley who had opened an office for the express purpose of aiding ex-POWs. When Knisley retired, Stovroff took charge of the office. He carries the title, National Service Officer. Among those he has helped are six ex-POWs who were held in the same camp where he was imprisoned. Stranger than fiction, his next door neighbor in Florida was in the same barracks as Stovroff when he was in Stalag Luft #1 'segregated'. The man's family owned a delicatessen in New York, whose slogan was, "Send a Salami to a Soldier in the Army."

"Our office has great success in getting the help that the veteran deserves," Stovroff explains. "We have helped several hundred. Some find us through our Web Site. Others read articles about entitlements, but don't know how to get them. If they can prove that they were a POW, we can help them."

Recently the Stovroff/Cohen team has taken on a new project. With so many wounded and blinded servicemen coming home from Iraq, they have started a program of procuring Guide Dogs and trainers. The cost of raising and training a VetDog from birth to placement is approximately \$30,000.

Since the Guide Dog Foundation delivers its dogs free of charge, sponsorship opportunities have been created to assist the Foundation in providing a new lease on life for the veterans.

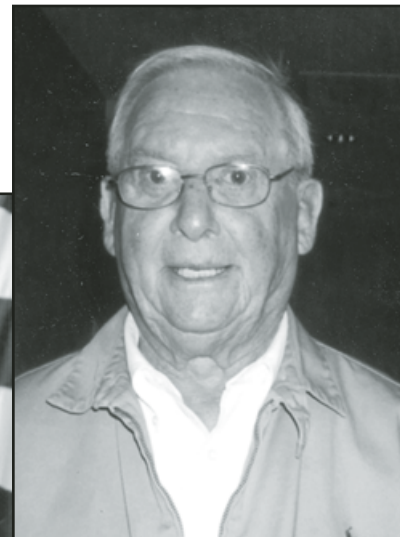
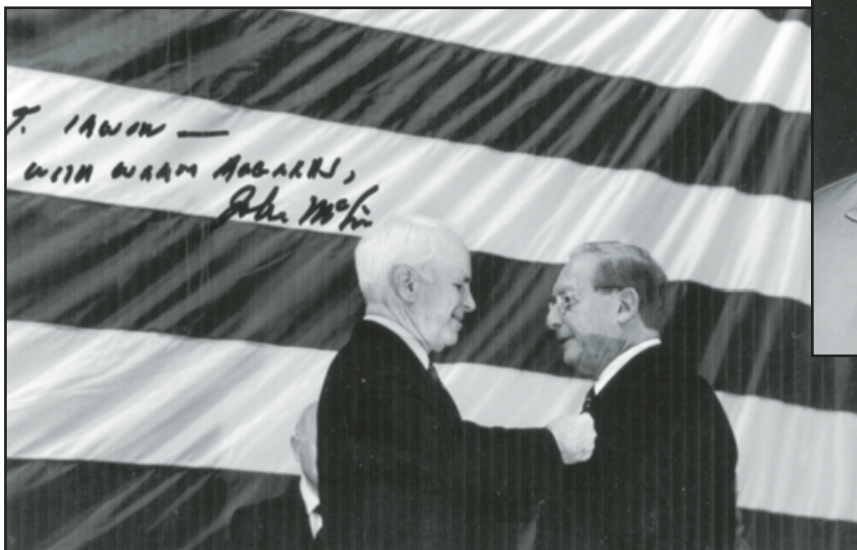
Veterans who receive a guide dog become a partner in a VetDogs team. Through this program, blind veterans can acquire a dog, but also get Guide Dog training and computer-assisted technology training.

Stovroff's work is all voluntary. However, three years ago he did receive one notable award--his DFC Medal, 6 decades late. It was pinned on by Senator John McCain.

The phone number of Ex-POW office at the VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach, Florida is (561) 422-7475. Stovroff's home number: (561) 488-6155; E-Mail [IRWINTFI@AOL.COM](mailto:IRWINTFI@AOL.COM)

*Irwin Stovroff's story was featured in Volume 3, Issue #7 of the 8 Ball Tails, Spring 2001. The grim circumstances of his POW experience are described in The Mighty Eighth by Gerald Astor.*

Senator John McCain and Irwin Stovroff



Irwin Stovroff

## IN DESPERATION, THE LUFTWAFFE TRIED THIS

Gerald Gross, Navigator on the **Thomas McKenna** crew, recently found a book with details about a little known, fearsome secret. ***THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE LUFTWAFFE, The Suicide Attack on the Eighth Air Force, 7 April 1945.*** The behavior of the pilots in the obsolete and war-weary planes of the enemy was so bizarre, High Command could not believe their tactics were deliberate.

This carefully researched treatise by Adrian Weir, credits Herr Hajo Herrman, the Luftwaffe officer, with the planning of this suicidal group which became known as the *Elbe* Force, named because its base was near the Elbe River. 1500 very young and inexperienced German pilots volunteered for this service, totally unaware of the plan. Herrman believed by ramming the bombers of the USAAF, it would slow their attacks long enough for the Jagdwaffe (jet fighters) time to re-equip.

Herrman planned for 1500 fighter A/C for the plan, but Hitler wanted fuel for troop support, so he allocated enough for only 1,000. On further thinking, he supplied enough for only 350.

The plan was that the BF-109 pilot was to dive at the wing or tail surface of a bomber and use the propeller as a circular saw. He could either throw the canopy aside for easy exit from the plane; or wait until the last second, then parachute to safety. An alternate plan would be to ram the bomber, bringing both planes down.

All armor was removed from the fighters to increase speed. Only 50 rounds of ammunition would be made available. The radios for these A/C could receive, not transmit; presumably to prevent conversations that could lead to loss of courage for the assignment. The young pilots had almost no training, as there was no extra fuel available for this purpose.

The day that the attack plan was to be implemented was April 4. As it happened, Herr Herrman was shot down and captured on that day. The weather was bad, so the scheme was delayed until April 7.

### Luftwaffe Losses

German losses in 1945 were increasing at a rapid rate. From January to March 24th, 112 pilots were KIA or missing; 168 planes went down. Their worst day was January 14th when 54 pilots and 69 planes were lost.

As American pilots learned, the best laid plans do not always work. Jet pilots were ordered to ignore the bombers and attack the fighters. Formations of jets flew through the bomber formations without firing. The Elbe fighters were to follow the jets, then choose a bomber to cut with their propellers. Those youthful pilots that attempted that strategy chose to avoid the wings, in recognition that they cause a massive explosion from the stored fuel, bringing both planes down.

Some groups of the inexperienced German pilots were to climb above the USAAF formations and dive down. The temperature at 30,000 feet was minus 48 degrees. Many got lost in the clouds and turned the wrong way. Some had mechanical problems and returned to the air base; some bailed out; 60 were recalled because their fuel was dangerously low.

The famous English author, Roger Freeman, reported on the events of April 7th: 972 B-17s from the 1st and 3rd ADs and 340 B-24s from the 2nd AD took to the skies that morning. Despite the inclement weather, the 3 AD (B-17s) succeeded in bombing seven cities in the Fatherland; the 2 AD (Liberators) bombed Krummel, Doneburg and Neumunster; the 1 AD (17s) bombed six.

A total of 1314 bombers were airborne and 898 fighters. P-47s & P-51s claimed 64 German a/c destroyed. The bombers claimed 40 kills, but it was probably 10, as a number of gunners could be shooting at the same plane.

Freeman wrote that at least half of the bombers lost that day were known or suspected lost through ramming tactics. However, he did not conclude that these were deliberate suicide missions.

...continued on page 16

## The 2 AD Experience

One Elbe Fighter rammed a '24 which turned to avoid the crash and bumped another. Both Liberators went down, along with the Messerschmidt. Both crews parachuted and survived, as did the Elbe pilot.

Two other Liberators sustained damage from Messerschmidts, and they turned back

toward a French Airfield. Accompanied by a Thunderbolt, they limped across the North Sea and made it safely back to England.

As determined as the bombers had to be, continuing to their targets, the skies were full of the contrails of Mustangs and Thunderbolts circling and shooting.

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## THIS MISSION IS LOST FROM THE 44TH RECORDS

The History of the 67th Squadron indicates five A/C were on that mission; an unknown number from the 66th flew that day; the 68th put up twenty two. The Database credits only one plane which went to Neumunster that day, hitting a Railroad Center. *One Weakness* was flown by **William Warner**. The navigator on that crew was the 44th BGVA President, **Robert Paul Kay**, who fortunately could supply that information to Will Lundy.

In his History of the 68th Squadron, **Webb Todd** reported that the 44th dispatched twenty two A/C, five from the 68th. Their destination was to hit the dynamite installations at Krummel as priority target number one. He states that a rack malfunction in the lead A/C caused the lead squadron to go on to visually bomb target two, which was the Railway Center at Neumunster.

Todd's account stated that the high right squadron continued to attack Target One (Krummel), but because of the intense smoke at the target, the aiming point could not be picked up until just before bombs away, and the bombs landed short and to the right of the target.

However, Paul Kay's recollection was somewhat different. "I'm sure we hit the Dynamite Factory at Krummel," he recalled. "I remember the debris from that explosion rising up 12,000 feet. If our plane missed that target, the one that followed had to have hit it. Never before have I seen debris rise that high from a bombing." Kay remembered the fighter attacks. "We were attacked by FW 190s. Our gunners got 40 and the Fighters got 63."

He also recalls the interesting tactics of the fighters. "One Messerschmidt came straight through our formation, followed by another that was shooting at our A/C. Our gunners brought him down. We thought perhaps the first German pilot was showing the ropes to the second, who appeared to be quite inexperienced." According to Weir's book, Kay's evaluation of enemy activities was probably accurate.

The 66th Sq. reported their formation had been attacked for the first time in three months. They claimed three destroyed, one ME 262 and two ME 109s, with only minor damage to their own A/C.

**Gerald Gross**, Navigator on the **Thomas McKenna** crew (506 Sq.) recorded bombing Geesthacht on that date.

The German High Command determined that suicidal maneuvers were no deterrent to the onslaught of the bombers. It was the last mission of the Luftwaffe.

*If any member of the 44th has a record of four missions in April 4-5-6-7, 1945, please let us know. It would be invaluable in helping us to complete the Database.*



**Gerald Gross and Paul Kay** Two Navigators Who Flew This Mission Met at the Squadron Dinner



## **A GERMAN CAPTIVE'S POST WAR EVALUATION**

During the post war interrogations, Ehrhard Milch was able to tell his English captors that it was the USAAF daylight raids which had defeated Germany, as these raids had concentrated upon transportation and oil targets.

He added, "The British inflicted grievous and bloody injuries on us, but the Americans shot us in the heart."

On the other side of the globe, another noteworthy event took place on April 7, 1945. U. S. Navy planes sank the Japanese battleship Yamato in the East China Sea.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Did you know:* The first U.S. aircraft lost in combat was a B-24 destroyed on the ground during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The last bomber lost in combat over Europe was a B-24.

Source: LIBERATOR by Alwyn T. Lloyd

\*\*\*\*\*

## **SORRY TO REPORT**

Regretfully, the well-planned "Last Hurrah" trip to the UK has been cancelled. Sad to report, many who wished to go, had to cancel. Age is taking its toll. The eager young men who set forth to free the world from the Nazi scourge in 1942 have developed a lot of aches and pains since then. We'll have to depend on the Brits, to tell us how the Shipdham Museum is progressing.

## **THE 2007 REUNION**

Despite everyone's best effort to follow the 44th Memorabilia to the Army Heritage Museum in Carlisle, it cannot happen. The word has come from Michael Lynch, Director of Operations, that the expansion which was planned, cannot be completed in time.

Before the invitation to the Washington ceremony came about, the decision had been made to go to Branson, Missouri for the 2006 Reunion. Plan #2 came about when the 2nd Air Division eagerly offered to be the host to this 'once in a lifetime event.' Now we are in Plan #2 for 2007; it looks like Branson, Missouri will be our destination. Look for the details in the next 8 BTs.

**Blessed are the flexible, as they never get bent out of shape !!!**

## **INDISPUTABLE SAYINGS**

*"The only time you have too much fuel is when you are on fire."*

*"There are more planes in the ocean than submarines in the sky."  
(From an old carrier sailor)*

*"When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash."*

*Here's a good one to ponder: Without ammunition, the USAF would be just another expensive flying club."*

## LETTER FROM SHIPDHAM

Winter is knocking at the door as I look out my office window, and it will no doubt be well and truly established both in the US and the UK by the time you get to read this small note. Our new grass runway at Shipdham (140 / 320) is already a bit soggy from the heavy autumn rains we have had this year, but its grass surface is still very usable. (Remember the rain in Norfolk guys? It hasn't changed at all since you were here. (Come to think of it, it may even be the same water recycled... now there's a thought!)) Obviously our flying activities have slowed down and we are into the more indoor, winter activities that all rural flying clubs get into. Soon we will get a visit from the Safety Division of the Civil Aviation Authority (the UK version of the FAA) and they will deliver their current General Aviation Safety Lecture. We have hosted this lecture several times before and it is a really good 'heads-up' to keep us amateur pilots all to speed with the latest safety thinking. As their senior lecturer once said... 'it's good to learn from the mistakes of others, no human pilot can live long enough to make them all himself'. (Or herself with deference to Shipdham's 5 lady pilots.)

I have to advertise the 44th Bomb Group Museum yet again, as it is now almost fully complete. The main room and the library are completed and room three is well under way, complete with Audio Visual section showing the DVD 'The Mission'. Strange to think that Leon Johnson's deep, rich, southern voice would still be heard at Shipdham, on a regular basis, all these years on. A copy of Will Lundy's amazing book arrived earlier this month and will have pride of place in the library. The building itself had a good khaki paint job on the outside just before the Norfolk winter set in and should now hopefully be good for another few years, before we have to do it again. As I write this we are anticipating a visit from the family of a 44th Veteran, John A. Gray, who was a navigator. Both John's son and young grandson are expected at the weekend for a trip round the old base and a chance to wander through the museum.

We had our regular Shipdham Aero Club Bonfire and Firework Night on Nov 4th and got just over one hundred folks out on a clear autumn evening, to watch the fun, eat the burgers and hot dogs and drink some soup, and Real English Ale. (Yup...we still brew it in the old fashioned way, the same as it was brewed in 44, probably still in the same vats, and still without too many chemicals. It's still served un-chilled as you remember it and it still has a pretty darn good kick.) Our Landlady Mrs Paterson was one of the honored guests and having spent some of the evening with her, I think I can safely say she had a great time.

It is particularly poignant that it is Remembrance Day today as I write this. Like you we get TV programmes shown at this time of year that remind us of the vast numbers of people who never made it through WWII to 'May 45. Personally it is these vast numbers that I cannot really comprehend, and the mentality of the Nazi dictatorship to sacrifice millions of their fellow humans, including their own people, even after they knew that their cause was lost. Democracy in all its varied forms may well be slightly flawed, but it's the best we have to keep the world on an even keel, and defeat both dictators and terrorists alike.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you over the Christmas period.  
Best wishes from your old base here in East Anglia.

*Peter*

## THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

October 22-26, barely a week after the Air Force Celebration in Washington, members of the DFC Society convened at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. **Perry Morse** and **Dale Lee** were two of the few WWII airmen present for the event. The younger holders of this distinguished group were captivated with Dale's dramatic account of his plane going down at Foggia, his escape from a prison in Italy, crossing mountains and perilous stretches of land while constantly hounded by Germans. When the group finally arrived to safety, they had to prove they truly were American airmen who had previously flown to Ploesti. Finally, they received the award they had earned – the DFC – pinned by the great **Jimmy Doolittle**.

The DFC Society is an interesting accumulation of heroes. Among them is a Komacazi pilot. He was an air cadet when captured by the Japanese in North Korea. He was assigned to the Imperial 'Suicide Squad', but managed to survive the war. When North Korea went to war against South Korea, he escaped to the south and flew for the South Koreans, later the Americans. The Komacazi pilot ultimately earned the American Distinguished Flying Cross.

Events in Las Vegas included a trip to Hoover Dam, but more impressive was the opportunity to tour Nellis Air Force Base. Their grounds have an amazing collection

of war machines. Among the least impressive was an Anti-Aircraft gun designed by the French. When fired at a 90 degree angle, it tumbled backward, and soldiers had to rush forward to put it back in operation!!!

The most impressive item on display was the Predator Drone. Boxed in a large metal container, this wide-winged A/C is transported to Baghdad in pieces. It has proven to be a valuable reconnaissance machine. On some models, Hellcat Missiles have been added; and can be fired with deadly accuracy. The remarkable part of the pilotless Predator story is that it is directed by a colonel, sitting at a computer in an unmarked building at Nellis Air Force Base.



Nellis AF Base is the home of the Thunderbirds, the planes that decorated the sky at the Washington AF Celebration. An instructor described the goals. "We find the best pilots in the nation, and make them even better." (*We had no trouble believing that.*)

The DFC Society strongly urges members to contact congressmen, urging support of 'The Stolen Valor Act.' This piece of legislation is to protect the integrity of this award; so anyone wearing the insignia has earned this honor, by heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

## **MISSION TO DRESDEN** **(And back to Orly, a recollection of Roy Owen)**

"Our Primary Target on 16 January 1945 was the Marshalling Yards at Berlin, but we did not have good intelligence," **Roy Owen** (506 Sq.) remembered. "The weather was so bad, we couldn't see the target, so we headed to our secondary assignment, the railways at Dresden." Owen (Co-pilot on the **William Smith** crew) later learned that the railroad lines at Dresden were jammed, not only with army personnel, but also civilians who were trying to move west to escape the onslaught of the Russian troops.

"People were jammed into box cars, sitting on flat cars and hanging onto anything that was moving," he said. "Those of us who were on that bomb run could feel guilty about adding to the human misery below them; however, we can take satisfaction from the fact that we missed the target. We hit the western edge of the Marshalling Yards. It was not a good job."

The headwinds were fierce, snow was falling, and many planes didn't have enough fuel to get back to Shipdham. The Allies had already taken Paris, so Orly was the logical place to stop. William Smith brought # 00-829 down, only to find an airfield full of '17s and '24, all with the same problem.

"The first night they put us into a gymnasium." Owen continued. "The next two nights we spent in a Red Cross Hotel with all

its unusual amenities. It was the first time the men had ever seen a bedea, so that sparked some interesting questions and speculation about this luxurious equipment.

"Of course, we had to leave two men with the plane, so one immediately set forth to acquire some local beverages. Then, somehow they got into a scuffle with another B-24 crew, throwing snowballs at each other. As the beverages flowed, the battle advanced to firing flare guns. The next day the snow banks were full of black holes."

Three days later, fuel arrived from England, and it became necessary to leave the luxuries and the Mademoiselles of Gay Paris behind.

On that same mission, #42-50660, from the 68th Squadron, piloted by **John Testa** was abandoned in France, *Judy's Buggy* (67th) crashed near Metz, but did not burn. It was salvaged 4 February 1945; *Hellza Droppin'* (68th) got back to Shipdham but the airfield was fogged in solid. The crew bailed out, **Gerald Lindsay**, pilot, put the A/C on autopilot and it is believed to have crashed in the North Sea. **Bill Rosser**, pilot of *Big Time Operator* reported being delayed among others because someone ran off the taxi strip into deep mud and stranded several planes. The records indicate that fourteen men were injured on that mission.

### **YOU LOST WHAT?**

*By Col. Clay Roberts (Ret.)*

Six months following our return from Furstenfeldbruk in January 1948, we found ourselves enroute to England for 90 days deployment under Strategic Air Command's new policy of rotating bomb groups to the UK. As luck would have it, the 307th was one of the first.

All of the aircraft were well over Boeing's maximum gross weight of 120,000 pounds. Because of the weight factor, non-

stop to the UK was not advisable. We refueled at Bermuda, and because the runway was much less than the 10,000 feet at MacDill, my scanners/gunners reported the landing gear had 'tickled' the barbwire strands on the fence at the end of the runway as we departed.

I was the fourth aircraft to depart Bermuda, but somehow ended up being the first to arrive at our UK destination, Royal Air

...continued on page 21

Force Station, Marham. I guess being the Squadron Flight Engineer paid off. The Base Commander and welcoming party were there to greet us and cheered when my navigator's golf clubs hit the tarmac, the instant the bomb bay doors opened. It was good to be back in England and 'The Wash' area again.

Our daily routine was pretty much as it had been back at MacDill, but the Base Commander wanted his pilots to get some experience in attacking a bomber formation, so the routine was spiced up with some formation flying. At that time the Royal Air Force was flying the Meteor, a twin-engine jet that looked a lot like the WWII German ME 272. The fighter tactics used were pretty much the same as used in WWII and were carried off many times without incident until one day something went wrong.

We were a nine ships formation with a three ships lead, lower left and high right elements. The jets had been making head on passes; passes from the nine o'clock and tail positions and had now moved to the three o'clock position. I was on the right wing of the high right element leader and closest to the three o'clock attack. My co-pilot was "Bart" Barto, a WWII bombardier now a pilot

retread. He had been calling out the fighter attacks since my attention and focus were on the element leader, when he yelled, "he's going to hit us, he's going to hit us, he's going to hit us", and at that precise moment 160,000 pounds of airplane went up like an elevator about 20 to 30 feet. I had been flying level with the element leader, and now I was twenty to thirty feet above him.

Upon return to RAF Station Marham I was the last aircraft to land. When I climbed down out of 4072, my Squadron Commander was waiting for me. I was told to check the number 4 prop for any nicks - one of the jets had lost its pitot tube. Much to my surprise, one of the paddles had a nick in it. The Meteor's pitot tube, which all pilots know gives the airspeed reading, was at the very tip of the left wing and was over a foot long. The pilot that almost hit us had put his wing tip through my outboard prop, and the prop had cut off his pitot tube. No wonder my co-pilot was getting hysterical!! We came within inches of being wiped out by a jet traveling over 300 knots! Thank God he was the pilot in command that day or we'd all be sporting another kind of wings today.



## **THE CALABAN CREW**

Family members of the crew of this esteemed plane found errors in the identity of crew members on the cover of the Summer issue of the 8 BTs. Although William Egan, Bombardier, is the last living member, the children and grandchildren of this crew have established and maintained a relationship that is amazingly strong. They have asked that the correct names be attached to this picture:



Front Row, L-R : **Clark G. Bailey**, Assistant Engineer/Left Waist Gunner; **Edward M. Dobson**, Co-Pilot; **James E. Hill, Jr.**, Pilot; **C. E. "Ted" Shuler**, Navigator; **Emeric "Mike" Michalik**, Ground Crew/Medic; **William J. Egan, Jr.**, Bombardier; **Herman Wagenfuhr, Jr.**, Ground Crew/Turret Specialist.  
Back Row: **Lester L. Schwartz**, Ball Turret Gunner; **Ray Reeves**, Radio Operator; **John H. Christensen**, Ground Crew/Electrician; **John F. Russell**, Rt. Waist Gunner; **John Pitcovick**, Flight Engineer & Top Turret Gunner; **Hubert J. Womack**, Tail Gunner.

## JOHN W. HICKS

This message from Steven Adams: "A family in the U.S. is hoping to get American citizenship for their half-brothers in England. They need to know John W. Hick's serial number and unit. He was a Sergeant at the Shipdham Air Base. Neither the Database nor the ROH properly identifies this man.

**Does anybody remember John W. Hicks? It would be helpful to bring a family together. If so, notify me (Ruth Davis-Morse, address on the inside cover) or Steve Adams ([s.p.adams@btinternet.com](mailto:s.p.adams@btinternet.com))**



### A REQUEST FROM ENGLAND

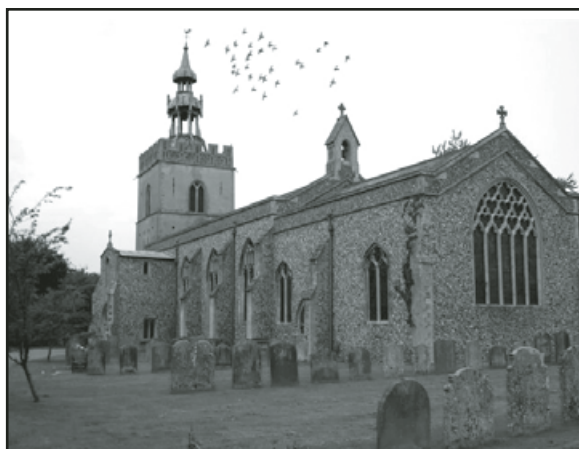
"I am trying to make contact with any ground-based veterans who were stationed in the UK during WWII with the 8th Air Force from any of the Bomb Groups based there. This would include anyone who was involved with running any of the camps in any way, Ground Crew, Cooks, Fire Fighters or Administration Staff.

"I'm trying to do research on the ground operations, to fill a gap that so far appears to have been overlooked, that of the sterling efforts required 'behind the scene' to keep the bomber offensive going.

"I am looking for any first hand accounts of life on or off duty, from surviving veterans or memories from more recent generations. I would like to hear about any tasks that were carried out, no matter how mundane. This is to get a clearer picture of how things were organized and done, especially as there were variations of operational procedure from base to base.

"I appreciate that I'm interested in events from over 60 years ago, but there may still be people with memories of this period of our history."

Malcolm Holland, Swindon, England, ([MAHoll200@aol.com](mailto:MAHoll200@aol.com))



The wall of the Church in Shipdham is crumbling. When repaired, they intend to include a time capsule. The 44th's donation to this project, as voted at the recent meeting, is \$1,000. The space capsule will enclose Will Lundy's book, *44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties*; and Arlo Bartch's Database of the 44th BGVA.

## ITEMS FOR SALE

*Having lost our superb salesman, Sam Miceli, the 44th BGVA is in dire need of a replacement for the PX. The job entails accepting orders for shirts, hats and other notable items and mailing them to customers. The reward is that you are helping a noble organization, and providing the means for veterans to show they are part of a proud and noble group. If you have the time to undertake this project, call me, Ruth Davis-Morse, Secretary. 717 846-8948*

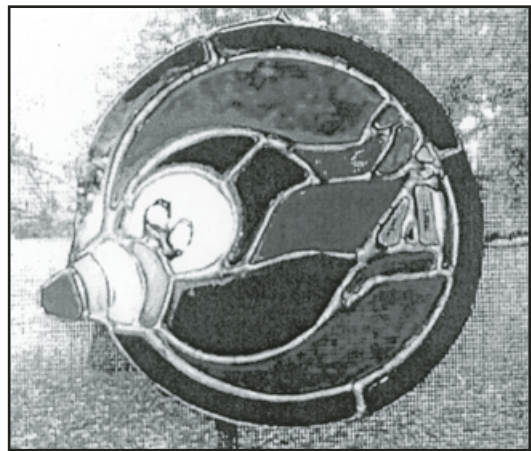
### Mary Aston's Sales Project

WWII Lapel & Hat Pin  
8th Air Force - DFC - Air Metal - Purple  
Heart - POW - ETO - WWII victory  
\$9.00 each + \$0.39 postage (each)  
(no photo available)

Proceeds go to 44th BGVA  
Place order with Mary Aston (706 283-1337)  
Mail check to  
830 Cardinal Dr., Elberton, GA 30635



Sun-Catcher  
Diameter is 14" with attached chain to  
hang in a window  
\$100.00 + \$20 for UPS packing and  
shipping = \$120.00



Sun-Catcher  
Diameter is 5.25" with attached loop  
hole to hang in a window; similar to  
14" logo, but no lettering  
\$50.00 + \$10 for UPS packing and  
shipping = \$60.00



Sun-Catcher  
Pelican-67th Bomb Squadron, 44th  
Bomb Group-8th AF (The only 44th  
squadron to have its own logo)  
Diameter is 14" with attached chain to  
hang in a window \$100.00 + \$20 for  
UPS packing and shipping = \$120.00

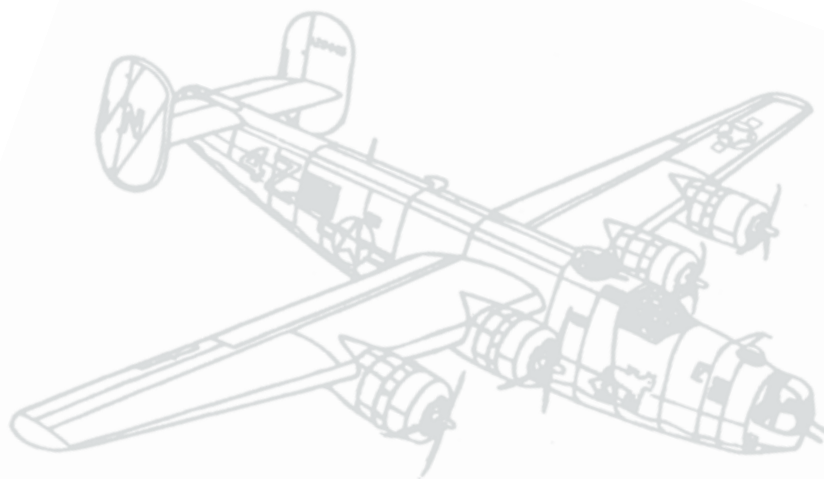


New Air Force Pin  
United States Air Force  
60th Anniversary  
1947-2007  
\$12.00 each + \$0.39 postage (each)

## **ASTON DONATES AAF UNIFORM UNIFORMS TO CARLISLE BARRACKS**



On a visit in October 2006 to the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 44th BGVA Director Robert Lee Aston, 67th Squadron, 44th Bomb Group donated his Army Air Corps footlocker packed full with his officer's uniforms, hats, pilot's coveralls, Army helmet, and other Army paraphernalia. Of particular interest to the museum personnel were the stencilled markings on his footlocker of Aston's shipment to the ETO with his name, rank, Army serial number, and FPO address. Another item of surprising interest was his Oxygen mask stowage bag which Aston said was used as a travel toilet kit by aircrew men. Shown in the photo accepting the gifts, L to R are: Robert S. Durham, Director, U.S. Army Heritage Museum, former Captain Robert Lee Aston, David J. Kennaly, Assistant to Registrar, and Jay A. Graybeal, Curator of Uniforms.



**Do you know why cannibals don't eat clowns?**

**Answer: Because they taste funny.**



## HERBERT JACKSON RUSSELL'S MEMORY OF A TREE THAT GREW IN SHIPDHAM

In September, 1942, our 44th Bomb Group found a new home in the county of Norfolk near the town of Shipdham in Merry Ole England. A nice new airbase with three hangars! This story is about Hangar 1.

Hangar 1 was the most convenient for our 68th Squadron plane inspections. The hangars were wide enough for a B-24 to go straight in, but you couldn't zig or "there went them wing tips".

The first time we used Hangar 1, we pulled our ship in the west door and headed for the other side to pull straight out when our 100 hour inspection was completed. Our prime mover was the faithful "CLETRAC", and you remember how easy it was to steer them straight!

Everything went well, no wing tips bent, but someone looked at the far side to plan our exit; and lo and behold, a huge oak tree near the hangar door had our B-24 stymied for an easy exit.

Well, M/Sgt. **Campbell**, our line chief, soon decided how to get our plane past that tree. Pull one wing out of the hanger, swing the tail around in a cartwheel maneuver and back the plane out the hangar door. It worked! However, it took a lot of time and patience.

Well, our 68th Engineering section knew the answer. Requisition a 72" two man saw and we would solve the problem in a couple of hours. (What a job for a 20" chain saw,

which we didn't know had been invented.)

Tech supply and base supply soon found that asking for a 6' crosscut saw required a lot of explanation. How, why, where, when, and what were mild questions. Didn't we know that to cut a tree, we needed permission at the highest level? Yep, it had to go "through channels"!

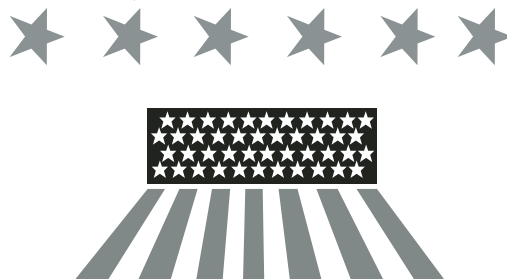
We explained our problem of using Hangar 1, and the wheels started turning. Slowly! My memory tells me it took over four months for permission to cut our tree, and then we didn't get the privilege of bringing the tree down ourselves. An official tree cutting crew was assigned to handle this job and carry away all the wood.

You know why we wanted to cut the tree ourselves? We found out how 'cold' the coke burned in our stoves, and that huge old tree would keep our Nissen huts nice and warm during that cold British winter.

Our story of the tree that stymied our B-24s had come to a happy ending. We became adjusted to the damp cold English weather, as if we had six blankets for our bunks, and didn't really miss the nice firewood for our huts.

If any of our British readers know the story of cutting a tree on government land, it would be nice to hear the explanation.

*Herbert Jackson Russell,  
former M/Sgt. - 68th*





## MAIL & E-MAIL

From Chris Barrett in England: I am looking for members of the crew who flew with **Kermit R. Faust**, a Waist Gunner on the **Donald L. Clark** crew. **G. B. Jones**, Co-Pilot; **Leonard Munter**, Navigator; **Thomas J. McGarry**, Bombardier; **John Keba**, Engineer & Top Turret Gunner; **H. P. Nagler**, Navigator GEE; **Glenn W. Howeth**, Radio Operator; **C. M. Kopperdud**, Waist Gunner; **R. N. Tharp**, Tail Gunner; **D. S. Ocker**, Tail Gunner on some missions.

Chris is a teenager in Shipdham who has developed a strong sense of history since moving close to the Aero Club. His E-Mail address is [barrettvolv@aol.com](mailto:barrettvolv@aol.com). If you know anything about Faust's crew and do not have a computer, you may contact me (Ruth W. Davis-Morse). My address & phone number is inside the cover page.



### *Interesting recollection about the past.*

From N. R. Cheek to Will Lundy, 1989: I was a member of the 464th Sub-Depot. I was the Assistant Supply Officer. ...I remember Captain Lee, who ran the Control Tower... When I enlisted in the Army at Ft. Bragg, N.C., M/G Jacob L. Devers was the Commanding General. He is the same General who pinned the Medal of Honor on Col. Johnson at Shipdham. I remember Mr. "Hardrock" Gaggety, the Minneapolis-Honeywell Norden Bomb Sight Tech Rep. He was the best poker player I ever saw. Col. Wall and Major Barnes were the best Bridge players. At the base, I was the 'Camouflage Officer'! Big Deal!! *N. R. Cheek remained in the Army and rose to the rank of LTC.*



From the *New York Times*, November 16, 2006: Gen. **Jacob E. Smart**, a four-star general who conceived the strategy for the daring WWII bombing raid on the oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania, and went on to help shape

the postwar Air Force, died in Ridgeland, S.C. He was 97 years old.

General Smart, then a colonel, came up with the idea of having planes fly exceedingly low to bomb the tightly defended refineries, which were believed to be producing one third of the fuel oil for the Nazi war machine.

In the face of protests by the five group commanders who would be leading the raid, his plan of flying at treetop level was accepted by Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied Commander. Among the plan's advantages,

Col. Smart argued, was greater accuracy. Col. Smart was not allowed to fly on the Ploesti mission because his superiors thought his knowledge of Allied war plans and secrets was too great to risk his capture.

The Ploesti mission was deemed a success, even though 54 of the 177 bombers that took part were lost, and 53 more were heavily damaged. The refinery output was greatly curtailed, and five Medals of Honor were awarded, the most for any single American military action.

Later Col. Smart was allowed to fly 29 missions, the last of which resulted in his being shot down (at Wiener-Neustadt) and put in a POW camp. The German interrogated him repeatedly, having seen his picture with President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Although he knew the details of the Normandy invasion, he divulged nothing.

After the war, Col. Smart became commander of the Fifth Air Force. In 1964 he became Deputy Commander in Chief of the U.S. European Command. After retirement, he worked with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, where he worked on the Hubbell Space Telescope Project.

*Although few members of the 44th had the opportunity to meet Gen. Smart, he was a powerful influence in their lives during the war years.*



...continued on page 27

To Will Lundy from Peter Bodle (at the Shipdham Aero Club.): The post delivered your remarkable book, safe and well, this morning. On behalf of the club, I would like to thank you and Lt. Morton for the kindness in providing it for our library. I will pass it on to Peter Steele, our curator, for placement in the small (but growing) museum library. I'm sure it will be appreciated by our pilots, and also the steady stream of visitors we are now starting to get to the museum. Kindest regards from your old (temporary) home.

*Ed. Note: The Shipdham Museum & Library is growing, thanks to a dedicated group of Brits who promised to remember our men, and they do. This book was donated by Lt. Morton and Will Lundy paid for the postage.*



To Jerry Folsom from Scarning Primary School in England:

**The Airfield at Shipdham**

The big destroyer and killing machine - Deadly  
It's quiet and still waiting for the planes to land.

To destroy the enemy wherever they are.  
It smells of oil; it sounds like a roar  
As it takes off and is very speedy.

I can feel the rumble of the window at  
five AM

In the morning when it takes off.

*By Shana Cross*

*(Obviously, English children are being taught the story of the air war in WWII)*



From Jill Mott Roberts, daughter of **Charles M. Mott** (68th Sq.) "One day I entered my father's name into Google. On the fourth or fifth page I found a man in England was trying to get in touch with an American veteran of WWII who had been stationed somewhere in England during the early 40's. The man in England wanted to get in touch with this man or his family, because he had something to return to him."

Jill knew her father had been a Bombsight/Auto Pilot Mechanic, and that he had been stationed at Shipdham. She also knew he had spent some time in North Africa.

The man in England has a friend named Howard, who had been a Boy Scout in Crewes, England. Crewes was a heavily traveled intersection on the rail lines at that time, and the troops frequently traveled that line. Howard, eight years old at the time, worked at a church canteen serving food to the soldiers who were on their way to their appointed destinations. Like all boys his age, he collected souvenirs: badges, buttons and anything they could regard as a prize. After all those years, he still had Charles Mott's dog tag.

Jill had to prove with birth certificates, that she was Charles Mott's daughter; then one day it arrived in her mail.

"Inside the envelope, wrapped in a folded sheet of paper, was a piece of metal that my father must have held in his hands a million times. I couldn't wait to send an e-mail to my new friends, to tell them that it had finally arrived home.

"Sometimes it's easy to get so tangled in the 'pros and cons' of war, we forget that men and women who serve in the military are real people. They have families who miss them while they are gone, loved ones who worry about them and who pray every night that they will make it back home alive and well.

"They are heroes. The ones that don't make it back are gigantic heroes..."

*Ed. Note: Charles Mott folded wings in 2000.*





## WILL SEZ

It is hard to believe, but 2007 has arrived already, and now time for another **Will Sez**. How these years roll around so quickly.

Many of you now know about the loss of our Prez, Paul Kay, thanks to Arlo Bartsch's note that he posted on the Web. What a terrible loss it is, both personally as well as from our Association. His great good humor mixed in with his dedication to his work with our organization cannot be replaced. It was a joy to be near him, both with our organizational work as well as at our reunions. He was a great one!

In early December, about a month ago, Paul asked if I could provide him with a listing of memorial plaques that have been placed wherever, to honor our men that have been lost, as well as to provide some data about our 44th BG accomplishments. Paul did not advise me of the purpose of this listing, but I did compile one that I hope is fairly complete, I hope now that he might want it made available to all of you.

I could not find any records of any memorial being established while our 44th BG personnel were associated with the 2nd Air Division Association in the period between 1945 and 1980. But when the 44th Missile Wing was established and given our old number, they were instructed to form an organization to honor the military organization's roots from which their number (44th) had been re-assigned to them. This took place near the end of the 1970's with this entity becoming the 44th BG Heritage Memorial Group. At that time most of the 44th BG members within the 2nd ADA joined this new organization that was established, and with **Charles Joseph Warth** already established as our new leader. Both the 68th Squadron and the 506th Squadron had organized their own small units; but

they, also, were absorbed into the HMG.

During the period following 1980-1904, Joe Warth and our new organization designed and installed several plaques. They were:

1. Air Force Academy, Colorado. A bronze metal plaque dedicated 29 August 1986.
2. On our Shipdham Air Base, at the new Flying Club: A large granite stone mounted on a cement? base. 24 September 1988.



Shipdham Air Base

3. At Shipdham Village Church grounds near the street rock wall: A duplicate of the granite stone base placed on our base. Date: 24 September 1988.
4. At the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio. 1 August 1993. A bronze medal plate.



The Air Force Museum

...continued on page 29



Shuttleworth Family. Ian is the young man on the right

### OTHERS

1980's On a stone facing overlooking the Fairie Locks, near Gairloch, in northwest Scotland. The Shuttleworth family, while on their annual vacation near Gairloch in the 1970's discovered the remains of a B-24 that had crashed in that area in 1945, and were so impressed that they 'adopted' it. David, the father had served as a Navigator in "Lancaster" bombers during the war, so had strong feelings for other bomber airmen. Ian, his younger son, also became very interested, began his search to attempt to get answers for the many questions as to why and how this crash had occurred.

The David Shuttleworth family provided for and placed a metal plaque on the large rock facing overlooking the crash scene shortly after Ian had learned the identities of the airmen. He learned that this was the nine-man Ketchum crew from our 66th Bomb Squadron, plus six other veteran airmen from Air Transport Command. The B-24 was from the 93rd Bomb Group, was heavily loaded, had flown from a field in lower Scotland, and they were on their way home to the U.S. via Iceland. Date of accident was 13 June 1945.

Had it not been for Ian Shuttleworth contacting me, it is quite likely that I, we, never would have learned about this tragedy. All official records for our old 44th Bomb Group ceased at the end of May 1945. So there were no official records available with which to obtain this information in any of our

records. Ian spent years searching to locate all next of kin, the task doubly difficult as six of these men were from other military organizations. When Ian obtained the home addresses of all these airmen, he then notified these families about the data he had collected, and offered to any of these next of kin, to meet them at Glasgow and drive them to the Gairloch. Several of these family members did visit.

Ian also managed to convince the Scottish officials to declare this area as an official sacred site, due to the nature of the crash. This area is covered with the shattered remains of this B-24, some larger pieces being parts of engines, landing gear, propellers, etc. So, as a sacred site, the public is warned not to remove any of the material.

1992 Shipdham Airfield. A beautiful large stone memorial stone designed and donated by **Lee Aston**. Doug Genge, whose business is located next to the tower, arranged for the placement of this memorial on the east wall of the old tower, as well as for the ceremony itself. Prior to that time, Doug also paid for most of the expenses to restore the exterior walls of the tower and the replacement of the entire roof. So, in essence, he has made the control tower itself a memorial for us, as it had become dangerously deteriorated.



East Wall of Control Tower



Butts Brow, near Eastbourne

1995 Butts Brow, near city of Eastbourne, southeast corner of England. On 2 February 1944 the **James Bolin** crew, returning from mission, flying in Ruth-less, failed to clear the low mountain and crashed, killing all ten airmen. A young local resident, Kevin Watson, obtained the full support of the mayor, Ron Parsons, and placed a large memorial stone at the site. He also compiled and had printed a book about the crew (*Ruth-less, And Far From Home*), and the city has a small display near the beach to exhibit and tell more of the story about both the airplane and the crew.

In addition, on Remembrance Day (our Memorial Day) this fine city has a very full day of activities to honor the military. They start with a big, colorful parade, then follow that with a ceremony at the *Ruth-less* site, which includes a full memorial service. They end the day with more ceremonies and a Concert in their large auditorium, again honoring their military and any Americans who happen to be in the audience. It is awesome, to say the least.

1996 France, near Rouen, in a small village, the French had installed a stone monument with a memorial plate honoring the 67th Squadron crew of **Clyde E. Price**, flying in *Miss Dianne* that had crashed there on 8 March 1943. Nine men were killed, three became POW. The French retired military personnel arranged to conduct the installation ceremonies to coincide with our tour of 44th ers in 1997. I personally was quite impressed as *Miss Dianne* was the airplane I serviced; some of the crewmen were close friends.

2001 Pingland Hills, 5 miles northwest of Norwich, England - Private property on a small lake. Here the property owner designed, furnished and provided the memorial plaque to honor the eight airmen who were killed, aircraft and bombs falling into her lake. The accident occurred 21 April 1944. The pilot, **Forrest C. Havens** and co-pilot **Leon L. Del Grande** survived, with all eight of their crew not surviving.

*Editor's Note: We are aware of more monuments than those listed here. We will try to get photos and locations of these edifices, so veterans, family members or friends who are traveling in those areas can find them. Because Paul Kay was so dedicated to preserving the 44th's history, he asked that this information be collected and later placed on the Web Page.*

*Other known monuments are at Hammelkiln, Belgium and Kjeller, Norway.*

Will Lundy  
P.O. Box 315,  
Bridgeport, CA 93517

## FOLDED WINGS

*The days decline: no more again, the hills so clearly rise,  
And even joy's a shade of pain where still a sorrow lies.  
Nor will my soul be soon aglow, nor soon my heart be gay  
For here they lie - and I must go the miles another way.*

*James Facos, 388th BG*

**Alba, Charles** #19186 27 June 2006 66th Squadron. Borah was the Crew Chief on *Queen Anne*, a plane that made two trips to Africa, went through Ploesti, but crash landed near Foggia after it's second trip to Wiener-Neustadt. No personal information is available on the Database.

**Borah, John J.** #19460 4 September 2006 68th Squadron Lt. Borah, later Captain, joined the 44th BG on 23 May 1944. He flew 34 missions. According to **Robert Lehnhausen**, Lt. Borah was recognized to be an excellent pilot who adapted to combat operations quickly. He flew very good formation. His crew of officers were co-pilot **Otis Carmichael**; Navigator **Elmer Alderman**. His Bombardier eventually was **Myles Brewster**. In the course of time their combined combat skills were noted, and they became a lead crew. Their leads were often with PFF equipped planes. On those occasions they had the super skills of **Wayne Elberg** as their 'Mickey' Navigator. The close relationship of these officers continued through their lives, and they were regular attendees of the 44th BG Reunions.

Borah's first two missions were as Co-pilot with the crews of **Charles Gayman** and **Robert Knablein**. His first mission as pilot was on 21 July 1944. On other missions the Borah crew flew with Capt. Charles Hammer, Capt. Joy Smith and Major Harold Barnes as Command Pilots. The crew flew in *Jose Carioca*, *Gipsy Queen*, *Gallavantin' Gal*, *Lili Marlene*, *Lady Geraldine* and *Louisiana Belle*.

Borah's first flight as Captain was on 7 January 1944. His last mission was 29 January 1945.

After WWII, Borah remained on active duty with the Air Force, flying a total of 43 missions, including the Berlin Air Lift. Upon retirement, he entered the field of finance. He became an officer of a bank in Riverside, CA where he and his wife Maggie resided until his death.

**Castro, Ladislao** #19696 15 November 2006 S/Sgt. Castro was the Right Wing Gunner on the **Raymond Houghtby** crew. He also flew one mission with **William M. Maynor**. Most of his missions were flown in *Lucky Strike* and *Gallivantin' Gal*, one in *Peep Sight*. On his 16th mission to Friedrichshafen, Germany, flying in *Lucky Strike*, the plane was hit with flak, and was not able to cross the Channel. The crew bailed out in France. With the help of the French Underground, he was able to evade the Germans and made it to safety through Spain. All other members of his crew were captured and became POWs. Castro also served in the Korean War, achieving the rank of T/Sgt.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Sally; two sons, eight grandchildren.



## FOLDED WINGS

**Cootz, Edward P. #19833** 9 October 2006  
67th Squadron Cootz was a member of the Bombsight Maintenance Section of the 44th Bomb Group.

**Eckstein, Herman J. "Joe" #20090** 9 December 2006 68th Squadron. Captain Eckstein was a pilot. Information of his death comes to the *8 Ball Tails* from **Robert Lehnhausen**, who remembers Eckstein as a model combat bomber pilot. "He joined the 68th Squadron as the co-pilot of the **Jack Leibrich** crew in late July, 1944. He possessed a quiet confidence that made him very popular with crewmen and his peers. After 7 missions as Leibrich's co-pilot, he flew a few missions as co-pilot to **Ray Suddeth** and also my brother "**Doc**" **Lehnhausen**.

"He was then made co-pilot for the **George Washburn** crew. After 19 missions as a co-pilot, his skills were rewarded and he got his own crew.

"Joe was soon trained as a lead pilot, and flew his last several missions in that responsibility. He completed his 35 mission tour on 28 February 1945.

"He attended a few of our reunions. His son Tony has been active member of the 44th BGVA for several years.

"Jack Leibrich and George Washburn would both attest to the piloting skills of Joe. Both of these first pilots owed their survival to his airmanship during a flight in which a crisis arose. He calmly corrected the problem without fuss or feathers. His attitude was, 'isn't that what I was supposed to do?'

"Joe Eckstein was, to me, one of the finest examples of a very good combat bomber pilot. We are saddened by his departure."

Editor's Note: Eckstein flew with three Command Pilots: **Harold Stanhope**, **Dale Benadon** and **Wayne Stevens**. In his 35 missions, he flew in *Jose Carioca*, *Flak Magic*, *Puritanical Bitch/Puritanical Witch*, *Corky*, *Gipsy Queen*, *Lady Geraldine*, and *Gallavantin' Gal*.

**Haulman, Clement #20582** 7 May 2006 506 Squadron (*Corrected Report*) Lt. Haulman was a pilot, who sustained an injury soon after being assigned to the 44th BG, and was returned to the states. After the War, he remained in the Air Force Reserve for approximately thirty years, rising to the rank of full Colonel. Many of his yearly two-week tours of active duty involved research and development assignments at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. During the same three decades he worked for the Pittsburgh Testing Laboratory branch in New Orleans, where he and his wife Cecil Lurline Breaux Haulman raised three sons. In 1979 he moved with his wife to Lafayette, Louisiana, where he belonged to the Reserve Officers Association, the Retired Officers Association, the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association and Asbury United Methodist Church. Not long before he died, Col. Haulman and his wife moved to Gainesville, Florida. There is a display commemorating Col. Haulman's service in the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base. Among other items, it contains his WWII uniform, a wooden model of a B-24 he carved while recuperating from his wartime aircraft accident, and a book about the 44th Bombardment Group in WWII.

(This information was supplied by Col. Haulman's son, Dr. Daniel L. Haulman, Chief of Organizational Histories Branch, Air Force Historical Research Agency.)





## FOLDED WINGS

**Heyer, Edwin #20649** 8 September 2006 68th Squadron. 1st. Lt. Heyer was a Navigator on the **George Martin** crew, but he flew also with **John Diehl, Jr., Baxter Weant, Joseph Brown, Samuel Williams, Frank Sobotka** and one mission with Major **George Jansen** as Command Pilot. This crew joined the 68th shortly before the 44th was sent to Benina Main, so they were part of the group that joined the low level mission to Ploesti.

Heyer's first mission was 5 July 1943. In his 24 missions, many times as lead crew, he flew to Italy, Norway, Germany, France, Austria (twice to Wiener-Neustadt) and the awesome mission to Ploesti, Romania. The crew flew in *Victory Ship, Eager Eve/Hag Mag/the Moth Ball Queen* and *Pistol Packin' Mama*.

Heyer and his wife Irma resided in South Holland, Illinois. He is remembered as being very upbeat and positive; and even though he was battling a serious lung disease, he intended to attend the Washington celebration, 'just to be with the guys.' Tragically, he missed it by about a month.

**Kay, Robert Paul #20888** 68th Squadron 24 December 2006 2nd Lt. Robert Paul Kay was a Navigator on the **William Warren** crew. He flew thirty one missions, according to official documents. However, his personal records indicate more, especially one on 7 April 1945 to Krummel. This mission that has recently attracted the attention of German researchers; but unfortunately, the U.S. records have been lost. The Warren crew flew in *Puritanical Bitch/Puritanical Witch, T.S. Tessie/Beck's Bad Boys, Phyllis, Limpin' Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose* and *One Weakness*.

After the war, Kay earned his B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering at the University of Tennessee, and an MS from the University of Illinois. He was employed by the Weyerhaeuser Corporation, rising to become V.P. of Sales and Distribution. He was elected Director on the

44th BG Board of Directors in 2002, and in 2004 was named Vice President. He 2005 he served as Reunion Chairman, and he moved into the presidency after that meeting.

Kay was preceded in death by his wife Doris Hurst Kay, a marriage of 52 years. The couple had two children, one son, Paul Kay, Jr. and one daughter, Rebecca Kay Sprague, and four grandsons. His daughter Rebecca was the source of information about his death.

**Laas, Robert F. #21018** 12 November 2006 67th Squadron S/Sgt. Laas was a Gunner on the **Jack Thomas** crew. He flew 29 missions, the first on 2 February 1944. Laas usually flew in the Waist position, but on one mission, served as a Belly Gunner. On another mission he was with the **Rockford Griffith** crew. Twice the Thomas crew went to the heart of the conflict - 'The Big B' (Berlin). As the War advanced, he flew with different Command Pilots - **R. L. Cox, Frank D. Slough, Howard K. Halladay** and **Sylvester S. Hunn**. The Thomas crew flew in many different A/C: *F for Freddie, Shack Rabbit/Star Spangled Hell, Tuffy, Judy's Buggy, Raggedy Ann II, Mi Akin Ass, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle* and *Phyllis*. His last mission was 30 May 1944. Laas & his wife Gladys resided in Bellville, Texas.

Knowledge of Laas's passing came from his grandson, S/Sgt. Thomas M. Laas, and was forwarded by Roger Fenton, 44th BGVA Historian.





## FOLDED WINGS

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**Miceli, Samuel** #21332 29 August 2006. 506 Squadron 1st Lt. Miceli was a Bombardier on the **Ernest Grosset** crew; however, he also flew with Capt. **Carl Horne**, Major **William Cameron**, Col. **Eugene Snavelly** and Major **Wayne Middleton** as Command Pilots. He joined the 44th Bomb Group of 14 August 1944, having flown 21 missions with the 492nd Bomb Group. Because of their heavy losses, the 492nd was closed and airmen were assigned to other Groups. Most of Miceli's mission were flown in *Southern Comfort III*, but also in unnamed planes. Miceli's missions were directed to depriving the Germans of fuel and equipment, and destruction of railroads to prevent movement of troops.

Upon completion of his 30th mission, Miceli returned to the States and became a Bombardier Instructor at Midland, Texas. After the war he maintained Reserve Status, retiring with the rank of Major. He and his wife Edith resided in Mentor, Ohio. He was revered by members of the 44th Bomb Group for his dedication to fundraising by managing the PX, selling materials at Reunions and by mail.

**Mitchell, Duane E.** #21377 68th Squadron 19 August 2006 1st Lt. Mitchell was a Navigator on the **Donald H. Steinke** crew. He also flew with **Frank L. Foy**, **Ben H. Gildart, Jr.** and **A.D. Bennett**. He flew one mission with **Robert Lehnhausen** as Command Pilot. Mitchell's first of 29 missions was on 26 April 1944. He flew in a large number of planes: *Jose Carioca*, *Northern Lass*, *Full House*, *Wendy W*, *Channel Hopper*, *Flak Alley II*, *Fearless Fosdick* and *Mary Harriet*. On D-Day he was on the mission to Colleville and St. Laurent.

On 7 July 1944 on a mission to bomb an A/C factory in Bernburg, flying in *Any Gum Chum*, the plane was shot down by enemy fighters. Only two members of the crew survived- Mitchell and the Radio Operator, both

of whom were POW. He was hospitalized for three months, and was liberated on 9 April 1945. He was flown to Paris, then to the ZOI on a stretcher where he was hospitalized at Winter General Hospital.

After recovering, he became a member of the Missouri National Guard. He entered into the field of Medicine and was engaged in General Practice until 1996.

At the time of his death, Mitchell was residing at Mount Ayr, Iowa.

**O'Brien, James** #22096 Date Unknown 68th Squadron. Capt. O'Brien was a pilot. He flew 21 missions, flying in *Rugged Buggy*, *Victory Ship*, *Hitler's Nightmare*, *Lynn Bari* and *Lemon Drop*; on one mission, Col. **James Hodges** was Command Pilot; on another, Col. **Leon Johnson**.

On his 21st mission to the Krupp Submarine Works at Kiel, his plane was beset by enemy fighters and went down; O'Brien and seven of his crew were captured and remained POWs for two years; two crew members were lost. After the war, O'Brien remained in the Air Force Reserves. He retired at the rank of Colonel.

**Orthman, Harry L.** # 21567 67th Squadron 23 September 2006 Capt. Orthman was first assigned to the 492nd Bomb Group. When their losses became so overwhelming, the group was dissolved and Orthman was among those transferred to the 44th BG, with whom he piloted seventeen missions, most on unnamed planes. During the period from 18 August 1944 when he flew his first mission with the 44th, he flew with many Command Pilots: Col. **A. T. Reed**, Capt. **D. M. Lavis**, Capt. **Frank Davido**, Capt. **Merrill G. Berthrong** and Capt. **George Rebich**. His last mission was 3 January 1945. Orthman was a Life Member of the 44th BGVA. He and his wife Sally lived in Mission Viejo, California.



## FOLDED WINGS

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**Rommelfanger, Ernest #21844** 67th Squadron 3 December 2006. Captain Rommelfanger was a Navigator, flying with many different pilots. His first mission was 23 May 1944, two weeks before D-Day. Activities at that time were directed to preparation for the Invasion, then support of the troops as they advanced across Europe. His last mission, 24 May 1945 was to Wesel at the Rhine Crossing. Rommelfanger flew with many pilots, frequently as the Lead Crew: **Richard Thornton, Frank Davido, John Mueller, Charles Mercer, Dale Benadom, Robert Gunton, Robert Knowles, William Mayerriecks, Norman Bartlett, Russell Peller, Jr.** and four Command Pilots: **J. I. Turnbull, Wayne Middleton, George Rebich** and **William Cameron.**

In his 33 missions, Rommelfanger flew in many planes: *Old Iron Corset, Glory Bee, Mary Harriet, Fearless Fosdick, Mi Akin Ass, My Sad Ass* and *Lady Fifi Nella.*

Arrangements for a military funeral came about from the efforts of 44th BG Awards Chairman, Lee Aston, who had been able to acquire belated awards for Rommelfanger, which were presented on 12 October 2005. At that time he received DFC/OLC#1 and AM/OLC # 4 & 5. He spent his last years in Omaha, Nebraska. He is survived by a daughter Rosan Royal.

**Thornock, Newell Bruce #22308** Date Unknown 67th Squadron. T/Sgt. Thornock was a Radio Operator on the **Harold Pinder** Crew. He flew three missions, the first, on 11th December 1943; the last 14th January 1944. He flew in the following planes: *4 Q-2, The Shark* and *Lib-erty Belle Lass.* Thornock and his wife Florence resided in Bloomington, Idaho.

**Weaver, William H. #22491** July 2006. 67th Sq. Captain Weaver was the Intelligence Officer for his Squadron, but he flew on two missions as an observer: 21 May 1944 to

Siracourt, France to the V-1 sites, flying with the **Howard Metts** crew on an unnamed plane. On 30 November he flew as an observer with the **Ray Boggs** crew to Neunkirchen, Germany. Flying in *Lady Geraldine,* they bombed the Marshalling Yards. News of Weaver's death came from **William Smythe,** 68th Squadron Intelligence Officer and long-time friend of the deceased. **Bob Lehnhausen** remembers both officers with respect and admiration for their dedicated service. In Lehnhausen's last conversation with Weaver, he learned that his friend was approaching the golden age of ninety.

**Yuspeh, Michael #22673** 506 Squadron 16 December 2006 T/Sgt. Michael Yuspeh was an Engineer/Top Turret Gunner on the **Thomas G. Waters** crew. On one mission he flew as a Tail Gunner with **Hal C. Tyree.** His first of 35 missions was 1 August 1944. The Waters crew was part of the group that bombed ahead of the invading troops, all the way into the Fatherland. They flew in many different A/C: *Ole Cock, Sabrina III, Shack Rat, Flying Log/Pregnant Peg, I Walk Alone, Down De Hatch, Chef's Delight/Chief Wapello, Southern Comfort III* and *Puritanical Bitch/Puritanical Witch.* His last mission was on 2 January 1945.

After the war, Yuspeh became a dealer in auto parts, selling them nationwide. Upon the request of **Roy Owen,** he became Reunion Chairman for the 44th BGVA. His most unforgettable Reunion was in New Orleans, where the Banquet became a masquerade ball. Among the great contributions that Yuspeh made to the 44th BGVA was his fundraising success, raising money to refurbish the Louisiana Belle, now on display at Barksdale.

Mike and his wife, Rose Faye, had two sons, both of whom became experts on U.S. government projects. The family lived in New Orleans for many years. Mike and Rose Faye moved to Germantown, Tennessee after a catastrophic flood in New Orleans.



**TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE 44TH BOMB  
GROUP: THIS MEMORIAL IS FOR YOU.**

This graceful monument reaching high in the sky can easily be seen on the skyline of Washington, DC and Northern Virginia. Remember, before there was an Army Air Force, there was the Army Air Corps. Before there was a Thunderbird, a Saberjet or an SR71, there was a B-24.

Located on a promontory in Arlington, these graceful spires overlook the Pentagon and are adjacent to Arlington Cemetery. There is a Runway to Glory at the site entrance, a bronze Honor Guard statue, two granite inscription walls and a glass contemplation wall that honors fallen airmen.

**MANY WARS FOLLOWED WWII.  
NONE WERE GREATER.**

**44th Bomb Group  
Veterans Association**

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