

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 8 Issue #2

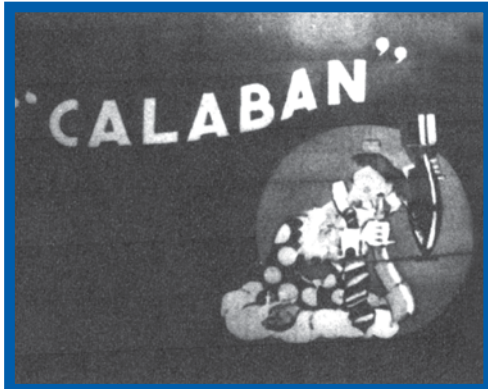
Journal of the
44th Bomb Group

Summer 2006

Non Profit Veterans Association

Veterans Association

EIN # 68-0351397



Most of *Calaban's* missions were flown by the crew of **James Hill, Jr.**, and the memory of this beloved A/C still lingers with its Bombardier, **William Egan**. *Calaban* arrived in Shipdham on 3 March 1943, and was assigned to the 67th Squadron. The plane's first mission was the successful raid on the Submarine Pens at Bordeaux, flown by **Walter Bunker** with **Richard Butler** as Co-Pilot.

Named for a dim-witted serf in English literature, *Calaban's* last mission 11 December 1943 was to a boat and rail center in Emden, Germany. The

'24s were set upon by a large fleet of German fighters; however, it was a bomb from a '24 above *Calaban*, dropping on the wing that brought her down. **Richard O'Neill**, pilot, and nine members of his crew were KIA. One survived to become POW.



L-R 1st Row, Front: **Edward Dobson**, Co-Pilot; **Clint Shuler**, Navigator; **James Hill, Jr.**, Pilot; **John Pitcovich**, Flight Engineer & Top Turret Gunner; **Ray Reeves** Radio Operator.
Standing: **Mike Chayka**, Ground Crew Chief; **John Christensen**, Assistant Ground Crew Chief; **Lester Schwartz**, Ball Turret Gunner; **Herman Wagenfuhr**, Ground Crew Turret Specialist; **Hubert Womack**, Tail Gunner; **Clark Bailey**, Left Waist Gunner; Emerson "Mike" Michalik (Ground Crew Medic); **John Russell**, Right Waist Gunner; **Bill Egan**, Bombardier

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Visit our website @ www.44thbombgroup.com

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CALABAN

“IT TOOK MORE THAN LUCK, BUT WE’LL TAKE THE LUCK”

The *Calaban* crew joined the group that flew to North Africa, and immediately joined in bombing missions to Sicily and Italy, preparing for the upcoming invasions by Generals Montgomery and Patton. On August 1st they were part of the low level mission to Ploesti, one of 37 A/C assigned to bomb Credito-Minier and Columbia Aquila. Following *Suzy Q*, flown by Colonel **Leon Johnson**, *Calaban* flew through the fiery inferno at treetop level with planes going down on all sides

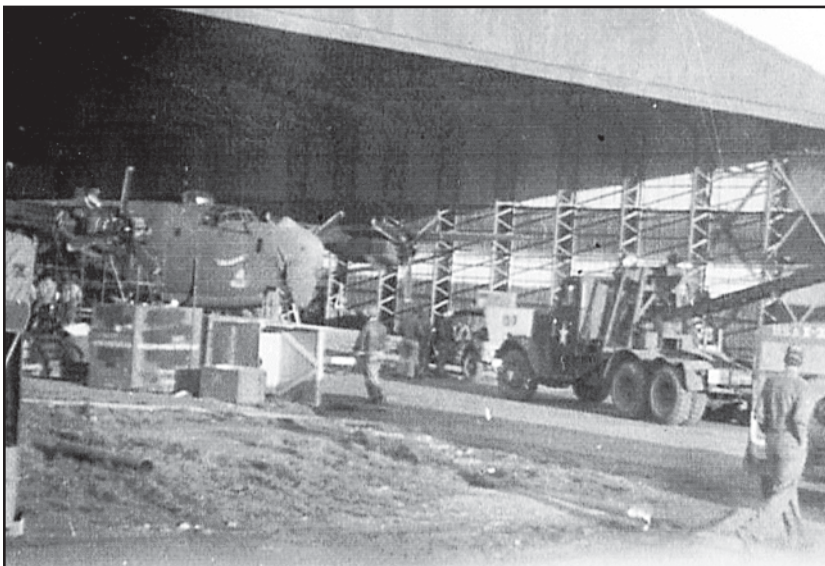
Those that emerged from that fiery cauldron were badly damaged. *Calaban's* right wing was severely cut between the fuselage and #3 engine all the way to the main spar where she had smashed through a balloon cable. All planes were blackened by the oil fires, blistering the paint.

Skimming low between and under telegraph wires, and rubbing their bellies against fields of corn in an effort to avoid the fighters and flak towers, the 24's

dashed bravely along, pursued by fighters. James Hill managed to evade the fighters and made it as far as Malta. With repairs, they were able to return to Benina Main in time to join the awesome raids at Wiener Neustadt and Foggia. When these missions were completed, *Calaban* was the only surviving plane in the 67th Squadron.

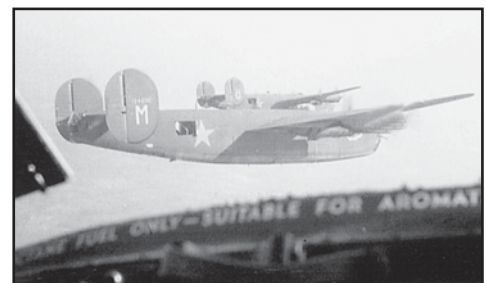
Squadron Commander Col. **Bill Cameron** remarked that *Calaban* was the most shot-up plane that kept coming back.

Of *Calaban's* original crew, only one member did not survive the war, **Ed Dobson**, Co-Pilot. He became pilot of his own plane and was lost with his crew on a mission to Norway. Bill Egan is the last living member of the crew. He and his wife Theresa have two grandsons who graduated from the Air Force Academy, both of whom are pilots. Bill had the honor of commissioning one of them as an officer in the USAF.



Calaban in the Hangar for Repair

According to Steve Adams, this is the first time this picture has been published. Does this sight look familiar to anyone in the Maintenance Crew?



Calaban



HITTING THE KJELLER AIRFIELD AT OSLO, NORWAY

Bombing the Motor Works at the airfield near Oslo was challenging. Returning to Shipdham was even tougher. Enemy fire and fuel shortage brought death to some, internment to others. Nevertheless, the raid was successful. The Norwegians built a monument to those who were lost on this difficult assignment.

It was **Edward Dobson's** second mission as pilot with his own crew. As Co-Pilot on the **James Hill** crew, flying in Calaban, he had survived the low level mission to the oil fields at Ploesti, and the awesome raid on the Messerschmidt plant at Wiener-Neustadt. On November 13, 1943 he flew his first mission as pilot on *Raggedy Ann*. Five days later on the raid at Kjeller, the plane was beset by a JU-88 and went down, losing all members of the crew.

Each loss is a personal story: it was the first mission for **Norman Charleston**, Co-Pilot; **Byron Latimer**, Navigator, had flown 11 missions, some on *Miss Emmy Lou* with **Richard Butler**; **Sydney Burroughs**, Bombardier, was killed on his 5th Mission; **David Faust**, Radio Operator, was lost on his 2nd; **Joseph Gallagher**, Engineer, was on his 8th; **Henry Voorhies**, Ball Turret Gunner, 4th; **Aaron Hulphrey**, Gunner, 16th; **Joseph Gilbert**, Gunner, 3rd; **Hershel Feichter**, Gunner—3rd Mission.

Kjeller Tally

Total loss of life-- 42; Internees-- 10
The 67th Squadron lost the **Edward Dobson**

Crew, **Joseph Houle** crew and **Earl Johnson** Crew. **Rockford Griffith** made it to Shipdham, ordered his crew to bail out then made his famous landing on only the left gear; the **Dellas Brown** crew lost one gunner, shot in an attack by an Me 210. The **Edward Mitchell** crew went down in the North Sea and all members were KIA.

The **Baxter Weant** crew of the 68th Squadron were forced to land in Sweden. The entire crew was interned, but later nine returned to duty. T/Sgt. **Frank Gavin**, (engineer) was retained to repair the plane, which later was used by the Swedish Air Force. The Avenger, piloted by Lt. **William D. Hughes**, made it back but lost one member of the crew to enemy fire.

Briefing advice about Norway: If you plane goes down, find a church and stay there. The Underground will find you.

Why was Norway important to the Nazis? Their thousand miles of coastline were ideal for ship building, and for stopping the flow of supplies from U.S. to Russia. When American bombers went to Kjeller, they had to precisely hit Nazi targets. Norway was a neutral country.

The war was moving in many directions when Kjeller was attacked. The city of Kiev was liberated; German defences on Dnieper were crumbling; Allies were crossing the Sangro River in Italy; and Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek were meeting in Cairo. Source: History of the Second World War, a Time-Life Book, Prentice Hall Press.



Broken Mulberries at Normandy, after the storm.

PRESIDENTIAL BRIEFING

Similar to Shipdham mission briefing, when weather was clear (not often) and the target was not heavily protected, the briefing was shorter.

So is this one - stay healthy, keep your spirits high (as always). I'll see you in Washington. We have registered sixty 44th BGVA members to date.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Kay'.

Paul Kay

COMPLETED: A FORTY YEAR PROJECT AND IT'S ALREADY ARRIVED TO CARLISLE

Will Lundy climbed up on John Warsinske's pickup truck in a final farewell to his 40 year project of preserving the history of the 44th Bomb Group. With the help of Kevin, Will & Irene's son, they worked for more than five hours, moving and packing cartons of paper.

According to Will, John was an expert, filling the boxes and keeping the material in order of dates, which will make it easier for the experts at the Army Heritage Library in Carlisle to file and catalog the information.

The experience provided Will with an education in shipping. The Post Office had special containers about six feet tall, 24-30 inches deep and about three feet wide. They were open on the front to load the boxes. It had a flexible heavy screen to keep every-

thing inside and secure. Will's files filled two of those and they went directly to Carlisle with no further handling.

A tribute to Will's lifetime effort, Warsinske said that in his twenty years of historical work, he has never seen anything that even comes close to the details of our 44th BG's collection of data. Will modestly credits the members who provided pictures and stories, making it possible for this collection to come to completion and reach its final destination.

It came about because of Will's foresight, Irene's support, great perseverance, and the fact that members trusted that Will would take care of their precious memories.

“Sign on Wall of Army
Heritage Museum”
The Eye of the Army
The Army in your Attic

**HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR THE 44TH BOMB GROUP REUNION
IN WASHINGTON? IF NOT, THERE IS STILL TIME!**

**THE BIG EVENT IS THE UNVEILING OF THE
ARMY AIR FORCE MEMORIAL**

October 13-16, 2006

Our Reunion coincides with the 2nd Air Division Association's 59th Annual Convention. We will be joining 17 other Groups. It will be the biggest showing of WWII airmen that Washington has ever seen. Of course, young airmen will also be in our midst—all those who dared to look up in the sky and choose to join other brave men who flew there in defense of liberty.

PROGRAM

Friday, October 13, 2006

Registration
Hospitality Room
Cocktail Party--Cash Bar
Squadron Dinners

Saturday, October 14, 2006

Buffet Breakfast
Business Meeting
Lunch on you own*
Dinner on your own*

*Food Court, Park Bistro, Club Lounge
Buses to Air Force Memorial
Buses to Air Force Memorial Concert

COST

Single Room \$692.00
Double Room \$542.00/per person
Triple Room \$492.00/per person
These costs include hotel room for 3 nights
And all events except Tour of Washington
Aerospace Museum and Sunday AM
Memorial Service at the AF Memorial.
Extra nights \$92 + 9% Tax
Deposit: \$50/person; Balance Due Aug. 1st
Refund Policy: (60 days prior to convention -
\$15 charge per person)
(30 days prior--\$25 charge)

Sunday, October 15, 2006

Buffet Breakfast
Special Options **
Bus Trip to Aerospace Museum \$17.50/person
Tour of Washington, DC--\$37.50/person
Memorial Service at Air Force Memorial
10:00 - 11:00 AM (No bus service for
this event)
Banquet

Monday, October 16, 2006

Buffet Breakfast
Farewells

DIRECTIONS

From **Washington National Airport** - Take 1-66 West to 1-495 South to Exit 50 B. Follow signs to Fairview Park South. Hotel is on the left.
From **Dulles Airport** - Take Dulles Access Road East to 1-495 South to Exit 50B East. Follow signs to Fairview Park South. Hotel is on your left.

TAXI SERVICE: RED TOP (703) 522-3333

RESERVATION FORM

44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Please print or type. All information must be complete

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (____) _____ E-Mail _____

Hotel Room: Single _____ D/D _____ King _____ Non-Smoking _____ Handicapped _____

Arrive: _____ Depart: _____

Sunday Tour 10/15:

AeroSpace Museum, Chantilly, VA \$17.50 per person Yes ___ No ___ # ___ \$ _____

Tour of Washington DC \$37.50 per person Yes ___ No ___ # ___ \$ _____

DEPOSIT - \$50/PERSON (Balance Due by August 1st): \$ _____ **PAID IN FULL:** _____

Registration includes: Everything on agenda except tours as listed above.

Registration must be received by August 25, 2004

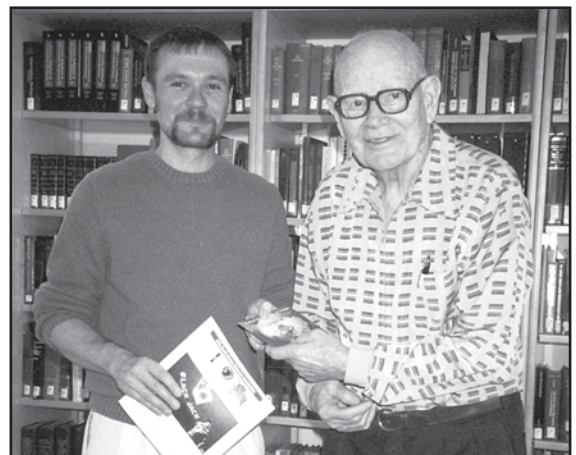
Send this form and all correspondence to:

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'THE ARMY IN YOUR ATTIC' AT THE HERITAGE MUSEUM & LIBRARY HAS OUR DATABASE

Greg Statler, Registrar at the General Stillwell Building, accepted the 44th BGVA's Database Disk from **Perry Morse**. At the Board Meeting held in Carlisle one year ago, Arlo Bartsch, did a presentation of the unbelievable amount of information that is held on the disk. Completion of the disk project is one of the 44th's great accomplishments. Placing it into the Library/Museum guarantees that it will be continuously available to researchers, family members and historians. When the Flying Eight Balls are only a memory, their deeds and sacrifices will not be forgotten.



Greg Statler and Perry Morse

44TH BGVA AWARDS, DECORATIONS & MEMORIALS

R. Lee Aston, Director

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS PRESENTED BY VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY AT WHITE HOUSE TO LT. BERNARD W. BAIL, 66th SQUADRON



Dr. Bernard W. Bail, former Lead Navigator, 66th Squadron, receiving the DSC medal from Vice President Richard B. Cheney in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, February 24, 2006.



Lee and Mary Aston represented the 44 BGVA at the White House DSC presentation with some of their children and grandchildren. Mary Aston is shown presenting a 44th BG glass logo suncatcher to the V.P. Gary Lee Aston, a 44th BGVA member, stands behind his father.

Sixty-two years late, on February 24, 2006, at the White House, former 2nd Lt. Bernard W. Bail, a Lead Radar Navigator, 66th Squadron, 44th Bomb Group, received the nation's second highest medal for his gallant and valorous actions above and beyond the call of duty on a bombing mission on June 5, 1944, the day before D-Day, the invasion of Europe. The target for the mission was a German V-1 / V-2 rocket launch site in the Boulogne-Sur-Mer area, France.

The June 5 mission turned out to be a Congressional Medal of Honor mission for the Command Pilot, Lt.Col. Leon Vance, leading the 44th Bomb Group bombing raid. On the second go-around to bomb the target, Col Vance's foot was shot off and he was in shock from loss of blood. Three of the Liberator bomber's engines were hit. The fuel line was severed to the fourth engine and high octane fuel was spewing about the flight deck necessitating cutting off the fourth engine. All flight power lost at the target at 23,000 feet altitude, and the first pilot, Captain Louis Mazure, was instantly killed. Lt. Bail placed his pants belt as a tourniquet around Vance's leg to stop the gushing flow of blood. The co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Earl Carper, put the bomber on automatic pilot to descend on a course to England which was only 18 minutes from the English Channel shores of England. The entire crew, except Lt. Bail and Col. Vance, bailed out over the Channel with England in sight. Only Lt. Bail remained to treat Col. Vance's leg but bailed out at the last moment over England leaving Col. Vance. The bomber was headed for an English village with a 500 lb. bomb still hung in the aircraft's bomb bay. Col Vance sufficiently recovered from shock to turn the bomber around and ditch in the English Channel thus avoiding killing English civilians. As the bomber landed in the Channel, it exploded. Miraculously, Col. Vance was blown clear of the bomber, survived, and was rescued by British Air Sea Rescue. Col. Vance was recommended for the CMOH. Recovering at the hospital, Col. Vance promised Lt. Bail that he would recommend him for a "very high medal" for saving his life. However, a

few weeks later as Col. Vance was being returned to the States aboard a hospital aircraft, the aircraft and all aboard were lost at sea between Greenland and New Foundland before he could recommend Lt. Bail for that "very high medal" he promised. Col. Vance was awarded the CMOH *post humusly*.

In 2005 Dr. Bail requested attorney Dr. R. Lee Aston of Elberton, Ga. and Director of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association to plead his case to the Air Force for that "very high medal" promised to him in 1944. Attorney Lee Aston prepared the Bail claim and successfully argued it to the Air Force winning the Distinguished Service Cross for Dr. Bail. Attorney Aston then made the arrangements for the DSC presentation by the Vice President at the White House on 24 February 2006.

Dr. Bail of Beverly Hills, CA, will be 86 years old in November and is still a practicing physician.



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

March 15, 2006

Dear Dr. Aston and Colleagues:

It was my great pleasure to meet with the veterans of the 44th Bomb Group last month. Your distinguished service to the nation is greatly appreciated. I am also grateful to you for giving me the stained glass piece with the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association logo on it as a memento of a wonderful visit.

You have my thanks and warmest good wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Cheney".

Dr. Robert L. Aston and Colleagues
44th Bomb Group Veterans Association
830 Cardinal Drive
Elberton, Georgia 30635-2606

LETTER FROM SHIPDHAM

Well, we Brits are always said to be pre-occupied with the weather, but for the moment that is with good reason. Summer has arrived at Shipdham, and it really is one of the old fashioned summers you knew when you were here in Norfolk. We get sun, a little cloud and for the last month or so, a little rain, usually at night. As long as we don't have to pay with some of the winters that hit the Shipdham area during some of the winters of the late 1940s, we'll be OK. Needless to say, we are getting to use your old runways a lot, and getting in some decent flying time.

The work to date on the 44th BG Museum is really bearing fruit, and it is starting to look like a real museum, as the support equipment is being taken away; and we can see what Peter Steel, the curator, and his small team has created. The 6 ft. high 'Flying 8 Ball' sign is soon to be fixed on the north wall of the museum building, so it should be visible from a long way off. The 44th Bomb Group Museum Library is now a separate room in the same building. It has only two books in it at the time of writing this; but by next week the hundreds of books we have been bought, donated, loaned or otherwise acquired, will be rounded up from their various storage places, and will be installed on the shelves. The offer of a couple of scale model B-24s from a North Pickenham enthusiast has been accepted, and we now have them in the library room. They really are superb. The model of Lemon Drop, your assembly ship, has been given a prominent place in the main room. However, in these days of GPS navigation, modern on-board radar and transponder location systems, I suspect we will have to elaborate a little to our visitors on the role the assembly ships played in the bombing missions of the 44th BG and the rest of the 2nd Air Division.

In my last letter I commented on the flying display season, which is now well under way. Here in the UK we recently had the major RAF Fly Past of Buckingham Palace to mark the Queen's 80th Birthday. Because we were right on the assembly route for some of the formation, flying was restricted from Shipdham for a couple of hours each day of the week, running up to the Big Day. But boy, was it worth it! You just can't fail to be impressed by a big ship formation passing overhead. OK. OK. I know you guys did this sort of thing virtually all day, every day when you were here; but formation flying on that grand scale is not so high on the training agendas these days; and we mere mortals on the ground do not get to see it that often... It was worth waiting for.

Our new runway was recently christened by a variety of aircraft, big, little, gliders and older style tail-draggers... and is now readily available for use. I had been calling it 130/310, but compass measurements look like it will be 140/320. No doubt someone with a really expensive GPS will come back with a heading to ten significant figures, but as that is the only runway within 45 degrees of that heading, I guess everyone will understand which I meant!!

Steve Adams, our UK representative, has a good friend, Paul Wilson, who has just completed a book on the 389th at Hethel, and that is selling well. As you know, the smaller books that I have been involved with on the 44th, the 389th and the 492nd/492st are all being received very well here in England. Steve's book is being considered for reprint, so you can see the flame of your memory is still burning as bright as ever here in Europe. The interest in what you guys did all those years ago is now carrying down to another generation. Long may that continue.

Peter

Peter Bodle is President of the Shipdham Aero Club. He can be contacted at peter@bodle.demon.co.uk. The Bodle/Adams booklet, "The 44th Bomb Group in Norwich" will be on sale at the 44th BG Reunion in Washington DC. The cost is \$5.00. If you wish a copy, call Ruth W. Davis-Morse at 717 846-8948.

INTERESTED IN ANOTHER LOOK AT THE UK?

Mary Aston invites the 44th BGVA to one 'Last Hurrah' in the environs of England, including the Shipdham Airbase, the 2AD Memorial Library in Norwich, and other points of interest in that wonderful island from which you once flew. Mary and Lee are working out a schedule, along with tentative dates. They will present this information at the 44th's General Meeting at the October 2006 Reunion in Washington.

Correspondence from friends in England indicates that they will welcome us as always. At the Airbase, major changes are taking place, all directed toward preservation of your history.

Even now, Mary would be grateful to hear from people who have a definite interest. You can call her at (706) 283-1337 or E-Mail leeaston@elberton.net.



THE EFFECTS OF WIENER NEUSTADT — STILL RESOUND

Luella Phelps (wife of the late 2nd. Lt. **Delmar Phelps**) is a school teacher who is determined that her students will know about the sacrifices of WWII. She bought a stack of back issues of the 8 Ball Tails for her school library, then a second stack for her grandson, Kevin White and another for her nephew, Jay Richardson.

Kevin's grandfather, Delmar, (66th Sq.) was flying as Co-Pilot on Fascinating Witch. According to the report of the pilot, **Richard W. Bridges**, A/C # 41-23811 had previously been grounded because the two inboard engines were using too much oil. However, Bridges believed that he could manage that problem, as it was only a ten hour flight.

Unfortunately, when the Group started its second climb somewhere over northern Italy or Yugoslavia, the battle-weary plane lost power and was not able to keep up with the Group. Later, when the Group leveled off, 2nd Lt. Bridges was able to slip back into his assigned position.

Shortly after 'Bombs Away', four Me 109's attacked the plane and set a fire in the Bomb Bay. With extra fuel aboard, it was time to bail out. Three members of the crew were KIA by the fighter attack; Phelps was one of the six that survived the bail-out, only to become POWs. Several months later, the pilot was able to escape from his prison in Hungary with the help of Tito's partisans. Others stayed in the German prison camp until the war was over.

To add to the frenzy of bailing out, while the flyers were coming down in their chutes, fighters flew directly toward them, then turned and flew away. It is assumed they were just wanted to look at American airmen.

Kevin and Jay are lucky to have someone teach them the price of freedom.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE 44TH BGVA FAMILY
FROM
ROBERT J. LEHNHAUSEN
2540 BENTON COURT, PEORIA, IL 61615

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

What a marvelous group of dear friends you are. You permitted me to serve as your president a few years ago. During that time I asked you for the voluntary contribution of money to permit the completion of the Master Database program. Your response was magnificent. The work was completed at the end of 2005, and each member of the BGVA was sent a copy of this valuable CD which is chock full of 44th history.

More recently I asked that you further support the memorializing of the 44th Bomb Group (H) by buying a copy of **Will Lundy's** "Roll of Honor and Casualties of the 44th Bomb Group". My plea was that you buy the book, not only for your own library, but consider making sure that copy of this historical treasure be placed in the library of your favorite college or university, or other centers of historical research, to assure that the courageous young patriots, with whom we flew or supported, are never forgotten.

Did you know that in the twenty nine months that the 44th flew against the Axis powers in WWII, we lost 859 of our brave young comrades, killed in action (KIA)? 186 of our B-24s were lost to combat and aerial operations. These are overwhelming figures. Will Lundy, in the ROH, has carefully researched and documented each of the Casualties.

One of the principal reasons that the 44th BGVA exists is to insure that the deeds and achievements of the men and planes of the 44th are never forgotten. Especially the sacrifice of life that resulted from fulfilling our mission. Will Lundy's revised and expanded ROH pays tribute to each of the men we lost. The book is an unusual collection of stories of true bravery and heroism...and tragic endings. It is easily worth the \$50 break-even cost, which includes shipping.

My sincere thanks to those of you who have already purchased the ROH. In fact, the initial printing has been sold out. Your enthusiastic response exceeded my expectations. Will has ordered a second printing, half of which has already been sold. This assures that the record of the 44th in WWII is, without doubt, the most thoroughly researched and documented of any Heavy Bomb Group in WWII. This is all because of your fantastic support. For those of you who have not yet placed your order, please do not delay. Send your order and your check to:

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

You will be pleased with this magnificent historical work. Read it, retain it for your library or consider donating it to you favorite library.

Bob Lehnhausen

Ed. Note: Bob Lehnhausen, one of the most beloved and respected members of the 44th BGVA, was recently honored in his hometown newspaper, Journal Star. The Memorial Day article noted his piloting skills and mentioned the day he ran out of fuel and had to tragically ditch in the Mediterranean Sea, resulting in the loss of five of his crew. He also lost his only brother, Edward, a pilot who was KIA in combat. Despite these painful times, Lt. Col. Lehnhausen rose to Commander of the 68th Sq. His leadership skills served him after the war when he became Mayor of Peoria, Illinois.



**FROM THE FILES OF THE LATE LT. CHARLES J. SELASKY
(Navigator on the *Suzy Q* on Ploesti Raid Flying with Col. Leon Johnson)**

**WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON**

20 August 1943

TO OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 201ST COMBAT WING OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE.

I have listened with greatest interest to the stirring accounts brought back to me of the details of the attack on the Roumanian oil refineries by heavy bombers of the Eighth and Ninth U. S. Air Forces. The destruction of these oil wells will be far reaching in its effect upon the German ability to carry on their operations. In fact, it might well be the "straw that broke the camel's back" and cause the dislocation of the German war effort. The dogged determination to reach and destroy each of those vital installations; and an utter disregard for personal safety, characterized the action of officers and men of your striking force and evokes my profound admiration.

The heroic accomplishments of the combat crews, and the splendid efforts of the members of the ground echelons who made the mission possible, are all deserving of the highest praise.

You were assigned the tremendous task of destroying in one day a target that could have been reached by surface forces only after many months of combat involving great losses both of men and materiel, and you carried your attack home in spite of the strongest kind of opposition built up by the Axis forces. Some of your comrades fell in the attack - others are now held as prisoners of war. Those of you who return to fight again must realize, as I do, that those men who gave their lives did so that others might live. The officers and men of the U. S. Army Air Forces all over the world take pride in your achievement.

H. H. ARNOLD
General, U. S. Army
Commanding General, Army Air Forces



Will Lundy's Roll of Honor is in Norwich, England, placed alongside the Roll of Honor in the 2nd Air Division's official listing of airmen lost in the War. Librarians can immediately look up the circumstances of any 44th's airman's death, when visitors come in to inquire. This new positioning of Will's book came about through the efforts of David Hastings.

**(Walter) Thomas Holmes, Jr. Lt. Col. USSAF Salutes
The Late Reginald H. (Bud) (Phil) Phillips, Lt. Col. USSAF**

Born 1/October/1919 - Folded Wings 3 April 2006

Phil and I were two of the original B-24 pilots of the 68th Squadron, 44th BG, trained at Barksdale Field, Shreveport, LA., early in 1942. He told me I was the first B-24 pilot with whom he flew. From Barksdale we were sent to Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, then on to Manchester, NH, where we checked out our new B-24s and prepared to fly the North Atlantic to report for duty in England. This was the first time I had seen the Northern Lights, and they were beautiful.

My bomber was named *Victory Ship*, but since Phil's plane developed a fuel leak and was sent back to Hershey, PA for repairs, his crew gave it the name of *Lemon Drop*! *Lemon Drop* was one of the few survivors at War's end. In these early days, so many of our planes were shot down, we doubted we would complete our requisite 25 missions.

Two of our most dangerous raids we will never forget: the Kiel Raid, May 14, 1943, and the well-documented low-level raid on Ploesti oil fields, August 1, 1943. One-third of the participating bombers were lost on that day.

At Kiel, which I consider my worst experience, we encountered some 125-150 German fighters for 5½ hours on a 7½ hour mission. Returning from this raid, Phil and I saw a plane from another group in dire straits with smoke pouring from two engines. Thinking as one, we escorted him, one on each wing, across the North Sea. When the crippled plane veered too close to Holland, we picked up two Folke-Wulf 190's and five Messerschmitt 210's. We survived a running battle to the coast of England, shooting down five of the seven enemy planes.

The *Victory Ship* suffered severe damage. Hit in the middle of the bomb bay, its

hydraulic system was knocked out; and with no flaps and no brakes, we had to crank the gear down manually, resulting in a very dangerous and difficult landing.

The Ploesti raid was even worse. Phil said it best when he commented: "I have been through and out of the mouth of hell!" Everybody agreed. Fittingly and thankfully, this was our last raid.

Both of these raids earned Presidential Citations for our Group. Phil was one of the most decorated pilots of WWII, many times cited for bravery and the recipient of the second to the highest medal award.

When Phil married Dorothy Jane (Dusty) Dustin in August, 1945, in Oklahoma City, I was privileged to serve him as best man. They were married for nearly 57 years and had three children, two of whom survive: Richard Phillips of Tulsa and Beth Warwick of Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Through all these years our families stayed in close contact frequently visiting and vacationing together. In the last few months, as Phil's health deteriorated, our communication was confined to the telephone. I talked with him the day before his death. The two of us were as close as any brothers, and for the course of our friendship, we never shared a cross word.

My magnificent friend, Phil, has now made his final flight and the best landing he could possibly make.

Tom

Victory Ship was hit on the crew's 4th mission to Abbeville. Holmes sustained a head injury and was knocked unconscious. He recovered and brought the plane back to Shipdham.



**FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
THESE FIGURES THAT TELL THE STORY
(CREWS SENT TO REPLACE LOSSES)**

Replacement crews, March 19435
Two months later, June 194320
Two months later, August 194316
Two months later, October 194320
November, transferred from 466th BG2
December17
February 194421
July 194440
August 1944, transferred from 492nd24

Most of these figures represent only the larger replacements. New crews were arriving every month because, as Major **Howard Moore** said, "The Luftwaffe was wiping us out." Where were the missions going? To Dunkirk, Holland, St. Nazaire, Wilhelmshaven, Rouen, Vegesack, Kiel and other strategic sites. Our men were flying unescorted daytime missions and the losses were huge.

When all that was going on, the War was raging on many fronts. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at Casablanca to plan the Allied strategy. On the German side, Admiral Karl Donitz took command of the German Navy and General Paulus surrendered the German 6th Army at Stalingrad.

Imagine this: Der Fuhrer believed that the Hitler Youth would outdo the American Boy Scouts in battle!

44TH BOMB GROUP PX

Flying 8 Ball Golf Shirts	\$25.00 + \$3.00 Postage
Flying 8 Ball Caps (Indicate Squadron).....	\$15.00 + \$2.00 Postage
Flying 8 Ball Squadron Pins (Indicate Squadron)	\$5.00 + \$.50 Postage
Blue Liberator Shirts (Light Blue with B-24 designs).....	\$30.00 + \$3.00 Postage
44th Bumper Stickers.....	\$2.00 (Postage Incl.)

Order From: Sam Miceli

(Make check payable to Sam Miceli)

6398 Dawson Blvd., Mentor, Ohio 44060-3648

Please Note: The felt patches which were previously advertised are no longer available.

Sam Miceli and I talked about all the aches and pains that go with reaching this 'mature' time of life (the 80's). Sam said, "It's supposed to be the Golden Years. In truth, it is all FOOL'S GOLD!!!" How true!

Donald Higgins, nephew of S/Sgt. **Hartwell J. Higgins**, invites members of the 44th BGVA to a salute to veterans in Gibsonville, North Carolina. The event will coincide with the arrival of the Collings B-24, The Dragon and Its Tail, October 20-23. He is planning a Mission Briefing in a huge tent located in back of a Bread & Breakfast that dates back to the 1900s.

(Gibsonville is located 30 minutes from the Greensburg Airport and one hour from Raleigh.)

If you are interested in joining this patriotic, foot-tapping party, contact Donald at:

Donboy37@earthlink.net

S/Sgt. Hartwell Higgins was on Pappy's Chillun (68th Sq.) on 21 April 1944. The mission was recalled because of severe icy conditions. Apparently ice formed on the A/C; and at 14,000 feet it went into a severe spin and turned over on its back. Due to the violent maneuvering, the right wing and tail tore off. The pilot, Forrest Havens and Co-Pilot, Leon Del Grande were flung free. They survived, but all other members of the crew were KIA.

Pappy's Chillun was originally assigned to the 486th BG at Sudbury, and was named Turnip Termite. It was renamed when assigned to the 44th BG.

LOOKING UP WHEN THE PLANES CAME TO MUNICH

"We knew they were coming because the ground trembled under our feet," Norman Dauerer of Hopewell Junction, New York recalled. "I was seven years old, and I can still remember that it shook so hard, it made my stomach shake; and after a while, my stomach began to ache from all the shaking.

"The planes followed the Munchen/Nurnberg Railroad line. 1,800 B-24s flew over us, headed for Munich. First we felt the earth shake; then we heard the roar; after that we saw the planes."

Dauerer's father had come to America to live before Hitler rose to power. To help his relatives in Germany, he returned

for a visit and the officials took his passport, then drafted him. Norman and his mother joined family members on a farm outside of town, and were present when the 106th Cavalry Group took over the town.

The GI's were so considerate of the German family, a bond was established that continues to this day. When the War was over, the Dauerer family was able to return to America. Norman got a scholarship to pay for his education. He attends veteran gatherings and publishes a magazine about WWII. He goes to great lengths to extol the virtues of the 106 Cavalry, 60 years later, who are still his dear friends.

FOR SALE

13" Diam. Colored glass logo of Flying 8 Ball

\$85.00 + \$15 for UPS Shipping

Proceeds go to 44th BGVA

Place order with Mary Aston (706 283-1337)

Mail check to

830 Cardinal Dr., Elberton, GA 30635

**Please note: The 8 Ball Tails is running a
'LOST AND FOUND' Column.
What's lost? A LOT OF OUR MEMBERS**

The 8 Ball Tails is sent by Bulk Mail. If the member has moved or the zip code has changed, it is discarded, and we have no way of knowing that the member did not receive the magazine. This is especially troubling with Life Members, as they do not receive annual invoices. So.....please check this list, and if you know of the circumstances of a person on the list-change of address, folded wings or any other information, let us know. We are a family. We can't afford to lose anybody. Notify Ruth Morse of changes. See inside cover for address and phone number.

Marjorie T. Austin, Steamboat Springs, Colorado
Clarence Baker, Portland, Maine
Kathleen (Mikoloski) Cataldo, Holmdel, NJ
John B. Conrad, Lexington, KY
John J. Dayberry, Salisbury, NC
George H. Flynn, Pittsfield, MA
Stewart H. Grove, Hutchinson, Kansas
Earl J. Guy, Glendale, AZ
H. William Holmes, Norwich NR6 7RQ
Dean W. Johnson, Gary, Indiana
Eric A. King, Hingham-Norwich-Norfolk, England
Curtis Kinion, West Plains, MO
Harry Koester, Mechanicsburg, PA
Raymond J. Lacombe, Slidell, PA
Morriss W. Larkin, Delray Beach, FL
Robert C. Ledger, Farnham Surrey, England Gu98RB
James L. Livingston, Ruskin, Florida
William Maynor, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Charles McPherson, Tucson, Arizona
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David Mundell, Tamuning, Georgia
Keith Nutter, Brooksville, Florida
Elvin D. Ours, Frederick, Maryland
John Page, Norwich, Norfolk, UK NR14 7LZ
Louis Parker, Jr., Lawrenceville, NJ
Archie M. Solatka, Tacoma, Washington
Charley Strange, Chicago, Illinois
Heath Strange, Lubbock, Texas
Erwin Stromhmaier, Oakland, California
Col. William Barrett Taylor, Arlington, Virginia
Charles W. Temple, Newpane, Vermont
Nancy Van Epps, Pensacola, Florida
Morton Zahler, Pompano Beach, Florida

GOING FOR THE TOGO

15 February 1943.

The target for this hurried afternoon mission was a German Raider thought to be the Togo, which was found on the morning reconnaissance flight. It was thought that the ship was ready to slip out at any time to raid Allied shipping. Crews were hurriedly called and briefed, with 17 planes of the 44th BG soon airborne. They rendezvoused with aircraft of the 329th Squadron, 93rd BG, and were led by the 67th Squadron's Captain **Arthur Cullen** and the C.O. of the 67th Squadron, Major **Donald W.**

MacDonald, as the formation's Command Pilot. Two aircraft were lost. A third crash-landed on the beach south of Ramsgate.

The bomb run was exceptionally long in order to make certain of scoring hits, as this target required bombing of the utmost precision and accuracy. At approximately 1540 hours, on final approach to target, the Germans placed very accurate flak bursts on the formation. Immediately after releasing bombs, leading A/C #783 was hit very hard by flak. #2 engine burst into flame and #3 was shot completely out of the wing. Captain Cullen reported, "We were on the bomb run. The target was in view. I flew P&I about 10 seconds, and he made a big correction to the right about 8 to 10 degrees. We flew that about 10 seconds and I saw the bomb release light go on - and then everything flew to bits. It must have been a direct hit with 88 mm under the flight deck at about the nose wheel section. It stunned me for a while, and when I could think reasonably, I looked around to see that we were in a dive, no ships were in sight, no roof on the cabin - just the windshield; numbers 2 & 3 were smoking and the cowling was blown off both engines and very little control on the wheel. I couldn't try the rudder because my leg was broken.

When I looked over at Major Mac (**Donald W. MacDonald**), he made motions to bail out. I then noticed he had a serious wound in his stomach. By this time we quit fooling with the airplane, as she was on her

right side and going down. Major Mac unstrapped his belt and with lots of effort on his part (it must have been agony for him) and a little pushing on my part, he went through the roof - or rather where the roof used to be. He got down all right, but died on the operating table of a German Luftwaffe hospital in France. After Mac left, I went, but hit the tail of the ship, broke my leg in another place, and also my arm. I heard from the Germans that **John Mackey** (Navigator) was killed in the airplane."

Sgt. **David H. Woo**, Radio Operator added: "On that day I had three relief men in the rear of the plane, so I was more or less in charge of making sure they had their chutes on properly. We had just made our bomb run and dropped our bombs when I felt a jolt and a sudden quietness. We were hit!! I called the Captain on the intercom for orders, but no reply. So I thought I had better get out. At least three times I tried to crawl out the waist window, but each time I was thrown back. The next thing I remember when I came to, I was in the open. I pulled my ripcord. I looked up in the sky and saw only pieces of our plane, but no chutes. So I must have been the last one to come down. I landed in the heart of downtown Dunkirk, and there must have been a whole German Army waiting for me."

Sgt. **Charles Arnold** normally flew with "Pappy" Hall, but was called in to substitute this day as a waist gunner. "It was a beautiful day for flying! Approaching the target, flak was not too heavy. Then I heard a muffled explosion and a dull thud - was it front or belly? Our plane shuddered but flew straight and level for a few seconds, then flipped over on its right wing and started spinning. The radio was out; everything loose was flying around. Jesse, David and I were all tangled up. (**Jesse Norwood**, Gunner; **David Woo**, Asst. Radio Operator) I knew that we had had it. I tried to get out of the waist window, but got hung up

...continued on page 19

between the gun mount and window frame, so Jesse went out the other window. As I was struggling to get free, I saw someone from the front fly past me. I just got a glimpse of yellow "Mae West" and black hair, so I could not identify. I just couldn't see that much in just a flash.

"Finally I worked myself free and got out to fall free of the plane. My chute opened and I landed in the village of Dunkirk, right on top of a high barn. I got free of my harness and then fell off the roof into a pile of fresh cow manure!! Quickly a German Field Artillery Sergeant picked me up. Woo, Norwood and I were taken to Stalag Luft 8B & 7A. I escaped three times, was caught quickly the first two; but my third was successful, and I came back through Russia.

"Just before the takeoff, Capt. Cullen's regular waist gunner (**Cecil D. Goddard**) got clearance for flying by Dr. Hymie and wanted to take my place, and for me to fly with Lt. **Rufus Oliphant**; but since I had already gotten my gear aboard, I asked to stay aboard; and he flew with Oliphant on our right wing.

After we got shot down, I thought, "Heck! I should have flown with Lt. Oliphant and I'd probably be back at the base or in some English Pub now. Later I heard Oliphant's ship was shot down with no survivors."

Cullen's craft was *Betty Anne/Gallopin Ghost*. Seven members of the crew were KIA: **Donald MacDonald** (CP); **John Mackey**, Navigator; **Paul Caldwell**, Bombardier; **Albert Emery**, Engineer and **Samuel Weiser**, Radio Operator

Arthur Cullen became POW, was wounded and repatriated; **David Woo** and **Jesse Norwood** were POW; **Charles Arnold** was POW, escaped and returned.

The *Rufus Oliphant* crew on *Boardwalk Flyer* were all KIA.

From the 68th Squadron, the **Thomas Cramer** crew on *The Captain and His Kids* crash landed; three bailed out and were KIA; eight survived the crash; three of the survivors were later KIA.

On the left side of this picture by Jerry Folsom is a flak explosion. Flying as Co-Pilot on the **George Beiber** crew, Folsom snapped this picture at the moment the explosion occurred, intending only to capture the bomb release.



He believes that the purpose of this explosion was to ascertain the altitude of the planes for the anti-aircraft guns. (A flak explosion was referred to as a German Scarecrow. Many pieces of black metal would be discharged, endangering any plane in its vicinity.)

**MISS DIANNE (67th Sq.)
ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE OF THE FORTS
(As reported by Stars & Stripes, February 18, 1943)**

These were the stories that came out of the homecoming of Eighth Air Force bombers that returned to their bases in Britain today after dumping hundreds of tons of explosives on St. Nazaire, one of the biggest Nazi U-Boat bases in a daylight raid. For the Liberators it was their second raid in 19 hours, following Monday's visit to Dunkirk.

Good-naturedly ribbing the Forts, the Navigator of *Miss Dianne*", a Liberator piloted by Captain **Clyde Price**, of San Antonio, challenged the B-17s to match their record of five enemy planes shot down.

The Navigator, 2nd Lt. **Jacob A. Augenstene, Jr.**, of Pittsburgh, recounted the engagements:

"As we were flying in the tail-end formations, the Germans would attack the Fortresses flying ahead and below us from the front, circle around, and then come to us from behind.

"The first plane that we got," Lt. Augenstene continued, "was blasted from 200 yards away, exploded and went all to pieces in the air. The second stalled when it was hit, plummeted straight into the clouds below, leaving a trail of smoke behind."

Dalton L. Snell, of Marked Tree, Arkansas, Top Turret Gunner; and Sgt. **Iris C. Wyer, Jr.** Waist Gunner from Clarksburg, Virginia, each got two of *Miss Dianne's* victims. Sgt. **Lewis J. Fleshman**, of Virginia, Tail Turret Gunner, got the fifth.

Fleshman's bullseye was scored on a plane that made the fatal mistake of exposing a vulnerable underside as it turned.

The rest of Captain Price's crew were 2nd. Lt. **Robert E. Forrest** of Columbus, Ohio, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. **Morton P. Gross**, of Denver, Colorado, Bombardier; Sgts. **Kenneth Laughton** of Pine Grove, California, Radio Operator; **Kenneth L. Erhard**, Clearfield, Pennsylvania, Waist Gunner; and **Earl W. Holton**, Mulliken, Michigan, Rear Hatch Gunner.

Crew Chief of *Miss Dianne* was M/Sgt. George Baccash.

On 8 March 1943 Miss Dianne went down at Rouen, four missions after answering the challenge of the Fortresses at St. Nazaire. Eight members of the crew were KIA; 3 became POW.



ON THE HOME FRONT
Aluminum Cans collected in Johnstown, Pennsylvania for the war effort.

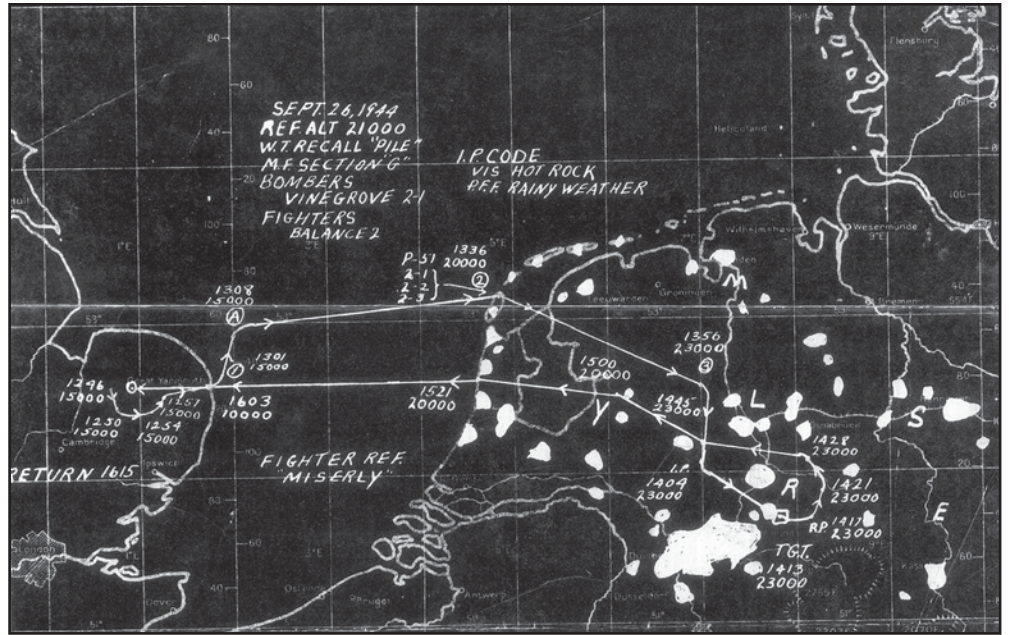


MAIL & E-MAIL



FLAK MAP

Jerry Folsom sent this Flak Map. It is labeled September 26, 1944. **Webb Todd** lists the mission to Hamm, Germany on that date. Can anybody interpret the meaning of the notations on this map?



Memories of 2nd Lt. **Charles Titkemeyer**, (Navigator, 66th Sq.) from the Database: "November 5, 1943, we bombed Munster, Germany. This was the first time we had fighter protection, and it greatly reduced losses.

"January 5, 1944, led raid on Kiel with Col. **Culbertson** as Command Pilot. We were out of position at target, so he ordered us to turn & bomb target directly into the wind. We dropped bombs directly on target, but at that slow speed, we all aged ten years." (After the War, Titkemeyer became a veterinarian.)

Steve Adams, our UK Representative, laid the flowers for the 44th BG at Madingley on Remembrance Sunday. He reported, "This is an Honor for me to do this for all the Heroes of the 44th BG who paid the highest price for the freedom I enjoy, and who some would try and deny me this God-given right." The service ended with the missing man formation, followed by a lone Spitfire, a Dakota, for the Airborne and finally a B-17.

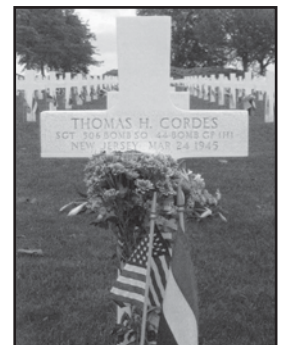
THE OLD CONTROL TOWER FALLING APART BUT STILL A TREASURE

Doug Genge, owner/operator of the Monster Cranes, whose business is next to the

Tower at Shipdham, could not save the old edifice; but nevertheless, he moved some of his heavy metal structure material close to the tower, protecting it, along with the excellent stone memorial that **Lee Aston** made and installed on the east wall.

Doug continues to monitor all activities around the Tower. He keeps the Roll of Honor in his office, making it available to anyone who visits and seeks information about the activities that went on there when the 44th BG was flying out, winning the War, 60 years ago.

Steven Oudshoorn of Holland sent this picture to Susan Alexander, niece of **Thomas Cordes**, a gunner on *Southern Comfort III*. This A/C was lost on the low level mission to Wesel, Germany on 24 March 1945. Two members of the crew survived, **Bob Vance & Louis DeBlasio**.



The Dutch people honor Americans who died, liberating their country. Cordes is buried at the American Cemetery at Margarten.

Lester Arms wrote this to **Will Lundy**, 13 September 1986: "I went overseas in April 1944 as Group Bombardier with the 492nd BG. Due to excessive losses, we ceased as a bomb group in August 1944. (530 KIA, 58 MIA) after 10 weeks of operation.

"I was on one of the ten crews reassigned to the 44th. We had flown 9 missions with the 492nd, and got 20 with the 44th. I was on (the late) **Joe Testa's** crew. Col. **Eugene Snively** was Command Pilot and we were the Lead Squadron on a memorable mission to Dresden, 16th January 1945.

"We were on the bomb run and target in the bomb sight when we got hit in #2 engine. Fire was past the waist gunner and the prop was vibrating badly. I salvoed the bombs as Captain Testa dove to 16,000 feet. The fire went out, but the terrific vibration continued. As we prepared to bail out, the engine froze and the prop was flat, causing a drag. Believe me, it is a lonesome feeling, seeing the bomber stream leaving us, along with the escort fighters. Here we were - 600 miles from our base and 400 miles from our lines. We soon lost #4 engine and had to lighten the plane. Out went our guns, ammo, bomb-sight, flak vests, helmets and anything we could throw out. The weather was unusually clear; we could see horizon to horizon. For some unknown reason, no fighters came up to do us in.

"Before reaching the Rhine, we lost another engine, but let it windmill for what good it might do.

"Knowing the French Army had taken Strasbourg and the Battle of Hagenau Forest was still going on, we crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg, trying to make Nancy. We were flying at about 10,000 feet; then an Ack Ack shell went through the wing between #3 engine and the fuselage. That emptied our gas tanks so we bailed out in the Alsace Lorraine area in the 44th Infantry Division territory. For some reason, a fighter pilot reported to our group that he saw us go all the way down when we dove to put out the fire. So, when we showed up about a week later in a C-47, it

came as a surprise to the group."

Captain Arms continued his report: "We got in the 29 of the 30 required missions. Our plane was taken by the SQ Staff for the flight home. We managed to change 3 engines in the war-weary plane they gave us. We would have changed all 4, but could only find 3. We were the last scheduled to leave for the States. The old plane had a coating of oil in the port side due to the bad engine, but we made it."

The Testa crew flew the last mission of the 44th, to Hallien, Austria 25 April 1945.

In the Spring 2000 Issue of the 8 Ball Tails, 1st. Lt. **Robert Dubowsky** (Co-Pilot) reported on this same mission. His recollections of the bomb run and bail-out paralleled Capt. Arms report. This 66th Sq. crew was flying in a 68th Sq. A/C. All members bailed out safely, but four sustained injuries: Capt. Testa, Lt. Dubowsky, T/Sgt. **Edward Sledghill**, Radio Operator/Gunner and **Robert Frady**, Left Waist Gunner.

When #42-50660 limped to unoccupied France and could go no farther, the crew bailed out. Before departing, Capt. Snively threw his '50 Mission Hat back into the plane. Miraculously, the plane went down but did not burn. A member of **Roy Owen's** crew retrieved the hat and returned it to its surprised owner.

"I lost my hat on that mission, also," Dubowsky recalled. "The folks in the 95th Evacuation Hospital in France (in the town of Saverne) where we stayed for two days were great. They gave me a hat and treated us all just fine. I gave my leather flying boots to one of the doctors."

*On that same day, Judy's Buggy, piloted by 2nd. Lt. **Howard Hinman** (67th Sq.) was hit by Flak and crashed near Metz. Two men were injured. The plane was salvaged.*

*On returning to Shipdham, Hellza Droppin', piloted by 2nd. Lt. **Gerald Lindsay** was abandoned due to fog. The crew bailed out; seven were injured. The plane was set on autopilot and presumably, crashed in the North Sea.*





Frank Scheaffer found the identities of the men on the picture on page 21 of the Spring 8 BTs. The site was at Marquis de la hue des Meuliers near Montmoat France. These were Allied Airmen who had been evading capture by German troops. The American was a B-17 Co-pilot from the 452nd Bomb Group. His crew went down on their first mission, 29 May 1944 on a mission to Leipzig. Also on the picture are a Canadian and an English airman. Others were members of the FFI (French Forces of the Interior).

The members of the FFI saved many of our men; and at great personal risk, kept the British & Americans apprised of the activities of the enemy. This information was a critical when the Invasion began on D-Day.



From Billy Finn to Will Lundy:

"Greetings from Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, Ireland. Very interested in the site (at Ballyshannon). My main interest concerns **Arthur H. Dittmer** who was involved in TWO Liberator plane crashes, one in Ballyshannon (19th June 1944) and one over Langenhagen, Germany (24th August 1944). On both occasions he was pilot. Our local history group, *Historic Ballyshannon*, honoured the crew of the B-24 Liberator which crash landed due to lack of fuel near Ballyshannon. Arthur Dittmer survived, while two of the crew of 10 died. Amazingly, he was pilot of a plane which came down near Langenhagen 2 months later.

The crew parachuted out, but apparently Arthur was shot dead by civilians before the military arrived. Most of the rest survived, and another crew member, **Arthur Grueber**, lived to relate the tale. Four of the crew who came

down in Germany were also on the Ballyshannon Liberator. Our historic group placed a memorial stone on the site last year, and the Deputy American Ambassador to Ireland, Jon Benton attended. Little did we know that Arthur Dittmer died 1 month after the Ballyshannon crash. (Finn discovered this on the 44th BG Web Site)

We would appreciate any assistance that you might offer regarding contacting any of the relatives. We would like them to know that he has been honored on a memorial stone in Ireland. E-Mail; billfin@oceanfree.net



From the Legacy Pages, **William S. Aldridge's** Claim to Fame: "I was Operations Officer of the 67th Squadron. On 24 July 1944 it was the 2nd Air Division's turn to lead the 8th AAF; 14th Bomb Wing's turn to lead the 2nd AD ; 44th BG's turn to lead the 14th Bomb Wing & the 67th 's turn to lead the 44th BG. I was advised by my CO (**William R. Cameron**) that I would be leading the whole show. The Mission was saturation bombing of the German Army at Saint Lo.

Here is my claim to fame: I led the largest bomber formation that was ever assembled to bomb one target (approximately 1500 to 1600 B-24s and B-17s.) We flew the mission, but due to cloud cover over the target, we were unable to bomb. I flew the mission again the next day; and again, was Lead Aircraft Commander for the 8th AAF.

Aldridge can claim fame for another famous mission nine months earlier -to Wiener-Neustadt 1 October 1943. "My crew joined the 67th at Bengazi (a few days after Ploesti). We did not fly a single mission out of Bengazi. I cannot forget our second trip to Africa, that 'milk run' to Weiner-Neustadt. Well, the ol' 44th BG got the hell-shot-out-of it on that little ol' milk-run. My crew was flying *'Earthquake (McGoon)'* and I was lucky enough to make it back as far as Italy on 2 _ engines (no hydraulic system, etc.) I left *Earthquake* on the Salerno beachhead buried in the mud. That was my crew's roughest mission.



WILL SEZ

I want to take advantage of this column to get a message to those of you who have ordered our *Roll of Honor & Casualties* and have not yet received it.

Thanks to the great letter that **Bob Lehnhausen** wrote and mailed to many of you, the response was overwhelming. I not only could not keep up with your orders; my supply of books on hand quickly sold out! I immediately requested a reprint of 100 more books, but the printers had a backlog and have just finished printing the new order. Unfortunately, the printing company is in Massachusetts, so delivery to California will be taking a week or so.

In the meantime, I have made my annual 'migration' to my summer cabin here in the High Sierras, so will be mailing them out from here; and unfortunately, mail service is slow, at best. But rest assured that I will be packaging and mailing them as quickly as I can. If you wish to contact me for any reason, my phone number and address is at the bottom of this column. The other important business regarding the 44th BG is the arrival of a representative from the Army Educational Center at Carlisle, PA, to my home in Cool. He quickly packaged most of my 44th BG collection of data, books and photos. After several hours, we loaded about 15 large boxes onto his pickup and delivered them to the local Post Office in Cool.

Yesterday, thanks to Ruth Morse, I learned that all of those boxes arrived safely at the Army Educational facilities near Carlisle, PA where they are being cataloged and will be placed in an area specifically

assigned for it all. Although my 'war room' looks rather depleted, I kept several items -- loose photos (boxes of them), many newsletters from several sources, microfilm, etc.-- until it can be determined whether they can be utilized at Carlisle.

I also retained most of **William (Bill) Cameron's** letters, writings, photos and his 'Journal', so that later I can try to compile the individual personal accounts of our airmen who flew the famous Ploesti mission. **Webb Todd** and **Norman Kiefer**, our historians for the 68th and 56th Squadrons respectfully, have included much data about that mission in their Squadron books. However, that mission is so important to our history, it seems fitting to combine it all in one story. Bill Cameron had attempted to do the same thing in his revised 'Journal', so it is important in my view at least) to place it all into our Master Database and/or in a booklet. I hope to make a dedicated effort on this project this summer.

So, if any of you have recollections, stories or whatever concerning the Ploesti project, and would like to have it included, please send it to me at my Bridgeport address, written above. PLEASE DO THIS. We must make every effort to save YOUR stories **NOW**.

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





FOLDED WINGS

*And so the day drops by; the horizon grows
The fading sun, and we stand struck in grief,
Failing to find our haven of relief-*

Frederick Goddard Tuckerman

LT. GUY, EARL #20496 66th Sq. 1st Guy was a pilot, and was credited with two missions, flying with the **Thomas Harrocks** crew as an observer. His first mission, 26 November 1944, on Jersey Jerk was to Bielefeld, Germany, bombing a Railroad Viaduct. His second mission, 30 November 1944, was to the Marshalling Yards at Neunkirchen. He was flying in *Southern Comfort III*.

HAULMAN, CLEMENT # 20582 506 Sq. 7 May 2006 For reasons unknown, Haulman's record is not in the Database. However, his obituary from the Gainesville, Florida newspaper states that he attended the USAF Institute of Technology, later, post graduate work at the University of Maryland, Tulane University and the University of New Orleans. He was certified as a Testing Engineer by the USAF. He served over thirty years of active and reserve duty in the Air Force. According to the newspaper account, during WWII, he flew both B-17 and B-24s. He spent 14 years in Research & Development as a Testing Engineer at Wright Patterson AF Base in Dayton, Ohio.

Members of the 44th BG might remember him at the Reunion in Barksdale, where he was highly visible in his still-fitting WWII uniform with all his medals. The reason his history is not in the Database is troubling. It can be assumed that he reached the rank of 2nd or 1st Lieutenant.

HULBERT, KENNETH #20751 67th Sq. 2 June 2004 T/Sgt. Hulbert was a Radio Operator/Gunner on the crew of **Leslie Lee, Jr.** On one occasion he flew with the **Raymond Maynard** crew. He flew 32 missions on *Fearless Fosdick, Three Kisses for Luck, Limpin' Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose, Mi Akin Ass, Old Iron Corset, Miss Marion, Missouri Belle/Missouri Sue* and *Lady Fifi Nella*. His first mission was 31 December 1944; his last was 25 April 1945, which was the last mission flown by the 44th. On this day the American and Soviet troops met at the Elbe River.

LOWE, NELSON #21143 67th Sq. 26 January 2006 S/Sgt. Lowe was a Waist Gunner on the **Jack M. Hyland** crew. He flew 38 missions, the first on 7 July 1944 at a time when the 44th was wiping out railroads, air craft factories and communication centers in Occupied France, Holland and the German heartland. The Hyland crew flew in many unnamed planes, also in *Old Iron Corset, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle, Ffifinella, Three Kisses for Luck, Mi Akin Ass, Limpin' Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose, Fearless Fosdick* and *Heaven Can Wait II*. Lowe's last mission was 17 October 1944.



FOLDED WINGS

MORRISON, HAROLD C. #21418 66 Sq. Information of his death came to the 44th with a returned envelope labeled 'Expired.' 1st Lt. Morrison served first as a Co-Pilot with **Walter T. Milliner**. His first mission was to Berlin 8 March 1944. After two missions he was given his own crew, and his first mission as Pilot was to Bernberg. On one mission he flew with Frank Davido as Command Pilot. The Morrison crew flew in such notable A/C as *Myrtle the Fertile Turtle; The Banana Barge, Patsy Ann II, Gipsy Queen, Northern Lass* and *Any Gum Chum*. Their last mission, # 36, was on 4 July 1944.

MULL, FRANK S. #21446 68th Sq. 3 March 2006. Mull succumbed to cancer, as stated in a note from his wife sent to his buddy **Wendell Drennan** and relayed to **Ivo DiPiero**. According to **Bob Lehnhausen**, Mull, Drennan and DiPiero were all members of the 68th Armament section. He remembered that 'all three were exceptional in their skills, exemplifying the old fable about birds of a feather.' As CO of the 68th, Lehnhausen expressed pride in these three men who were so proficient in their assigned duties.

NABORS, WILLIAM H. 21475 67th Sq. Date unknown. S/Sgt. Nabors was a Tail Gunner on the **James Perry** crew. He flew four of his five missions in *Raggedy Ann II*, his first on 20 December 1943. His second mission was to Escalles sur Buche, an effort to wipe out the V1 Missiles that were targeting London. Nabor's last mission was to Berlin on 6 March 1944.



PECK, FRANCIS J. # 34612 2 June 2006 T/Sgt. Peck was a Radio Operator on the **Newton Condray** crew. His first mission was 16 August 1944. At that time the Allied troops had broken out of the Normandy Beaches and were on a steady eastward movement. Staying ahead of the troops, the Condray crew were bombing strategic sites in Germany, limiting troop movements and slowing the production of war materials. Except for one low level supply drop in Holland, all other missions were flown into the heart of Germany.

The crew flew their thirty-four missions in *Fearless Fosdick, Mi Akin Ass, Lady Fifi Nella* and several unnamed planes. Their last mission was March 12, 1945.

Peck and his wife Donna resided in Spokane Washington. He became a detective in the Spokane police department, later spending ten years working in the Public Defender's Office. The couple had two children, Karen & Michael.

PECKA, WILBUR J. #21630 2nd. Lt. Wilbur Pecka was a navigator, first on the **Richard O'Neill** crew; later he flew with **Leroy Hansen**. Pecka flew three missions, first on *Poop Deck Pappy, The Shark* and *Bad Penny*. His first mission was 3 November 1943; his last, ten days later on a mission to a Port & Storage Facility in Bremen, Germany.

Tragically, it was the first combat flight for the Hansen crew. The weather was severe and the fighters were fierce. First the #4 engine was damaged, needing it to be feathered. Nevertheless, the plane made it through the target. On the homeward journey, a flak burst destroyed #4 engine and damaged #2. Unable to make it across the Channel, Hansen turned back to Holland and was able to safely belly-land in a canal. Immediately the crew became German prisoners.



FOLDED WINGS

PHILLIPS, REGINALD (PHIL) #23274 68th Sq. 3 April 2006 Lt. Col. Phillips flew seven submarine patrols before receiving his overseas assignment. In 1942 he flew *Lemon Drop* to Shipdham, arriving at a time when planes were being shot down at an alarming rate. His first mission was on 14 November 1942. Most of his 32 missions were in *Lemon Drop*, but he also flew in *Natchez Belle*, *The Avenger* and *Eager Eve/Hag Mag/TheMoth Ball Queen*. Phillips was among the group that flew to North Africa, and became part of the force that cleared the way for the invasion of Sicily. He was among the raiders on the Ploesti mission. Phillips left the 44th for the start of the 14th Combat Wing as Assistant Operation Officer; later Operation Officer. He returned to the states September 1944. Phillips became CO of the 206 Base Unit, at Almagordo, NM. He finished in AAF Board at Orlando, FL.

Bob Lehnhausen remembers Phillips as a very handsome, quiet, very laid back, intense pilot who demonstrated all the desirable qualities of a no nonsense bomber pilot. He was the original pilot of *Lemon Drop #699*, with the original call letter of "P". **Charlie Pigg** was the dedicated Master Sergeant who crewed the *Lemon Drop*. Lehnhausen remembers the warmth between the pilot and his maintenance man, Charlie Pigg.

After the war Phillips graduated from Purdue University. At various times he was a cattle buyer for Wilson & Co., was active in farming, insurance and real estate. He and his wife Dorothy (Dustin) lived in Oklahoma. They had two sons, one daughter and five grandchildren.



SIMONS, DAVID #22043 4 March 2005 506 Sq. Captain David Simons was a Co-Pilot on the **Richard Parker** crew. Their first mission was on 10 October 1943. Most of their flights were in *Peep Sight*, but also in *Sad Sack II*, *Lucky Strike*, *Sky Queen* and *Gallavantin' Gal*. Simons flew with Capt. **Jay Smith** and Capt. **George Insley** at different times.

On 5 November 1943, on a mission to Munster, Germany, targeting a railroad junction, the bomber group was attacked by a large number of FW 190s. *Peep Sight* was hit and all but one member of the crew were wounded. Fortunately, the pilot's wounds were slight; and although he could not stay in the formation, he was able to bring the A/C back and crash land at Shipdham.

After fifteen missions with the 44th BG, the crew was transferred to the 93rd BG where they served as Lead Crew on Pathfinder missions, flying a total of 31 missions.

After the War he entered the field of education, serving as principal of a local school. Later he entered the ministry, an occupation which he followed for the rest of his life. Rev. Simons lived in Huntington, PA. He had six children, one was lost in infancy. His oldest son Richard was killed in Viet Nam.

THORNOCK, NEWELL BRUCE #22308 2006 67th Sq. T/Sgt. Thornock was a Radio Operator on the **Pinder** Crew. He flew three missions, both on *Lib-erty Belle/Lass*. His third mission was to Escalles Sur Buchy, hoping to wipe out the V1 Missiles that were attacking London. Several days later another crew took *Liberty Belle/Lass* to the same area and the plane was lost. Thornock and his wife Florence lived in Bloomington, Idaho at the time of his death.

TRAGER, MEL #22339 506th Sq. No record is on file about this veteran.

Join us in Washington. We'll sing it together.

Oh.....Off we go into the Wild Blue Yonder, climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder. At 'em boys, giv'er the gun!
Down we dive spouting our flames from under; off with one terrible roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame. Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force

Here's a toast to the host of those who love the vastness of the sky.

To a friend we send a message of his brother men who fly.

We drink to those who gave their all of old, then down we roar

To score the rainbow's pot of gold.

A toast to the host of those we love, the U.S. Air Force.

Off we go into the wild sky yonder, keep the wings level and true;

If you'd live to be a grey-haired wonder, keep the nose out of the blue.

Flying men, guarding the nation's border, we'll be there, followed by more!

In echelon we carry on. Hey! NOTHING'LL STOP THE U.S. AIR FORCE

**44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association**

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