

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS

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Artist's rendering of *Missouri Sue*

An interesting E-Mail from Peter Bodle at Shipdham led to a study of a heroic mission that took place two days before D-Day. The mission was to the Boulogne Area of France. The target was Coastal Defenses at Pas De Calais.

Lt. Col. Leon Vance was Deputy Group CO of the 489 BG from Halesworth, Suffolk; but on June 5, 1944 he was chosen to be the Command Pilot on the *Missouri Sue*. The plane, one of six PFF aircraft of the 66th Squadron, was providing lead for the 95th Combat Bomb Wing. This mission is the only one Vance flew with the 44th BG.

Here is what made it newsworthy: Members of the Shipdham Aero Club took Vance's daughter on the same route her father had taken, sixty years previously.

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MISSOURI SUE and THE MISSION TO BOULOGNE



Captain Leon R. Vance

The date was June 5, 1944; the mission, the coastal installations at Boulogne-Sur-Mer. Perhaps this was part of Eisenhower's plan to deceive the Nazis, where D-Day was really to occur.

When "Bombs Away" was called, the

equipment failed and no bombs were dropped from their formation. Lt. Col. Vance issued the order to circle and approach the target again at the same altitude and speed. The flak gunners were waiting. Direct hits killed the pilot. Captain **Louis Mazure**, and severely wounded Col. Vance; only skin was holding his right foot.

Because bombs were still hanging in the bomb bay, the co-pilot, 2nd. Lt. **Earl Carpenter**, turned off the engines and switches, fearing the plane would catch fire and blow up. He turned the A/C toward England on a slow glide. When they approached land, he ordered the crew to bail out.

Only four men remained on board, Vance, Lt. **Bernard Bail**, Navigator and Radar Operator, Lt. **Nathaniel Glickman**, and **Milton Segal**, Bombardiers. Vance was bleeding profusely, so Bail placed a tourniquet on his leg. He tried unsuccessfully to convince Vance to exit the plane, but the pilot shook his head. The two shook hands, the Navigator bailed out and landed safely on English soil.

Glickman had been flying in the nose turret, which shattered when the flak struck. He had to break his way out of the turret; and with injured legs, crawled to the bomb bay, where **Milton Segal**, bombardier, was hanging in the catwalk. Glickman gave him a shove, then rolled off the catwalk and plunged downward.

In his weakened state, Vance struggled his way to the controls, turned the A/C away from populated areas and ditched in the Channel. Immediately the bombs exploded. Miraculously, Vance was flung from the plane. He plummeted into the water; then still finding himself alive, he started to swim toward shore. A boat found him in the water, and medical care became available.

...continued on page 4



L-R 'Bud' Glickman, Milton Segal, Bernard Bail and Earl Carper

The plight of the crew of *Missouri Sue* was as follows: the pilot, Capt. **Louis Mazure**, was KIA. **John Kilgore**, Navigator broke his leg in two places. 2nd Lt. **Nathaniel Glickman**, Bombardier and T/Sgt. **Quentin Skufca**, Radio Operator were wounded, parachuted, then sustained an injury upon landing. T. Sgt. **Earl Hoppie**, Engr. parachuted, but he, too was injured. 2nd Lt. **Milton Segal**, 2nd Lt. **Bernard Bail**, 2nd Lt. **Earl Carper**, co-pilot, S/Sgt. **Davis Evans**, RW Gunner, **Harry Secrist**, LW Gunner and **Wiley Sallis**, Tail Gunner all survived, some in water, others on land.

The area where they bailed out was between Ramsgate and Dover in Kent. Glickman was fortunate enough to land on the lawn of the Royal Marine Hospital at Deal, on the cliffs of Dover.

After Lt. Col. Vance survived the ditching, he spent some time in the hospital, visited by many of his crew. He recommended that Glickman receive the Silver Star, which was approved. Unfortunately, it was not presented until 1986 at Vandenberg AFB in California.

Vance did not live to receive his reward for his courageous decision to ditch and protect the populated area. He was approved to receive the Medal of Honor. Unfortunately, the plane transporting him back to the States went down in the ocean. His widow requested the

Air Force to defer the award ceremony until their two year old daughter was old enough to remember. Two years later the presentation was made at Enid Army Air Field, October 1946. Vance Air Force Base was named in his honor.

Sixty years later, Sharon met Steve Adams at the American Air Corps Cemetery at Madingly. She told him she was the daughter of this heroic pilot, and wondered whether it would be possible to fly the same route her father had flown on the mission to Coastal Defenses at Pas de Calais. Steve immediately contacted Peter Bodle at the Shipdham Aero Club, and with great delight, he made the arrangements.



Sharon Vance at age four.



Sharon Vance Kiernan (center) with Steve Jackmann (left) and pilot, Alan Ferguson.

This 'Journey into History' was a landmark event for the Shipdham Aero Club, for Sharon Vance Kiernan, and for all of the 44th, an ocean away.

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER Roy Owen



Does the title and the by-line seem familiar? For those of you unable to join our comparatively small number of attendees to our San Antonio reunion, we were informed by our president, **Bob Lehnhausen** that due to health problems, his physician had advised that he step down from the presidency to avoid any undue stress associated with the office. Bob has served as a Board Member for the first ten years of our Association since its re-birth, and of course, the last year as our President. It has been my distinct honor and privilege to work with him in those years. Bob brought his years of public service and management experience to the excellent advantage of our Association. In our Board Meetings he was an attentive listener, wise in his consideration and conclusions, particularly in dealing with contentious problems, enabling the Board to make sound decisions. Bob will serve out the coming year as our Immediate Past President.

To Bob: Remembering all the years of dedicated service from your facilitating our charter as a non-profit Veteran's Association in the State of Illinois as our President, we salute you and First Lady Liz for all you have done for us through those years. You both have our respect, love and prayers for improvement in your health.

While I regret the circumstances which necessitate this passing of the gavel, I stand ready to fulfill the remainder of Bob's presidential term and vow to press on with his promise to keep our family together in the bond of the valorous heritage willingly paid by our fallen comrades.

It seems, this seat of the Vice President I have occupied for several terms has, on three occasions now, been more like that of the Relief Pitcher; called in when the Starting pitcher has to give up the mound. For me, I'm thankful you all feel I've still got the pitches to finish the inning and save the win.

Remembering how it came about:

With that said, may I take a few minutes to discuss the problem we can no longer ignore; one we wish we could ignore, and now we must face? The ranks of our 44th veterans are thinning. You will remember we faced the threat of being pre-maturely disbanded by a despotic president and his appointed board. The loyal membership rebelled, and like the Phoenix of Greek mythology, rose from the ashes, clasped hands, and with the determination that has been our trademark, fought off the predicted demise of our association. To my mind, it was, by rallying to survive, we then realized we are truthfully a family. We confirmed this by taking on a whole new life, accepting the daunting challenge of breathing life into the magnificent collection of official documents, personal accounts and photographs obtained and preserved by **C. Will Lundy**. Will maintained the records of our wartime lives, and memories of the valor and service to our country given by our comrades and dedicated wives who are no longer with us. This amazing collection of personal and official documents has, through the tireless work of our archivist, **Tony Mastradone**, copying the official documentation of our 44th Bomb Group history stored in the National Archives and Will Lundy providing his material has, through Arlo Bartsch and his Computer Generated Data program, enabled us to marry these two collections into what we call the Historical Database. May I point out the word 'marry' means the work of many of our members sitting before their computer, formatting all that data into digestible form by the Database program.

This, I realize is old history for many of you; for the rest, this short review takes back to the time when the 44th's obituary was being written. Instead of throwing in the towel, we of the 44th family rose not only to remain alive, but to take on the daunting task of funding and inspiring our loyal members to contribute their biographical service in the 44th. We survived the set-backs which come with any visionary program to become not only the best documented wartime bomb group in American history; and may I add, the singly best organized B-24 Liberator Group in the 2nd Air Division, and arguably, the best in WWII 8th Air Force.

The Completion of the Database:

I am happy and proud to tell you all, the end is near for our hallmark project. With the final entry of Will Lundy's Roll of Honor which inscribes the names of those heroes who paid the ultimate price in preserving the liberty we enjoy. With that completed, each member or surviving lineal family member will receive the product of our efforts in the form of a compact disk containing the entire WWII combat and post war service history of every personal and materiel component of the illustrious Flying Eight Balls, known to the world as the 44th Bomb Group.

For those of you about to raise the question: What if I don't have a computer? The first option is to call your grandchildren. Next is to take your disk to the City/County Library, ask the Librarian to set you upon one the computers, show you how to start up, insert the disk and then follow the directions on the screen.

Setting the next goal:

Having said all that, we must now deal with the inevitable ravages of time. We, like all of the Greatest Generation groups are suffering the declining membership that comes with natural attrition. While there is nothing we can do to change the reality of our mortality, must we simply accept it and let our Association wither and die, with the last man standing turn out the light mentality? I think not. We must accept individual losses and think in terms of Association survival; that is, when we lose one, find and recruit one to carry on. Witness the sons, daughters and members of simply interested young people who have joined us and are now members of the 44th family, and are actively working in the administration of our Association, or the Database or Archival Research. They are fascinated with the wonderful legacy we are leaving in their care and are elated to locate additional historical facts the archives still contain and await recovery.

Think about it folks, if the Daughters of the American Revolution are still up and running after 228 years, how dare we think about folding up and abandoning the continued respect for one of the finest combat bomber groups in the annals of history. It is also our families' heritage. We can't afford to throw it into the ash pile of lost memories.

If you haven't met her by now, please welcome my contribution to that destiny: my daughter, Mrs. Jackie Owen Strong, RN and new Life Member of the 44th family. Bring your children and grandchildren into the membership, and introduce them to us in Tacoma next year. We will be setting a new course for our family association, and we want you there to meet the next generation.



Greater goals ahead:

The first thing we must do is set a new course for our 44th BGVA ship of state, one which will give us the longevity comparable to the Daughters of the American Revolution. We can do that!

In order to set the course, I must again review a little of our history. Recall the near downfall we earlier described and remember also the soon-to-follow retirement of the 44th Strategic Missile Wing that had been reorganized from the 44th Bomb Wing (B-47's) at Lake Charles, LA and transformed into the Cold War Missile force based at Rapid City, SD. That group continued until the USSR fell, along with the Berlin Wall; the 44th again faced retirement from the active Air Force. This was in my third term as your president. I remember the regret in seeing the 44th leave the active force again. It was more than pride. It was that we were to lose the relationship we had enjoyed for eight years with the young active 44th Blue Suiters and their wives. I well remember the great reunion we had at Rapid City, attended by General **Leon W. Johnson**. The young Active Duty people made us so welcome and were so happy to rub shoulders and shake hands with the Flying Eight Balls of WWII fame. They sat silent, listening intently to General Leon Johnson relate his recollections of the Ploesti mission. Later when their retirement came, I felt sad over losing them; but at the time, I failed to recognize that losing the Active Duty 44th really meant we were losing our relationship with the Active Duty Air Force. While I could understand the inevitable reduction in our missile defenses, why the 44th? With some help from the 44th SMW Historian, then stationed at Vandenberg AFB, CA, we learned the protocols of Air Force Heraldry dictate that any combat experienced group currently in retirement can only be recalled for duty in a combat role. The Historian instituted a recall request, which sadly lacked the support of the of the 20th Air Force commander and died at that level. With that rebuke, I went on with the business of our Association. Unfortunately we have seen the decline in our membership simply because the tireless search by our recently deceased **Art Hand** for 44th veterans who had never joined the Association had at last, all but dried up. Our attempts to recruit members within our progeny have been encouraging, but fall short of filling the vacancies of attrition.

Two years ago the light went on for me. I began to read of the Rumsfeld reorganization of the DOD forces, especially in the deployed Army and Air Force strength in Europe. This was the carry-over from the cold war posture needed, should Russia again become aggressive. The DOD rearrangement calls for a major return of the European Forces to the ZI and a reorganization (in the case of the USAF) into Air Expeditionary Forces, totally equipped with logistics and combat aircraft capable of fast deployment to any trouble spot that is endangering peace in the world. I have recently seen in the Air Force Times, a list of these newly formed AEF's. Nowhere in the listing did I see the 44th. I see some familiar numbers of our WWII contemporary groups and some I do not recognize. BUT WHY NOT THE 44TH? Is there any more experienced Combat Group within the USAF? Not to my knowledge.

Now what would recall of the 44th to active duty do for us? One could draw the analogy of being given a supply account of eligible young 44th members (who will someday be veterans) to which we can immediately hand the spirit, pride and illustrious history of the unit of which they are now a part. The beauty of it is that we have it all ready to share with these young people that which is embodied in our wonderful Historical Database.

How do we go about making this a reality? Simple. We exercise our constitutional right to petition our government for redress of a problem. Meaning: place this decision of the Air Force to overlook its policy for recall to active duty of a recognized combat experienced group in the hands of our elected representative for resolve. I intend to request a small committee to do the appropriate research of the Air Force Historian archives pertaining to this Heraldry protocol and formulate a letter of appeal for recall of the 44th to active duty within the new realignment of the Air Force mission. From that, we will draw up a letter for our members to send to their Congressional representative, requesting his/her support in correcting this grievance.

In conclusion:

This has been a brief history review of our Association, one I felt necessary for all of you to get a feel of how deeply I feel about taking advantage of an opportunity to ensure a long term source of new 44th veterans to carry on when we elders go on to rejoin our comrades at rest.

Please, after you have had the patience to read all I have shared with you, let me know how you feel and if you have any ideas that will help move this proposal forward. I, of course, want your strong support. If I know the 44th family, as I do, I trust you will overload me with e-mail and letters saying GO FOR IT!

I love my 44TH Family, and may I say again, I am proud to once again be able to have the presidential gavel in hand, to do what I can to ensure our future.

Roy Owen

Roy Owen,
Your President

p.s. My daughter Jackie sends her love and thanks for the welcome you gave her in San Antonio.



**Jackie Owen Strong, the new
First Lady**

THE HOWINGTON SAGA



Hartwell Howington

It The summer issue of the *8 Ball Tails* featured the story of 1st Lt. **Hartwell**

Howington's fatal mission to Ecalles Sur Buchy on *Ram it-Dam it*, January 21, 1944.

A year and a half after the War was over, something amazing happened to one of the sur-

vivors of the crash. S/Sgt. **Charles W. Blakley**, Right Waist Gunner on the Howington Crew, received a letter from a girl in Somme, France, that shed new light on the tragedy of his pilot's death.

It read, "Will you remember the 21st of January 1944 where your airplane fell down somewhere in France. You jumped out in parachute, but several of your comrades were killed. I saw one of they who were there. You jumped out in parachute, but several of your comrades were killed. I saw one of them whose parachute did not open. I found his wristwatch, and I naturally did not give it to Germans who were there. My dearest desire is to send it to the soldier's parents in America. I am very sorry I could not be his military address, because I later be forbidden to approach nearest him, I just know his name and birthday. Howington Hartwell 23-10-21, and I suppose that is worth. After you arrived OK on the ground, a woman of French Tory Inside gave you and three other men—**Alvin A. Rosenblatt, Alfred M. Klein, Archie R. Barlow** hospitality before you go to Paris, then England or America. Lastly I went and saw her, she gave me your four addresses, So I write this same letter to other three soldiers, hoping to have an answer.

"I should like to know if Howington Hartwell

is a friend of yours, who was in your airplane with you. I should be very grateful to you if you know something about it. Please, tell me his military and civilian address. I hope you will reply to me soon, and I beg to excuse my bad English. I have learnt it in school, and you must guess how much difficult it is.

With all my thanks I give you my regards. God bless and guard you always. A French girl,
Gilberte Daumal

When Blakely replied, Gilberte wrote thanks him for his help, then added this: "I don't remember if I related that Lt. Howington was buried in the cemetery of Poix. I know his grave very well, I was want to go and carry flowers, but now he is not there. American authority has taken away all the soldiers' bodies and transported them in a small village in a other district. I can't go. It is too long way, but know the name of this new place. Certainly you think that near two others of you comrades were ground or burnt inside the airplane. Germans put their remains into a small coffin and buried it near Howingtown, but we don't know their name. Alas! They will be unknown always..."

Louise Howington, widow of Hartwell, received the watch, picked up and delivered by Hartwell's brother Fletcher. In her gratitude to Gilberte, she added, "More than that (receiving the watch), however, it is so much comfort to know the details of my husband's death." She wrote about their daughter, Linda, who was one year old when her



Gilberte Daumal

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father left for England. At that time, Louise was working for the U. S. Department of Justice, and Linda was in the care of her grandmother. The correspondence between her and Gilberte continued, exchanging pictures and family information.

Gilberte's life was very difficult. She was an orphan, sometimes in the care of her grandparents, sometimes with an uncle, later sent to boarding schools.

In 1946 she described life in France, "During Jericans' occupation, French people was wretched, now war is finished and it is not better. France is very poor! You don't know what we can and cannot buy, how much easy it is to explain! We have ration for everything: food, clothes, shoes, heating etc.... Certainly we can buy all we want, but very, very dear. I suppose you have heard about the 'black Market' word is the fashion...."



Linda & Tom Guyton

Then, twenty five years later, her son-in-law Seth, through the Internet began the search for members of the Howington crew. The first contact was with Mrs. **Earl Boggs** wife of the Tail Gunner. Unfortunately, Earl had passed away several years before. However, she gave Linda the names of other crew members, **Archie Barlow** and **Charles Blakely**, who led her to **Will Lundy**. Will supplied the official information about her father's mission. Then he called upon Claude Helias, a French historian, for help in locating the brave girl who out-did the German soldiers. He called upon a friend with the same name, Marcelle Daumal (no relation). Marcelle took it as a challenge to locate Gilberte, and he succeeded. She is now 82 years old, living at Saint-Michel-sur-Orge, and is now Mme. Bourgougnon. The delight of being back in touch with the family of Hartwell Howington was matched by Linda's gratitude to the person who had found the watch and returned it to the family. The two are truly bonded, exchanging letters, pictures and family information.

The events at Ecalles sur Buchy continue to resonate through the 44th BGVA. Lois Cianci lost her father, **Clair Shaeffer**; Jackie Roberts lost hers, **Jack Ostenson**. Lois was able to find her father's name on the Wall of Honor at the Cemetery at Ardennes. Jackie found Jack's name at the Omaha Beach Memorial.

Then more about that mission unfolded. A year or two after Lundy researched the Howington crash, he got a letter from Mrs.



Linda Howington

Linda Howington was 17 months old when her father was killed, having been with her father on only two occasions. Her extended family and her father's parents filled her life with happy occasions. Her

mother remarried and she felt much beloved in this new arrangement. Then her mother died. Only then did she have access to the war memorabilia belonging to her father. Only then did she realize the tragedy and the courage which her mother had endured, to continue to make a meaningful life for herself and her baby daughter.

Linda married Thomas Guyton, they raised two children, and she put the past behind her. Now they have three grandchildren.

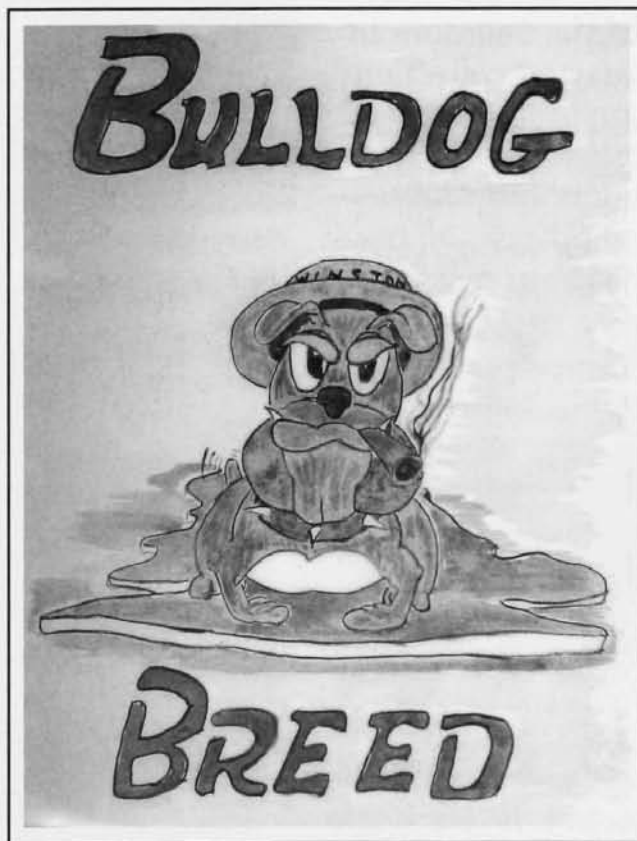
Mary Dickinson Hoke, seeking information about her husband, S/Sgt. **John L. Dickinson**. He had been engineer on 1st. Lt. **Gary Mathisen's** crew, which she knew had been shot down over southwestern France on 21 January, 1943. Will found that he was on the same plane (*Valiant Lady*) that **Jack Ostenson** had gone down in. Lundy was able to supply Mrs. Hoke with the circumstances of her husband's death.



Howington Crew, (Before Leaving the States) Upper L-R- 2nd Lt. Herman M. Curtis, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Richard Kasten, Navigator; 2nd Lt. Wayne Crowl, Bombardier; 2nd Lt. Hartwell Howington, Pilot Lower L-R- S/S Charles Blakley, S/S Earl Boggs, S/S Michael Mitsche (injured before January 21, 1944 crash) S/S Nicholas Heiter, T/S Archie Barlow, T/S Alvin Rosenblatt (now Ross), T/S Ray Reeves.

All of that happened 61 years ago. To Linda, Jackie, Lois and Mary Hoke, it could have been yesterday. However, the relationships in France are refreshing. Recent letters from Claude and Marcelle to Linda remind her of their eternal gratitude to Americans for liberating them from horror of German occupation. They assure her that the French government's critical stance toward our country has not been translated to its people.

Charles W. Blakley, RW Gunner on the **Howington** crew wrote this message, after reading the Summer Issue of the 8 BTs: "The photograph in the 8 BTs did not properly identify the crew (Note Corrections). Since Will Lundy located Gilberte Bourgougon for Linda, I have received five letters and a Christmas card from Gilberte. Each time she has expressed her thanks to us Americans for freeing her France from the Germans."



English child's version of Churchill



THE 44TH BGVA IN SAN ANTONIO

The Lone Star State opened its arms and heart to the 44th BGVA, and 106 members enjoyed the festivities. In that multi-cultured area, food could be Mexican, American or Indian, mild or spicy; souvenirs were reminders that the southern border was not far away; and Margaritas were a favored beverage. The Riverwalk proved to be a great place to dine, and those who wanted to see it all could enjoy it via the boat ride.

Lunch at the Officer's Club Ft. Sam Houston was a hurried affair, but could anyone object to the delicious food? The City Tour followed immediately, a short look at all the historical sites that San Antonio had to offer. Lunch was arranged by R. Lee Aston.

The ever-popular Hospitality Room at the Radisson was filled with 44thers who fought the war all over again, regaling the younger generation with stories. In one room were the books generously donated by Chuck Hand, son of the 44th's late historian, **Art Hand**. Most were sold by silent auction; the most valuable were sold at the Banquet by the 44th's superbly talented auctioneer, Lowell Roberts. Jackie Roberts kept the auction moving, running from one side of the Ballroom to the other, delivering the goods and collecting the funds. Bartending is becoming a practiced art with 44th members, as proven by **Perry Morse**, Tony Cianci, Leon Abbott and Ann Natelli, Bernadette Gately and others. All bartenders took turns, toting the ice from a full



Bob Lehnhausen and Bob Hooper

bathtub in the next room.

Bob Hooper, a native of Fredericksburg, met the bus which drove 70 miles to visit the home of Admiral Chester Nimitz. He greeted his friend, Bob Lehnhausen, who he had known since 1943 when their crews moved from B-17s to B-24s, and were assigned to the 44th BG, immediately upon arrival to the UK. Hooper's Pilot, **George Winger**, **Charlie Hughes** and **Bob Lehnhausen** trained together, and the crews interacted together on a daily basis.

The Nimitz Museum features the awesome Pacific War, with many pieces of navy armament on display. Outside is a Peace Garden, provided by the Government of Japan.



Perry Morse and ship's cannon

The Candlelight Service at the Banquet was a two-generation event, conducted by President Robert Lehnhausen. Lois Cianci lit the candle for the Iraq servicemen, she was honoring her father, **Clair Schaeffer**, who lost his life at Villers Ecalles; Edward Dobson lit the candle for the Kjeller Mission, honoring his father, **Edward M. Dobson**. Charles Hughes lit for the 66th Sq.; **Don Williams**, 67th; **Sterling Dobbs**, 68th; Perry Morse, 506th; **Louis DeBlasio**, Wesel Mission; **Thomas Holmes**, Ploesti; **Frank Schaeffer**, Evadees; **Dale Lee**, POWs; **Roy Owen**, Kiel.



Ed Dobson lit the candle for the Kjeller Mission

President Lehnhausen presented the **Leon W. Johnson Award** in absentia to **Edward "Mike" Mikoloski** for many years of dedication to preserve the history of the 44th Bomb Group. It was accepted by his long-time friend and admirer, **Leon Johnson Abbott**, grandson of General Johnson.

In recognition of her dedicated and continued service to the 44th BGVA, President Robert Lehnhausen presented a 44th BGVA medallion to **Mary Aston**. Mary is offering new products to the 44th for sale: lapel and hat pins, including 8th Air Force, DFC, Air Medal, Purple Heart, POW, European-African Mediterranean Theatre and WWII Victory Medal; also, a leaded glass depiction of the Flying 8 Ball. Each pin is \$9



Photograph of Mary Aston at table

+ 37 cents postage. All proceeds go to 44th BGVA. Order from **Mary Aston**, 830 Cardinal Drive, Elberton GA 30635; specify pin names and number of each type.

The highlight of the Reunion was the belated pinning of WWII Medals. **Atty. R. Lee Aston**, Board Director and Chairman of the Decorations and Awards Committee, was able to process five Air Force claims for members who had earned medals six decades previously. He assisted in the sixth claim for **Roy Owen**, who had submitted his own claim. In only nine months, and with determined effort, Aston was able to get the awards approved by the Air Force in time for the presentation at the Reunion.



Photograph of pins

As any veteran can attest, approval for belated medals can take years. However, with Aston's experience with his own DFC, pinned at the Barksdale Reunion 57 years late, he learned how to expedite this operation. The AF Review Board and the Board for Correction of Military Records worked with him to expedite these claims as a 'package'. **Mr. William Anderson** from Randolph Field, personally and so kindly, delivered the medals to **Lee** at the Radisson Hotel, two days before the Banquet. Unbelievably, two of the veterans, 1st Lt. **Orville Curtis** and 1st Lt. **John E. Butler** got more medals that they had originally claimed.

Two of the recipients could not be present for the pinning: 1st. Lt. **Orville Curtis**, Co-pilot, 506 Squadron and 1st. Lt. **Robert J. Keyes**, Co-pilot, 67th Squadron.

...continued on page 14

The decoration awards were honored by Major General **William (Bill) Brandon's** attendance to make the presentations to these combat flyers. The individual citations were read by R. Lee Aston and pinning of the medals was by 'Bill' Brandon. The recipients were:

S/Sgt. **John Gately**, aerial gunner, 67th Squadron,; two Air Medal OLC, # 5 and #6; DFC.

1st. Lt. **John E. Butler**, Navigator, 67th Squadron; one Air Medal OLC #5; DFC and DFC OLC.

1st Lt. **C. C. Spagnola**, Pilot, 67th Squadron; two Air Medal OLC #5 and #6 (not present)

1st Lt. **Roy Owen** Co-pilot, 506 Squadron, DFC



L-R R. Lee Aston, John E. Butler, John Gately, M/Gen. 'Bill' Brandon, Roy Owen



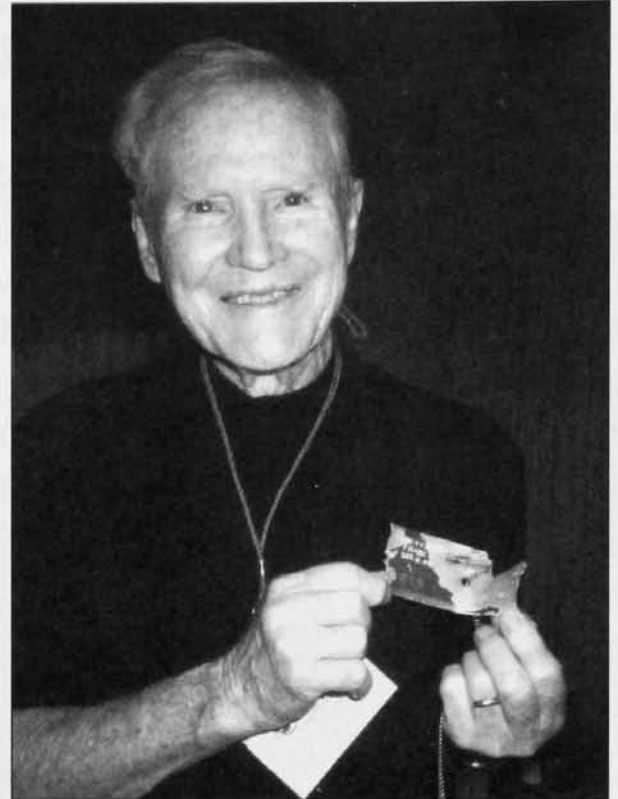
Cynthia Harmonoski tells her wartime experiences at the 68th Squadron Dinner. Sitting with her is George Washburn



Attending the Reunion for the first time are Nancy Bass and Dana White. They are honoring their uncle, John W. Reasons, 68th Squadron, who was KIA, November 18, 1943 at Kjeller.



Enjoying the Riverwalk when the Reunion is over are Dick & Betty Lynch, co-treasurers for the 44th BGVA.



Tommy Holmes carries the piece of metal he pulled out of his head after his first flight into Germany. This flight was considered a 'diversionary,' but the German Focke-Wulf 190s attacked them anyway. Holmes has his dog tag attached to the piece of metal, which apparently was part of the plane.



Photo of man in wheel chair

Former Co-Pilot, 1st Lt. **Robert J. Keyes** received two OLCs, # 5 and #6, to his Air Medal and the DFC. Presentation was made on "9/11" at his rehabilitation center in Bayside, New York City by Lt. Col. William E. McArdle, 106 Mission Support Flight Commander of the Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, New York. Bob also

received a Commendation Certificate from a local New York Assemblywoman, Ann-Margaret Carrozza. Keyes pinning ceremony was in his wheelchair in the presence of his wife, Marie. Despite the fact that he was extremely ill, it is notable that when the ceremony was completed, he was able to return the officer's salute. He died ten days later.



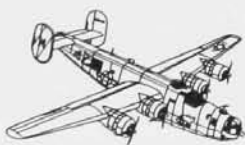
THE 2ND AIR DIVISION IN PHILADELPHIA

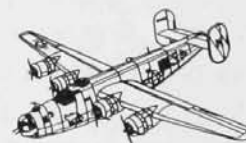
President Richard 'Dick' Butler retired of President to the 2 AD after serving two terms. He was presented a plaque, in recognition of his outstanding services. All 44thers should be proud of him and the dedicated service he gave to advance the goals of this organization. On hand to honor Dick was his wife Ardith and their son Dan. As you will recall, Dan carried the Roll of Honor at the dedication of the Memorial Library in Norwich. Other 44th attendees were: Beryl Apgar, Joe and Gloria Diemer, Julian Ertz and his friend Dorothy Fishbein, Cynthia Harmonowski, Joe and Lillian Jackson, Ed and Eria Schwarm.

This was the first reunion for the Jacksons and the Deimers. George Washburn, 44th' representative to the 2 AD, reported "I was re-elected VP for the 44th after a strenuous campaign."



Dick, Dan and Ardith Butler





ANOTHER SOBERING MOMENT AT ARLINGTON THE INTERMENT OF COL. EDWARD 'MIKE' MIKOLOSKI



Tony Mastradone and Chris Clark carry the 44th BGVA Banner, walking among friends and family members. Mike's son Stanley is in the left foreground.

Members of the 44th joined friends and family for the interment of one of the organization's most avid spokesman, Edward 'Mike' Mikoloski. Anyone close to Mike can attest to his love of life, (despite many sorrows), his devotion to the Bomb Group, his outstanding military career, his successful business venture and his unending pursuit of culture through music and art.

One of Mike's goals was to attend all of the great operas in the world. The last e-mail this writer received from him, he described the musical event in Vienna. It was a golden moment when he danced to the most beautiful music in the world, clad



President Mike presiding at Barksdale Meeting

in white tails and with a dance partner who flowed to the waltz music in a circle of white splendor. He had one more dream, which did not come true—to dance at the grand opera in Paris. He also could not follow his plan, to attend the interment of his friend Col. **William Cameron**. He died a few days previous to Bill's burial.



Fritzi Selasky and 'Mike' danced in New Orleans

Mike worked with the great people in history. As a Navigator, he flew with Majors **Algene Key** and **Howard Moore**, was an aide to General **Leon Johnson**, served in the Pentagon during the Missile Crisis, became an advisor to General Curtis Lemay, assisted in NATO planning and served in SHAPE Headquarters. in Paris.

Mike struggled against a failing heart, but was determined to make every day count. He served seven years on the Board of the 44th BG, one year as President; he contributed energy, enthusiasm, finance and creativity to the Bomb Group's goals. Mike never slowed down until his heart brought life to a sudden halt. The 44th Bomb Group, along with Mike's two sons, Stanley and Vincent and daughter Kathie can be grateful that we shared in the life of this unique and heroic man.

THE WWII CELEBRATION IN WASHINGTON

If I could make any wish come true, it would have been that all the 44th BG veterans could have come to the Washington Celebration. The ceremony was long overdue for all of you.

Veterans were seated in Section 1; handicapped were placed in front of that group. We were a mile away from the President, but could clearly see all that was going on via the screen. It was a great big brotherhood of veterans, sitting together. Each one was checking with the other—'where did you serve?' Sitting in blazing sunlight, we relived the War all over. I imagine most of you saw the ceremony on TV. To me, the man who did the veterans the most enduring recognition is Tom Brokaw, who ten years ago named us 'The Greatest Generation.'

Lois & Tony Cianci and Jackie & Lowell Roberts shared our Washington experience. Veterans had special seating in the MCI Center, but they entered through another portal, walking in alongside of Bob Dole. That performance of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard Band was awesome. They played every appropriate WWII song, ending up with a presentation by young, trim, handsome servicemen marching in absolute precision and playing the songs that had fortified our decision to win. It was tear-jerking. All I could think is, 'That's what you gentlemen looked like, sixty years ago.'

All around the monument people laid photographs, medals and notes to lost loved ones. One area that was especially meaningful to Jackie and Lois was the star studded panel, a field of 40,000 sculpted gold stars on the Freedom Wall. Each star represented 100 Americans who gave their lives. Needless to say, their fathers, **Clair Shaeffer** and **Jack Ostenson** were among those who were silently honored.



Jackie Roberts and Lois Cianci

It occurred to me, if it had been erected earlier in our history, it may not have been so dramatic. It took 60 years for the full immensity of that War to infiltrate the minds of the generations who followed. Since there are only four million veterans still among us, the monument was not built for our generation. It was built for our children and grandchildren. Thank goodness some of us got to see it.

FROM IRELAND, ANOTHER REMINDER OF THE 44TH'S HISTORY



Suzy Q at Langford Lodge, No. Ireland Spring 1943

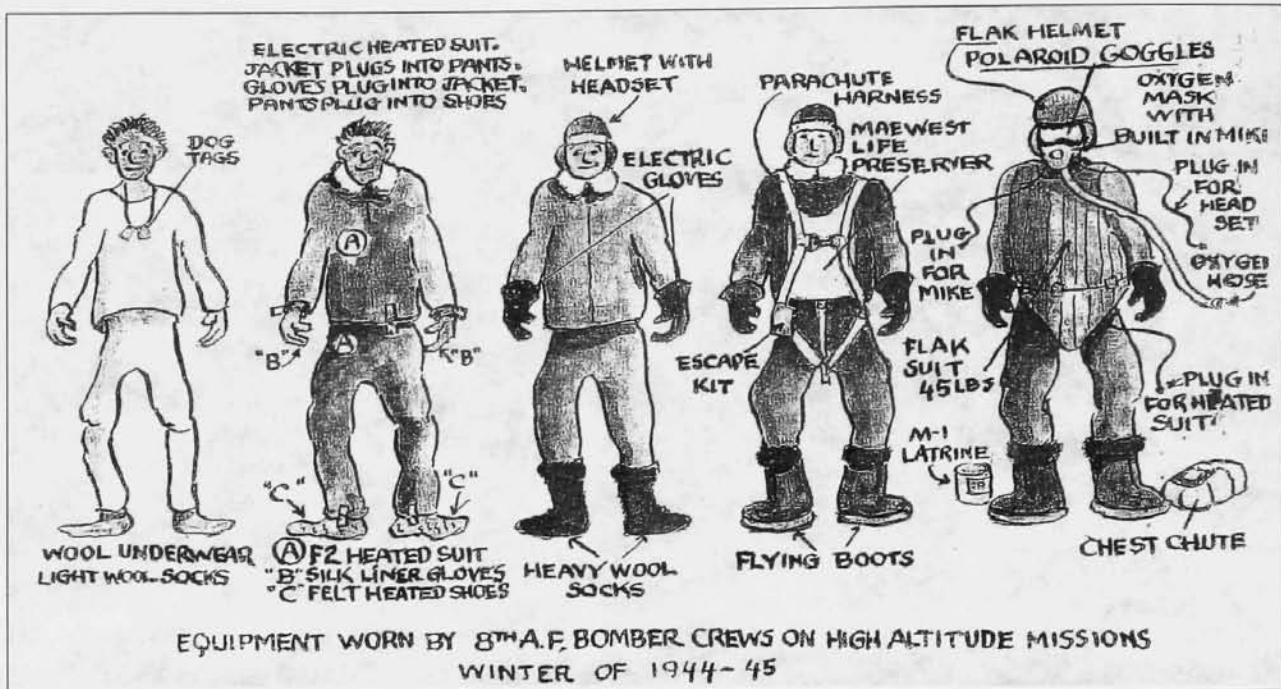
From Blaine Duxbury: Ernie Cromie in Northern Ireland, a member of the Ulster Aviation Society, forwarded this picture of Suzy Q. It was taken just prior to her return to Shipdham after undergoing modification and repair. The time is early May 1943. According to Cromie, Suzy Q is parked on '3', denoting Hangar 3 with her tail toward the Control Tower. According to **Bob Lehnhausen**, "The Lockheed Corp. operated a large aircraft facility at this location. It was an airfield and manufacturing/repair enterprise. It was located on the north-eastern tip of Lough Neagh, a large body of inland water, west of Belfast. Early in the American part of the war, each of our original and then newly arrived a/c from the states were sent to Langford Lodge for modification. A/C were equipped with new gear or improvements of existing components to better fit the craft for combat in the ETO.

"The routine was to send a crew and plane to Langford. The plane would be delivered to Lockheed for modification, the crew would get a three day leave in Belfast. The crew would then transport back to Shipdham a plane that had completed modification. Upon completion of modification of the most recently delivered plane, the 44th would be notified and the process began all over again. I do not recall when this routine ceased, but I do not recall any trips to Langford after our return from the Ploesti mission. Early in my stint with the 44th, I was privileged to have been on one of these tasks. It was very pleasant."

Duxbury noted that the ship shows 8 mission markers. As of that time frame, Suzy Q had flown 18 sorties. **Howard Moore** had flown 8 in Suzy Q at that time. Were the markers painted for his missions only? Cromie identified two people in the picture, Hank Ogden (second from left), General Manager of the Lockheed Overseas Corporation at Langford Lodge and Kenneth Hull, (5th from right) Assistant Manager. Can anyone identify any others?

ANOTHER VIEWPOINT OF THE AIR WAR

T/Sgt. Forrest S. Clark (67th) has written a book: *Innocence and Death in Enemy Skies*, his account of his experiences as a Radio Operator and Gunner on the Rockford C. Griffith crew. Clark's 11th mission took him to Lechfeld, Germany, where Flak damage forced the pilot to head to Switzerland and internment. In a daring escape, Clark was able to make it back to his base. The challenges that faced this T/Sgt. are a story worth preserving for other generations to read. The price is \$10. Write Forrest S. Clark, 703 Butter Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34759.



Remember This? This cartoon was borrowed from the 8th Air Force Historical Society Newsletter

**44TH BOMB GROUP REUNION 2005
WILL BE HELD IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON
LABOR DAY WEEKEND
PAUL KAY PROMISES A VARIETY OF ENTERTAINMENT:
A TRIP TO THE BOEING MUSEUM OF FLIGHT
BOEING ASSEMBLY PLANT
PIKE'S MARKET IN SEATTLE WHERE FISH FLY!
MT. ST. HELENS (ASSUMING SHE STOPS ACTING HOSTILE)
INDIAN CASINOS, GLASS MUSEUM
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Make these arrangements privately. If you call 1-800-777-0707, Mindy will help you book a trip.

She is with Alaska Airlines, and works with all cruise lines.

D-DAY AT SHIPDHAM

(Peter Bodle, Pres. Of Shipdham Aero Club)

"Earlier this week the 44th BG's Representative, Steve Adams phoned me for a request. He had met up with some folks at the Madingly Memorial Cemetery near Cambridge. Steve asked whether a flight be arranged for them the following Saturday (July 5th) Then he went on and explained that the flight was to recreate the last operational flight of Lt. Col. Leon R. Vance, Jr. The Vance crew took off from Shipdham, joined the remainder of the formation over Hailsworth in Suffolk, then southwards to the French coast around Cap Gris-Nez. It suffered severe damage and crashed off the Kent coast, attempting to return to England.

It transpired that the passenger on this memorial flight on the 5th would be Sharon D. Kiernan, the only child of Lt. Col. **Leon Vance**.

Shipdham aircraft G-ATOT, a Piper PA28-180 was the aircraft chosen. For late spring, the English weather was remarkably good. The flight departed Shipdham 20 runway at 14.30 hours and faithfully followed the route taken 60 years earlier by the Vance B-24. Two Shipdham Aero Club members, Alan Ferguson and Steve Jackman acted as pilots for the emotional 2 hour flight.

We were all delighted to be of service."

PLEASE NOTE

UPDATE ON THE DATABASE

Through the efforts of Will Lundy, Arlo Bartsch, and through the contributions of members of the 44th BGVA, the Database is almost completed. All sorties, all planes, most members of the 44th BGVA and the Roll of Honor have been entered on a disk. All except personal stories. Is your story on the Database? Not if you didn't send it in.

The Board of Directors has determined that May 1st, 2005 will be the final opportunity for 44thers to submit their stories. When all have been entered into the Database, each member will be issued a disk. Late submissions will be entered into the Database, but will not be included on the disk which will be provided to all 44thers.

What if you don't have a computer? Hand it to your son, daughter or grandchild. Lend it to your local library. Offer it to a college library, the local VFW, the local museum. They can put the information on their computer and return the disk for further use.

This is your last opportunity to preserve your personal experiences in WWII. You cannot look into the future and know who will be searching for your record—a family member, a historian, a military researcher. If you don't provide it, it won't be there. Do you think your story is too unimportant to be recorded? Wrong! It took everybody to win the War. What were your experiences, living in England? Did a bomb get stuck in the bomb bay? Were you one of the GIs that General Johnson dropped off at your barracks? Did you have to bail out? What were you thinking when that happened? Every story is individual. Every story is important.

PUT YOURS ON RECORD NOW

Do you need an application? Write me: Ruth Morse, 2041 Village Circle East, York, PA 17404. Tel. 717 846-8948. Do it for your grandkids.

D-DAY IN EUROPE 60 YEARS LATER

Despite our best efforts, Perry and I missed President Bush and Queen Elizabeth at Normandy. In fact, we even missed Prince Charles at Portsmouth. He had spoken the day before we got there. Portsmouth is where most of the vessels sailed from on June 6, 1944, also in 2004. On June 5th and in the weeks that followed, the Stars & Stripes were waving alongside the Union Jack, in recognition of that joint effort.

Our tour on D-Day took us to St. Mere E-Glise, the landing site of the 82nd Airborne on June 5. In our honor, today's 82nd Airborne parachuted in before our very eyes, and they were greeted warmly by the French citizens. Locals were eager to tell us that we were walking the very street where the GIs paraded when the city was liberated. A parachute hung from the church roof where John Steele had dangled for hours, pretending he was dead, until Patton's men brought him down.

There were more British than American soldiers on hand, but each group had its own 'tent city.' Perry has never felt so much like a celebrity: young people were buying books about the war and asking all veterans to autograph them. He was posed among them for photographs. I couldn't help wondering how the Germans would feel in our midst. They solved the problem very cleverly. A large group had an 'umpah band' that was so engaging and so riveting, everybody clapped and tapped to their beat. It couldn't have been a wiser reminder that the Europe was enjoying a new day.

At Normandy, some of the sea walls at Point de Hoc are crumbling. They have been closed off from foot traffic, and a program is started to stabilize that historic site. Outside the office, under an overhang, are computers where the name of any lost veteran can be entered. Information about the location of his body can be printed out.

The monument at Bastogne was awesome, and the museum featured the American presence in the most dramatic way -- mannequins in American uniforms with jeeps and paraphernalia of battle. All veterans entered the museum without charge.

We learned to our surprise that Patton was buried in Luxemburg. His grave, as simplistic as every other soldier's, was notable in only one regard. It faced the graves of those who had followed him to their deaths. Americans are truly honored in that little country. They clearly remember who liberated them.



JACK BUTLER'S MEMORIES OF D-DAY

"I had a spectacular view through holes in the clouds, of the bombing of the beach area at Caen. We dropped our bombs at exactly 6:29 AM. Shortly after 6:30 AM, our infantrymen, led by Col. Earl Rudder, waded ashore and stormed the beaches that led up the cliff at Omaha Beach.

"I did not actually see Col. Rudder and his men storm that cliff at Omaha Beach, but I do know what happened that day. It made me very happy to be safe, 3 miles above and about 30 miles from Omaha Beach where the bloodiest action took place.

"The next day, June 7, the weather had cleared considerably. Our target was the railroad tracks and bridges at Colleville/St. Laurent. This was eight or ten miles inland from Omaha Beach. We flew directly over Omaha Beach to get to our target. Our altitude was 15,000 feet, very low for our heavy bombers, and the weather was clear enough that we could see the terrible sight that was going on below.

*Ed. Note: 2nd Lt. Jack Butler was a Navigator on the **Robert Knowles** crew. His D-Day account was recorded in the Austin*

American Statesman. He recalled that there were more than 4,000 four engine bombers in the air on D-Day. This was his fourth mission, flying in Mary Harriet. He clearly remembers looking at the stream of heavy bombers lumbering out of the English fog, 65 miles long, numbering more than a thousand.

*The pilots got the bombers on target at precisely the right time; but horror of horrors, two bombs hung in Mary Harriet's bomb bay. The bomb bay doors were wide open. One bomb was facing upward at a 30-45 degree angle, and the propeller was madly spinning. S/Sgt. **Michael Powers**, radioman, tried to jettison the bombs, pushing and kicking. Butler went back and got 2nd Lt. **John Fenn**, Bombardier, who stopped the spinning arming propeller, putting safety wires on the bombs. Then Jack 'jiggled the bombs' until they fell, and Mary Harriet returned to Shipdham and safety.*

Every airman has a clear memory of sobering minutes in his wartime adventures. With Jack, it is the day that the bombs hung around too long.

THE 44TH BOMB GROUP PX

| | |
|--|------------------------|
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EASTBOURNE REMEMBERS THE *RUTHLESS*

Elizabeth and William Mills, Southampton, UK forwarded photographs and a news clipping of the memorial service at Butts Brow, Eastbourne, letting us know that they have not forgotten the brave men who died on the *Ruth-Less*, February 2, 1944. Ten standards of the Eastbourne Combined Ex-Services Associations dipped their standards to acknowledge the sounding of THE LAST POST, played by George Roberts. The service was conducted by the vicar of Christ Church. Individual names of the crewmen were read, as crosses were laid by the Mayor and representative of associations attending. This was the 60th Anniversary of the crash.



Photo of ceremony at Butts Brow, of uniformed English with dropped flags



Monument with names.

Elizabeth is still hoping someone will know the whereabouts of Lt. **Jack Holtzman**, a friend who was frequently a guest in the family home. Jack was a bombardier with 66th Sq. He flew with the **Richard Comey, Shelby Irby, George Insley, John Winchester, Charles Mercer, William Wahler and Robert Bickerstaff** crews. If anyone knows how to locate Jack, please contact the 8 Ball Tails editor (address is on inside cover of this publication).

AN ENGLISH GIRL REMEMBERS

Lottie Stock, Reading, Pennsylvania, was ten years old when war began in England. She lived in Liverpool, the port where war materials were placed on board ships, to be transported to English soldiers in many parts of the world. "The Germans learned what was happening on our docks and in our ships, so eighteen months after the war began, they started bombing. They bombed us every night for three years. When an ammunition ship 'went up,' everything lit up and the whole house shook.

"My father was too old for the service, so he did essential work. He drove a Steam Wagon. Also, he volunteered as an Air Warden. My mother could not bring herself to work in a war plant. She did not want to make materials that could be used to kill other women's sons. Instead, she took a heavy duty job as a porter in a department store."

"During a Raid, the authorities urged us to go to the shelters, and we had to take our mattresses, also an attaché case with insurance policies."

No time was wasted in the shelters. Lottie learned to knit socks and gloves. Unfortunately, one mother was less clean than Lottie's mother. She brought fleas into the shelter on her mattress. Lottie's parents decided to 'tough it out at home.'" This was a mistake. One bomb took the roof off their house. Lottie's father was so angry, he walked outside and cursed the Nazis at the top of his voice. Her mother tried to hush him, not wanting the children to hear him using bad language.

The ceiling on the first floor remained

intact, so the family no longer ventured up the steps. When a raid was going on, Lottie and her twelve year old brother sat under the kitchen table playing chess. One bomb was so violent, it shattered the windows, and glass splattered over her mother's head. She had to be carried off to the nearest hospital. That hospital was bombed out, so they took her to the next.

"For several days, we didn't know where she was. That was my worst memory—not knowing where my mother was.

"When I was sixteen, I was invited to the wedding of one of my friends. My mother would not permit me to go, as she did not approve of the girl's parents. I was truly angry. However, my mother's decision saved my life. That night a bomb did hit their home. The only one who survived was the bride."

Lottie remembered an American soldier who came visiting her, always laden with food. Her mother fretted that he had stolen the food, but he assured her, it was quite legal for him to be carrying off large quantities of Spam and dried eggs. This was a treat, considering they were allowed 4 oz. meat, 4 oz. butter per week, 2 oz. sugar per week and one egg a month. To this day, living in America, she still loves Spam.

"I will never forget VE Day," she declared. "My mother made me a red, white and blue outfit out of odds and ends of fabrics. I joined friends, walking the streets, asking others to join us. We danced at street parties and sang patriotic songs. It was wonderful."

**Sign on entrance to pub in Portsmouth, England:
NO DRUGS OR NUCLEAR WEAPONS ALLOWED INSIDE.**

MAIL & E-MAIL

From **Bob Vance**, quoting Mark Twain: "Be careful about reading health books. You may die from a misprint."



Aviation Thoughts from **Roy Owen**:

1. As an aviator in flight, you can do anything you want...as long as it's right...and we'll let you know if it's right after you get down.
2. You can't fly forever without getting killed.
3. He who demands everything that his aircraft can give him is a pilot; he that demands one iota more is a fool.



From Luc Dewez in Belgium: "By a twist of fate, WWII began and ended on nearly the same day, May 10, 1940 and VE Day-May 8, 1945. By the same twist of fate, May 8 was as sunny as May 10, but this time the cloudless sky was empty of black crosses' airplanes. "Those five years were a nightmare for millions of men, women and children. For the survivors, they had nightmares for years to come, reliving in their sleep what they had experienced....one human was dying every five seconds during those five years."



Military Records: The shortest way to access records is to go to:

["http://www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs/"](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs/)



From the Editor, **Ruth Morse**: Please note my new E-Mail address:

rewdm@blazenet.net



From Peter Loncke: "My dad was a professional bike rider before the war, and I occasionally surf those web sites of bicycling history, to see if I can find info on my dad. During one of these visits I saw a notice on a message board that a man from Holland was looking to find relatives of Jeff Loncke, a brother of my dad.

"Peter's uncle Jeff had extended kind-

nesses to a retarded Dutchman during a time when they were held in a German work camp. Now, years later, the villagers decided to place a monument, honoring those who had survived the work camp ordeal. Peter's uncle Jeff is among the honorees.

The German camp was at Duisberg. Interestingly, Peter went to the web site of the Duisberg factory where his uncle had worked. They have a time line, telling what happened at different times in the company's history --all except 1939-1945.

Ed. Note: The truths about Nazi Germany are best told outside of Germany.

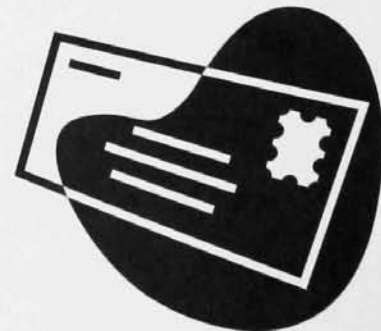


Newspaper clipping: **Allen J. Baker** of Loystown, PA, a Radio Operator/Gunner on the **Joseph F. Hermann** crew was recently awarded a Silver Star for his courageous service June 20, 1944. On a mission to Politz, Germany, with the bomb run completed, it was discovered that the fin of a 100 pound bomb was tangled in the plane's control cables. Unassisted, without oxygen, flak vest or parachute, Allen straddled the bomb bay, freed the bomb from the cables and dropped it out of the plane.

Lyle Latimer of Iowa, Tail Gunner on the crew was instrumental in obtaining the distinguished medal for Baker.



From **Bill Newbold**: One of our members, **John J. Dayberry**, is now located at the VA Medical Center, 1601 Brenner Street, Bldg. 42-2D, Salisbury, NC 28114. Could some of his friends drop him a note?



From Bob Lehnhausen: A few days ago I received a note from **Forrest Clark**, alerting me to the fact that we had not included the memorial established at Kjeller airdrome in the list of memorials printed on the back of the donation letter. This monument memorializes the five 44th crews that were lost on the mission of 28 November, 1943.

The Command Pilot on this mission was General Brandon. He was flying with the crew of Capt. **Willie Weant**. (Weant was my original co-pilot, and a splendid pilot.) Because they did not have enough fuel to return to England, they flew on to Sweden. They were interred there for a time. Brandon and Weant returned to the 44th in January, 1944.



Three members found the answer to the question of the plane which **William Chaffin** photographed March 29th, 1945, the Target: Wilhelmshaven. Roger Fenton, **Will Lundy** and Chris Clark named it as A/C 42-50644 Bar A. It was flying lead that day, with **James Stevens** flying as Command Pilot, Capt. **James Clements** was in the other seat. The date was the 30th of March. On board were both GEE and PFF Navigators. This unnamed plane was originally with the 66th, then transferred to the 506. It survived the War and returned to the States in May 1945. *Thanks Will, Chris & Roger for your diligence in the research.*

From: **Donald R. Jenkins** (re picture of T.S.Tessie, Fall, 2003 issue of 8 BTs) "The photo was by **Bob Seever**. I was the Navigator on his crew, and we remained friends until Bob folded wings in 2002." The caption of the A/C clearing the fence to land at Shipdham read 'the picture should stir the soul of airmen and ground crew alike.'" Jenkins said it stirred his soul. Of his original crew, three are left, Jenkins; the Nose Gunner, **Richard Coward**; and Tail Gunner, **Lee Dunham**.



From **Thomas J. West, Sr.**, 68th Sq., Engr. on **W. G. Solomon & R. C. Pitts** crews. West

wants to know whether anyone remembers the contest, "Sweetheart of the 44th Group" First prize was a baby picture; second prize was his future wife, Erma Dolfi. Married 58 years, West lost his sweetheart November 1, 2003.



Photo of Erma Dolfi



From Marie B. Elder, 7804 E FM 979, Franklin, TX 77856: Can anybody remember S/Sgt. **David C. Messer** from Erwin, NC. (66th Sq.) David was a gunner assigned to the 44th BG May '44 to Sept. '44. He flew one mission to Saarbrucken on *I'll Get By* on June 28, 1944. Major **J.J. La Roache** was Command Pilot; Capt. **Paulino Ugarte** was pilot. David was later killed in a B-36 bomber crash in 1965. He left behind a 6 year old daughter, who is trying to learn something about her lost father.

From **Nick Garza** to Bob Lehnhausen: "In answer to your question, 'Were you the soldier that General Johnson picked up in his big old gray Packard Sedan?', I was one of those two. We were picked up on a ghastly rainy night on the way home from Liberty. But for the love of God, I cannot think of who the other GI was who was with me. We saluted a Command Car heard a voice say, "Never mind the rain, just get in here as quick as you can." When we realized it was General Johnson himself, we were simply astonished.

"He took us right to our Barracks site, and was ever so very kind. As for us, we just knew no one would believe us. I will keep trying to remember who my other buddy was. I will keep looking through my notes and papers, and hopefully, will come up with the name of the second G.I. who was fortunate to share this beautiful experience with me.

"... Perhaps someone will come up with who tossed Col. Gibson in the pond...."

According to Bob Lehnhausen, Nick was in the hierarchy of the San Antonio School System.

Will the second GI, walking in the rain with Nick Garza please step forward and identify himself?



From Will Lundy: I tried to make the point in my ROH book, how truly unprepared the 44th and the 93rd BGs were when we arrived in late 1942. Not one man was trained in high altitude formation flying, so absolutely necessary over Occupied Europe and Germany. Our aircraft was developed for

peacetime flying at low altitudes. It seems that the only item that was developed for high altitude bombing was the Norden Bomb Sight. EVERYTHING else had to be modified, changed, replaced and learned before we had a ghost of a chance against such an up-to-date enemy.

One had to have been there, to see our men returning from those early missions, nearly half dead from cold and inadequate clothing, heaters, oxygen and failed machine guns. It is nearly a miracle that the 8th AF hung on long enough to rectify almost all equipment failures, so vital to their survival from the elements alone.



From **Robert B. Patterson, Jr.** to Robert J. Lehnhausen: "I joined the 44th Bomb Group as navigator with the Fred H. Jones replacement crew in May/June 1943. After completing six missions in Africa, I broke my elbow in a truck accident outside of Bengazi. My crew did not return from Ploesti. (The **Fred Jones** crew) After my hospitalization, I was returned to the States for elbow rehabilitation. I returned to England in early 1944 as a lead navigator with the 34th bomb Group and flew thirty-nine missions in Liberators and Flying Fortresses with that Group, including lead for the Third Division and Eighth Air Force on one occasion, for a total of forty-five missions. I then returned to the States before VE Day and became a Statistical Control Officer with the Fourth Air Force Headquarters in San Francisco. The 44th was a great group, and Col., later General, Leon Johnson was a great commanding officer.

A PRAYER REQUEST

Ruth Gibson, wife of General John H. Gibson, asks your prayers for the great General. He has just come out of the hospital, and has been placed in Hospice Care. We all pray for his comfort in this difficult time.



Borrowed from Reader's Digest: "While stationed with the Strategic Air Command, I found a memo typed on official letterhead. At the bottom of the letterhead was our motto: 'Peace is our profession.' Beneath that, someone had added: 'Bombing is only a hobby.'" David French

Traveling to Nova Scotia? You might want to look at the Greenwood Military Aviation Museum, which is housing a restored WWII RAF Lancaster.

From Don Ward: I have just finished a new book about WWII fliers and have a man from the 44th BG/66BS and one from the 67th BS profiled. Please take a look at: http://www.mpress.addr.com/s_wings.html If it is to your liking, please inform others of this site. Don Ward, 5320 E. 50th St., Minneapolis, MN 55417-1533. Phone: 612 722-7358. E-Mail: don_ward83@hotmail.com

A REQUEST FOR SOMEONE LOOKING FOR SOME 44TH BG STORIES

On behalf of his father-in-law, James Gratta, Jonathan Jesse is hoping some history buff will want to record this gentleman's colorful remembrances. As a Radio Operator, Gratta flew fourteen missions with different pilots and in several different planes from February 25, 1945 to April 25, 1945.

Anyone wishing to record his stories, his address is 14101 Cisne Circle, Ft. Pierce, FL 34949-2270. The son-in-law lives in Massachusetts, and can be reached at jhjesse@verizon.net

From Jerry Folsom: "I have old issues of the 8 BTs, from the first issues on. They are available at \$5/each. Call (801) 733-7371 or write: 3582 East Dover Hill Road, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121-5527.

E-mail: 44thbgva@xmission.com

Please inform Jerry of address changes. If you moved, if your zip code changed, if you have a new telephone number—let Jerry know. We do not want to lose any of you; we do not want you to miss a copy of the 8 Ball Tails.

Chris Clark has generously offered his 44th Bomb Group Banner to anyone who wishes to borrow it for a veteran's funeral. Thus far the banner has been to some prestigious places—Washington DC Reunion at the Doubletree, The White House, 44th BG Table at 2 AD Reunion in Philadelphia, to Arlington, honoring **Bill Cameron** and '**Mike**' **Mikoloski**, and lately to San Antonio. He only asks for reimbursement for postage, and that it be returned immediately after the funeral. Chris can be reached at 8427 Willow Glen Court, Manassas, VA 20220-4639. Tel. (703) 392-9437. E-Mail: clarkhistory@aol.com.

Stuart Wright of London has written *An Emotional Gauntlet: From Life in Peacetime America to the War in European Skies* about a B-24 crew assigned to the 453 BG, Old Buckingham, England, 1944. University of Wisconsin Press: publicity@uwpress.wisc.edu

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MESSAGE FROM SHIPDHAM

It must be summer in England, the rain is getting warmer! One aircraft recently took one and a half hours to return to base from Leicester, a 40 minute flight away. To avoid the bad weather, the pilot reported flying north, south, east and west at various points of the journey, as he dodged round the many storm cells littering east Anglia at the time. Nothing changes at Station 115.

Other than these little English peculiarities, things go on much as usual at Shipdham Airfield. Work continues apace at the museum building, and books for the library are rolling in at the rate of two or three a week. We are desperately looking for copies of the bomb squadron books, as well as Roy Owen's book and either of Ursal Harvel's works. Any leads to acquire copies of these precious

books would be gratefully received.

The training of new pilots continues within the gliding section of the club. Matthew Ladley, son of one of our more experience Glider and Tug pilots recently went solo, continuing the pattern of helping young men achieve their ambition to fly.

We plan to have an open day in August, mainly featuring the Gliding section, and hope to show the folks from the nearby towns and villages what happens at the airfield. We have a very active 'good neighbors' policy, regarding aircraft noise and nuisance. Something I guess you didn't have to contend with in your day.

Look after yourselves and remember us from time to time.

Peter



Look what is happening at Shipdham!
44th Memorabilia on display



At this time words are failing me in my attempt to thank all of you great 44thers out there who have sent letters, cards, telephoned to express your sorrow, regrets and sympathy for the quick and unexpected passing of my dear Irene. I now must thank each and every one of you most sincerely for your messages, as I was unable to do so at that time.

Also, specifically, I must thank **Bob A. Larsen**, 68th Sq. pioneer pilot, who contacted me several times in his efforts to assist others like me who are experiencing the anguish of family or close friends who are facing serious cancer. He strongly suggests that these people investigate the product Graviola (N-Tense). Contact him at bob@bribrew.com

Had it not been for Irene and her visit home to Norwich in 1972, most likely I and we (the 44th) would never have learned about the 2nd Air Division Association's activities. We joined immediately. Like so many of us 44thers, I had completely forgotten about the War, except for the letters, cards and telephone calls between my aging buddies.

Irene had met and knew so many of my Buddies in Norwich that she jumped right in at the reunions to help at the sign-in desks to welcome their arrival. It soon became a tradition for her that she thoroughly enjoyed.

To honor her memory I joined with Ray Ward, an old friend and author of "Those Brave Crews" (among others), to place many copies of this book in libraries around the country. Ray has received many honors for this book, and of late has offered a generous plan to place his book in as many libraries and Air Force Bases as possible.

Also, inquiries have been made at the 2nd ADA's Memorial Room, located in the Norwich Central Library about donating a computer, complete with Arlo Bartsch's MDB and color printer. This would help to give our 44th BG's history and Roll of Honor data much more exposure there. This seemed appropriate to me, as Irene was born and raised in Norwich. However, preliminary contacts have not proven favorable due to several factors, but I still hope these problems can be resolved.

It now has been nearly ten years since I began my efforts to revise my Roll of Honor & Casualties book, so it is well past due. Several errors were located, corrections have been made, many new stories and data have been added, new format designed by Jim Hamilton, and now a few last minute additions are yet to be made. Hopefully, these additions can be data entered by Jim early in next year, so that the cost of a new printing can be determined. We will have a limited printing made; then positively it will be placed in Arlo's Master Data Base. This final product then must be made available on the Internet through a Website or our 44th BG's Website for anyone to read and respect the great work the 44th BG did during WWII in Europe.

Will Lundy





FOLDED WINGS

*They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We shall remember them.*

Agerton, James July 29, 2003 (This death was reported in the Spring Issue of the 8 BTs, but no information was available.) Sgt. Argerton was a member of the 3rd Strategic Air Depot at Watton, England, and became a member of the 44th BGVA. His wartime assignment was repairing downed B-24s. Jim and his wife Dorothy were married 61 years. Jim became a Deputy Sheriff in Washoe County and Verdi Resident Deputy in Nevada. He and Dorothy retired in Fernley, NV in 1981. He leaves 3 children, Steve, Michael and Arvilla, 7 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Branson, James Elmer #19500 506 Sq. March 24, 2004. S/Sgt. Branson flew 33 missions, most with the **Conrad Manzel** crew, others with **D.H.Dines** and once with **Olaf Allison** as Command Pilot. His first mission was May 21, 1944; the last, August 1, 1944. He flew in eleven different A/C: *Flying Log/Pregnant Pet, Ole Cock, Consolidated Mess, My Everlovin' Gal, Feudin Wagon, Southern Comfort II, Passion Pit, Down De Hatch, M'Darling, My Peach and Joplin Jalopy*. On one mission he sustained an injury and was awarded the Purple Heart. After service, Branson attended Guilford College and became an institutional food broker. He and his wife, Nancy and their children Tyler and Devin resided in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Church, William D. #19751 67th Squadron. Date unknown. 1st. Lt. Church was the co-pilot on the **Charles H. Mercer** crew. On one mission he flew with the **Robert C. Schmidt**

crew. His first mission was March 23, 1944, his last, June 22, 1944. In his 31 missions he flew in *Lil Cookie, Glory Bee, Black Sheep, Phyllis, Mary Harriet* and *Feudin' Wagon*. He lived in Richmond, Virginia.

Clements, James #19777 506 Sq. May 16, 2000 Capt. Clements went to the United Kingdom in July 1943. He flew 37 missions, his first on November 13, 1943, his last on April 18, 1945. As a 1st. Lt. he flew his early missions in *M'Darling*. On March 6 he flew Group Deputy Lead on the first daylight raid on Berlin. Other targets were Bremen, Ludwigshaven, Kiel, Gotha, Brunswick. In April 1944 he had risen to the rank of Captain, and was flying as the lead crew, with Command Pilots **Sylvester Hunn, David Saylor, Addison Davis, Eugene Snavelly, Dale Benadom, Marion Tiemeris, A.T. Reed, J.G. Merrell, Joy Smith** and **Charles Hughes**. On the mission to Bielefeld, 9/26/44, Clements was Command Pilot. During this period the Air Corps was knocking out bridges, tunnels, marshalling yards and railroads, curtailing German progress in their march to the homeland, and providing access for the Allied troops to move forward. Clements is recognized for training many pilots who later distinguished themselves after receiving his excellent teachings. On completion of his first tour, he returned to the USA on leave, then returned to the UK for a second tour. He retired from the USAF Reserve in 1981 as Lt. Col. Among his honors are: Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, ETO with 6 Battle Stars.



FOLDED WINGS

Comstock, Jack F. #19814 March 2004 68th Sq. 1st Lt. Comstock flew his first mission February 22, 1945, safely piloting his crew through 16 missions. The war was drawing to a close, so most of his missions were aimed at German troops who were rushing to defend the homeland. Lt. Comstock piloted *Jose Carioca*, *Black Sheep*, *Lady Geraldine* and other unnamed A/C. His last mission was April 18, 1945; he returned to the ZOI in May.

Comstock remained in the service. He flew in the Berlin Airlift and in an observation plane during the atomic test at Eniwetok. At the time of his death, he was residing in Gulf Breeze, Florida.

Confer, Louis Charles #19818 506 Sq. & 489th BG June 15, 2004. 1st. Lt. Confer flew 2 missions in the 489th before moving to the 44th. His first mission with the 44th was November 21, 1944, flying as co-pilot with **George Insley** in *Gallavantin' Gal*. The next thirteen missions he flew as pilot in such known A/C as *Sabrina III*, *Gypsy Queen*, *Clean Sweep/Dragon Nose* and *Down De Hatch*. His last mission was February 6, 1945. After the war he became an aero research flight test officer, flying in B-29s in the Korean conflict. Confer rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. His last assignment was to the Bomber Branch, Flight Test Directorate Deputy for Test and Engineering and Air Force Special Weapons Center. He maintained the Center Nuclear Test Crews at a high state of awareness. Additionally, he personally participated in numerous serial flights which were instrumental in refining and developing new techniques of weapon delivery. He was interred at Sam Houston National Cemetery. Lt. Confer the pilot for Chris Clark's Uncle Frank, who was the inspiration for this young man to start researching the history of the 44th Bomb Group.

Dye, Gorman #20082 67th Sq., March 9, 2004 S/Sgt. Gorman flew as a Ball Turret Gunner, Nose Gunner/Toggler and Tail Gunner on the **Ernest Kyle** crew. He flew 13 missions, between February 16, 1945 and April 20, 1945. The crew flew in *Mi Akin Ass* and *Lady Fifi Nella* and many unnamed planes. He and his wife Ellen resided in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Heskett, Donald #20640 66th Sq. 2003 1st. Lt. Heskett was assigned as a replacement crew for Ploesti, his first mission August 21, 1943. He piloted two missions in Italy, the rest from Shipdham to Norway, France and Germany, flying most in *Jersey Jerk*. On a mission to Ludwigshaven, December 30, 1943, *Bull O' The Woods* was attacked by fighters and the plane crashed. Heskett and his crew bailed out, eight evaded; two KIA; one evadee became POW. Heskett was able to evade by walking through Portugal.

Hill, Harold #20666 68th Sq. May 19, 2004 M/Sgt. Hill AKA "Pappy" was a Crew Chief for the 68th Sq. He worked on several planes, including *Lil Marlene* and *Avenger*. He arrived on the Queen Mary September 5, 1942. As Crew Chief, he went with both teams to Africa, first for the low level crews that went to Ploesti, later to support the invasion of Sicily. After that, he remained in Shipdham until May 30, 1945, returning to America on a new Loran equipped B-24, piloted by Lt. Col. Robert J. Lehnhausen. He was considered one of the top crew chiefs in the 68th. His home town was Minneapolis, MN.



FOLDED WINGS

Hughes, James L. #20749 67th Sq. Hughes was a Radar Technician, serving from 1944 until V E Day. After the war he was employed as a salesman with the Prudential Insurance Company, later in administration with Hughes Business Technology. Hughes and his wife Joy lived in Rockford, Illinois. They had fifteen children, nine girls and 6 boys.

Keyes, Robert #20915 67th Sq. September 25, 2004 Capt. Keyes was a co-pilot on the **Christopher Spagnola** crew. His first mission was on August 26, 1944; his last, February 16, 1945. He flew *Mi Akin Ass* and *Judy's Buggy*, and in many other unnamed planes. On several occasions he flew on the *Newton Condray* and *O. Collins* crews, on one occasion as Bombardier, another as Nose Gunner/Toggler. After he completed his missions as a 1st Lieutenant, he became a pilot in the Air Transport Command, transporting Air Force VIPs to various destinations. He and his wife Marie resided in Bayside, New York.

Kopko, Edward E. (Dutch) #20970 68th Sq. July 27, 2004 Ed Kopko was one of the 68th Squadron's most fabled young airmen. With his crew he joined the 44th two days after Ploesti. This bold, cocky teen age gunner completed his first tour of combat on April 24, 1944. On this mission he shot down and was credited with the destruction of a German 262 jet—the only one ever shot down by the Squadron. Having successfully completed his required missions, he volunteered for a second tour. After ZOI leave he began the second tour. For a time he was on detached service to the 467th Group as a gunnery instructor. Upon return to the 68th, he checked out as a flight engineer and flew most of his additional 17 missions with the **Gerald Lindsay** crew. After VE day, he was one of two 8th AF airmen chosen to accom-

pany Gen. "Tooley" Spaatz on the General's triumphant return to the States. This was the highlight of his military career. "Dutch" and his lovely wife Grace have participated in all of the 44th BGVA activities. While Ed was not a 'war lover', he was as man of uncommon courage. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, August 16, 2004.

Matters, Elwood #21228 506 Sq. December 1, 2002 M/Sgt. Matters was a Waist Gunner on the **Richard Habedank** crew. He flew 26 missions, the first on Sept. 11, 1944. He was wounded on the low level supply drop on Sept. 18, 1944 at Best, Holland, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart. Due to his wounds, his crew finished their tour ahead of him. His last two missions were with the **Thomas McKenna** and **Emmett Burns** crews. Matters flew in six different A/C: *Consolidated Mess, Chief's Delight/Chief Wapello, Sierra Blanca, Jose Carioca, Missouri Belle/Missouri Sue* and *The Big Headed Kid*. His last mission was April 4, 1945, just days before the air war ended. He died at age 83 in Northumberland, PA, where he and his family lived after the War.

Olpin, Harold, MD #21560 67th Sq. March 4, 2004 1st Lt. Olpin was a Bombardier on the **John Mueller** crew; his first mission was April 8, 1944. On D-Day he flew two missions to Colleville, St. Laurent, later to Caen, protecting the action that was taking place at Normandy. He flew a total of 32 missions in *Mary Harriet, Old Iron Corset, Fifinella* and many unnamed A/C. His last mission was July 25, 1944. After the War Olpin went into medicine, specializing in Anesthesiology. He and his wife of 60 years, Karroll, resided in Walnut Creek, California. They had 6 sons and one daughter.

FOLDED WINGS

Parks, David Reid # 25813 67th Sq. January 14, 2003 Sgt. Parks flew 11 missions, the first March 12, 1945; the last, April 18, 1945. He was the Nose Gunner and Toggler on the **Roger Markel** crew. The war was drawing to a close, and the crew flew in a number of different planes: *Mi Akin Ass, Old Iron Corset, Missouri Belle/Missouri Sue, Lady Fifi Nella* and *One Weakness*. He is survived by his wife Shirley of 53 years, 3 daughters, Carol Mesmer, Deborah Dernoga and Suzanne Huber, all of Wilmington, Delaware, five grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Shook, Carl C. #22029 506 Sq. August, 2004 T/Sgt. Shook flew 44 missions, most as Radio Operator and Gunner on the **Jim Clements** crew, but at various times, with ten other pilots. His first mission was October 10, 1943; his last, January 13, 1945 and included such targets as Kjeller, Kiel, Ecalles Sur Buchy and Berlin. Shook flew in *M'Darling, Puritanical Bitch, Jose Carioca, Prince/Princess, Sabrina III, Down De Hatch, Clean Sweep/Dragon Nose* and *Gypsy Queen*, sometimes serving as Ball Turret Gunner, Waist Gunner or in other positions. He and his wife Lynda resided in Columbus, Indiana.

Telford, George D. #22277 May 23, 2004 66th Squadron Lt. Telford completed 24 missions, his first December 22, 1943. He was shot down on March 18, 1944 on a mission to Friedrichshaven. The B-24s were making a second pass over enemy aircraft factory to avoid B-17s, a few thousand feet below when they were hit by flak. They escaped into Switzerland, but were able to escape on September 25, 1944. The Telford crew flew *Scourge of the Skies, Lemon Drop, Queen Marlene, Big Fat Butterfly, Chief's Delight/Chief Wapello* and many unnamed planes.

Telford is survived by his wife of over 60 years, Geneva (Nem) Telford, a daughter Marcia Scattergood and son, Mark Telford.

Ed. Note: Tragically, our list of Folded Wings grows longer each year. Most have not recorded their personal experiences of the War. Have you done yours? If not, don't put it off any longer. Call me. I'll send you an application. 717 846-8948





Christmas in Shipdham, 1944

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