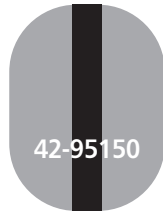


44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS

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PASSION PIT

Passion Pit #42-95150 arrived in Shipdham in March 1944, and was assigned to the 506th Squadron. She flew a total of 43 missions with 15 different crews. The crews of **Eustice Hawkins, John C. Titter, Fred E. Stone, John Milliken, John Doctor, Norman Howe, Conrad Menzel, Richard Hruby, H. K. Bennett, Norman Bartlett and Gilbert Abell. J. N. McFadden** flew as Command Pilot with **H. K. Landahl** on the first D-Day Mission. Eustice Hawkins piloted the second mission that day.

After D-Day, all efforts were to keep German troops from assisting fellow soldiers at Normandy. One of the bloodiest battles transpired at the Falaise Pocket, where Generals Bradley and Patton managed to entrap

thousands of German soldiers. To strengthen their position, they called on the Air Corps to bomb the areas where Germans were trying to break through.

The date was 13 August 1944. Twenty five planes were dispatched, *Passion Pit* among them. Flak was heavy and accurate; # 1 and 2 engines burst into flame. The Milliken crew escaped the plane just in time.



Passion Pit afire at the Falaise Pocket.
Flak explosion overhead.

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John McClane, Navigator on the **Charles D. Peretti** crew (68th Squadron), saw *Passion Pit* fall out of formation, followed by a monstrous explosion. He described the frightening scene, "The engines were torn from the wings and went tumbling through the sky with their props wind milling as they fell in a large linear arc. The wings, fuselage and tail were torn to shreds."The pieces of aluminum drifted and twisted while they were falling. With each turn the sun would reflect off their surfaces back into my eyes, as if they were mirrors. But the most spectacular sight was the fuel cells which had been torn from the wings. They did not explode their gasoline, but rather, they burned in huge orange tongues of flames streaming out behind the cells as they fell in a wavy fashion toward the earth."

At the road junctions between Le Havre and Rouen, France, the crew of *Passion Pit* fell into German-held territory and all became POWs

THE CREW OF PASSION PIT ONE EVADEE, ONE POW WHO EVADED, EIGHT POWS

Ironically, on August 13, the order came down that 31 missions would be sufficient for crews to return home. This was the 31st for the Milliken crew; but instead, they were on their way to their new dwelling—prison.

Together they were herded into a canvas-top truck for transportation from France to Germany. **John Milliken**, pilot, was able to hide a knife from his captors. At one point, he slashed a hole in the canvas and slipped off the truck, rolled into the bushes and eluded the German guards who would have shot him on the spot. He walked many miles and sometimes hung out in a cow pasture until a British force came through. They helped him make it back to Shipdham, unscathed.

The rest were questioned in Paris, then sent by box car to Frankfurt. While sitting with **Irwin Stovroff**, Bombardier, Co-Pilot **William Manierre**, noticed another prisoner who kept staring at the two of them. Neither could figure out why the man was looking so intently. Suddenly they connected – it was Manierre's



Front L-R **Jack Bertoli**, Navigator; **Irwin Stovroff**, Bombardier, **John Milliken**, Pilot.
Back: **Darrel Larsen**, LW Gunner; **Martin Richard**, Engineer/Gunner; **Gilbert Yarbrough**, Tail Gunner; **Kenneth Beckwith**, Radio operator; and **Morris Larkin**, Tail Gunner.

brother Cy. Cy had been dropped by a plane to the French Underground. He had been aiding the Marquis in blowing up trains; and along with others, was to be shot as a spy. Only a coincidence of fate kept him alive, to join his brother at Stalag Luft IV.

Darell Larsen, LWG, remembers the ride from Paris to Frankfurt in the box car. "They put 50 or 60 in the car with only one window for ventilation. We took turns standing or sitting, as there wasn't enough room for everyone to sit. "Our interrogators at Frankfurt were from the Gestapo. One was a graduate of Yale; the other graduated from Harvard. Their story was that they came to Germany for a visit and in their words, 'got trapped.' The enlisted men were separated from the officers, and we got sent to Stalag Luft IV. Several months later, the Russians were approaching, so the Germans started us marching back toward Germany.

Larsen's Escape

"At the Oder River near Stetein, with the help of some Polish slave laborers, I got across on a barge. Along with two RAF pilots, we managed to reach the British lines. American Intelligence Officers got us to London where we were placed in the 7th Hospital. They fed us and de-liced us, and brought us back to health.

"The Brits found us to be a problem. Sometimes we would sneak off and get drunk; and what was worse, took their bikes. They solved the problem by hiding our clothes."

Larsen went by boat from London to East Anglia, back to Shipdham, then home to California where he was discharged. He celebrated VJ Day in Hollywood.

Martin Richard (Engineer/Top Turret Gunner) remembers arriving in Paris as a POW. The Germans paraded the prisoners through town, proud to show off their captives.

The Gestapo agent who interrogated

Richard was a Yale graduate. Unimaginable but true, he sang "Yankee Doodle Dandy" to his prisoner.

"I felt they were playing mind games with us," Richard recalled. "They would ask the same question over and over, hoping we would say something more than name, rank and serial number. All of their mannerisms were very threatening."

From there the prisoners were moved to a convent which had ten foot walls. Here was the next threat, 'If one of you escapes, we will kill 15 or 20 of those who are left.'

Stalag Luft IV was in Poland, near the town of Grostychow. Richard remembers that someone in the camp secretly rigged up a radio. Progress of the war traveled quickly by softly spoken words. In January the Russians were nearing the outpost, so all the *kregies* were marched out. This was January. They walked for three months along the Baltic Sea, close to Kiel, sleeping in barns or in the open, filthy dirty and full of lice. At one point they marched along the east side of Berlin, almost to Leipzig. Finally they met the British troops, which was the beginning of their trip home.

Irwin Stovroff had a truly unique experience. Being Jewish, he threw away his dog tags; and when questioned, answered only with his name, rank and serial number. In Frankfurt, his interrogator said, "Since you won't tell me about yourself, I will tell you about you.

I know who you are, and I know what you are, (meaning Jewish). He proceeded to name my father, mother, sister and brother. He knew the school I attended in Buffalo, and the name of a girl I had dated."

"How can you know that?" I gasped.

"You were my paper boy when I lived in Buffalo," he replied. It seems that the Luftwaffe officer had come to Germany to visit his grandmother, and was drafted. The officer promised to help Stovroff. On his written report he placed a question



Irwin Stovroff
and his Vet Dog

mark under religion, but it was no help.

At one point, the German captors decided to separate the Jewish prisoners from the group. They ordered all Jews to step forward, whereupon the entire group stepped forward. However, it did not take long for the

Germans to find out who was Jewish. They separated them, in preparation for execution. Their lives were saved by an American army officer, Col. Zemke, who told the commandant, "If you execute the Jewish prisoners, you will be held accountable after the war." Apparently the possibility of losing the war was a strong enough deterrent to change the prison's policy.

Stovroff, William Manierre (Co-Pilot) and **Bert Bartoli** (Navigator) were all released at the same time.

What does one do after being face to face with almost certain death?

Irwin Stovroff became a Service Officer, helping ex-POWs who needed a helping hand. He continued this practice for years until the Iraq War. Then he found that POWs did not arrive from Iraq: the Iraqis did not take prisoners—they chopped off their heads!

Stovroff and his associates turned to another need—Seeing Eye Dogs for blinded soldiers. Later it became apparent that Service Dogs could be trained to care for men in wheelchairs. They walk alongside the chair, lead the way across streets and assume the

responsibility of keeping their charges safe. This requires money. At first he paid out of his own pocket, but seeing the great need, he began a fundraising project. So far he has raised over two million dollars. He needed much more help, so he started writing to Congressmen, describing the size of the problem and the need for help to solve it. Finally, Representative Rod Klein introduced a Bill in Congress, "Gift for Life". Every member of the House put the Defense Authorization Act 2010 to the top of the list, and help is now available. In October President Obama signed the bill into law.

In his report, Representative Klein applauded Stovroff's efforts, pointing out that a single man with absolute determination, has corrected a major problem in our society.

It is no secret that dogs are man's best friend. Stovroff took full advantage of that known fact, and a lot of disabled veterans are grateful for his foresight. His Web Site is www.Vetshelpingheroes.org

*In Frankfurt the crew of **Passion Pit** met **Bill Topping**, Bombardier on *Bad Penny*. He was a member of the *Leroy Hansen crew, 67th Squadron*. They got shot down on their first mission to *Bremen, 13 November 1943*.*

*While the crew of **Passion Pit** were going through a frightening experience, on the German side, things were worse. With the growing weakness of the German response to D-Day, Field Marshall Gunther Von Kluge was ordered back to Berlin. Knowing Hitler would certainly put him to death, he chose to commit suicide. The Allied victory at the Falaise pocket was so successful, the area became a killing field – one of the most intense and vicious battles of the war.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Here we are in mid February in Tampa-- wondering if warm weather is ever going to arrive! We do not complain, however, seeing what those of you, north of here are experiencing!!

Jackie Roberts reports that 2010 dues are coming in. Some 370 dues notices were sent out and she has had some 260 returns. Just a reminder to those 100 or so who have not yet sent them in. Also a reminder to report any changes in addresses, etc. to Jackie.

We have some exciting news. **Roy Owen**, our late president, had a dream of getting an Air Force Unit with a 44th designation so that our heritage would be carried on in the active duty Air Force. In January, Roger Fenton received an e-mail from Col. Kent Furman, a Squadron Commander at Holloman Air Force Base in Alamogordo New Mexico. **A 44th Fighter Group was being activated!** They are looking for memorabilia of the 44th

Bomb Group and want to invite some 44th veterans to an Activation Ceremony. Details are not yet formalized. The 44th Fighter group has one squadron of F-22's and another squadron will be flying unmanned aircraft! We are all excited to see Roy's dream come true and sad that he is not with us to see it happen.

We spent New Year's in Norfolk, England., and had a short visit with Eric King and Dru Forsdick. Eric was a farm worker during the war and befriended several 44thers. He has many stories about the old days. We also got to see Peter and Margaret Steele , who came to our Tampa Reunion last year. Peter is the Curator of the 44th Museum at the airfield. A short visit to

Shipdham found quite a bit of activity on a cold, clear day . We met several old friends there- Geoff Draycott, who wrote that "Salute to the Eighth" poem that appeared in the Summer 2008 Ball Tails; Chris Barrett- young glider pilot and collector, who helps with the museum; and Mike Atherton, who did much on the Memorial Garden.

We managed to get home after only a one day delay due to the biggest snow storm in memory near London- 15 inches!!! Also the coldest in England for many years!! I am sure we will all welcome spring.

George Washburn

"For once you have tasted flight, you will walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward; for there you have been, and there you will long to return."

This quote from the 49th Fighter Squadron's Publication, The Hangman's News. The editor attributes this statement to Leonardo DaVinci – who only dreamed of flying.

LETTER FROM SHIPDHAM

By Peter Bodle



Like most parts of the Northern hemisphere, we at Shipdham had a very traditional white winter with more than our fair share of Ice and Snow. All of which meant that the flying activities over the winter have been slower than in previous years. On a personal note, I have edited my last Shipdham Flying Club monthly newsletter and handed it on to Lauren Bean our new editor. Lauren is one of the new crop of young pilots who are starting to take an active part in the running and administration of the club and its activities. Another teenage pilot who is 'getting involved' is Chris Barrett who I have mentioned before, as one of the Museum's Assistant Curators, helping Peter Steele and myself with upholding the memory of the 44th. With an active team of younger folk getting this involved, the future for the club and the museum looks very promising.

We are aware that the passing of time does not make return trips to your old station any easier, so we are delighted to note that a visit is being arranged for Arthur (Art) Holt (66 Sq.). Art was a 1st Lieutenant, and Bombardier who flew 29 missions with the 44th starting with the raid on the Juvincourt Aerodrome in Jail Bait on Sat August 12th 1944 and ending with The Brunswick Marshalling Yard raid on Sat March 31st 1945 in **44-49356**. He also flew in **Big Time Operator** (12 missions), **King Pin**, **The Big Headed Kid**, and **Loco Moto**, as well as numerous un-named aircraft. Art is expected to be with us in mid summer. If any other folks are thinking of making the trip, please let us know and we will ensure you a traditional Shipdham welcome. I will no doubt report back to you all on his visit in a later edition of 'Tails'.
peter@bodle.demon.co.uk is my e-mail and gliding.steele@btinternet.com is Peter Steele's. Please drop us a note, even if it is at the last minute, we will be delighted to meet up with you and show you round.

Despite the recent economic woes, the membership levels at Shipdham Flying Club have remained constant and we can still boast over 100 active members, which for a rural G.A. flying club in the UK., is pretty darned good. A recent major clearing -up and thinning out session in the hangar will allow us to house a couple of more aircraft and that way boost the club's income without adding too much of a strain on individual members wallets, although private flying has never exactly been a low cost hobby.

The Museum team have had a pretty successful year with a couple of hundred pounds being dropped into the donation box by the entrance.

Considering we only 'officially' open for 8 Sundays a year, that struck us as a pretty good sum to help run and expand the operation and continue to look after what we already have on display.

Like you we all look forward to the arrival of spring and for us, the start of both the Museum season and the prime flying time for the club.

Best wishes as always from Shipdham.
Peter Bodle

GOOD NEWS

More than a year ago, Lee Aston came up with a design for a 44th Bomb Group Monument which we hoped we could place in the Courtyard at the Army Heritage Education Center in Carlisle. As it happens, Lee has a piece of property that is full of granite, and he was willing to donate a chunk to this noble goal.

Lee has created other monuments for other causes—such as kinfolk from the Revolutionary War era, and a plaque for the Control Tower at Shipdham. Lee had the connections to have the stone picked up, transported, and carved to our specifications.

With the help of **Will Lundy's** book, Bob and Liz **Lehnhausen** figured out how many men served in the 44th ; how many air crews were shot down; and the number of KIAs, POWs, and WIAs. On the back of the monument are the names of the two men who received the Medal of Honor – **Leon Johnson** and **Leon Vance**; and the two missions that earned the Presidential Citation – Kiel and Ploesti.

Mike Perry, Executive Director of the Heritage Center Foundation, approved the design, but assured us that every monument must meet the approval of the Secretary of the Army, which means—

going through a lot of committees! However, he told us where to start, and gave us reports on its progress through the system.

Then, one day the Secretary of the Army wrote me a letter, approving the monument. It will be set in place and unveiled at the Army Heritage Celebration on Armed Forces Day. What could be more appropriate than that the history of the 44th Bomb Group should be locked in stone? We have a special location where it will be set, so if your children, grandchildren or great grandchildren ever walk the Trail in the Army Heritage Courtyard, they will see your rock-solid history along the way.

The unveiling will be held on May 16, 2010 at 2:00 PM, and **you are invited to join the ceremony.** Simultaneously, AHEC will be celebrating Army Heritage Day, and 5,000 people are expected to be walking the Trail and viewing the collection of army memorabilia from many wars.

If you decide to attend the unveiling, please let me know. It is important to know how many 44thers will be attending the ceremony. Call me at 717 846-8948 or send me an e-mail rdavismorse@aol.com.

Everyone is invited to attend the unveiling. If you plan to join the group, please let me know. They expect a lot of people there, and want to know how many will be with the 44th BG.. Call me at 717 846-8948.



FROM THE DIARY OF BOB BLAKENEY

Radio Operator/Gunner on Black Sheep
(On his first and only mission, Foggia 16 August 1943)

Flying with **Carl Hager**, Pilot; **Robert Pimentel**, Co-Pilot; **Wallace Blake**, Navigator, **John Mills**, Bombardier, **Howard Woods**, Radio Operator/Gunner; **Isabelino Dones**, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; **Francis Curry**, Engineer/Gunner; **Henry Farley**, Waist Gunner and **J. A. Hess**, Tail Gunner

"About 125 to 150 B-24s took off in the early morning hours, with our plane the tail-end of a 4 plane diamond formation. Our pilot this day was **Robert F. Pimentel**, who had more experience than our regular pilot, **Carl Hager**, who for this mission, flew in the right seat.

We checked the plane, loaded the bombs and checked the ammo – then took off, Circle D and joined up with the group formation. We were flying a diamond formation, with our plane being the tail of that diamond.

Over the sea, after we had been flying for several hours, each plane dropped from the formation and we test-fired all our .50 calibers. **J. A. Hess (Tail Gunner)** was loading his gun when he accidentally pulled the ammo box off, and all his ammo went onto the floor. He reported this to the pilot, and **Francis Curry (Engineer)** came back to hand feed Hess's gun as we neared the target.

About 20 minutes or so before we reached the target at Foggia, we saw Ack-Ack, but don't believe it hit any of the planes.

Thereafter, we saw German fighter planes all over the place. They were mixed Me-109s and FW 190s, and my guess is that there were over a hundred of them. Almost before we knew it, our right inboard (#3) engine was on fire.

I told Hess and our pilot about it, that it was flaming and smoking, so Hager finally feathered it.

All of a sudden, the fighters seemed to pick on us. Hess hollered that B-24s were going down on his side. It was horrible to see a B-24 go straight down around and around, so we yelled for the guys to bail out. Six to eight of our 24's suffered the same fate. On my right, one of the planes in our formation dropped back to fly parallel with us. Next thing I saw was the crew in the back of this plane jumping out, their chutes opening.

Just before they bailed out, two German fighters came at us from the right and rear, so everyone was shooting back at them. They came in so close, I could see the pilots' faces for a second or two.

Anyhow, all the guns on the right side and tail of our '24 and the plane next to us were shooting at these two fighters, making one of them drop off.

I saw it smoking as it went down, and the pilot bailed out. But they had hit us, too, and our other inboard (#2) engine was on fire.

Then 3 or 4 fighters attacked two of our planes directly from the rear. I heard **Henry Farley (Waist Gunner)** yell over the intercom from his tail turret, because a fighter had hit his turret, peppering him with Plexiglas. Later, I saw him with Plexiglas in his face, and he was bleeding badly. His guns were not damaged, but the turret would not turn to follow the attackers.

All this time everyone was firing at these fighters, and one went down, smoking. And in the adjacent plane to ours, I saw the crew go out the waist windows. This plane was on fire, too.

Bombs out but fighters in waiting

By now we had dropped our bombs and were heading out from the target, when the fighters swarmed in on us

...continued on page 9

again. They shot down another '24 close to us while we were hollering over the intercom to have our pilots maneuver up or down to avoid the attacking fighters.

By this time we had a third engine on fire and the wing was smoking. I tried to get the tail turret going, but had no success. **Francis Curry** (*Engineer*) was called up to the front of the plane by Pimentel or Hager, to help with the feathering buttons. We could see holes in the plane from the hits they had been taking, but miraculously, no one had been wounded. We all felt ourselves to make sure we were okay.

It seemed that the fighters followed us for a long time. I cannot remember how long, but when they finally left, "**Rene**" **Dones** (*Right Waist Gunner*) came to the back of the plane, because the pilot had told us to put on our chutes – and to throw out everything we could to keep our altitude. But we kept dropping, even though we tossed everything loose overboard – guns, ammo, etc.

As we were doing this, Hess, who always was the nervous one, yelled that we should jump. We were going down gradually, but it was too late for that, as we were already too low over the water. Besides, I did not relish the idea of jumping into the water. Of course we all had been ready to jump if we got the pilot's signal, but now it was too late to bail out. We went into steeper dive, and Hess hollered that we were going to crash. I heard a bell sound, so we in the rear, Hess, Dones, Farley and myself—started to brace ourselves for the inevitable.

The Crash

We learned later that we had had no flaps, the wheels were up, and we hit the ground at about 150 to 160 mph. Hager and Pimentel made a tremendous landing on the beach in Reggio Calabria, but we did not know where we were at that time.

When we hit the beach, the sand broke through the bomb bay doors and flew all over the plane. The doors came off and slammed into us, but fortunately it only hit our legs. Hess got whacked on his head by a door, putting a hole in his head that bled for hours. Farley got knocked down and injured, but not seriously. Dones and I were not touched.

When the plane had almost stopped, we heard an explosion that blew out the bomb bay area. There was no immediate fire, however, just that explosion.

When the plane came to a halt, Hess was the first one out of the plane, yelling for us to follow him. We had no idea what had happened in the front of the plane until we all got out from the back. Then we saw that the whole front section of the plane was on fire.

Dones and I tried to go through the bomb bay to help our guys in the front, but by then the flames were everywhere and very hot. We were forced back, then removed our parachutes, but kept the packs as we exited the wreck.

We found that Hess and Farley had moved away because they thought the plane was going to explode. But as we were leaving to join them, we heard someone call from the front to the plane. We ran to the front to find Lt. Hager alone – he was the only one from the front to get out. He had taken off his flight jacket, Mae West and parachute in order to wriggle out the open side window. He told us that he heard the guys in the nose section screaming as the flames engulfed them. He had told **Pimentel** (*Co-Pilot*) to take off his gear and go out his side window, but there wasn't time enough. The flames were too severe. He didn't make it.

We helped Hager out and away because he was badly burned in the face and hands. His ears were really scorched, and he was in intense pain.

We had to abandon all efforts to free the others, as the flames were consuming

what was left of our plane. We heard nothing from inside.

So five of us had managed to escape – Hager badly burned, Hess still bleeding from his head wound, Farley bleeding from his many facial wounds, plexiglass still embedded in some, while Dones and myself were in pretty good shape. None of us knew just where we were, but we saw a farmer coming down a dirt road nearby with a cart pulled by an ox, I think. We yelled and he waited for us, so that we could load Hager and Hess, who thought he was dying. We tried to halt Hess's bleeding, finally slowing it down a bit. He was weak, though, from the loss of blood. Farley was very excited. But we could hardly touch Hager to help him, as his burns were so painful.

Captured

About this time we got on the back of the open wagon to ride for help. Then soldiers came down the road in a truck. We learned they were Italian soldiers, who took us into town; Cantanzaro, I think, in Reggio Calabria, which is the toe of Italy.

They put us in a room that was free of any furniture; and there we met a very angry, small round, and completely bald Italian Colonel. There were about eight to ten soldiers with him, too.

Instead of applying first aid, or trying to help Hager and Hess, the Colonel pointed out numerous bullet holes in the wall of the room where our fighters had strafed the place a night or two earlier. The Colonel was mad and started to ask questions in Italian.

Luckily, Dones spoke Spanish, and I understood most of what the Colonel said due to my knowledge of French. So Dones and I exchanged our interpretations with glances and gestures. Later, when we knew the Italians did not know English, we told the rest of the fellows what was said.

The Colonel kept insisting we tell him where we came from, the kind of plane we were on, how many planes, what was the target, and all of the usual military questions. But when he got no satisfaction from any of us, he began to gesture that he was going to slit our throats and have us shot. I told him to go to Hell—and Dones swore at him often. Of course, he did not know what we were saying, so when a question was asked, I'd tell him to jump in a lake, and Dones kept up his swearing at him. This went on for over two hours with the Colonel becoming more frustrated, mad as Hell. He again gestured that he was going to have us shot.

During all of this time, Lt. Hager got no medical attention. I kept asking for a doctor by pointing to Carl and gesturing for medicine and bandages. They apparently had neither. John Hess's head wound finally stopped bleeding, and I could see he had a hole as round as a dime in his head.

At some point, I'd guess about 5 or 6 pm, we were told to march into the street and led over and up stairs into another building and locked in. It had a slanted wooden partition on the floor, so I helped Hager while Dones helped Hess to lay down and to get them more comfortable. Hager had been in bad shock almost from the time he got out of the plane, so needed all the assistance we could give him.

We still had our parachute packs which had emergency rations in them. The irate Colonel was so emotional, he forgot to have us searched, or the packs. So we gave both Hager and Hess some chocolate. I cannot recall everything in the packs, but there large pieces of chocolate, sugar candy, etc. But Hager was in such pain that he could not sleep. I put my flight jacket under his head, but the poor guy was still in agony, no way to relieve him of his pain.

Dones, Farley and I talked about what we thought they were going to do with us. We must only give our name, rank and serial number. Farley was afraid they were going to shoot us, but Dones and I tried to assure him that they wouldn't.

Later, perhaps 8 to 9 pm, we heard the guards come up the stairs to get us. Fortunately, they only came to get us to feed us. I wanted one of us to stay with Lt. Hager, but they insisted that all of us go downstairs with them. I don't know what the food was, but it was okay, and we all were starved.

Our guards tried to talk with us again when one of them started talking in French. I knew what he was saying, so tried to whisper it to the others. Somebody came in, bringing some bandages and a sort of salve or lotion—at long last!

Burn Care

I experimented with the salve or lotion, first by applying it to Hager's hand, to see what his reaction might be. The soldier in charge began blabbing to me, and I gathered he thought I didn't trust them to give Carl the right medicine – he was right. Anyway, Carl stammered that the hand was okay after I had put the stuff on it, so we did his face as gently as possible. But to just touch his hand, face and ears caused him to moan in pain. I'll tell you, I never in my life saw a guy with the courage Carl through all the pain his burns caused him throughout this ordeal.

I think he was in shock for several days. Every time it was necessary to change his bandages and I had to remove the old, it almost killed him. Of course, this would open his wounds again. There was pus coming out of the blisters, especially with his ears – they were the worst.

After we finished our first meal, they took us back to the upstairs room and locked us in again. Carl got sick at his

stomach; then we used whatever clothing we had to serve as his bedding. The rest of us slept on the concrete floor, mostly sitting up against a wall. No one slept well, because either John or Carl kept moving or moaning. There were no facilities such as a bathroom, either, and the two windows had bars on them. In the very early morning I told Dones and Farley that I was going to try to get the 'Eyties' to take Carl and John to a hospital. I didn't know where they were going to take us next, but Lt. Hager, especially needed medical care immediately. We had some medication, sulfur or some other compound in our packs, but we used all of it the first night. Dones and Farley were sure that Eyties wouldn't know what we were asking for, but to hell with it. I was going to try. I said I'd talk in French to the Sergeant, and he'd understand. We agreed that both the Sergeant and the Colonel would be damned mad when they learned I understood the Sergeant's French the day before, but Hager simply had to have help. So we agreed with my plan.

Again the soldiers came to get us, took us down to breakfast. Hess was so weak, we had to help both him and Carl. Downstairs the same Sergeant was waiting, and I asked him in my best French, "Avez vous un hospital? And pointed to Carl and John.

The Sergeant was surprised, no doubt, but instead of running over to get the Colonel, he asked me if I spoke French, and said something about the Colonel being mad if he found out. Fortunately, the Sergeant had some compassion and did not send for the Colonel. He used French to inform me that there was a hospital, but in another town.

Carl didn't want to leave us, even though I told him that John Hess would go with him to the hospital. He still refused to go, so all we could do was try to get the dirty bandages off ourselves

and put clean ones on. It was slow and painful, to say the least.

'Breakfast' was a cup of coffee and some stale bread, then back to our cell. The guards returned again about noon and loaded us into one truck with an Italian driver and four guards. I don't remember now, the name of the town where we stopped for the night, but I know we were on the road all afternoon and most of the night. On the way, we went up and down and around mountains and hills. The driver was always talking to the guard with him, and he was a lousy driver. It was scary because there no rails on the side of those roads.

During the ride, we still had our parachute packs with us and, fortunately, there were chocolate bars and sweets in them. We were able to sneak them out of the packs without being seen. Half the time, one or two of our guards were asleep anyway. We talked of jumping off the truck – and I think we probably had some good opportunities, but with Hager and Hess, could not get far even if we did escape. But we talked of getting away if the chance came up later when Carl and John felt better.

Our Next Quarters

We finally arrived at this town, name unknown, and drove about one half mile out of it to a stone building. They made us get out, and frankly, we were relieved to get out. They put us in one room that looked and felt like a dungeon because it was down in the basement of the building. It could have had a dirt floor or cement with hay scattered over it. There was a hole in the ground at one end, and obviously, this was the toilet. It stunk!

Locked in, we got nothing to eat. I tried to make Carl as comfortable as possible, but he sure was in bad shape. Evidently, due to his extreme pain at all times, shock seemed to be worse. He was moaning, and we could not help

him. So we started yelling for the guards, got three of them to come to the outside of our cell. I told them that Carl must get some medical attention and medicine. By gesturing and some French, I tried to make them understand there could be some medicine in our packs that they finally had taken from us. Could I go look?

They would not let me out of the cell, but they motioned to Dones, who was small, that he could go. I told Dones to strip all the packs of food or anything else he could find to help us, and to bring it along if he could. Dones spoke Spanish to the guards and they understood him.

Dones finally came back with everything from the packs, which wasn't much—the usual chocolate, some sugar and sweets, as I remember it now, and some gauze. "By then "Carl was sinking lower, and we thought that he was going to die. I again tried to get the guards to get a doctor for him, but they only gave us a hard time. It seems that some planes had shot up the town a few days or nights before, and they certainly were not about to do anything for us. Dones and I got mad and were really spouting off—so much that they called the other guards down, plus an officer, I believe, and they started the same old business of gesturing they'd cut our throats, etc.

I remember inviting them into our cell, but of course the door was locked. It is peculiar, but as afraid as we might have been, the fear gets overwhelmed by anger, and then there no longer is fear. Had they opened the door that night to shut us up, I suspect that Dones and I would have gone after them. The anger came from our feeling of helplessness in seeing that Carl was dying and we could not do anything to help – nor would they.

For four nights and three days we were kept in this dungeon. The stink got worse. Carl got worse, but Hess improved a little. They gave us our meal of macaroni a day, usually about 4

to 5 p.m. We didn't eat the chocolate, deciding to give it and the sugar cubes to Carl. Both Dones and Farley were okay, but I was always a bit afraid that Farley might crack. He was quite young (about 19 or 20 and very immature, more afraid than the others. But we treated each other well and equally, which seemed to help him. As long as he could follow someone's lead, he'd be okay, and he was.

During our stay, we again talked about putting Carl to sleep, something to spare him his pain. But we couldn't hit him, nor do anything else. He did manage to sleep at times due to sheer exhaustion, but it was only in short spells. I remember trying to stay up with him as long as I could, but I'd still doze off and wake up in the morning.

Another Guest in the Dungeon

We complained about the stink in the place, but got nowhere. Rarely during the day did we see any guards; they stayed away from us. But, as I remember it, on the third or last night, the guards brought in a Lieutenant named Wilson, who was supposed to have been from the Midwest. We all remembered the warnings that the enemy planted people among prisoners, so we acted accordingly. This Wilson must have thought we were either the rudest or most stupid people he had ever met. I told our guys not to say anything in his presence. He, of course, overheard me say this, and insisted that he had been a P-38 pilot, and had been shot down a few days before. He said he was glad to see us, but we weren't too happy to see him.

He was about 5 foot 8 inches tall, wore a flyer's suit, had a mustache and, I guess, he was about 25 to 30 years old. We never trusted the poor guy, and as I learned years later from Hager, Lt. Wilson was truly a P-38 pilot, was sent to a German POW camp in Germany.

On the morning we left the dungeon, we got into a truck with the same four guards. Carl still showed few signs of improvement, though he could have been a bit better. I don't recall our route now—if I even knew then—but we finally got to one town with a railroad station where it looked like an army guarding it. I could not determine if they were Italian or German. The town was Taranto, but it took me many years to establish its name.

Bari

We stayed here for several hours, then finally put on another train, in a cattle car, and taken to the town of Bari. It was here that we had the toughest time. The guards took us off the train and walked us from the square on down the street. But before we left the square, there were people lined up on both sides of the street, yelling and raising their hands. Their ages varied from young to old and all were getting stirred up. Definitely we were in for it. They pointed to bullet holes in houses and just screamed at us. But the guards said and did nothing. When one elderly lady raised a stick as though to hit Hager, I raised my hand to take the blow. It was looking very bad for us, and we were thinking we surely would be mobbed. Still the guards did nothing.

Just at that time we heard machine gun fire from two motorcycles as they roared down the street, firing into the air. The mob dispersed rather quickly as they were afraid of these two Germans.

We were taken to a German headquarters for questioning, we guessed. So I reminded our guys to give only name, rank and serial number, to say nothing else. Both Hess and Dones said they weren't going to salute any German or Italian officer; and in fact, when Hess came out he told us he did not salute and did not stand at attention. I thought that this was wrong and told him so.

When I went in, there were three officers at a table, two Germans and one Italian. I clicked my heels and saluted. I heard one of the officers say, 'Bona soldten' and I was glad that I had saluted.

After we all had been interrogated, they took us to a temporary prison camp in Bari. We took care of Hess and Lt. Hager, both of whom were feeling better. Carl Hager's face was still swollen, hands still bandaged. So I helped him changed his clothes, helped dress him, washed and sometimes fed him.

It was here we met about 25 to 30 other American airmen, all shot down at Foggia on the same mission with us. We were there only three to five days, one meal a day eaten about 5 p.m. usually macaroni and hard tack, and no Red Cross packages. We spent our time doing nothing except a little boxing with each other. One Italian considered himself a professional boxer, had a pair of gloves and wanted to challenge us. However, he sparred with one of the officers and tried to knock his head off; but happily, took a beating instead.

While there, formations of some Allied planes flew over on bombing missions. The funny part is that they had an air raid shelter at this camp, and when the planes would come over, the siren would go off, and all the guards ran for that shelter. But all of us Americans ran outside and cheered the planes.

We left Bari the same way as we entered—walked through the streets to the train station. But with one exception, we had German guards. They put all of us in two cattle cars, and our train went through and over mountains in the central part of Italy. They had to stop at every steep hill, unloosen all but one car and then take it over, one at a time. I don't remember how long it took, but somewhere along the way they separated the enlisted men from the officers, sending them into Germany and prison camps there.

Prison at Sulmona

We enlisted men went to a prison camp in Sulmona, Italy, which was somewhere east and a bit north of Rome. It was in a valley surrounded by mountains and contained some 3 to 4,000 prisoners. There were over 3400 English, French, Turks or Greeks and whatever, but we were the only Americans—about 18 of us.

The first night an English Colonel came into our barracks and laid down the law to us. He was in charge! We were to do nothing, including trying to escape, without his knowing and permitting it. Immediately, we did NOT like him.

By now it was September, 1943. We had German and Italian guards around the prison at various stations. There was a high stone wall with, as I remember it, one gate. Could have had barbed wire on top of the wall, but I don't remember for sure. There was a dirt field where we played softball, a small church area and a priest. I got a prayer book from this priest, still have it at home. I always wore my rosary beads while flying and still had them around my neck there.

We all wondered and talked about the others that were killed in the crash. We talked about whether our families knew we survived and were all right. Again, we had one meal a day – macaroni and hard tack—but we got so hungry, it started to taste good. We received only one or two Red Cross packages while we were there. Don't remember all they contained, but it was just great, especially the chocolate malts and crackers.

We were in Sulmona prison camp for about four to six weeks—I lost track of dates. The weather always seemed to be good, we slept on straw over concrete. It was uncomfortable at first, but one can get used to it. I don't recall any interrogation of us while we were there. On one or two occasions, we saw our

bombers flying overhead and, of course, we hollered and waved to signal 'give them hell'.

But each passing day was just like the others. Except for softball, we did absolutely nothing. Oh, we did exercise a little, but not much of that either. All of us were still wearing our flight suits and jackets. I do not recall any of the Americans with us ever complaining, except about the food. We all lost much weight, I am sure.

During the time we were there, rumors kept spreading around camp that Italy had capitulated in September. After a while, we noticed that some Italian

guards seemed to be missing. We were told they left for home when they heard Italy was out of the war. Anyhow, as the days drug by, there were fewer and fewer Italian guards on the walls around our camp. We saw considerable numbers of German troop movements by truck. Sgt. Jett had talked with one of the German officers who, apparently, told him Italy was out of the war; but he warned Jett not to try to escape or he would be shot.

Blakney's adventures will be continued in the next publication.

*At the same time the crew of **Black Sheep** were suffering through the fear and agony as POWs, President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill were meeting in Quebec for the Allied Quadrant Conference. At the same time, the Allies had completed the conquest of Sicily.*

You only live once, but if you work it right, once is enough.

Fred Allen



This performer came to Shipdham to entertain the airmen. Does anybody know his name?

Some thoughts on Colonel Richard “Dick” Butler Truly an Officer and a Gentleman

From: Robert Lehnhausen, 68th Squadron Commander

Dick came to the 44th as the Co-Pilot of the **Walter Bunker** crew in the 506th Squadron. The 506 was the fourth squadron of the 44th and arrived on Station 115 (Shipdham) in early March, 1943. The Bunker's crew was one of eight crews that made up the 506th.

Butler participated in both of the 44th missions that earned the Presidential Unit Citation, Kiel, Germany on May 14, 1943 and the epic low level mission against the Ploesti, Roumanian oil complex on August 1, 1943. He also flew on several more of the 44th's most dangerous and costly missions. Notable were the Foggia mission of August 16, 1943 and the hellish mission to Wiener-Neustadt on October 1, 1943.

Dick Butler gave thirty years of admirable duty to our nation. All of his duty was with elements of the Strategic Air Command. It should be noted that he was a veteran of WWII and the Cold War. At retirement in 1971 he was the Chief of Staff of 15th Air Force. In 1964 he became the Commander of March Field, CA. In 1966-69 he commanded the 320th Bomb Wing at SAC unit of B-52 and KC-135 aircraft.

Dick Butler was one of the organizers of the 44th BGVA. He and his devoted wife Ardith were regulars at all 44th functions. Dick also gave of his time, talent and treasury to the Second Air Division. For many years he was the 44th representative to that B-24 organization. He also served the 2AD as its Executive Vice President and then as President.

Dick Butler was one of the prime movers of the bronze scale model of the B-24 being sculpted and displayed at the Air Museum in San Diego, California's famous Balboa Park. He was also responsible for raising some of the money to finance this historical presentation and display.

Dick possessed a pleasant personality. He was easily met. Dick had a reputation for being a firm but fair commander. He also expressed a deep and genuine concern for welfare of his people, especially the enlisted personnel.

For those of us who had the privilege of serving with him in WWII, he was known to us as a man of sterling character and of uncommon courage. A truly great American.

The 44th Bomb Group Reunion in Dayton, Ohio

Please Note: You will be visiting one of the largest Air Force Bases in the world. Work that is done there determines the future of aerial flight and aerial combat; therefore secrecy is prime.

Thus, they must have a list of everybody who will be transported through their gates, so be sure to register by September 10, 2010. No registrations can be accepted after that date. If you register and then must cancel, you will receive your money back. You must carry your ID. A driver's license, Military ID, Student ID will be needed to get on the base.

If you plan to stay additional days at the hotel, please note that when you register, in order to get the reduced price. If you decide to leave early, please indicate that to the Hotel UPON YOUR ARRIVAL. Otherwise you will be charged for extra days.

As you will see, registration for the Reunion and the Hotel are together. We are able to get a better price by working with the Tourist Bureau in the planning.

Schedule of Events
2010 REUNION OF THE 44TH BGVA
SEPTEMBER 16-19, 2010
MARIOTT-DAYTON HOTEL
DAYTON, OHIO

Thursday, September 16

Board Meeting	10:00 A.M.
Registration	1:00 to 5:00 PM
Hospitality Suite opens	7:00 PM

Friday, September 17

Breakfast	
Load buses for Wright Paterson AF Base	7:00 AM
WPAF Museum - B-24 special 'Look In' (Guided Tour Air Power Gallery and more)	8:00 AM
Lunch at WPAFB Club & Banquet Ctr.	12:00
Load buses for Esther Price Chocolate Factory	2:00 PM
Welcome Reception	7:00 PM

Saturday, September 18

Breakfast	
General Meeting	9:00 AM
Load Buses for Wright-Dunbar Museum	10:15 AM
Lunch and Tour at Carillon History Park	12:00
Cash Bar	6:00 PM
Squadron Dinners	7:00 PM

Sunday, September 19

Breakfast	
Load Buses for American Packard Museum and Lunch	10:00 A.M
Load Buses for WPAF Museum Rededication of 44th Plaque	12:00
Load Buses for WPAFB Presidential & Experimental Hangars	2:00 PM
Return to Hotel	3:30 PM
Cash Bar	6:00 PM
Banquet	7:00 PM

Monday, September 2010

Breakfast & Farewells.

**REGISTRATION FOR REUNION OF THE
44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
1414 South Patterson Boulevard
Dayton, Ohio 45409
September 16-20, 2010**

Please print or type. All information must be complete (as shown on your ID.)

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Spouse/Guest _____ Squadron _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

PRICING, 4 HOTEL NIGHTS

Single \$630.00 Double \$860.00 Triple \$1090.00 Quad \$1330.00

Please indicate bed preference: King _____ Queen _____ Single _____

ALL ROOMS ARE NON-SMOKING

Includes: Welcome reception, Four Breakfasts, Hospitality Room, Free Parking, Free Airport Shuttle, Transportation and Lunch on all Tours, Squadron Dinners, Banquet.

SQUADRON DINNER: Please indicate choice of entrée:

_____ Chicken _____ Baked Salmon

BANQUET: Please indicate choice of entrée:

_____ Steak _____ Chicken

PAYMENT

Number of Registrants (See Prices Above)

Single \$ _____ Double \$ _____

Triple \$ _____ Quad \$ _____

Please send checks to 44th Bomb Group Treasurer
Jackie Roberts, 11910 S. E. 44th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73150

MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 10, 2010

The September 2008 issue of the 8 Ball Tails carried the story about Lt. Louis Trouve, who was blown out the nose wheel door on the mission to Emden.

Lt.Col. Thomas T. Drysdale, Retired, Co-Pilot. Tells the Rest of the Story

Lt. Louis V. Trouve, known by friends as Lou or Louie, was a 44th BG 66th Squadron Navigator on the **Richard J. Comey** crew. I was the Co-Pilot, and the rest of the crew consisted of: Lt. **John J. Harmonoski**, Bombardier, Sgt. **Albert D. Franklin**, Engineer; Sgt. **Stanley J. Rosinski**, Asst. Engineer; Sgt. **Albert (NMI) Greenberg**, Radio Operator; Sgt. **Quentin J. Hall**, Asst. Radio Operator; Sgt. **Dale W. Neitzel**, Gunner; Sgt. **Richard H. Walker**, Gunner.

On December 11, 1943, the 44th BG was on a bomb run above Emden, Germany when it was attacked by ME 19s. Lou was blown out through the nose wheel doors. The 109s attacked from "out of the sun", firing, what we later learned were 30 mm tracer, armor piercing and explosive shells in that order. Our Bombardier, Lt. **Harmonowski** was ill on that day, and was replaced on this mission by Staff Sgt. **James E. Kipple**.

Two days later, December 13,
the European Edition of

THE STARS AND STRIPES Newspaper
Printed on the front page the
following headlines:

**8th hits Emden. Destroys 138 Fighters
Third Biggest Score Is Rolled Up in
Blow at Vital U-Boat Base
17 Bombers, Three Escorts Lost, N.J.
Pilot New Ace.**

The first shell, an explosive, hit our plane, **Nice 'N Naughty**, on the left side of the nose section, opening a hole more than two feet wide and with enough force to blow Lou out through the nose wheel doors. Fortunately, most of the explosion was absorbed by a large 50 caliber ammo can on the left side of the Navigator's compartment. Had the ammo can, full of ammo, not been there, the full force of the explosion would

probably have hit Lou and killed him.

The explosion also set the insulation covered walls in the nose section on fire, instantly filling the Navigator's compartment, the cockpit and flight deck with black smoke.

The second shell, armor piercing, came through the cockpit window to the left of Comey, barely in front of his head. It then pierced than armor plate a couple of inches behind my head at a steep angle and ricocheted through the radio equipment and into the bomb bay, destroying the release mechanism for two 500 pound armed bombs.

The third shell, another explosive, hit the top of the fuselage, next to and in front of the top turret. It did not injure the engineer/gunner, but left another two foot wide hole on the top of the fuselage.

When Comey and I rubbed the smoke off of some of the side and upper windows in the cockpit, we discovered we had dropped about 100 to 200 feet below the 44th BG that was dropping bombs at that time. Comey carefully and skillfully zigzagged, avoiding the falling bombs. Soon after that, we discovered the oxygen system had been knocked out, and Comey quickly alerted the crew to use walk-around oxygen bottles.

Following the bomb run, Comey and I became very concerned about Lou and the Bombardier, so I headed for the nose section as fast as I could. When I kneeled down on the catwalk, I could see the interior of the nose section was on fire, and the nose wheel doors were wide open. Not wanting to get my seat pack parachute on fire, I put it on the flight deck and crawled past the open nose wheel doors and into the front of the plane. Fortunately, the smoke had dissipated somewhat, and I was able to put out some of the fires with my gloved hands.

To my dismay, Lou was gone, but the

...continued on page 18

Bombardier was still in the nose turret. I opened the turret, yelled at him, shook him violently and tried to pull him out; and finally gave up, thinking he was dead due to smoke inhalation, lack of oxygen, the explosion, or a combination of the three. I then put out the rest of the fires, crawled back to the flight deck and cockpit and told Comey that Lou was gone, and the Bombardier was probably dead in the nose turret.

The ME 109's attack also knocked out an engine and the hydraulic system. So, not able to keep up with the 44th BG, we dropped several thousand feet and joined some B-17 stragglers heading for the English Channel. When we were at about 12,000 feet, to our amazement, surprise and glee, the Bombardier showed up on the flight deck! The explosion in the nose section, or the lack of oxygen had not killed him as I had assumed. It seemed he had only passed out, probably due to a lack of oxygen, and he agreed.

Crossing the Channel and arriving over Shipdham, we had more concerns: a landing gear that would not come down due to the battle damaged hydraulic system and two live and armed bombs that could come loose and explode on the runway while landing.

As to the landing gear, and having never cranked one down, I circled the plane over the Shipdham area while Comey went back somewhere into the bomb bay area and cranked the gear down by hand, greatly relieving all the crew.

Regarding the two 500 pound armed bombs that could be jolted loose and explode on the runway during landing, I think Comey gave the crew the option of bailing out or staying with the plane. I don't recall that any bailed out, but may be wrong. As it turned out, the bombs did not come loose on landing. Thank God!!!

Following the mission, all of the crew was concerned regarding what happened to Lou. At the mission debriefing, other 66th Squadron crew members said they saw Lou come out through the nose

wheel doors and open his chute. Of course, we did not know if he was okay, wounded, injured on landing, picked up by the underground, or was captured. Fortunately, about six months later I received a Red Cross Card from Lou in Stalag Luft III. The card was addressed to me, Tom Drysdale, 8th Air Force, England, following strict US Air Force policy for POW's to not reveal specific addresses of other combat crew members. He stated that he was well and enjoyed the Red Cross food packages. Receiving his card was a great relief to all of the crew.

Shortly after the war, Lou and I wrote and telephoned a few times, then later I met him in Brooklyn, NY. He had returned to his Long Island home, and was working as a newspaper reporter. We spent several hours updating each other, and he told me that as a POW, he was initially very concerned about what happened to the rest of the crew following the bomb run on Emden, but was happily informed by other later arrivals at the POW camp, that we all made it safely back to Shipdham.

My last contact with Lou was in 1955 when he sent a copy of the *Cincinnati Post All Week Magazine* to me, with a page 7 article he had written, *Behind the Barbed Wire... What happens to men condemned to the grim life of a war prisoner?* explaining his experiences as a prisoner of war for 17 months. The introduction was written by the Cincinnati Post **All Week Magazine** staff, stating how Lou became a POW, and that prior to the Emden raid, he had received the Air Medal, Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross, the latter for participating in the low level bombing of the Ploesti oil fields.

The "*Behind the Barbed Wire*" article also included a photograph of six other POWs lying on the ground, surrounded by barbed wire. It is the same article sent by Marianne Trouve, Lou's daughter, for

the 8 Ball Tails 2009 Summer edition. The introduction to the article also explained it was originally written by Lou for the New York World-Telegram and Sun, and other Scripps-Howard newspapers.

Ed. Note: *The Database lists this target as 'Boat & Rail Traffic', but Stars &*

Stripes lists it as a vital U-Boat Center. Probably both are correct. Calaban from the 67th Squadron was lost with 8 KIA, 1 POW. Bombs from a B-24 overhead caused this loss. Nice 'N Naughty had one POW. 68th Squadron Bing's Big Box had two wounded, but returned.

Sobering Memories of Joseph Benoit

67th Squadron

Assistant Engineer/Right Waist Gunner Benoit flew to Shipdham as part of the **Roy Jorgensen** crew. In keeping with the group policy, Jorgensen flew as Co-Pilot with **Donald Decker** to Ochersleben, Germany, along with **James Liddell**, Navigator, and **Frederick Gatens**, Bombardier. **Big Fat Butterfly** was hit by flak, and everyone on board was KIA.

Four days later, **Sidney Hawkins**, Ball Turret Gunner from the Jorgensen crew flew to Gotha, Germany with the **Harold Etheridge** crew in an unnamed plane. Me 109s and FW 190s attacked. The Navigator was killed and all others became POW.

The rest of the Jorgensen crew, **Melvin J. Johnson**, Co-Pilot; **Frank Wood**, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; **D. A. Lawyer**, Radio Operator/Gunner; **James Crane**, Left Waist Gunner; and J. J. Petricevich, Tail Gunner became part of the Richard E. Harleman crew. They made eight bombing missions together.

The final mission was Mont de Manson Airdrome, located in southern France. This mission was not expected to be a rough mission, but the 12 flak guns were very accurate. Right after #42-109836 dropped the bomb load over the target, they were hit by flak in the right wing, just behind the #4 engine. The fuel tank was also hit. The engine stopped, and they could not keep up with the formation. The decision was made to hit the deck and fly to Spain, a neutral country. As they flew over the French coast, they were hit by machine guns and small arms fire.

Quoting Benoit, "Our plane caught fire, and Lt. Harleman ditched the airplane. The plane broke in half at the waist windows. The four survivors were standing just behind the break, and were thrown into the water. Lt. Baum (*Bombardier*) got out from the front of the plane, but did not live. He had seven bullet holes, one which was in his neck.

"The front part of the airplane stayed afloat long enough for the rest of the crew to get out. I don't know why one else got out, whether they were knocked out or hit by the gun fire. They went down with the front section about a half mile from the shore in the Bay of Biscay, just out from the French town of Biarritz. The four survivors were pretty banged up and sent to a hospital in Bayonne France."

Melvin Johnson, Frank Wood, D. A. Lawyer and **William Cobane** (*Navigator*) were KIA. **Lee Fields**, (*Ball Turret Gunner*) was badly burned and repatriated. Benoit, Crane and Petricevich became POW, and were held for 13 months.

On that same mission, 67th Squadron lost Texas Roset. The entire crew was interned in Spain.

THE PROBLEMS OF GOING HOME

As remembered by **Fred Marzolph**, Gunner on the **William Smith/Roy Owen** crew—506 Squadron.

I don't remember where our mission had been to; but on the return home, we were in need of fuel. Our pilots, **Bill Smith** and **Roy Owen** found us an emergency field with a metal landing strip in a park in Gent, Belgium. On landing, we saw we weren't the only ones to have used it, as several fighters and I think a B-17 were also there on each side of the strip.

After landing, we all piled out of the plane and saw our pilot cruise by on a nearby street on the back of a motorcycle in search of fuel.

A short while after this, a civilian came walking up to our group and seemed to study each one of us, looking up and down as he walked by. Suddenly, as he approached me, he smiled and grabbed me by the front of my jacket and pulled and pointed down the street, out of the park. Not understanding the language and his intentions, I hesitated as he pulled harder, and he grew more excited as I refused to move; his action seemed to threaten me. Finally, at some of the crews' urging, I finally gave in. I collected a few more extra rounds for my pistol, and allowed myself to be pulled out of the park. We walked a block or two. We stopped in front of a tailor's shop, and in the window were two store dummies dressed – one in a civilian suit and one wearing a German Luftwaffe pilot's uniform. The gent pulling on my coat, let go, and with his arms going up and down the front of me, he pointed at the uniform. I began to see what he was trying to tell me, and we went inside the store. He removed the uniform coat and motioned for me to put it on. I removed my jacket and pulled part of my heated suit down and put the jacket on. It fit like it was made for me. Now the very excited 'giver' took the rest of the uniform, put it all on a hanger and handed it to me.

I had very little money with me, so I offered him a full pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes and a half-used pack as payment, and he seemed delighted to receive the American smokes. Probably he thought he was giving me the uniform completely for free.

I left the store after many thank you's and got back to the plane about the same time the pilot and fuel arrived, and we soon took off for home.

This station was just shortly before the war ended; and when it did, we were told we were to fly home the next day. The CO also said each squadron was to receive 100 gallons of beer as a farewell party gift. Numerous officers donated wines and other spirits obtained when they had landed on different shores. A good time was had by most, I among them.

Usually I was conservative on drinking, but this was a special occasion going home!

We were to leave the next morning, and when I didn't get up and get dressed, they first tried to talk me out of bed. That didn't work, so they took off my covers and pulled me out of bed. As they tried to stand me up, I resisted. We knocked over the barracks stove, soot and all, but they dressed me and packed my belongings. Simple, huh? Not really.

As I slowly recovered on our first home bound stopover, I looked to see if all my items were packed for me, and the first thing I missed was my German uniform. It was left hanging on the hanger. This shook me up a little, but believed that was all that was missing.

Then on our second landing in the Azores, while walking to the mess hall with our engineer, **Carl Jacobson**, I noticed I was sorta dragging one foot. "Jake" asked me if I got hurt in that bar-

...continued on page 24

racks scuffle, and I said I didn't think so; but later that day, when getting ready for bed, I noticed one shoe was much smaller than the other. A closer look showed me one shoe was my size 8 ½ and the other shoe was size 11! When the guys were dressing me, they grabbed one of my shoes and other size was found some place other than under my bed.

I tried to get a shoe or a pair in the Azores, but had no luck and equal luck in Newfoundland, Bradley Field in the U.S.,

and at Ft. Sheridan, from where I was to get a 30 day leave. I was going home walking like a wounded veteran! Once I got home, I put on a pair of low cut shoes, and with a very relieved and smiling look, I enjoyed my 30 day leave.

Fred sent me this story—typed out on his very antiquated Royal typewriter. It pre-dated electric typewriters, but it still peels out his memories—like the time he overdid the celebrating, just because the war was over!.

THE CAMERON SAGA, CONTINUED

Two days after the Naples mission, Bill Cameron described his next assignment: Rome.

At the briefing, I learned that the target for the next day was, indeed, an important one—Rome! This certainly was a day for surprises. The next word was that I would lead the Group in the **Suzy-Q**. Half of Howard Moore's crew had dysentery, while our ground crew, (including a few of our flight crew) had four engines to change on my plane, **Buzzin Bear**. **Suzy-Q**, however, was in good shape, despite the unusual and bumpy landing it had just undergone.

*(For some unknown reason, **Suzy-Q**, piloted by Howard Moore, had fallen short of the runway. All four engines had quit. The plane ran through rocks, sand and sagebrush, but landed safely onto the runway.)*

On the 19th of July, 1943, we were off for Rome in the **Suzy-Q**. It was a good mission, and I remember the white city below, while above we had a very blue sky. A few Italian fighters made half-hearted attacks from positions above our formation, but the sight of those beautiful tracer bullets streaming across the sky apparently discouraged any serious thought of attacks against us. I don't recall much flak, if there was enemy. It seems that the enemy was quite certain that we would not attack this holy and historical city, so had failed to provide any defenses in depth.

We had been briefed extensively on our target, the Marshalling Yards, where most of the Nazi's war material was being funneled to the front. Under no circumstances were we to bomb unless we were certain that we could hit this area without any possibility of errant bombs. The results were very good with little to no damage inflicted outside of the target area. There was considerable out crying by our enemy for this raid, and Christians all over the world were deeply concerned until it became known as a fact, that Rome itself was not attacked or damaged.

Jackson Hall was with us as the Group Command pilot that day, flying in the Co-Pilot sat on the flight deck. On the way home we lost an engine quite suddenly. But a few minutes later I finally figured out that Jackson had accidentally nudged the number four engine ignition switch with his right knee! That was about the only excitement on the entire mission.

Ed. Note: Three missions to Sicily and four to Italy completed Cameron's required number of tours. However, when it became known that the next mission was the longest ever undertaken by the 44th, he could not resist volunteering. Col. Johnson chose him to be Deputy Lead., to Ploesti.

BOOKS OF GREAT EVENTS IN 44TH BOMB GROUP HISTORY

BURNING HITLER'S BLACK GOLD is a factual account of the greatest mission of WWII—Ploesti Oil Refineries, Romania. Major Robert W. Sternfels, pilot of the B-24 *Sandman*, 98th Bomb Group, compiled this book following 2 years of interviews with historians and participants in the mission. The book replicates many official documents, plus the report of an interview with the planner of the mission, General Jacob Smart.

Sternfels group flew alongside **Leon Johnson's** 44th BG, experiencing the same dangerous surprises—the railroad car full of German soldiers with anti-aircraft guns, small arms fire, steel cables, black smoke and fighters.

To purchase this factual, highly organized report on this valorous mission, contact Major Robert Sternfels, 395 Pine Crest Dr., Laguna Beach, CA 92651. The price is \$26.75 with shipping.

If you are looking for a high adventure WWII story, read **Escape in the Pyrenees**, by the late **Archie Barlow**, Engineer and Top Turret Gunner on the **Hartwell Howington** crew. The mission on 21 January 1944 was to Escales Sur Buchy, France, to wipe out the V-1s that were striking London. **Ram It Dam II** went down, and Barlow survived and evaded. He relates his moment by moment escapades of being hidden by the Underground, chased by Germans with dogs, sleeping in freezing haylofts, and finally sliding down a very high hill to safety into Spain.

Barlow's wife Aline has copies of the book. 190 Johnson Drive SE, Calhoun, GA 30701-3941 Tel. 706-629-2396. The cost is \$20.

HERE I GO AGAIN

This is a song, written by the late Archie Barlow, author of the book described above.

I don't know if Archie intended for this to be published. Perhaps he was just bemoaning the problems of being on Lasix, which is a diuretic. I'm sure others can identify with this complaint, but the average person does not make poetry about it! It is to be sung to the tune of "Taking a Chance on Love."

**HERE I GO AGAIN..... THE LASIX'S MAKING ME GO AGAIN,
I'D BETTER NOT BE SLOW AGAINDOING THE LASIX LOPE.**

**HERE I GO AGAINMY ENERGY'S RUNNING LOW AGAIN
THERE'S JUST NO STOPPING THAT FLOW AGAIN
DOING THE LASIX LOPE.**

**HERE I GO AGAINDON'T KNOW WHEN IT WILL PEAK
OH GOSH, I JUST SPRUNG A LEAK! TOO LATE FOR THE LASIX LOPE.**

FOR SALE—LAPEL PINS

Mary Aston is selling lapel pins of WWII Medals: 8th Air Force, DFC, Air Medal, Purple Heart, POW, European-African Mediterranean Theater and WWII Victory Medal. The price of each is \$9 + 44 cents postage. (Specify pin name and number of each type.)

A large Suncatcher depicting the Flying 8 Ball; a 67th Squadron Pelican or 8th Air Force Logo are available at \$120 each + \$25 UPS (a total of \$145)

A small Flying 8 Ball sells for \$65 + \$18 UPS (a total of \$83) Proceeds go to the 44th BGVA. Contact Mary at 830 Cardinal Drive, Elberton, GA 30635.

THE 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
44th Bomb Group Stickers.....	2.00 (Postage Incl.)

Order From
Jackie Roberts
11910 S. E. 44th Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73150



The consensus about this picture is that it was staged. Bob Lehnhausen checked the records and realized *One Weakness* was flown to the states by the William Warner crew. Coloma Warner, Bill's wife, stated that the third man from the right was her husband, the pilot. In the driver's seat is our Past President, the late **Paul Kay**. According to Bill's memory, Paul always rushed to the Jeep so he could be the driver.

The man in the highly decorated jacket may not even be a member of the 44th BG. It is nice to know that the Life photographer was present at a happy time—when the war ended.



MAIL & E-MAIL

From Andrew Hawker: (a member of the Board of Governors of the Memorial Heritage Trust in Norwich, UK). Tom Eaton, the original Chairman of the Board of Governors recently passed away. Tom had worked closely with the 2nd Air Division, to bring the Memorial Library into existence, and to maintain its financial stability. This Library brings America to young English students, who are profoundly interested in learning of America's history and traditions. The men of the 2nd Air Defense, (of which the 44th was a part), are indebted to the dedicated work of this fine English gentlemen.

Apologies in order:

Imagine this... By telephone, **Tom Muff** (506 Sq.) called to say that the report of the folded wings of his friend **Walter Scott** was wrong!!!!!!!!!! He had just gotten done talking to him.

Here's how the error occurred. When the Board was trying to figure out whether Life Members were still living in the same place, Jackie Roberts made a number of phone calls. She had been given Scott's wrong area code number, and the lady of that house promptly announced that her husband had passed away. She was the wrong lady to be questioned about a 44th Bomb Group member, and she was too distraught to say more, so Jackie assumed she was talking to Scott's wife.

Fortunately, Scott was very forgiving of the error.

The question has arisen, should we continue to record Fallen Wings of men whose names are obtained from the Social Security list. I have voted 'yes'. If a man served in the 44th, I feel that we owe it to him to list his name in our publication. Someday his family may be looking for his history; the 8 Ball Tails and the Web Page may be their only source of information.

President Ronald Reagan asked this question: "Why does the Air Force need expensive new bombers? Have the people we've been bombing over the years been complaining?"

**HARDLY A DRIVER IS NOW ALIVE, WHO PASSED ON HILLS
AT SEVENTY-FIVE**

Burma Shave

AT INTERSECTIONS LOOK EACH WAY

A HARP IS NICE

BUT IT'S HARD TO PLAY.

Burma Shave

ROBERT LEHNHAUSEN REMEMBER JAMES GARVEY

A few weeks ago one of our still surviving 68th veterans called to tell me that Jim Garvey had "folded his wings". My immediate thought was to recall what this remarkable patriot had endured in combat. He was a marvelous example of one who converted the "lemons" of life to lemonade.

T/Sgt. James T. Garvey was an excellent radio operator. He joined the 68th squadron shortly before we left for Africa, the first time. He flew with several different crews, some of the squadron's finest.

On Jim's 20th mission on July 4, 1944 their B-24 developed a runaway engine that they were unable to shut down, shortly before leaving the English coast. The pilot, Lt. **Ben Schaefer**, ordered the crew to abandon the out of control airplane. All of the crew successfully parachuted safely over England. Not an every day experience.

On July 7, 1944 the 44th participated in a "maximum effort" mission. The 68th put up twelve aircraft that day to assault a target at Bernberg, Germany. Most of the airmen who had bailed out on the 4th were scheduled for this mission too, including Jim Garvey. For the 68th it was a terrible day. The German fighters really beat us up. We lost three very fine crews. Fortunately Jim's crew returned safely, but they knew they had been in a battle.

July 11, 1944 the target was Munich, and Jim Garvey was assigned to fly with the crew of Lt. **A. D. Bonnet**. Their aircraft, **Flak Alley II** picked up battle damage from flak in the target area, losing number 4 engine. Another engine failed about an hour from the French coast, and they were struggling to get to England. As you know, our big bird did not fly well on two engines. They did not succeed and were forced to ditch in the English Channel. Four of the nine man crew survived the ditching, including Jim Garvey. All were badly injured. Garvey had multiple broken bones. They were rescued by a British destroyer. Sadly, we lost five fine young men, two of whom were on their last mission.

Jim Garvey was sent to a British hospital

at Oxford, England. As he was recuperating from the trauma of eight days of extraordinary flight duty and survival, his agile mind reasoned that since he was in this famed city of learning, he should take advantage of the locale. He petitioned the Doctor who was the head of the hospital, to see if the University would permit his studying while he was recuperating. The Doctor was fascinated, telling him that this was the first time such a request had been made. The delighted Doctor was most willing to be the petitioner in Garvey's behalf, but he had to know what discipline Garvey desired. Jim's interest was in engineering. The Doctor made the call upon University officials, who were favorably taken in this unusual request, but unfortunately, the school did not offer a course in Engineering. The Doctor reported to Jim that while he could not get engineering, they had offered a course in Economics. Garvey accepted. He enrolled. After months of hospitalization and rehab, he continued his education in the States, in Economics. And it became his life work.

In civil life this gifted gentleman was very successful. He and his dear wife Vivian reared a large family and retired to Fargo, ND. We talked and we corresponded. It was always a joy to visit with him. He was always positive and upbeat. He never complained about the injuries that he had incurred, nor the rigors of his disability.

Like most of you, he continued to be a productive citizen after retirement. He was a national officer in the SCORE program, which is an organization of retired executives who voluntarily assist people with mentoring and advice. His eventual use of a wheelchair to navigate was of little concern. His approach was, "Hey, I am alive and available".

This is the brief story of another of the marvelous young patriots with whom we were privileged to serve. We salute his resourceful courage and exemplary service. As one of our British friends would say, "This lad had great pluck".

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT CARDENAS AND HIS LATEST PROJECT



Bob Cardenas (506 Squadron) flew to Friedrichshafen as Command Pilot on the **Raymond Lacombe** crew on 18 March 1944. It was his 17th mission. With flak damage and the plane afire, **Chief and**

Sack Artists, was able to limp to the border of Switzerland; the entire crew bailed out into Lake Constance, swam to shore and became internees.

When the Swiss government learned from the American government, that they had a first class pilot internee, they asked him to teach Swiss pilots to fly B-24's. They wanted to get those big planes away from the border, to keep them from the eyes of German pilots.

In time the Swiss Underground reached Cardenas, helped him out of the country, and he became a test pilot.

Cardenas's contribution to progress in air supremacy is immeasurable. As a very young flyer, he was sent to 29 Palms, California, to establish the Army Air Corps Glider Score. His next assignment was at Wright Field, where he tested P-38s, B-24s, B-17s, LB-30s and AB-24s. Wanting to enter combat, he finagled his way to England and got assigned to the 506 Squadron. Escaping from Switzerland ended his combat experience.

Nevertheless, he stayed in the service, graduated from Flight Performance School, and at Wright AFB, did the flight test evaluation of the German ME-262 and the ARADO 234 – Germany's first jet bomber. Later, he had the unique experience of flying the B-29 that carried Chuck Yeager in the X-1 into the realm of supersonic flight.

The list of planes that Cardenas has flown includes: the fighter XP-26 "Peashooter" and B-29/X-1. He flew the YB-49 (the Flying Wing) over the Capitol Dome. (President Truman had asked him to fly it down Pennsylvania Avenue at 'rooftop level", so people could see what he was going to buy. It was the beginning of the stealth program. He flew in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

His last combat tour over North Vietnam was in F-105's as Commander of the 18th TFW Okinawa and Korat, Thailand.

After he retired from the service, Cardenas devoted his efforts to helping homeless veterans get a burial with military honors. His latest endeavor was to create a new National Cemetery at Miramar, California, so families that want an in-ground coffin burial will not have to go 100 miles north to Riverside.

He was recently honored for his ongoing efforts to see that veterans got the honors to which they are entitled, and for his leadership in establishing this new Cemetery.

Cardenas's early exit from WWII opened the door to many notable events and experiences for him. Nevertheless, the 44th BG can claim him as one of their own.



In this picture standing at the podium and surrounded by dignitaries, he led the flag salute.

*"Victory at all costs, victory in spite of terror,
victory however long and hard the road may be;
for without victory there is no survival."*

Winston Churchill

SIGN ON A T-SHIRT: THE OLDER I GET, THE
BETTER I WAS.

.....



To err is human. To refrain from laughing is humane!

LANE OLINGHOUSE

.....



FOLDED WINGS

*...sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust.
Approach thy grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him,
and lies down to pleasant dreams.*

William Cullen Bryant

Austin, Horace William #19256 506 Squadron 1966 Lt. Austin was a Pilot having flown in five different aircraft in the eleven missions with his crew. They flew in *Heaven Can Wait/Pete the Pom Inspector; Southern Comfort, Ruth-Less, Timb-A-A-Ah* and *Jenny/Lady Luck*.

Austin arrived in Shipdham just when the group was sent to Africa, where he joined in the missions to Lecce, Rome and Sicily. On August 1st he followed **Leon Johnson** to Ploesti. He went to Wiener Neustadt on August, then three days later flew to Foggia, where fighters brought down *Jenny/Lady Luck*.

Enlisted men on his crew were imprisoned in Italian prisons, six of whom escaped and evaded. Two members were KIA. He and his Co-Pilot were placed on a train, enroute to Germany. At one point Austin saw the opportunity to put a stone in the door of the train; and just as they were approaching the Brenner Pass, he opened the door and rolled down an embankment. He kept rolling as far as he could, then laid down in bushes. The Germans searched and shot toward the bushes, but finally continued on their way. His Co-Pilot was POW until the end of the war.

Austin slept in hay stacks by day and walked at night. Along the line he met another very bedraggled airman, and the two continued on until they found British troops who got them back to England.

Austin and his wife Marjorie had two children, Robert and Jane. Robert served in the U.S. Navy during the Viet Nam War. Marjorie, a Life Member of 44th BGVA, has two grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She resides in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Butler, Richard D. (Dick) #19614 67th & 506 Squadrons 29 December 2009 Captain, later Colonel Butler flew 27 missions with the 44th Bomb Group, his first on 16 April 1943. He flew as Co-Pilot with **Walter Bunker**, who later became his Command Pilot. The Bunker crew flew such awesome missions as Kiel and Ploesti. At Ploesti, the Bunker crew followed Lt. Col. Posey to the Creditul Minier Refinery. Their bombing was so successful, it was never re-opened until the Russians took it over. This deprived the Nazi regime of aviation fuel, a major factor in the downfall of the Luftwaffe.

On 7 September 1943 Butler moved to the pilot seat and flew *Miss Emmy Lou*, named for his newborn daughter. At Wiener Neustadt the plane was hit by fighters, the # 3 engine was hit, and the gas level was low. The decision was made to land at an airfield near Catania, Sicily. He had no hydraulic brakes, the right wing was damaged and the flaps did not act in unison. They skidded to a stop, the nose wheel went down, and the plane had to be abandoned. The 44th had already left Africa, so the crew hitch hiked back to England.

Butler's next plane, *Miss Emmy Lou II*, took him on three missions. (She flew a total of nine.) On his last mission to Bremen, flying in *F For Freddie*, he had attained the rank of Captain, and flew as Command Pilot.

When *Miss Emmy Lou II* went in for maintenance and repair, the Butler crew ran the test flight. Tragically, there was an explosion on the battle damaged plane; it crashed on a farm near Shipdham, and Butler's fractures ended his career with the 44th BG.



FOLDED WINGS

In addition to the two planes named for his daughter, Butler flew in ***Ruth-Less, Mr 5 By 5, Calaban, Old Crow, Earthquake McGoon*** and ***F For Freddie***.

After the war, he remained in the service, serving in the Strategic Air Command. He was Base Commander at March Air Force Base, then Chief of Staff of the 15th Air Force at March Field.

Butler was a founding member of the 44th BGVA, and served on the Board for many years. He served as a Board Member and later President of the 2nd Air Division Veterans Association, and was a major participant in the creation of the 2 AD Memorial Library in Norwich, England.

Dick leaves his wife and childhood sweetheart, Ardith, six children, 8 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. The couple resided in Riverside, California.

Dusossoit, Paul V. #20080 66th Squadron 16 January 2009 Lt. Dusossoit was a pilot. He and his crew flew their first of twelve missions on 10 March 1945. They flew in ***Fifinella, Big Time Operator, King Pin, Henry*** and ***Loco Moto***. On the mission to Rheine, Germany, they flew with ***Veryl Bevelacqua*** as Command Pilot. Dusossoit's last mission to Hallein, Austria, 25 April 1945 was the last mission of the 44th Bomb Group. Twelve days later, Germany surrendered.

Before the war, Dusossoit attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology. When he returned home to Massachusetts, he became a securities and commodities broker, later working for Merrill Lynch and rising to the vice presidency of this organization. He was frequently asked to lecture on commodity futures at both Harvard University and M.I.T.

Dusossoit was active in a number of sports. He and his wife, Elizabeth Jane King, built a house on the Inner Coastal Waterway

where he could enjoy the sport of sailing.

In addition to his wife of 66 years, he leaves three daughters, four granddaughters and two great granddaughters.

At the time of his death, Dusossoit and his wife were living in Charlotte, North Carolina. Information of his passing came from his daughter Janine Dusossoit.

Etheridge, Harold #20142 66th Squadron 1998 Lt. Etheridge was a pilot who flew one mission with ***Kenneth Jewell*** on 21 January 1944, flying in ***Banshee IV/E.Z.Duzit***. Seven days later he moved to the left seat with his own crew. In the next two weeks, the Elderidge crew flew in ***Myrtle the Fertile Turtle*** and ***Ice Cold Kady***.

On 24 February 1944, the 44th Bomb Group led the 14th Combat Wing to an aircraft assembly plant in Gotha, Germany. The bombing was successful, but the Me 109s & FW 190s attacked with a vengeance.

To elude the attackers, Etheridge took evasive action, diving, banking, skidding and slipping the A/C in a violent, erratic manner. He later reported that his waist gunners, who were not belted, were being thrown around like popcorn in a popper.

The two right engines on Etheridge's plane were knocked out and the vertical stabilizer was badly damaged. The plane went down; nine of the ten crewmen became POW. The Navigator was KIA. Etheridge had a broken leg. His waist gunner had a neck injury from tumbling around the plane during the evasive maneuvers. This was made worse by abusive civilians who did not understand that he could not raise his arms in surrender.

Despite their injuries, the prisoners had to walk to a village where they were separated and sent to different prison camps. Etheridge spent the rest of the war at Stalag Luft in Barth, Germany.



FOLDED WINGS

Etheridge stayed in the service, rising to the rank of Lt. Colonel. After retiring, he and his wife Rebecca, lived in Albany, Georgia. Rebecca pre-deceased him by seven years. He is survived by two sons, Chris Etheridge and Terry Etheridge; also one daughter, Debbie Powell.

Knowledge of Etheridge's death came from his son Chris. One of Chris's interesting recollections about his family is that his grandfather witnessed the Wright Brothers' first powered flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C. on December 17, 1903.

Two planes were lost on that mission: Etheridge's plane #42-29248 and Flak Alley from the 68th Squadron. Seven airmen were KIA; thirteen became POW.

Garvey, James T. #20327 68th Squadron 2009 T/Sgt. Garvey was a Radio Operator/Gunner who flew with no fewer than eleven pilots and three Command Pilots in the eighteen missions he flew from 24 September 1943 to 11 July 1944. He flew in *Avenger, Pistol Packin Mama, Ram It Dammit, Heaven Can Wait II, Northern Lass, V for Victory, Any Gum Chum, Lone Ranger, Corky (on D-Day) Lili Marlene and Flak Alley II*. He flew with the following crews: **W. D. Hughes, Harold Slaughter, S. H. Bowman, Raymond Townsend, Norman Peterson, George Martin, Ben H. Gildart, Charles Duerell, Benjamin Schaefer and A. D. Bennett**. He flew with three Command Pilots: **Myron Sesit, Robert Lehnhausen** (twice) and **John Gibson**. On 11 July 1944 on the Mission to Munich, they were hit with flak, but continued to limp westward, accompanied by P-38s. Finally, *Flak Alley II* could go no further. Lt. Bonnet ditched in the Channel, whereupon the plane broke in half. Garvey sustained a fractured shoulder and injury to his 5th &

6th vertebrae. When drowning was almost certain, the Navigator pulled him from the water and held him alongside the dingy until an English destroyer rescued four of the crew.

Garvey's last address was Fargo, North Dakota

On that same mission to Munich, the 66th Squadron lost one plane. Total losses: KIA – 13, Evadees – 3, POW – 1, Injured & Rescued – 4.

Hill, Richard G. (Dick) #20663 67th Squadron 15 January 2010 1st Lt. Hill was a Bombardier on the **Veryl Duwe** crew, flying 30 missions from 24 May 1944 to 29 July 1944. Most of the missions were in *Old Iron Corset*, but also in *Limpin Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose, Fifinella* and *Mi Akin Ass*.

On D-Day the Duwe crew flew to Caen (Vire).

After the war, Hill returned to his studies at the University of Cincinnati where he earned his degree in Mechanical Engineering. He became a Factory Representative for Macomb, Illinois, later a Sales Engineer for Lennox Industries in Missouri and Illinois. From there he became Sales Manager for Purdum Real Estate in Illinois. He moved to

Hawaii and accepted the position of Consulting Engineer at Darow & Sawyer in Honolulu.

Upon retiring, he and his wife of 58 years moved to Bella Vista, Arkansas. The Hills had two children, a son and a daughter; four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Hobbs, Harold #20679 506 Squadron 23 February 2002 No information is available about this member of the 44th BG. Source: Social Security Records



FOLDED WINGS

Holden, Arlie R. #20694 66th Squadron 17 July 2002 T/Sgt. Holden was an Engineer & Top Turret Gunner on a many crews. His first of 28 missions was 3 November 1943; his last, 30 October 1944. He flew with the following crews: **Richard F. O'Neill, Sidney Paul, Richard Thornton, William Wahler, George H. Thom, Robert McCormick, Hal S. Kimball, Maurice Steven, Joseph Gillespie** and **Thomas Daily**. He flew with many Command Pilots, **Charles Benton, Robert Felber, Spencer Hunn, John Gibson, Lewis Adams, Douglas Thompson, John Losee, Lewis Adams, M. K. Martin, Eugene Snavely** and **E. T. Claggett**. On D-Day he flew to Caen Vire with **James McAtee** as Command Pilot; later that day he flew to Colleville, St. Laurent with **Leon Johnson**. On one mission to Gilslendirchen, Germany, he served as Ball Turret Gunner.

Holden flew in twelve different aircrafts: **Poop Deck Pappy, The Shark, 4-Q-2, Lil Cookie, D-Barfly, Shack Rabbit/Star Spangled Hell, Phyllis, I'll Be Back/Feather Merchant, Consolidated Mess, Big Time Operator, King Pin** and **Flak Magnet**.

Information of Holden's death was found in the Social Security Records.

Hyland, Jack M. #20776 67th Squadron 24 April 2001 1st Lt. Hyland was a pilot. His first of 36 missions was 7 July 1944. Hyland flew in many unnamed planes, but also in **Old Iron Corset, Myrtle The Fertile Turtle, Fifinella, Three Kisses for Luck, Mi Akin Ass, Limpin Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose, Fearless Fosdick, Heaven Can Wait II** and **Sultry Sue**.

His last mission was 17 October 1944. Information of his death came via the Social Security Files.

Humphries, Paul C. #20756 68th Squadron 14 August 2004 Sgt.

Humphries was a gunner on the **Myron Butler** crew, serving sometimes as a waist gunner, more frequently as a belly gunner. His first mission was 7 July 1944; his last, two weeks later to Oberpfaffenhofen.

The target was an armaments factory near Munich. A section of the wing was shot off by flak. Seeing they could not make it to England, Butler headed toward Switzerland. They encountered more flak, causing them to lose an engine and the right rear stabilizer on **Cape Cod Special II**.

The crew bailed out. One member of the crew was injured when he hit the ground. Humphries and others were taken to Mulhouse, France, then Frankfurt, next to Dulag Luft, then to Stalag I, Barth, which is on the Baltic Sea. They were liberated by the Russian Army.

Information of his death came from the Social Security Records.

Hunyadi, Arnold G. #20766 66th Squadron 14 August 1944 T/Sgt. Hunyadi was an Engineer and Top Turret Gunner. He flew 28 missions with **Ralph Hayden**; one with **Robert Podojil**, one with **Paul Dusossoit**.

His first of thirty missions was 5 September 1944; his last, 21 March 1945. Hunyadi flew in many unnamed planes, but also in **Jail Bait, Jersey Jerk, King Pin, Henry, Fifinella, Down De Hatch** and **Big Time Operator**.

Information of his death came from Social Security Records.

Hurst, Oliver F. #20770 67th Squadron January 2010 Lt. Hurst was a pilot. He flew 29 missions. His first mission was 12 August 1944, flying with the crew of **Wilbur Carter**. On his second mission he moved over to the left seat and flew all other missions with his own crew. The Hurst crew flew in **Glory Bee**,



FOLDED WINGS

Fifinella, Old Iron Corset, Judy's Buggy, Phyllis, Lady Fifi Nella, Sultry Sue and Mi Akin Ass. Their last mission was 7 January 1945. Most of Hurst's missions were in France and Germany, bombing bridges, railroads and air fields, clearing the way for the advancing ground forces.

At the time of his death, Hurst was living in San Antonio, Texas. Information of his passing came from his daughter, Charlene (Hurst) de la Fuente.

McKee, Ira #21283 506 Squadron 28 February 2010 Col. McKee was an Armament Officer. He arrived in Shipdham 17 March 1943, having attended the Aircraft Armament School at Lowery Air Base. He was placed on inactive status December 1945 and returned to active duty March 1947. He was a Staff Weather Officer for SAC and TAC. He received meteorological training at UCLA and University of Chicago. He earned his Master's degree at St. Louis University. After retiring from military service he taught 9th grade mathematics.

McKee holds the Bronze Star and Distinguished Service Medal. He lost his first wife, marrying Ruth W. McKee several years later. He has two daughters and a son, two step-daughters and a step-son.

McKee was a regular attendee of the 44th BG Reunions. He and Ruth resided in Arlington, Texas at the time of his death.

Pyle, Larry #25853 506 Squadron 10 June 2009 Lt. Pyle was a pilot. His first of seven missions was 21 March 1945. The crew has one loss. On the low level Wesel mission, his Left Wing Gunner, **Anibal C. Diaz**, fell from the plane to his death, while dumping supplies to the British troops who had just crossed the Rhine River.

Pyle and his crew flew in **Sabrina III**,

Joplin Jalopy, Clean Sweep/Dragon Nose and Jose Carioca. Their last mission April 25, 1945, which was the 44th BG's last mission of the war.

Pyle's last address was El Cerrito, California.

Ed. Note: Pyle's name in the Database is 'Leonard'. 'Larry' must be correct, as he has been a member of the 44th BG for many years. It is assumed he would have corrected the error of his name.

Kille, Wesley G. #20919 67th Squadron 15 February 1997 No information is available for this member of the 44th BG. Notice of his death came from the Social Security Records.

Wellman, Everett # 22509 66th Squadron 26 December 2009 Lt. Wellman was a Co-Pilot on the **James N. Williams** crew. In the post- D-Day effort, the 44th was bombing ahead of the troops, attacking refineries, bridges and railroad viaducts. On one mission he flew with **M. W. Miskewich** and two Navigators using GEE and PFF for accuracy in the bombing. Seven Command Pilots flew with the Williams crew: **A. W. Reed** (491st Bomb Group), **William Cameron, J. A. McGregor, William Strong, Joseph Gilbert, A. L. Johnson** and **M. K. Martin**. In their 23 missions, the Williams crew flew in many unnamed planes, also in **My Peach, Fifinella, Big Time Operator** and **Helen**. Their last mission was 30 December 1944.

Wellman's last address was in Oklahoma City.



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