

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



Season's
Greetings!

8 BALL TAILS

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The crashes of 67th Squadron Aircrafts #41-23784 T and #41-23988 E are almost as vivid to the French living in Rouen as to Claude William Lundy, Aircraft Mechanic assigned to *Miss Dianne*. Fifty two years later, in 1997, he and Roy Owen unveiled a monument to the Clyde Price crew, whose plane crashed at Villers-Escalles on 8 March 1943, hit by F190s and flak. Seven of Lundy's friends were KIA, three became POW. In gratitude for Americans who gave all to liberate their country, the French hosts presented every airman on the tour an artist's rendering of *Miss Dianne* and her sister craft going down.



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WILL LUNDY HISTORIAN

If you had to name a living member of the 44th BGVA, whose name has made it around the globe most frequently and consistently, Historian **Will Lundy** would be high on the list. From France, Germany, Belgium and England, and particularly here in the USA, the Assistant Crew Chief at Shipdham has left a mark on WWII air war history that will resound through the next millennium.

"When I realized that nobody was recording the events of my Squadron, the 67th, I started collecting information. "I put a book together, made 100 copies, and gave it to members of the 67th Squadron. Later I discovered there was no record of those who died in combat," he continued. "I thought their families should know what happened to them. If one or two men escaped a crash, I would look up their hometown and see if they still lived there. Or I would try to find somebody who knew them. Sometimes it was pure luck. I also got access to official documents, the briefings of those who made it back. I put it all together in a book, which I called *The Roll of Honor and Casualties*. Then I found a printer and made 160 copies of this book. (Ed. Note: Will did this at his own expense.)

Lundy's history of the 67th Squadron is long out of print and old copies are eagerly sought. One recently sold on e-Bay for \$150. His Roll of Honor augments most of the stories that appear in the 8 Ball Tails. His early recognition of the historical value of pictures led him to start what is possibly one of the biggest collections of WWII aviation memorabilia in the world. Even when he is looking for a safe repository for his collection, photographs, diaries and government records, he is using it almost daily to answer one more question from someone who is requesting information about a long lost cousin, father, uncle or brother. Most of the documentary information in the Database came directly from his files; and as much as he wants to take time to enjoy other facets of his life, he continues to research and respond to every e-mail that comes onto his computer.



C. Will Lundy - 1935

Will never started out to be a historian. He wanted to be a pilot. To his dismay, he learned that he couldn't enlist in any branch of the service because of visual limitations. A student at UCLA working on a degree in Psychology and Anthropology, he saw his classmates taking flying lessons. He was the only one who did not become a pilot.

When he was drafted in 1942, he wanted to be as close to a plane as possible, so he applied for Aircraft Mechanics School after Basic at Keesler Field, Mississippi.



Will at A.M. School, Keesler Field - 1942

Will crossed the Atlantic on the *Queen Mary*. With his buddies, he shared his awe at seeing *Lady Liberty* on Ellis Island; but before long, he realized that the *Queen* was all alone in that big ocean, with no escort service. That was a little bit sobering. Nevertheless, they made it safely to Ireland, then Scotland, then England.

He remembers sunken ships in the harbor at Firth, seeing Scottish children look at them in wonderment and riding in a 'toy train', (big enough for troops, but much smaller than American versions). "We got off the train around 2:00 A.M. and walked through total blackness to a GI truck. We all stayed in line by hanging onto the shoulder of the man ahead of him.



"We got to England before our combat crews who flew over later, so to keep us busy, they had us march up and down dirt lanes. We marched so long, we actually wore out our boots. Fortunately, my buddy and I had stashed a pair of civilian shoes in our bags, so at night we went to town and visited a pub. We enjoyed the company of Polish flyers who were in the RAF, even though neither spoke the other's language."

The realities of war came soon enough for Sgt. Lundy. Twelve times he watched his plane *Miss Dianne* take off and eagerly awaited its return. On 8 March 1943, the mission was to the marshalling yards on the west bank of the Seine River, south of Rouen. The bombers flew unprotected, and two were lost. Seventeen men from the Clyde Price and **Robert Blain** crew were KIA; four became POWs.

Will saw so many brave young men take off, never to return, he maintained his equilibrium by backing away from strong friendships with the combat crews. The pain of losing friends was too unbearable.

In 1944, he recalls waiting for his plane. "In the cul-de-sac there are the usual post-mission activities of gassing up, patching flak holes and/or bullet holes, engine checks, covering up, etc., fully underway. But here -- my plane is missing! I've sweated out each plane that landed hastily, identifying, then looking for the next. But the ships are now all in and unloaded. My pleas to the adjacent departing combat crews for any sign of its fate resulted in merely that it had been hit, feathered #2 engine, and fell behind. The many stories of stragglers being jumped by enemy aircraft continued to send chills up my spine. And hope was almost gone.



Will Lundy at Shipdham
WINTER, 1943

"Too upset to leave the line, I kept busy moving things around, making sure everything was in readiness for her return; kicking the weeds, watching the sky, and then the Jeeps and power wagons as they busily traveled the perimeter, returning the crews for debriefing. Then suddenly one of the Jeeps turned in and screeched to a halt. The line chief yelled, 'They're safe!! They landed on the coast with just an engine out.'" I almost needed a parachute to bring me safely back to earth."

A traveling maintenance crew patched up the unnamed plane, and managed to get it safely across the Channel, past the White Cliffs of Dover to Friston Air Base, an RAF Fighter Base. Will joined his crew chief, **George Baccash**, in driving to southern England to ready the plane for its return to Shipdham, then back to combat.

With Lt. **Knapp** at the controls, the ship's return was an awesome experience for the eager aircraft mechanic who volunteered to serve as engineer on the flight. Adding to the problems of getting a bomber off a fighter air strip, the experience was heightened with "Doodle Bugs" (V-1 Rockets) passing overhead.

Pre-flighted, we taxied out across the iron mats that served as a short runway for the Spitfires, then on down to the far south corner of this rough, grassy plateau. It is a pretty view to see the ocean a couple hundred feet down the chalk-white cliffs through the co-pilot's window. But the view back diagonally across this "airfield," the long way, wasn't all that inviting because it really wasn't long. So it doesn't take much grey matter to understand why we got as far away from those buildings as possible. I took up a position between and just behind the pilot and co-pilot as they set the brakes, then fully advanced the four throttles, then the superchargers until the full power of those spinning propellers shook and bounced us, straining every nut, bolt and rivet. Suddenly, brakes off and I was hanging on for dear life as we jumped forward, gaining momentum with each turn of the wheels. We are soon rapidly accelerating, crossing the metal landing strip and off, but not up. Now a bump and we are airborne. No! back on the grass again. The rough terrain keeps bounding us up, but down we come.

"With rapidly widening eyeballs, I shifted my anxious gaze from those suddenly large buildings to the instrument panel - and almost swallowed my teeth. The fuel pressure - the FUEL pressure - it wasn't. But before I could say anything if, in fact, I could make a sound at all, we blasted up over those buildings - and back down again. No, not quite all the way back down, but into a shallow valley where we gained sufficient flying speed, retracted our gear, and tanked toward home, and I could breathe again.

"Why in the world do I always jump for any excuse to fly?" But now all is fine, those four Pratt & Whitney engines are music to my ears, even though the fuel pressure gauge tells me that one of them shouldn't be. Back in our cul-de-sac, I quickly took off the fairing around the engine accessory section of the "ailing" pressure to find that the indicator hose line had been improperly connected. No harm done, except of course for several missed heart beats. Now, ready for tomorrow, early, and back to war.

"In June of '43 we heard a rumor that a group was going to Africa. At that time, the 44th was undergoing severe losses, getting replacement of new crews and new planes. They started to practice low level flying, and we had to make alterations in the planes--50 calipers in the nose, twin 50's in the waist windows, etc. When I heard they were going to Africa, I wanted to go along. Africa was a warm climate, and England was cold and miserable. The Crew Chiefs could take one man; and as Assistant Crew Chief, I couldn't go. I couldn't even stow away, as the planes were too full.

"We got the word that the mission would be Ploesti, and some of the maintenance crew were recruited to go as combatants. Those who survived Ploesti returned to Africa on the second trip, but did not survive the Wiener-Newstadt Mission, only two weeks later."

Along with the agonies of losing friends, Will's memories are coupled with admiration of pilots whose skill bordered on miraculous. He saw Lt. **Rockford C. Griffith** bring in a battle-damaged plane from a long mission to Oslo, Norway. The right landing gear was damaged, and would not fully drop; the ball turret was down and could not be retracted; T/Sgt. **William T. Kuban** engineer was wounded. The pilot ordered all other crew

members to bail out; after which the pilot and co-pilot set that plane down so skillfully, so evenly, the turret did not scrape, and the wounded man was safely delivered. Lundy noted that for this skillful execution, Lt. Griffith was awarded a Silver Star.

Once he saw planes coming in from a long mission into a snow storm. With terrible vision and with one using the wrong runway, two planes were directly headed for a collision. At the last minute, one pilot took off, literally leaping over the other. Both planes were saved.

He watched everybody leap in all directions when 1st. Lt. **E. Jay Spencer's** plane skidded a bomb up the runway. (Fortunately, it had been disarmed.) He looked in as a P-47, returning to base, missed a formation of '24s coming in. A wing on the fighter clipped a bomber, and both planes went down.



Will leaves the Shipdham Barracks, heading to work.

When the 506 Bomb Squadron came over in March 1942, they brought new planes. With all of the changes that had been made for greater efficiency, maintenance grew increasingly complex. It was Will's job to see that every plane of his squadron that got off the ground had been checked, according to the Tech Orders for that particular series. Every time a defect was noted, all maintenance crews worldwide were informed of the repairs that must be made. The problems became so complex, Lundy became an Assistant Inspector in August '44, a specialist in checking plane numbers, and making certain the necessary repairs were made. He was moved up to Staff Sgt.



VE Day and the joy of the Trolley Mission made up for all problems, inconvenience and discomfort. Will finally was able to get on a plane. Then, before the 8th AF Command would accept any B-24 back at the states, every Technical Order had to be completed and documented. Seeing planes flying out daily, Lundy rushed to complete his assignments, so he, too, could fly in one of them. It was his joy to fly home in the *Iron Corset*, a B-24 that had set a record of 129 missions. It was the first time he was home since he had been inducted.

Will met his wife Irene, and they dated while he was at Shipdham, but had no plans for continuing their friendship. One week after he got home, he decided life could not go on without her, so he called her and asked her to marry him. Although she accepted immediately, it took 1 1/2 years before they could finally get together. All transportation out of England was booked solid. Finally, there was a cancellation, and she was able to come across. They were married in January 1947, one week after her arrival.

Irene is no less eager than Will to preserve the history of the 44th. She has been at his side through all of his research efforts. When the 44th gathers each year for the Reunion, she is right there at the Welcome Station. This is not a formal assignment. Everyone knows she will just show up and help out.

Irene's family connections to England have given the two insight into what was happening over there. They grieved when the Marshall Plan was rebuilding Germany and other enemy countries, while their allies in England were suffering through dreadful times, rebuilding their country. When the idea of a Memorial Library in Norwich was born, Irene was able to give Will new directions for his research materials. The Lundys' contribution to the 44th BG is best described by their many admirers.

From Col. **Bob Lehnhausen**: "More than any other person in WWII, General **Leon W. Johnson**, by his personal courage and leadership of the 44th Bomb Group (H) assured that unit and its brave air and ground echelons a prominent position in the history of military aviation. Likewise, no other person has done more to preserve the history of the gallant acts and deeds of the 44th air crews and their dedicated ground crews than Will Lundy.

He and his precious wife Irene possess an unusual sense and value of history. While the 44th spent the WWII years making history, the Lundys have spent over 50 years gathering, preserving, researching, cataloging, verifying and sharing the information. They have developed an international network of selfless persons who share their interest in history. The Lundys and their many, many enthusiastic and resourceful friends have assisted many, many families of missing or deceased airmen, in learning "what happened" to their loved ones during WWII. They have a special dedication for those young men who gave their lives in the cause of liberty...and of victory. The Lundy mission is to be sure that everyone who served with the 44th will be remembered and recognized.

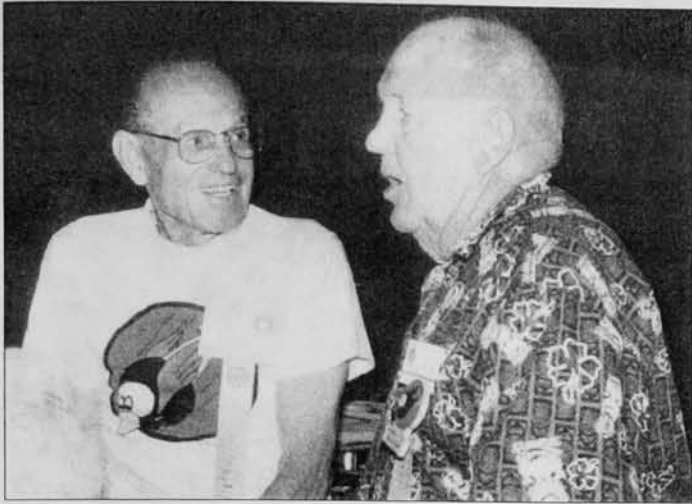
I didn't know Will Lundy at Shipdham. However, from what I have gotten to know of him since then, his reverence for the flight crews of the 67th Squadron, he had to have been a superb AM (Aviation Mechanic).

Irene and Will have been very, very helpful -- more than any other, in finding out what happened to my brother and his crew. Bless them.

From Col. **Roy Owen**: C. "Will" Lundy, Historian, 44th Bomb Group; translated, speaks "Mr. Forty Fourth."

This wiry little Assistant Crew Chief on the 67th Squadron aircraft *Miss Dianne* was the first among the Eight Ballers at war's end to have the imagination, foresight and energy to realize the value of organization level combat records by compiling all of the group Missing Aircrew Reports into his *ROLL OF HONOR*. From that foundation, he brought birth and life to the history of the 44th and what later evolved into the 44th Bomb Group Veteran's Association as we know it today.

In 1992, the incumbent association leadership made a decision that the Memorial Group no longer had a future and would disband. Will was one of the first of a small group of stalwart members who rallied to preserve the association. They not only kept it alive, but also have steered its steady growth into the best organized B-24 Group Association in the Second Air Division.



C. Will Lundy and Dick Butler, TAMPA, 2nd AD, 2000

From Col. **Richard Butler**: "I did not know Will during WWII, but I know he started out as an Assistant Crew Chief and worked up to becoming a Line Chief in the 67th Squadron. Ardith and I first met Will and Irene in 1979 during a Second Air Division Association convention in Norwich. Our friendship with them and our respect for them, and appreciation for Will's work on behalf of the history of the 44th Bomb Group has continuously grown since that meeting. Few people would argue with my opinion that Will is the most dedicated veteran of the 44th in recording its history. For the past thirty or so years he has virtually dedicated his life to researching and writing about events and people of the 44th at Shipdham. The two books which he compiled and published at his own expense, "*History of the 67th Bomb Squadron*" and "*44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties*" are recognized as the most accurate of any similar books of any B-24 bomb group. His historical work is recognized among the historians of the Second Air Division Association as the best. Almost all of his work on behalf of the 44th has been at his own expense. Irene, Will's wife, has always been at his side, assisting him in his work and encouraging him at his times of frustration. Over the years, Will has received thousands of requests from 44th veterans, spouses, children and other relatives, seeking information as to what a 44th person did during the war, or the circumstances of an individual's death. Will has answered each request to the best of his ability, often spending hours of research on a single case. To me, this has been his greatest contribution, helping people who are seeking information about a loved one. I am proud to be a friend of Will and Irene, and thank them for their dedication to the history of our bomb

group, and for the service they have provided to our members and their relatives who seek information about their loved ones.

From Sgt. Peter Loncke, Belgium Air Force: "I came in contact with Will Lundy back in 1999 as part of my research on both crashes of 24 March 1945, involving 2 B-24's (*The Crandell and Chandler crews*). He sent me a copy of the video tape which showed both crashes. With the help of this tape, I was able to find these crash sites in Wesel, Germany. Will helped with my investigation of the January 1944 crash of the Pinder crew in Winbrin, Belgium. He has been very helpful with my e-mail requests about 44th BG history."

From Col. **Bill Cameron**: "...Will is not only a gentleman, but is an admirable person. I didn't know Will during the 2 1/2 years we were at Shipdham. Sometime after the war I wrote to him, and we have continued to correspond for about thirty years. Four of the sergeants on my crew were his close friends. When they were lost, my bonds with Will became even stronger. I am very grateful to him for writing the history of our squadron, the 67th, and then later, the history of the 44th. They are both exceedingly well done...and required a great deal of time to research. During the war, he was a most dedicated mechanic, working in fair, as well as very cold weather; and in the early months, without shelter of any kind.

A SALUTE TO MECHANICS FROM AN UNKNOWN PILOT

Here's to the people with the greasy hands,
Who fuel the plane when the pilot lands.
Who fix the canopies and stop the leaks;
Change the tires and oil the squeaks.
Who smooth the scratches and rivet the panels;
Check "loud and clear" on the radio channels.
Who read the write-ups; and make repairs;
Check wires and cables for chafing and tears.
Who pull the chocks and walk the wings;
And do a million maintenance things.
Who watch as the bird takes off and flies.

So here's a salute to the gals and guys,
From a group of fliers who seldom ponder.
The ones who keep them in the wild blue yonder.

Reprinted from "TALL TALES", SAFHS, Georgia Chapter.



BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT L. CARDENAS



Test Pilot, Combat Leader and More

Left: B/GEN. ROBERT CARDENAS
HAS FLOWN MORE THAN 60 DIFFERENT AIRCRAFTS
IN HIS CAREER.

Right: Climbing out of the
XB-45-JET Bomber.



Brigadier General **Robert L. "Bob" Cardenas**, Commander of the 44th Bomb Group, began his military career in the Coast Artillery, then became a pilot as a Cadet in the Army Air Corps. He was commissioned in July, 1941. In August, 1941, he was an instructor at Kelly Field. His section leader asked "has anyone here flown a glider?" According to Cardenas, "being a 2nd Lt., and not knowing better, I raised my hand before asking - why?" He wound up being sent to 29 Palms, California to establish an Army Air Corps Glider School.

29 Palms was a contractor-operated facility, and Lt. Cardenas was the only military person there. He had no gliders, but it was expected that the government would supply them. However, at Glider Meetings he had become acquainted with Mr. Richard Dupont, a gentleman who had been named 'Glider Czar' by President Roosevelt, so he decided to use this contact to change the situation.

Lt. Cardenas wrote to Mr. Dupont, telling him that if he had \$5,000, he would be able to get five gliders and begin teaching men to be glider pilots.

Two weeks later a C-47 arrived and out stalked a very tall Colonel. "Who's in command here?" he asked. "I guess I am. I'm the only military man here." "Step around here, son," he ordered, and we walked to the back of the plane. He introduced himself as Colonel **Fred Dent**, and said he was in charge of the Glider Program.

"Did you go to West Point?" "No." "Then I'll forgive you, but don't ever write to a civilian over the head of your Commanding Officer." After the lecture, the Col. wrote out a check for \$5,000, and the Glider Program began.

This opened the door for Cardenas's new assignment. He was sent to Wright Field where he tested P-38's, B-24's, B-17's, LB-30 Testing AB 24's. The testing was going fine, and then his mentor, Col. Dent, was ordered to England for combat duty.

I told him, "Fine thing. You raised me from a pup, and now you're leaving me." He replied, "If you ever get to England, I'll get you into a group."

To England

Later Cardenas went to England as 3rd pilot to deliver equipment. He jumped ship in London and called Colonel Dent, reminding him of his promise. Cardenas urged, saying, 'I believe a superior's word is his bond.'

"All right," Dent replied, "but you'll fly every mission." This suited Captain Cardenas just fine. He was assigned to the 506 Sq. After four missions as co-pilot, he moved to the left seat and **Sidney Paul** joined him in the right. He piloted *Prince/PrincAss/Princess, Baldy and His Brood, I'll Be Back and Consolidated Mess*, each tour taking him deeper into enemy territory. **L. A. Sefranek** co-piloted with him into Berlin, **Eustice Hawkins**, into Brandenburg and **Dean Miller**, to an Aircraft Components and Assembly Plant in Fredrichshaven, Germany. That was on March 16, 1944.

To Switzerland

Two days later, on a return to Fredrichshafen, his 17th mission, he flew as Command Pilot, with 1st Lt. **Raymond J. Lacombe** at the controls. *Chief & Sack Artists* sustained flak damage, causing one engine to catch fire. Damage to the left wing caused the aircraft to descend at a 45 degree angle. Skillfully manipulating the controls, Lt. Lacombe succeeded in righting his aircraft and regaining his position in the formation to complete a second bomb run. Additional flak damage set fire to a second engine, severed fuel and hydraulic lines, and rendered the electrical system inoperative.

With several of his crew badly wounded and the uncontrollable aircraft on fire, Lt. Lacombe flew close to the Switzerland border where the entire crew parachuted to safety, including Captain Cardenas. (For his outstanding skill, courage and judgement, 1st Lt. Raymond Lacombe was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to his Distinguished Flying Cross.

Cardenas's chute dropped him in Lake Constance, a border lake between Germany & Switzerland. A piece of flak clipped off part of his scalp, but he was able to swim into the neutral country.

At that time the Swiss government was concerned with the B-17s and B-24s which were in plain view to any overhead German flight crew. They contacted the U. S. government, requesting an instructor to teach their pilots how to fly them to the safety of a mountain airfield. "You already have an instructor—Captain Cardenas," they replied. Thus the internee became the instructor of his captors' pilots.

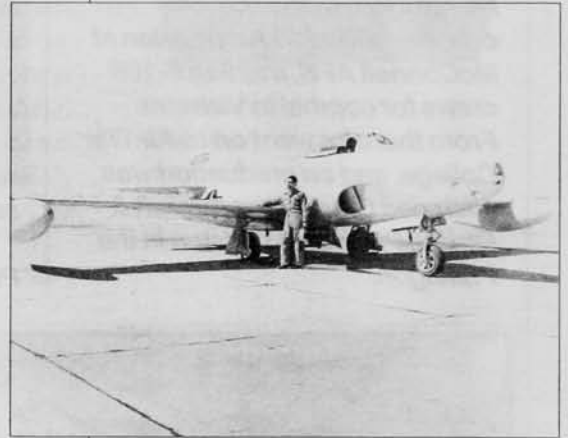
"I had to swear, practically in blood, that I would not use this opportunity to escape in one of these planes," Cardenas remembered. "However, the freedom to move around made it possible for me to make contact with the Underground. During his internment at Camp Maloney at Adelboden, he made friends with a Capt. Stolz, who joined him in an escape plan that led back to England.

"In Geneva the train station had one track that accompanied trains traveling IN-COUNTRY and another track for trains traveling OUT-OF-COUNTRY. My contacts arranged for me to hide in a Cafe' on the island between the two tracks. At the appointed time I donned a waiter's apron, walked out on the island and jumped into a freight train headed out of the country into France. I was accompanied by Capt. Stolz. When the train slowed down near Grenoble, we jumped and were contacted by personnel from the French Underground. After D-Day, we were flown out in a black C-47 back to England. Somewhere I have a photograph of Capt. Stolz and me with our contact in her Chalet near Geneva. I have never shown this photograph to make sure she was not placed in jeopardy."

Testing

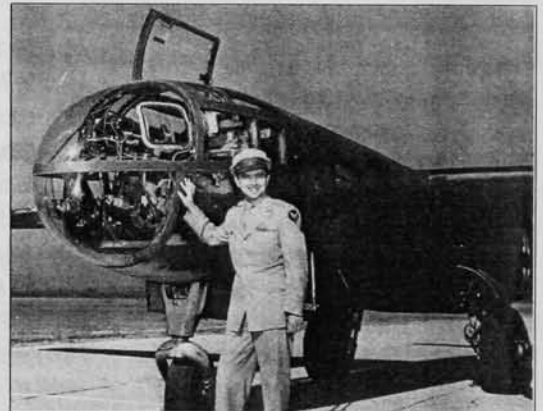
Returning to the States, Cardenas attended and graduated from the Flight Performance School. He participated in the flight test evaluation of the German ME-262 and the ARADO 234—Germany's first jet bomber. He was

the Operations Officer and the Command Pilot of the B-29 that launched Chuck Yeager in the X-1 into the realm of supersonic flight. In 1948 he was assigned Officer in Charge of Flight Test Division projects at Muroc AFB and Chief Air Force Test Pilot of the YB-49 Flying Wing program. After completion of the Performance Phase II, he checked out Captain Glen Edwards after the crash of the B-49 and loss of the crew, to complete the Stability and Control



The YB-49, in which Cardenas set a speed record in 1949.

program in the remaining B-49. By 1949, Cardenas flew the YB-49 from Muroc AFB to Andrews AFB to set a transcontinental record of 4 hours, 05 minutes, covering 2,258 miles at a speed of 511.2 mph. (Muroc has been renamed Edwards AFB.)



This was a German Jet Bomber which Cardenas evaluated.



Korea & Vietnam

During the Korean War, Col. Cardenas was working on the cutting edge with new jet fighters and bombers. He was then Commander of the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing in Okinawa, flying the F-86D. Later, he was Commander of the 18th Tactical Fighter Wing on Okinawa during the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. For the next two years, he flew the F-105 in combat operations over Vietnam.

He returned to the U.S. to command the 835 Air Division at McConnell AFB, training F-105 crews for combat in Vietnam. From there he went on to Air War College, and on graduation was assigned Chief of the Aircraft & Missile Programs Division in the Pentagon.



ABOVE: COMMANDER OF THE 18TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING IN OKINAWA, KOREA AND THAILAND.

CARDENAS FLEW F-105'S OVER VIETNAM.

International Assignments

From the Pentagon, he was made Chief of the Special Operations Division at U.S. Strike Command HQ in Tampa, Florida. He rose to the rank of Brigadier General, and

became Commander of the Air Force Special Operations Force. Next he was assigned in Europe as Vice Commander of the 16th Air Force at the Torrejon Air Base, Spain. It was here that he had the dubious honor of negotiating the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces in Libya with Muhmar Quadafi.

"After that I became the U.S. Deputy to LIVE OAK at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe) in Mons, Belgium." One of my jobs was to tell the Soviets 'NYET' when they would try to close the roads, trains and/or airways into Berlin. At SHAPE, which was the headquarters SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe), they called us 'the tripwire' to WWII."

Prior to his retirement in June of 1973, General Cardenas served as the Chief of the JL Division of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS) where he was responsible for the Joint Strategic Target List of the U.S. Nuclear War Plan.

In 1983, he was appointed to the White House as the California Coordinator for President Reagan's Southwest Border Economic Action Group. He resigned in 1985 and accepted an appointment by the Governor Dukemejian as Chairman of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Group, as well as a member of the California Council of Criminal Justice.

The Governor then appointed General Cardenas to the Board in 1987 where he was elected to a policymaking body for the California Department of Veterans Affairs, and to which he became Chairman in March, 1990. He left in 1993 to serve as Chairman of the San Diego County United Veterans Council and as a Director on the Board of the Veterans Memorial Center & Museum.

On April 15, 1993, the University of New Mexico honored him for his Outstanding Professional Contributions and Leadership. The USAF Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB honored the General on December 10, 1994 as a "Distinguished Alumnus" and in September, 1995, he was inducted into the "Aerospace Walk of Honor" at Lancaster, California. The Sigma Chi Fraternity awarded the General the Sigma Chi "Significant Sig" medal during their June 1995 national convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Currently, he serves as a member of the San Diego Advisory Board and a Director on the Board of the Veterans Memorial Center & Museum (VMC). He started a "Living History" library at the VMC so the little guys will not be forgotten. The group acquired 16 computers and established a computer school for veterans to prepare them better for a job and keep them from becoming homeless. They just started a committee that works with the City Public Administrator to provide dignified burial and honors for unclaimed homeless veterans. Toward that end, the VMC is in the process of acquiring cemetery acreage from civilian cemeteries to be operated as Satellites of Rosecrans National Cemetery, since Roscrans is full!

"This will provide approximately 90,000 coffin burial plots within a couple of years while we wait for a new National Cemetery," he reported. Last year there were 340,000 veterans in San Diego County. This year they are down to 280,000.

As a former Chairman of the Flight Test Historical Foundation at Edwards AFB, The Men of Mach 1, he now serves as a Trustee to the FTHF. The Foundation is the fund raising arm of the AFFTC Museum at Edwards AFB and the SR-71 "Black Bird Air Park" in Palmdale, California.

General Cardenas currently enjoys life at home with his wife Gladys, their children and grandchildren in San Diego, California.

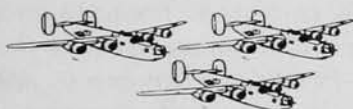


THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE - YB-49 Flying Wing.
Wing span - 172 feet.

Decorations

Legion of Merit
with Oak Leaf Cluster
Distinguished Flying Cross
Purple Heart
Meritorious Service Medal
Air Medal with 4 OLCs
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Air Force Commendation Medal
with OLC
Distinguished Unit Citation
Foreign decorations include
the Spanish Grand Legion
of Aeronautical Merit.

44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association
P.O. Box 712287
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Did you know that the 44th BGVA is not closed to veterans and wives? Any member or interested person may join as an Associate Member. Family members regularly request information about brothers, uncles, fathers or cousins. Any of these people are eligible to join and share the benefits of reunions, publications and camaraderie with WWII airmen whose awesome stories continue to unfold with each gathering.



The 44th BG's Tour Didn't Happen



September 11, 2001 Began a New Era

It was defined in the resounding words of President George W. Bush

“We will not tire. We will not falter. We will not fail.”

Larry Herpel made every effort to bring the trip about, but with every hour, the sobering truth became more clear. Newark airport was closed!!! Other hijackers were suspected to be in the area.

It will take some time for him to unwind the 16 day tour in which he had placed so much time and energy. He asks for forbearance from all of us who are waiting to be reimbursed.

FACING A NEW ENEMY

The world has seen rubble before. The attack on the World Trade Center in New York was, in a single strike, a ghost of the many nightly raids in London with the V-1s, and later the V-2s.

Our new enemy, the terrorists, had the advantage of total surprise. Early in the War, the British were able to take advantage of a new invention-radar. Located along the English Channel, they provided early warning of an upcoming bombardment.

*“I was in London, helping an English family clean their fireplace equipment,” Sgt. **Perry Morse** recalled. “I could barely hear the V-1 motors because the air raid sirens were so loud. It was scary to me, but the family had become so accustomed to the bombings, they hardly paid attention. One of the rockets dropped on the Railroad Station, and that caused quite a bit of damage, but it rapidly got cleared up and the trains continued to run.”*

The V-2 was more destructive. This rocket powered engine revealed itself as a red flash in the sky. The explosion was powerful, and the shock wave was truly violent. Wiping out those sites had to become a priority if England was to survive. No wonder the 44th was deployed to Pas Des Calais area at Escalles-Sur-Buchy and other areas on the French side of the Channel to knock out this ghastly threat. England survived; and along with the United States, determined that civilization and morality must prevail. It still must.

President Mikoloski sums up the American situation succinctly: “The World Trade Center, America’s most visible symbol of economic freedom and flourishing, was reduced to ashes with the greatest single day’s loss of lives in our history; the Pentagon, Bastion of the Free World’s most powerful military force, blasted by a hijacked commercial airliner with the loss of nearly 200 precious lives...”

On 7 December 1941, our generation did not know how we would win WWII, but we knew we had to win. Now the banner has been handed to another generation. Advanced technology has made great weapons available.

*With their strength and determination and our prayers,
America will again prevail.*



The German V-1 'buzz bomb'

Winbrin, Belgium 17 September 2001
Hamminkeln, Germany 19 September 2001

Events we were scheduled to attend on our tour.

PHOTOGRAPHS kindly submitted by KARL-HEINZ GANSEL



MEMORIAL PLAQUE
PINDER CRASH SITE

This message from Peter Loncke:

I just returned from my mission to Winbrin. What can I say, all went perfect!!! All +/-100 people attending were impressed by the ceremony and memorial!!! Mission accomplished!

I started the ceremony with one minute of silence to remember those killed at the terrorist attack from last Tuesday. I introduced the different guest speakers. The unveiling of the memorial was done by Colonel USAF Tunstall from the American Embassy, together with the Mayor of Houffalize and a Belgian War veteran who was too fragile to mount the steps, but stayed below. Five flower wreaths were laid. The last post was played and two minutes of silence. The school children had stood all this time around the memorial and at the end sang a song in French, very moving and nice. The 44th BG was represented by the Crandell family, brother of Lt. Crandell, KIA on 24 March 1945.



PETER LONCKE
2001

WINBRIN, BELGIUM September 17, 2001

The 44th BG's tour was to take us to the Memorial Site, where a monument to the Pinder crash was unveiled. Although we could not be present, a memorable event took place, captured photographically and relayed to us by E-Mail, courtesy of Sgt. Peter Loncke of the Belgian Air Force.



DEDICATION CEREMONY

Sgt. Forrest S. Clark had a special interest in that crash. He was personally aggrieved that his close friend, T/Sgt. Abe Sofferman, had been lost. In honor of this friendship, he had a plaque erected in his honor. In Clark's words, "It took 56 years and many months of research to put this story together ...Belgian aviation researchers recently unearthed parts of a B-24 bomber buried deep in an Ardennes pine forest..."

"The date (of the mission) was 29 January 1944 and the target, the city of Frankfurt, Germany. The pilot of that bomber was Lt. Harold Pinder, and in the crew was T/Sgt. Sofferman. I was to be on that bomber, but he chose to go to get his missions done."

Somewhere over southern Belgium an FW190A of JG26 shot down the bomber. It crashed in the pine forests near the tiny village of Winbrin in the Ardennes, about 100 miles south of Brussels. The FW190 guns set one wing afire.

It was one of 863 heavy bombers dispatched on that mission. Twenty-four B-17s and five B-24s failed to return. The FW190s of the 4th Staffel of JG26 took off at 1010 hours and intercepted the B-24 formation. On most of the mission, the bombers were flying without fighter support.



Some of the crew died in the crash and some parachuted, among them, Lt. Pinder and Sgt. Sofferman. They managed to get out of the badly damaged craft before it went into a steep downward spiral and crashed.

Fragments and some of the ammo have been dug up at the site. The forest hid much of the plane, but recently with the aid of metal detectors, pieces of fuselage, shell casings and other artifacts pointed to the plane's identity, B-24 #42-7547, *Sky Queen*, 67 Sq., 44BG.

Clark's research continued, "The rest of the story is one of hardship, courage and overwhelming odds. The surviving members of the crew were taken in by

the Belgian partisan army and hidden in various locations in the vicinity of Winbrin for about 30 days. Some of the local



PLAQUE UNVEILED.

resistance fighters and a couple of postmen saw the parachutes coming down. They took Sofferman and Pinder to the hideout of the partisan resistance army known as *Armee Blanche*. The area was heavily honeycombed with German occupation troops, all armed and ready to kill. They were under strict orders to seek out and destroy downed allied airmen. But the partisans kept one jump ahead of the Germans."

In one of the coldest winters in Europe's history, the partisan's struggled to get the airmen and some Russian

escaped prisoners to the *Comete Line*, an established escape route, but apparently their presence was made known to the German police.



THE CEREMONY PROGRESSES.

Unbelievable as it may seem, a Russian defector to the German army, Gen. Vlassov, led an attack on the partisans. Rather than risk capture and abuse from the Nazis because of being Jewish, T/Sgt. Sofferman chose to try evading. He was shot.



PETER EMMERICH

Clark expressed his deep devotion to his friend by paying for a plaque in his memory. It can be seen at Winbrin, along with the monument which the city has erected.

Sgt. Peter Loncke found the crash site. After much inquiry among the villagers, a burgomaster led him to the pine forest where the plane had gone down. According to Loncke, the impact hole was still visible. Some of the resistance fighters were still living, and could relate the events.



Thanks to the research of Will Lundy, Peter Loncke and many others, the crash site was discovered and the plane was identified. Loncke arranged the unveiling.



Hamminkeln, Germany

19 September 2001

A bridge was built between the USAF, the family and friends of nine B-24 groups and the city of this German town. The Mayor of Hamminkeln received a Memorial plate

commemorating the crews of "Operation Varsity," along with a painting of the planes which are now hanging in City Hall.

On 24 March 1945, the 67th and 506 Sqs. had been assigned to drop supplies to British paratroopers who had just crossed the Rhine. The planes were loaded, and the guns had been removed, to make more room for materials of war. They flew at treetop level over the little town of Hamminkeln.

Two planes from the 44th BG went down. Everyone on the crew of Leonard Crandell were KIA. Two survived the crash of Max Chandler's crew: Robert Vance and Louis DeBlasio. Sgt. Anibal Diaz on AC #42-50535, 506 Sq., was swept out of the plane when his parachute spilled open and out the ball turret well. The force of the air pulled him into the well and out of the plane. The Germans later reported him dead. John Delaney, flying a P-47 dived at anti aircraft guns and his plane crashed also.



MAYOR, CONNIE, BARBARA CRANDELL, PETER, JOE, PETER EMMERICH

The memorial event was orchestrated by Peter Loncke, who described the events of the day.

He picked up Joe, Barbara and Connie Crandell at their hotel in Lommel. Joe was the brother of Capt. Leonard Crandell. Along with a Belgian friend, they traveled to Hamminkeln.

Peter wrote, "We drove to the crash site which is situated next to the crash site of Lt. Chandler. It was



PETER STANDING during speech in the TOWN HALL

indeed an emotional moment for Joe and his family and ourselves when he put fresh flowers on the site, a wreath of artificial flowers with two American flags and a

plastic-covered display holding the photograph of the crew and the story of the crash. He had brought some sand with him from his hometown in Illinois to scatter around the crash site. The empty sand pot, he then filled with soil, together with some just fallen leaves from the oak tree which grows on the site. It was indeed a moving experience.

"We traveled on to the village of Hamminkeln. We set up our Memorial plate and covered it with an American flag. We went back downstairs where Joe met Peter Emmerich, the German FLAK operator who had shot down the Crandell plane. This was indeed an emotional moment for both men."

Both Germans and Americans contributed to the Memorial plate. Along with the contributors, two German fighter pilots attended the ceremony. Also present was a mixed party

from Holland and America. The group met with the Mayor in a big Council Room. The Memorial plate and painting

were presented. Contributors names and addresses were listed on the back of the painting.

Fifty-four years ago, nobody would ever have dreamed that such a gathering between friends and enemies could have taken place. We of the 44th are truly grateful to Peter for building this bridge.



L TO R: P. LONCKE, P. EMMERICH, JOE CRANDELL, GEORGE AND TERRY BOETCHER (15 AF), AND MAYOR OF HAMMINKELN.





From the Desk of our President

It is my fervent hope that with the summer vacation period a pleasant memory, we can now return with renewed vigor and energy to the serious matter of our unique, vibrant but seriously aging membership. It is reported in the media that most veteran organizations memberships are declining. Yet, in spite of these national trends, as you may recall, one of my announced goals as your new President was to increase our membership at a rate of 10% per annum. By virtue of our annual membership drives that included the EVERY-MEMBER-GET-A-MEMBER (EMGAM) CONTEST, the establishment of our new WEB Site, the mailing of some 800 letters to former and/or unaffiliated veterans of the 44th Bomb Group, and the continuing and constant day-by-day efforts of Art Hand and Jerry Folsom, the growing vitality of the 44th BGVA has shown steady annual growth. Where in 1998 our rolls stood at 850, today our membership stands at 1065.

Again, as in the 1999, 2000, and 2001 Budget preparations, I included in the 2002 Budget assumptions another 10% increase from 1065 to 1175.

But Jerry, Art, the Board, our Squadron Historians, "Will" Lundy, Larry Herpel and I need help from you. YOU are our greatest resource and reservoir. As our pool of potential members shrinks, more help is required from you to contact your crew mates, colleagues, comrades and/or associates. Once you establish communication with them or their families, refer them to our WEB site and/or apprise them of our association and the important programs (History and Individual Computerization, Annual Reunions, "8 BALL TAILS," Memorials, Ploesti Diorama, B-24 Dedication, etc.) we instituted. Do them a favor by "reaching out" and sending a membership form for them to submit.

I encourage you to do what many of us have already done, and enroll at least one of your children and/or grandchildren to insure that you will always have someone in the family who will stay informed about your wartime exploits by virtue of our WEB site, the "8 BALL TAILS," Reunions, and, of course, the Master Data Base. What better gift can you give? GIVE THEM A GIFT THAT WILL BE A WINDOW TO YOUR GLORIOUS WWII SERVICE.

Your Board held their semi-annual meeting in Omaha and it was agreed to hold our 2002 Reunion at that location. The firm dates in October will be announced soon.

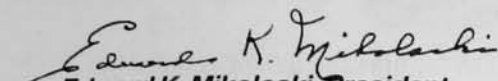
Pete Frizell sent me the July issue of the WORLD WAR II magazine (circulation 233,000) that contained a controversial article about the PLOESTI Air Battle of August 1, 1943. It contained erroneous, unfair and unwarranted accusations of this mission of mistakes allegedly by Col. "Killer" Kane (98th) and, indirectly by association, our Col. Leon W. Johnson. It appeared to be a futile attempt to sully the reputation of a leader and the brave men who flew on that daring mission by an apparently dissident airman from another group (389th). Whatever the writers motivation, our response rebutted the article's allegation by drawing on the personal reports of our Ploesti participants, and the fact as compiled in the official reports of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Headquarters, Army Air Force, we dealt with the truth without resorting to acrimony, insult or blame. TRUTH will always win out. TRUTH is eternal.

Coordination with the Board and a representative group of Ploesti veterans: M/G Wm Brandon (44), Colonels Hodge (66), Cameron (67), Phillips (68), Holmes (68), Butler (506), Dabney (67), Reed (66), Hughes (66), resulted in a virtual tie as to whether the article should be even dignified with a response or challenged with an appropriate reply. It was my decision to write and challenge the article. I assume full responsibility should there be any criticism or adverse results from my letter. I hasten to add that my entire file was forwarded to Mr. and Mrs. John Kane Jr. (Col. Kane's son), Col. Wm Bacon and M/ Sgt. A. Plouff (98th), and M/G Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Jr., (Son-in-Law of Gen. Johnson and an avid student of the Ploesti raid).

I do not believe we have seen the last act to this "drama" but until the "final curtain" comes

down, my efforts will be devoted to insuring that the TRUTH prevails and that the reputation and gallant character of our esteemed leader and the brave men he led are duly honored, protected and preserved. Stay Tuned.

**My closing quotation –
"He who slings mud loses ground."**


Edward K. Mikoloski, President

(Ed. Note: The courage and skill of men in the Ploesti mission will forever stand as a measuring block for the glory and irrepressible spirit of airmen everywhere.)

.....
From the Editor:

Members, please do not keep your change of addresses a secret. If you change locations, phone number or E-Mail address, let us know. It will save Jerry Folsom, Art Hand, Roy Owen, Will Lundy and your crew members a lot of time trying to locate you. The 44th BG is a tight band of men, families and friends with a unique history. Let's stick together by staying in touch.

Have you visited the 44th Bomb Group's Web Site? If you are online, search <http://www.44thbombgroup.com>. You will love what you see—all the information about this great organization, the list of planes that flew, the upcoming events and much more. As time goes on, more information will be added.

Do you have any photos or information about your airplane, or one that you worked on? Do not let it yellow in your attic. If you are saving it for your children, copies can be made at any reliable office supply store—Kinkos, Staples, etc. (Not on a standard photocopy machine. It doesn't bring out details.) If you send originals, they will be copied and returned.

Have you done your Database? Do it. No effort is too small to record. Hitler's Thousand Year Reich ended in six years because of you. Write it, so the world will never forget the sacrifices that were made to bring him down.

The Eighth Memory

The English girls loved you
The German cities hated you
You littered Europe with bombs and fallen comrades
You learned to like the bitters and the weather
The cold was always there but so was the hope
I still see you there, children in leather and green
So much younger than you seem
Adapting, adjusting and bringing about death
Certain and doubtful all in one breath
Odds are against you, what do you have to lose?
But lose you will, if not your own life then someone you knew
Your livelihood riding cold on dedicated ground crew and never turning back

Life in a tin can, work in a freezer shot at day by day
Boredom and terror never far away
Fighters and flak stalking your every move
Pubs and English lovers never there long enough to soothe
Lives that ended too soon, terror that lasted too long
Your being there, now written on an airfield in marble stone
In November they bring you poppies, hoping somewhere you're well
Remembering the good times, remembering your hell
They see you in their memories
They visit your mates at Maddingley
Remembering your presence, remembering your fight
They remember you most, as those who fought in broad daylight
They call you "our lad's" in villages and in dales, from Norwich to Lavenham

From Framlingham to Deenthorpe the story is passed down
Of the day the Yanks brought new hope to town
From Fortresses, Liberators and Mustangs the stories live
In small churches, pubs and in village halls
To that most sacred of places behind the altar of St. Paul's
You who fought without hate
You those immortal young men of the American Mighty Eighth

Mark Brotherton

Write to:
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association
P.O. Box 712287
Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287



A Tribute to



a Great Officer

Col. **Griffin Goodman** is best known by most members of the 44th BGVA for his droll humor, coupled by his delightful southern accent. He passed away March 22, 2001, at his home in Ft. Walton Beach. Col. **Edward K. "Mike" Mikoloski** attended the funeral service. President Mike remembers that, "More than anyone else, Colonel Griffin provided the continuity and 'sense of mission' of the 44th Bomb Group, since he served continuously as the EXECUTIVE OFFICER to all of the COMMANDING OFFICERS of the group, from Col. **Frank Robinson** at Barksdale AFB and Will Rogers AFB through Colonels **Robinson, Johnson, Posey, Dent, Gibson, Snavelly** and **Smith** at Shipdham."

In a tribute written in the 2 AD Journal, Lt. Col. **Richard Butler** referred to the Group Executive Officer as "Mr. 44." Butler reported, "He was the right hand man for all of the men who served as group commanders at Shipdham. Griff remained in the Air Force after WWII and served with distinction in numerous important assignments, retiring with the grade of Colonel. He attended virtually all of our 44th reunions and most 2nd Air Division Association conventions. He once served as President of the Association."

As C.O. of the 68th, Lt. Col. **Robert Lehnhausen** had little contact with 'Griff', but he was aware that as the ranking officer on the ground side, he was a skilled administrator. Lehnhausen stated, "Our troops were seldom shorted by the distribution channels of food, clothing, combat supplies and pay. It may not have satisfied their every want, but the group policies were not onerous or unbearable."

"Some of our folks didn't understand that our Base was a part of the 'Lend Lease' arrangement with the British. They were our landlords. Griffin's demeanor of grace and gentle persuasion, his tactful manner in dealing with the British "Clerk of the Works" and our Norfolk neighbors, made life for the seven commanding officers for whom he served much easier and pleasant. Our 44th personnel also shared in this rapport--without knowing why. It is unusual that one gentleman should serve so long in such a position of great responsibility. He maintained his leadership role because he was a valued aide to each of those seven commanders."

"I really got to know him through visits together at the Reunions. He possessed an amazing memory of the happenings of the 44th, both big and small. A great part of my admiration of this humorous, talented officer was his huge respect and the concern he displayed for our enlisted men and their welfare. Colonel Goodman G. Griffin was a splendid officer and a gentleman."

Editor's Remembrance: One of Col. Goodman's recollections was about the time he was riding on an eastbound train full of soldiers who were under his command. When he opened his orders to learn his destination, he discovered that fact had been omitted by his commanding officer. While riding along, pondering this omission, he questioned his First Sergeant, only to learn that he knew all the answers. He laughingly reported, "I had to ask my First Sergeant where I was going!!!" (He was going to England.)

The site of the American Bombing of 18 November 1943



RICHARD AND ARDITH BUTLER

From Col. Richard "Dick" Butler:

On 18 November 1943, B-24 aircraft of four groups, the 44th, the 93rd, the 389th, and the 392nd bombed the German motor works at Kjeller Airfield near Oslo, Norway. The bombing was excellent, but the 44th lost five aircraft and the crews of four of them. The 67th Squadron lost three planes and their crews. These were piloted by **Edward Dobson**, **Joseph Houle** and **Earl Johnson**. The 68th Squadron lost two aircraft, one being that piloted by **Edward Mitchell**. This crew was lost. The other 68th plane, piloted by **Baxter Weant** with Lt. Col. **William Brandon** as command pilot, had extensive damage and landed in Sweden. Two gunners on planes that returned to Shipdham were deceased due to fatal gun shot wounds.

In 1993, Forrest Clark, assisted by Ed Dobson, son of the lost pilot, led an effort to raise the funds for and to place a memorial at Kjeller Airfield to honor our fellow crew members who were lost on the mission.

On this past 30 June, my wife, Ardith, and I arrived in Oslo, Norway to start a cruise. Because I was on that mission of 18 November 1943 and lost some very good friends, I wanted to see the memorial to them. So on 1 July, Ardith and I journeyed out to the Royal Norwegian Air Force installation at Kjeller Airfield to view the monument. We were escorted to the site and I am pleased to report that the monument is in perfect condition. It and an adjacent RCAF monument are maintained by the RCAF. The brass plaque on the stone reads below the Eighth Air Force Insignia:

U.S. 8th Air Force

1943	1993
NORWAY	UNITED STATES

Here at the site of the American Bombing of 18 November 1943,
We, the Survivors of the 8th Air Force, 44th, 392nd, 93rd
And 389th Bomb Groups, Dedicate this memorial to the
Brave American Airmen who died on the Mission to
Norway in November 1943. In Remembrance of their
Sacrifice and Devotion to Freedom, we Salute them
And the Courageous Norwegian Allies who fought
Against Nazi tyranny a Half Century ago.
...dedicated 18 November 1993

In the photo, Ardith and I are standing behind the monument. The object to our left is a split five hundred pound bomb casing from the mission. It is well maintained also. It was an emotional experience for me. I am glad we went to Kjeller Airfield.

I might add that the Coastal Steamer cruise is wonderful. Norway is such a beautiful country and so clean. The ship is a working ship and stops at numerous towns and villages. We went all the way up into the Arctic Circle to Kirkenes at the very northeast tip of Norway where it adjoins Russia and Finland. I went to the Russian border. Ardith and I strongly recommend the cruise.



FOR SALE

Flying 8 Ball Patches -- \$14 + \$2 postage.

Back copies of *8 Ball Tails* -- \$5

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

Flying 8 Ball Shirts -- \$25 + \$3 postage

Flying 8 Ball Caps--\$15 + \$2 postage

Pins -- \$ 5 + \$2 postage

Write **Sam Miscelli**, 6398 Dawson Blvd. Mentor, OH 44060-3648

Kevin Watson's book *Ruth-Less and Far From Home* is the story of the tragic crash of the A/C #41-24282, 506 Sq. It is available through Amazon.com; signed copies can be obtained through hometown.aol.com/kpwats7. The cost is \$20. His book is a tribute to the **James Bolin** crew of *Ruthless*.

The 44th Tour Group in 1997 will remember Kevin for graciously traveling with the group through France and Belgium and shopping for amenities to make the members more comfortable on the bus. Watson arranged for an awesome ceremony on Butts Brow, the hillside crash site of the Ruthless; and later, the meeting at the Eastbourne Courthouse with Mayoress Beryl Healy.

44th BOMB GROUP, The Flying Eightballs, a 115 page documentary of the 44th BG is available for \$55 from Turner Publishing Company, 412 Broadway, P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101. This hardbound 9 x 11 book has 128 pages of historical material, and biographies of many veterans. A good reference book for new members seeking information.

THE WILD BLUE YONDER is a chronology of the **James N. Williams** crew, (66th BS) as recorded by **Warren F. McPherson**. McPherson's detailed report tells the story from induction to his last mission, concluded by a kiss on solid soil. The Tail Gunner who later became a minister presents a lively and accurate account of the life of an NCO in the maelstrom of war. Cost \$10 for a soft cover, 32 page ringed book. Write 1016 E Rockwood Street, Springfield, MO 65807-5092.

PURSUIT IN THE PYRENEES, by **Archie Barlow, Jr.**, is an account of a three month effort of evading the enemy in German-occupied France, 1944. The price is \$20. Write L. B. Wright, 3911 Black Locust Drive, Houston, TX 77088-6904. Tel. 281-931-1932. E-mail Wright@juno.com.

The Angel and the Eagle, by **Joseph E Milliner** is a personal story, written in 3rd person, of his experiences as a pilot, a family man and a distraught father whose son, a helicopter pilot, tragically disappeared in Laos during the Vietnam War. Milliner describes the fury of the Ploesti Raid, target White V in dramatic detail. Then there was Foggia, where *Buzzin Bear* crashed, and four of the crew were lost. According to Joe, his ever faithful Guardian Angel JOSEPH saved him from parachuting into the flaming plane. Milliner's signed hardcover book is available for \$11.95, (postage incl.). Write 281 Fincastle Way, Shepherdsville, KY 40165. E-mail Mackie0126@aol.com.

S/Sgt. Robert Reasoner Remembers

Kiel Germany

May 14, 1943

It was a good day for a bombing mission, as the sky was clear except for a few scattered clouds below us. Soon after we crossed the coastline and were over the continent, we began to see German fighters rising in the distance. We began to have fighter attacks at irregular intervals before we reached the target city. As we reached the outskirts of Kiel, the fighter attacks intensified and became almost constant. At about that time, I saw Capt. O'Brien's ship drop out of formation and lag behind. He was under heavy attack and the fighters were just swarming around them. I was unable to observe any parachutes drop from the plane because of the large number of fighters in the area.

As we were nearing the target, we had become "tail end Charlie" because of the loss of Capt. O'Brien's ship. (I think we were flying #2 position and O'Brien was #3). Capt. Jansen had called me over the intercom and said "let me know when the bast--- are coming in!" When I called and said "here they come!", he then slipped up under the leadership of our formation and did such evasive action, that the gunners of the lead ship said they could almost touch us. At the home base, they were worried that Capt. Jansen would cut the bottom out of their ship with his props.

It seemed the fighters would never stop coming in on us. Most of the attacks were from 6 o'clock high and were mostly FW190's that lined up one behind the other and came in. Their tracer bullets coming at me appeared to be like little streaks of light that flashed on and off. On one attack, I suddenly found myself hanging on my back out of the tail turret. I didn't know what had happened until I got back in position in the turret. At that time I saw a bullet hole in the turret-plexiglass at eye level just above the bulletproof glass on the rear of the turret. The bullet would have hit me in the center of the forehead, but I was saved because I was

shooting at the fighter; and when sighting through the gunsight, I had to bend forward and stoop slightly. The bullet had just broken the skin on my head. It felt just like a hard blow with a hard club. The bullet had torn a slit in my helmet, clipped my headset and continued on into the aircraft structure. My imagination took over and I could feel the blood seeping on my head. I didn't dare check then, but it turned out to be my imagination, because the blood had remained in the area where the bullet struck me.

Even after the bombardier had dropped our bombs, the fighters continued to attack in large numbers. It seemed they would never stop their attacks. By this time, I had just about given up and wondered why Capt. Jansen had not rung the bail out bell. I looked in the waist section to see if the other gunners were still there. I could see they were still firing their guns and it looked like they were up to their ankles in spent 50 caliber cartridges.

As the fighters had begun their attacks rather slowly, they ended their attacks abruptly. I wondered why and looked around for a reason. The tail gunner is the last to know! There below was the coastline of the North Sea. The timing was perfect for us. My right gun was out of ammo and the left gun had a strip about eighteen inches long.

The safety from the fighters as we reached the North Sea gave us a chance to look around for the first time. When we saw all the holes in our plane, we thought of the new danger of the cold water below and how long we could survive if we had to bail out or crash-land in the water. Also how long before we could expect to be picked up and would it be in time?

Anyway, Capt. Jansen kept MARGARET ANN going with her #3 engine feathered. All of us in the waist kept a sharp lookout for any other signs of failure, but none appeared and we arrived back at our base at Shipdham. The engineer shot a red flare indicating "wounded aboard," and we were cleared to land immediately. Capt. Jansen made a perfect landing - he held the plane on the left main



A VIEW FROM AN EAST ANGLIAN

Roger Freeman

landing wheel, as the right tire had been flattened by a 20mm armor piercing shell. When the plane slowed till he could not hold it off the right wheel any longer, he let it touch down and made a curve off the runway onto the beautiful green grass and soft earth of England. The exit of the crew from MARGARET ANN must have set some kind of a record. MARGARET ANN was riddled. The ground crew told us later that we had 250 major holes (1/2 inch or bigger) in our aircraft. Most of the fuel tanks had been punctured, but luckily the hits were above the gas line. There were 3 holes in the tail turret. One hit me on the head, one came in at a slight angle and knocked the handle off the plexiglass door behind me (an early modification to keep the cold air off the tail gunner), and one came through the bottom of the turret and nearly cut the toes out of my G.I. shoes stored under the catwalk behind the turret. In the turret, I wore silk socks covered by wool socks and fleece lined flying boots. The ground crew traced the bullet that hit me and presented me with the steel point of a .30 calibre armor piercing bullet.

I'm sure those of us that still survive will always remember the first American raid on Kiel. All of us in the rear of the plane had been slightly wounded. Besides me, the two waist gunners had been hit by 20mm explosive shell fragments. The bottom gunner had received internal injuries and died on the way back to Shipdham.

S/Sgt. Leo V. McCready was hit by a .30 cal. machine gun bullet in his stomach and died the next day. M/Sgt. Robert M. Smith had 20mm shell fragments in his right leg, and S/Sgt. Richard J. Butler was wounded in his right hand, right arm and chest from .30 cal. bullets.

Ed. Note: S/Sgt. Robert Reasoner's story was featured in the Summer issue of the Eight Ball Tails. Reasoner has the singular distinction of acquiring three Purple Hearts.

"I have my own memories of you good people. I remember you on your bicycles, the laughter, the singing and the shouting, how you would go to the local pubs, complain bitterly about the wet, warm English beer and then drink the pubs dry. I recall your generosity with the local children, how you would give them sweets, make a fuss of them and arrange parties for them. I think most of us in England remember those cheerful young men that you were.

I have other memories and I make no excuses for changing the mood here. These are some of my memories that I have and they're true.

"I remember being terrified as a B-24 Liberator spiraled down with one wing aflame and I was down there on the ground, and some equally terrified, or far more frightened young men, were parachuting down from that blazing bomber. . . I recall watching the pilot of a P-38 Lightning being literally lifted out of his cockpit because he was so cold and numb after a long fighter escort mission to Berlin. "I remember seeing a B-17 Flying Fortress in a cloudless summer sky limping home from a raid with a shattered tail and with holes so large blown through both wings, you could see daylight through them. When this bomber finally came in to land at the local airfield, I recall seeing the humps on the stretchers being carried to the waiting ambulances.

"I also remember those bitter winter days in England, watching the ground crews working on the engines. Their hands must have been as numb as they could possibly be because you couldn't wear gloves for some of the intricate jobs they had to perform. . .

"And I remember a burning mass in an English field which, a few seconds previously, had been a P-51 Mustang fighter... and I knew that somewhere in that mass was a charring body that had once been a human being. . .

"I also recall the noise as I lay in my bed early in the morning. The constant noise which you couldn't escape from anywhere in East Anglia in those days as the bombers and fighters were warming up, taking off and going to war.

"I recall the contrails in the skies as hundreds upon hundreds of your bombers flew out . . . all heading eastwards. And one day, when you couldn't see the sky because of an overcast, I can recall seeing the colored assembly flares slowly dropping through.

"I also remember the fighters sweeping back in the late afternoons, the colors of their heraldry flashing in the sunlight... and the bombers coming home, some limping, but usually in good formation.

"These are my memories . . . I know there are memories which you have that I cannot share . . . although I know what they are... "Such things as the flak clouds over Berlin . . . over Merseburg . . . over Hamm . . . Such things as the smell of smoke and human sweat in the oxygen systems. Such things as the tired grip of an oxygen mask on your face for ten hours . . . the vibration and the noise of riding those bombers . . . Such terrible things as seeing your comrades, who you probably had breakfast with that morning, go down in the plane next to you

and being helpless to do anything about it. . . and perhaps worst of all, those empty beds which had been full the night before . . .

These are also your memories and they are just a small part of the story of the 8th Air Force. The 8th Air Force . . . I'll remind you again, the largest air striking force in history ever committed to battle . . . the supreme realization of the American dream of daylight strategic bombardment. Yes, a great force indeed.

"I know that the men of the 9th Air Force bled as freely . . . those of the 15th Air Force died as cruelly . . . and all the other air forces of that war have their pride, and rightly so. But no one can take away from you a record that is unsurpassed in courage and endeavor . . . And the evidence is there . . . 47,000 men killed or missing by the end of the Second World War . . . half the top awards for bravery earned by the American Air Forces were for the 8th Air Force . . . so that speaks for itself.

"Sadly, today there are people, some of them young, who would scoff at all this. They would say that you have come here to wallow in old glories . . . to gloat over a victory over another nation . . . that you achieved nothing . . . that your comrades who are not here with you died in vain, and in any case they are forgotten . . . Well, it goes without saying that there are men here tonight, with mental and physical scars obtained during those dark days, who could tell any 'Peace-Nik' far better than I could, that there is no glory in war.

"Of course you're not here to gloat over a victory over an old enemy . . . I have German friends and I'm sure some of you do. No, you're here because you take an honest pride, and I think, if you won't admit this, it is probably the basic element of your all being here. You have an honest pride of being part of the 8th Air Force . . . indeed you do.

And as for having achieved nothing . . . that is nonsense. You were part of the decisive victory over the worst tyranny that man has ever known . . . and you should be proud of it. Your courage and endeavor are not forgotten... neither are the people who died. Any young life is a wasted life, but nobody died in vain. All those boys whom you lost died in a damn good cause.

"I mentioned honest pride; if you want to keep faith with the sacrifice of your buddies of years gone by, there is no better way than to promote that pride. Pride in the 8th Air Force . . . the greatest Air Force your country has ever produced and one of the most famous fighting units in history . . . Cherish that pride.

"Most of you wear the 8th Air Force symbol in some form or another, either in the badge of this society or sister societies. I say to you, gentlemen, you have every right to wear that with pride . . . wear it with pride and so keep the courage and endeavor of the 8th Air Force shining brightly for future generations.

(Ed Note: Roger Freeman is the foremost authority of the history of the 8th Air Force in England during WWII. He is the author of "The Mighty Eighth" and other historical writings of the era.)

WILL SEZ

May, 2001

In this issue I would like to address a question to all of you combat men who could have flown the mission of 8 May 1944 and then the short period of 4 through 7 April 1945. We need your data if you participated in any of these missions, as these five mission folders are missing or misplaced in the National Archives! Tony Mastradone has made several trips there asking for searches to be made for these folders, but until this time they are still missing! Tony did find a 67th Squadron Engineering paper listing those 67th Sq. crews that flew the mission of 8 May 1944 (to Brunswick), so we can prepare sortie reports for them, but we must attempt to identify the crews from the other three Squadrons for that date AND all crews that flew any of the four days in April 1945 (4, 5, 6 and 7 in April 1945).

If any of you combat men remember or recall participating in any of these five missions, could you please drop a note to me with that information. If you can remember the names of your crew mates, great! If not, we may have to resort to your regular crew names to show on the sortie report. A/C name would be most valuable if known or found in your own records.

We are so close to completing our data entry files for all sorties flown by the 44th - well over 8000 - that we must do everything that we can find the answers to these last few. So, if you have kept any records of your missions covering these two periods, please take the time to check out any records you may have to determine if you were involved. We must be as accurate as possible in our historical records. THANK YOU!

Secondly, a personal request to each of you non-combat personnel. The story about the 44th's efforts during WW #2 will never be complete unless you people let me, us, know about what each of you did at Shipdham. Much of what the combat men did was recorded and saved in official records. But for the support personnel there is very little, indeed.



If you will do nothing else to help, would EACH of you drop me a note (my address is on the inside front page) to tell me what job YOU PERFORMED. If you don't write anything else, PLEASE give me your "job." Then, if you care to include more about yourself or particular events, names of men you worked with and who you worked for, I will be most grateful! Look at it this way, it took at least an average of 10 of us to keep one combat man flying. For the most part our work was routine, but very important to the war effort. We might not have had direct effect with the combat men or the B-24s, but the sum total resulted in victory in Europe. There still is a free world. And yes, I was ground crew, too.

Truly, I cannot emphasize this enough. For all practical purposes, all that now exists in our records is your name, and even these did not come from the official records. By writing to me you will confirm that we have your name and get it spelled correctly. I, we, do not have any monthly reports of personnel from any section, either. Nor are there any monthly reports of Squadron Operational personnel except the one I kept personally for the 67th Squadron for April 1945. Would any of you have kept such reports in your memorabilia? If you do, could you please copy and send to me? They are priceless now. Will you help me with these records?

Now on a personal note, I'd like to tell you about an incident that happened to Irene and me while shopping at a large grocery store a couple months ago. As we were pushing our large shopping cart, a man of about 60 years old walked up to us, pardoned himself for interrupting our shopping, and asked me if I was a World War veteran! It was a very unusual question, so I hesitated for a moment trying to guess what his motive was. When I finally told him that yes, I was, he then told me that he had been watching us for a couple minutes, noticed our erect posture and friendly ways, decided to stop us and ask. He said he was sure because of the look in my eyes, but I don't know for sure what that meant.

So we chatted for a few minutes about my time in service, about the 8th Air Force, the Liberator, etc. Then he told me that he often visited markets and public places, made a point of looking for men

who could have served in WW #2, and then telling them just how proud he was of us, and most of all, to thank us for our sacrifices. He said that the American public have not expressed their appreciation of their veterans as much as they should, so he was doing his best to seek out and to personally express his sincere thanks to as many veterans as he could.

He then firmly shook my hand, patted me on my back and walked away! It took me a bit to believe what had just transpired, but it left a warm spot in my heart. I am now relating this experience to you in case you have never experienced such a personal experience like this. It had happened to me, but in reality it was meant for all of you. So I wanted to tell you about it so that you will know that your efforts to save the free world is still much appreciated by our people who still remember your sacrifices.

Will Lundy



FOLDED WINGS

September, 2001

Prepared by:
Will Lundy



ARRAJ, ROBERT 1/8/90 Not combat, no records located.

BRADFORD, KENNETH No date 66 and 67th Squadrons. Kenneth was a gunner, both waist and nose turret for the seven missions that he flew between 31 May 1944 to 15 October. He flew two with R.J. Gunton, three with H.C. Henry, and two with C.R. Hinshaw.

CAMPBELL, WALTER D. 1/92 68th Sq. 39331274 Walter joined this Sq. on 21 May 1944 as a member of the R.C. Ricketts crew. He served as a ball turret and waist gunner from 29 May 1944 to 30 December 1944 to complete 30 missions. He dropped from the Ricketts crew during that summer and then flew with other crews. Late in November, he joined the H.J. Eckstein crew and flew with them until 30 Dec. 1944.

CHANDLER, LAWRENCE W. 11/24/00 36427258 68th Sq. Engineer. He was a member of the A.A. Starring crew that arrived in this Sq. on 8 December 1943. Their first combat mission was 21 January 1944, when they were shot down over France. Four crewmen became POWs, but Lawrence managed to evade capture until he returned to the base four months later. Two days later he was on his way back to the U.S.



COLUCCI, PATRICK Date ? 506th Sq. Gunner Pat was a member of the T.G. Waters crew that arrived in the 506th Squadron on 28 June 1944. They flew their first mission on 1 August and he flew most of them with this crew. The T.G. Water crew completed their tour on 2 January 1945, but Pat had missed a few, so completed his 33rd on 14 January with the V.J. Scheerzberg crew. During most of his missions, he was a waist gunner. Both Pat and Ginny were frequent attendees at the annual reunions. They will be missed, indeed.

DAVISON, WILLIAM R. 1/29/97 13013634 68th Sq. 1st Sgt. He joined the 68th Sq. on 6/20/42 and was promoted to First Sergeant on 14 July 1942. He made both trips over and back on the Queen Mary, first in Sept. 1942 and return on 16 June 1945.

DIXON, WILLARD E. 3/1/87 Cannot identify.

FAHEY, DONALD F. 2/28/69 37506294 68th Sq. Radio Operator for the T.L. Weaver crew. Donald joined the Sq. on 5/5/44, flew their first mission on 5/21/44. This crew was shot down on 7 July 44 while on their 21st mission. Donald was one of the last crewman to bail out; was taken Prisoner of War. He was released at war's end, departed Europe on 3 June, arriving at the U.S. on 11 June 1945. On one of his missions, he was credited with saving the life of one of his crew, Sgt. Harrison.

FUNKS, ROBERT D. 3/01 506th Sq. He was Radio Operator for the T.G. Waters crew that arrived in the 506th Sq. on 28 June 1944. Robert and Patrick Colucci (above) were crew mates. He flew 28 missions, most of them with T.G. Waters, but he did not finish his tour until 25 March 1945. His last three missions were with the W.M. Smith crew.

GAURONSKAS, EDWARD C. No date 16042233 68th Squadron. Edward served as an Aircraft Mechanic. He was with the Ground Echelon that made the voyage to England on the Queen Mary in September 1942. His line crew is not identified, but he served in this capacity until 16 June 1945, when he returned to the U.S., once again aboard the famous Queen Mary.



GRIFFIN, GOODMAN G. Jr. 0-337352 3/22/01
Headquarters Group Executive Officer. Griff joined the 44th BG at MacDill AFB at the time it was organized, 15 January 1941. He was the only man to remain with the 44th from inception to 1946, when it was de-actified the first time. He was the Ground Group Commander, a Major, in charge of the ground echelon that departed the U.S. from New York City on the Queen Mary 5 September 1942. He served as Group Executive Officer throughout the time at Shipdham, serving as the right hand man for all five Group Commanders during that time. On 16 June 1945, he again was in charge of the ground echelon, brought them back to the US on the same Queen Mary. He remained in service, retired with the grade of Colonel. He was a great friend to us all. His memory will always bring a smile to many of us, and he will be sadly missed by all.

HOLLADAY, FRED R. 2/22/01 18163207 67th Sq. Waist gunner for the H.F. Hess crew that arrived at Shipdham in February 1944. He flew his first mission on 16 March, followed quickly by five more. But on 27 March 44, while attacking Mont de Marson at 10,000 feet, their aircraft was so badly damaged, the crew bailed out over northern Spain, were interned. Later he completed his tour of 50 missions with the 15th AF in Italy.

KAY, THOMAS C. 71/7/98 T-61780 & 0-885659 68th Sq. Pilot. Thomas and his crew arrived in the 68th Sq. on 8 July 44. He flew his first three missions as a co-pilot, first one dated 13 July. His first as a 1st pilot occurred on 19 July. Target Koblenz. He completed his tour of duty with 35 missions, the last one dated 21 November 44. He received his commission on 3 October 44. After completing his tour, he was placed on Detached Service to the Continent (Belgium) on 30 November. He departed England on 16 December for the U.S. and a well earned leave.

KISELYAK, WILLIAM L. Date? 0-2072476 67th Sq. Navigator for the R. Zanoni crew that was assigned from the 70th Replacement Depot on 1 March 1945. Their first of 10 missions was dated 17 March, with their tenth and last one on 20 April 1945. After participating in the "Trolley Missions", they returned home to the U.S. flying A/C #4449323.

LAUGHLIN, WILLIAM E. 3/24/01 0-718111 506th Sq. Flew as Bombardier on many crews, starting with R.L. Hoisington crew on 26 & 27 August 1944. Then R.H. Habedank and P.J. Durett. In January, he began flying with Lead crews, often with Habedank and E.J. Burns crews. He completed his tour on 20 April 45 with 38 missions.

LEWIS, WARD B. 9/25/95 0-806471 66th Sq. Co-pilot for the H.E. Etheridge crew. This crew flew just four missions, being shot down on that fourth mission dated 2/25/44. They made a valiant effort to evade attackers after being badly damaged over the target, but finally were forced to bail out at a low altitude. One crewman was KIA, with the others becoming POWs.

MEYERS, VERNON C. No date 66th Sq. From 2nd ADA. Vernon was a member of the 66th Squadron, a Corporal in September 1942, when he was part of the ground echelon on the Queen Mary, destination England. Later he was promoted to S/Sgt., but occupation cannot be determined.

MILLER, WILLIAM F. 2/08/01 William joined the 44th HMG back in 1986. However his unit was not identified and no other records can be located at this time.

MOSLEY, WALTER H. No date 38141279 67th Sq. Engineer for the J.R. Perry crew that joined the Sq. in late 1943. He flew his first mission on 20 Dec. 43. Walter flew his eleventh and last mission on 26 March 44, ten of which were with the Perry crew. In early April, he and the Perry crew were transferred to the 15th AF in Italy, assigned to the 415th BS of the 98th BG where they completed their tour.

PETERS, WADE D. 7/20/01 T-132351 66th Sq. Wade was the Navigator for the R. A. Perrault crew. This crew joined the 66th Sq. on 20 December 1944, flew their first mission on 28 January 45, had to make an emergency crash-landing near Brussels. Wade went on to complete 22 more missions, the last one being on 20 April 45. In May, they flew back to the U.S. In 1961, he returned to active Air Reserves service for 20 more years and retired as a Lt. Colonel.

RAY, CHARLES W. 8/5/01 14170302 67th Sq. He served first as a gunner and then later as engineer for the W.L. Wahler crew. His first mission was on 20 February 1943. On 8 April, he was seriously wounded, did not fly again until 25 May with the Wahler crew. Later, in July, he flew with other crews including Mueller and Benadom. He finished his tour of 29 missions with Holmer on 30 Dec. 1944. Charles and Helen nearly made it to their 60th anniversary.

SWATERS, WILLIARD E. 1990 Willard served with the 50th Station Complement. He was a member of the 44th BGVA for many years, but have no records covering his duties or time of service.



MAIL & E-MAIL



From Norfolk, England: Brian Peel, longtime friend and admirer of the 44th BG, is sad to report that his mother, Doris Peel passed away on April 11, 2001 at the age of 100 years, six months. As a civilian, Mrs. Peel was involved in the war effort, providing tea for English soldiers in the area, housing soldiers' wives and evacuees from London. Her efforts brought her acclaim from many dignitaries, including the British Secretary of State. When the Americans took over the airfield at Shipdham, she provided laundry services for men of all ranks. Brian was a teenager when B-24s were flying from his hometown. He has many warm memories of his associations with both flyers and maintenance crew. The 8 Ball Tails extends warmest condolences to him for the loss of his mother.



A School Boy's Memory: "I was about nine years old, living in Peterborough, England, attending All Soul's School. There was an American airfield nearby. At 11:00 A.M. we were out in the school yard and we heard a whole lot of planes roaring overhead, still climbing. They were two engine cargo planes with long steel cables pulling gliders. When school was out at 3:00 P.M., we heard the roar again. The planes were coming back, with the long cables twirling behind them. The gliders were gone. It was D-Day.

James Keane, York, Pennsylvania



A question from your editor:

Who named the B-24 Cadet Nurse, and for whom was it named? I have read that it was in honor of a Cadet in the nursing program at Memorial Hospital, Johnstown, PA. That was my school of nursing. I would surely know this lady, as it was a program that ran for only three years.



Mike Fusano's story about chauffeuring General **Leon Johnson** brought back a memory to **Joe Feeney**. Joe was one of those who was picked up by the General and transported to his destination. Among the General's questions was whether we were getting enough to eat. "We were," Joe affirmed.



Feeney supplied a bit of historical trivia: When were Serial Numbers discarded for Social Security Numbers? Joe made that suggestion at a Pay Conference in 1968. The idea was adopted. He believes he is holding the last card that has both his Serial & SS#. They were to turn them in, but he couldn't part with his.



Stephen E. Ambrose: "It would be an exaggeration to say that the B-24 won the war for the Allies. But don't ask how they could have won the war without it." (A quote from his new book, *The Wild Blue*.)

On May 2, 1945, 70 airmen and staff members were honored by the French Government. Gen. **Leon W. Johnson**, commander of the 14th Wing was decorated by Maj. Gen. Kepner. He was presented the Legion of Honor, Order of Chevalier and Croix de Guerre with Palm. The following members of the 44th were awarded the Croix de Guerre with Palm: Lt. Col. **William H. Brandon**, Lt. Col. **Walter I. Bunker**; Lt. Col. **William R. Cameron**; Lt. Col. **Robert J. Lehnhausen**; Lt. Col. **William H. Strong**. Now the French Government wants to express gratitude to **EVERYONE** who was in or over French soil from D-Day to VE Day. Monsieur **Perry A. Morse** recently received a lovely 'Diplome', worthy of framing, along with a letter of appreciation. Applications are available at Veteran Administration offices.



From Paul A. Trouve, son of **Louis V. Trouve**, comes a letter that solves a puzzle for Will Lundy. Louis expired 17 March 1977. His son found this letter from **R. J. Convey** to **Ralph Golubock**, explaining why the plane *Princess Charlotte* kept showing up in unexplained ways:

LETTER FROM R. J. Convey to Ralph Golubock
66th Squadron

My fiance was named Charlotte, so I named all of the B-24s I flew *Princess Charlotte*. Though I trained in B-24s, the first *Princess Charlotte* was a B-17 which I flew across the Atlantic with my crew.

The first few missions, including Ploesti, I flew with **Joe Flaherty**, 66th Squadron, 44th BG. He was a single-engine pilot who came to the 44th straight out of flight school, and was a permanent co-pilot on several missions until I got there. He sat on the left side and I sat on the



right. It was sort of a cooperative effort between the two of us to get the plane to the target and back. Our fourth mission (13 July) saw us lose two engines and land at Malta on a small field. We left the first B-24 there for repairs. *The Princess* that went to Ploesti kept her engines running all the way in and all the way back - for which we were duly thankful. While several people shot at us, including a "75," we were extremely lucky as *The Princess* only picked up one bullet hole, as I remember it.

We flew her back to England. But immediately after Ploesti, I moved to the left seat and my regular co-pilot, **Tom Drysdale**, moved back into the right. Back to Ploesti. We bombed White V, right behind General **Johnson**. However, so many planes were shot down, disabled or out of position, it was like we were all alone after hitting the target on the nose. So we rejoined another squadron of the 44th and came home.

The 44th made a second trip to Africa (in September) and we had a mission to Wiener-Neustadt. Besides losing an engine, we acquired an unbelievable number of holes in our plane. We landed near Naples at a British fighter base, and left the plane there. We rode back to England on a DC-4.

In a later raid (11 Dec. 43) to Emden, Germany out of England, we received a direct hit on the nose, right above the navigator, Louis Trouve. The force of the explosion knocked him backwards, over on the nose wheel doors, and out he went. Fortunately, though wounded, he opened his chute, landed in a bay, and was picked up by the Germans. (Lou and his wife, Charlotte, and I got together in New York after the war.)

After Lou was gone, we found flames were licking out of the hole in the nose, so I pressed the alarm button, "Prepare to Abandon Ship." The ball gunner (Neitzel?) saw Lou go by his turret and decided things were really serious. He tried to get out of his ball, but some empty shells or perhaps a belt or two had jammed the back exit door. With brute strength - and he was not a very heavily-built guy - he pushed the door right off its hinges and got out. The bombardier passed out in the nose turret and we thought he was a goner.

It turned out the flame was fed by a broken oxygen line, and when the oxygen was used up, it went out! By then I was half way out of my seat and preparing to signal "abandon ship" when I realized things were not so bad, and finally got things back on keel again. However, we were now alone and I headed for the Channel, losing altitude at a rapid pace. When we reached about 10,000 feet or so, the bombardier's voice comes on the intercom. He was alive and OK - just passed out from lack of oxygen.

We very luckily crossed the Channel and returned to

base without encountering any German fighters. The hydraulic system was now out, but there was enough pressure still in those spheres to work the brakes. I should have stopped at the end of the runway and received a hero's welcome, but I taxied back to our pad and coasted very slowly off the edge of it when the pressure finally ran out.

The "*Princess Charlotte*" (really *Nice & Naughty*) like all the others, got us home OK. We were blessed with good fortune as far as the crew was concerned.

I believe I saw her fuselage on the junk heap later. (Yes, she crashed at Shipdham on 4 Jan 44 while on takeoff). I still have the stencil that says "*Princess Charlotte*" used on some of these planes.

Completed 25 missions in *The Princess* - some bore the name in paint, others in mind only. Some bore two names, but as far as I was concerned, they were all Princesses, and all great. I flew missions for the 66th Squadron, although for Ploesti, we were assigned to another squadron (67th?) to fill out the formation.

Charlotte and I have been married 50 years and are living here in Stowe, Vermont.

Regards, *RJ*



A Search

This letter from Gerhard Walter from Erding, Germany, near Munchen, translated by Robert Chombard:

At the end of April, beginning of May, 1944, I was flying a single engine aircraft FW-190, located at Werneuchen, about 22 miles N.E. Berlin.

A little before noon this day, the sirens screamed. Some 45 minutes later, we heard the engines of a bomber formation N.E. of our base. When the formation was at about 1 1/2 miles from our base, we suddenly heard a terrible machine gun fire exchange, followed by the noise of over running engines. Little after, approximately 10 or 14 B-17s or B-24s fell in flames. None of them bombed, and thus was no bombs left in the wrecks, this meaning that the planes were on their return trip after having attacked their target. Suddenly a plane came down at low altitude, through the clouds. When the aircraft was at about 250 feet, the crew parachute jumps. Few minutes later, many came out of the clouds and ????? toward Werheuchen.

The same day I piloted my FW190 over the neighborhood, when suddenly I noticed a parachute in the branches of a tree. Immediately I thought, "I will go and get him for myself." After landing, I rode a bike toward this forest.

There I saw the tree, climbed it and cut the ropes. I just finished putting the parachute in my bag and was ready to ride my bike again, when I heard someone telling me "Hello." I was at first astonished, then I saw at about 30 feet, under a tree, a man in pilot's uniform. He waved his hand and showed me his leg, apparently wounded, but no open wound. He was probably wounded at landing. As I did not speak English, and himself obviously no German, we communicated by signs. Then he offered me a chewing-gum tablet. I then wondered, "How will I bring this lad to our base?" As good as had, I sat him on the seat of the bike and pushed it out the road to the base. When we arrived to a village, we stopped at a brewery and we both drank a beer from there. I phoned to the base and asked for a car. To start, I had some difficulties to convince them I was not joking. After an half hour wait, I went out to take a look. To my great astonishment, there were several people around with sticks who asked me to give them the pilot. Of course, my reply was showing them my pistol. "If you dare to come too near, I will shoot." I told them, "I am myself a pilot, and I would not like to be mistreated by a gang of civilians if I was shot down in enemy territory." Fortunately, no one moved. As no vehicle was in sight, I continued with my American on the bike. After another half mile, a Kubelwagen arrived with a driver and a meteorologist who spoke English. We had a brief conversation, and I heard that my man was a pilot of a B-24 unit. I asked him if I could have his insignia with wings, but he told me he would still need it to prove his identity. Then the car went. This history touched the life of two young men during WWII, but each one on opposite sides. *Ed. Note: If the American pilot reads this story, Gerhard Walter would like to be in touch. The 8 BTs would like to hear the rest of the story.*



From Mark Morris, Pueblo, CO: A new publication, Pueblo Army Air Base History, written by Dr. Ray Sisson, is now available at the Pueblo Historical Aircraft Society, located at the Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum, 31001 Magnuson Ave., Pueblo, CO 81001. Dr. Sisson is a retired professor from the University of Southern Colorado. Members of the 506 Sq. will find this book appealing, as their squadron was formed at the PAAB in 1942. They will also enjoy the museum, which houses interesting and well preserved memorabilia from 59 years ago. The book costs \$19.95 + \$3.00 S & H. Contact the Museum or write Mark: marksan@iex.net or PWAM@IEX.NET

The following photos are from the PAAB Book. Mark states, "I wish we had some photos of the 506 crews that trained at Pueblo, but we don't. Nor do we have any aircraft with crews - just A/C in the air. We have no information on others who may have trained at Pueblo as crews only. We have a lot of photos in the book, but all are later than when 44BG members would be in them. These people in these photos are unknown except for Jinx Falkenberg. The others at the party are unknown."



The Band at Pueblo took time to refuel. Can anyone identify this enthusiastic group of musicians?



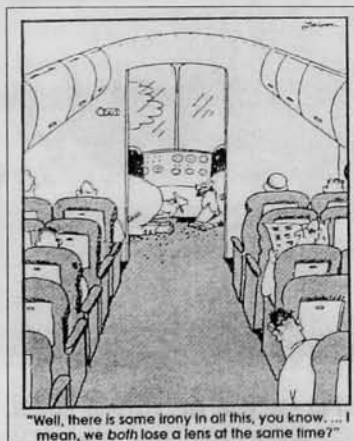
From Ted Stamos: I am trying to track down information about my cousin, 1st Lt. **Robert G. Stamos**, who died as a co-pilot on a raid over Bernberg, Germany on April 11,



1944. The pilot was 1st Lt. **John D. Money**, who wrote an account of the incident... having to break out the window on the co-pilot side to escape. Robert was dead in his seat of flak wounds. The last contact from John Money in the 44th BGVA records was in 1992. The plane was, I believe, Southern Comfort II, 506 B. Sq. Only three survived, John Money, **Don Young**, **Wallace Kirchner**. I am trying to find somebody who might have known Robert, and could tell me anything... anything at all about him. (Lt. Col.)

Richard Butler sent me copies of his combat record. He suggested contacting the 8 BALL TAILS, to see if anybody remembers Robert. My home address is: Ted Stamos, 4423 Arden View Ct., St. Paul, MN. Phone 651 633-7067. E-Mail: ststamos@ties.kl2.mn.us.

Ed Note: The target for this mission was Junkers Aircraft Assembly Plant. The right bomb bay doors failed to open. When approaching the target, they received a direct hit in the bomb bay, setting the plane afire. It flew on a short distance, then winged over and split in two at the waist section.



"Well, there is some irony in all this, you know. ... I mean, we both lose a lens at the same time?"

From David E. Saylor, Birmingham, MI:
The identities in the photo showing the 14th CBW War Room are: Seated is Lt. **William Church**; Standing is Capt. **David Saylor**, Lt. **Harry Jacobs** and Capt. **Robert Morton**.



42-3 4423-5 BOX WAR ROOM, 14TH BOW

Bob Norsen (68th BS) to Will Lundy: "I had just finished B-17 school as a 'qualified' 1st pilot, B-17. There they tried to get us to land tail wheel first. Some did at great expense. The main gear came down so hard, the drag strut would part, laying the plane on one wheel, a wing tip and one engine.

"Early instructions on the B-24 were to land three point. Some did. The result collapsed the nose gear, left the tail pointing at the sky (at Ft. Myers). Of course, the right way to land both airplanes is on the main gear with the tail low but not dragging. The planes fly much alike. They can fly in formation easily. Same altitude. Same speed. "*Lemon Drop* was one of the originals, flown across by my close friend **Reginal Phillips**. Phil named it that because it had some defects originally that caused Phil and crew some delay to get the defects fixed. "I didn't get into the terrible trouble on missions that many did. Many times close, but I never came back with serious damage, and only once with an injury on board. I didn't fly a full 35 missions. Between an operations job and then engineering modifications for the B-24 after my crew was lost, flying with another pilot, I flew when needed as a substitute pilot. In that situation, I seldom got to go. I remember flying for **Johnny Diehl** on a Hamm Raid. Nearly frozen controls...working so hard with stiff controls, I had the window open, drenched in sweat. B-17s were flying back through our formation, engines out, etc. "I recall one mission while the main group did Ploesti. I stayed down to bring down another flight, when the 'promised new crews' showed up. We ran training missions of semi-real missions with long and complete briefing, then careful debriefing to review the 'mission'. The idea was to become so familiar with combat details, the new crews would be as safe as possible for themselves and for the rest of the team. On one of several such missions, a diversion, my plane was head-on attacked by a twin engine Messerschmitt that launched the first rockets I had seen. "Back in the States we had mentally practiced quick evasive action. Just as they 'stand still' out there, do a quick dive.' I did. The rockets smoked a few feet overhead. Slight rudder damage... " "Our (stateside) experience in Sub Patrol paid off in Europe. I was Operations duty one night, planning an ordered 44th mission to Danzig (a Polish port on the Baltic Sea at the mouth of the Vistula River), a flight well over twice as far as Berlin. We had not gotten back all planes on missions to Berlin because of fuel shortage. Using what I learned about stretching miles, flying like we did Sub Patrol, we got the entire 44th flight to Danzig and returned with fuel to spare.



From the Web Page, Aaron Williams, a relative of Capt. **Chester L. Phillips, Jr.**, 67th Sq., pilot of *Little Beaver* writes: It appears that a college prank was the impetus for Capt. Phillips to choose to become a combat airman: Williams describes an event in which the rivalry between Phillips's school, Texas State Agriculture College (now Univ. of Texas at Arlington, Texas) and Tarleton State U. in Stephenville, Texas. Phillips took his own plane to his rivals, intending to taunt their pre-game celebration. Unfortunately, Tarleton was pre-warned; a student threw a big board in the air, hitting the propeller and causing the plane to crash. Chester's punishment was that he could not complete his education. Williams believes this humiliation was the driving force for Phillips to request combat duty. His plane went down on the Kiel Raid, 14 May, 1943. Seven of the crew were KIA, four became POWs.

Williams wrote: "I want to thank all of you who sent me information about Capt. Phillips. Some of you remembered him as "George." I checked with the family to see what the origin of "George" might be. (It was the name of his dog)... I hope to see and meet many of you in Shreveport.



From the Archives

Does anybody remember this?

8th Air Force 3rd Anniversary
Office of the Station Commander
January 28, 1945

During the first part of the month, a couple of old faces reappeared on the station after an absence of nine months. They belonged to two enlisted members of the Chemical Company, who, in March 1944, were transferred to the Eastern Command and stationed in Russia to service bombers on shuttle missions. They reached their destination, the southeastern part of Russia, by a circuitous route, coming up through Persia. They found only makeshift quarters on a barren site and in a dry climate. Their food consisted of U.S. Army rations which were flown in from the Persian Gulf Command. All other supplies, including regular Post Exchange rations were also flown in from here. News was supplied by incoming crews and translated Russian communique, which were

posted on the bulletin board. Later, the men were able to salvage a liaison set and were thus supplied with ready news and entertainment. During the summer, a club was set up for the Americans and Russian officers. Here, liquid refreshments were available in the form of cognac, wines, a lager type of beer, and that "power-plus" vodka. (They say that the stuff can be used as lighter fluid.) The men worked in teams with the Russians supplying labor to be supervised by the Americans. The language was very difficult to learn and very few knew enough to converse to the natives, although some of the Russian officers could speak English well enough to make themselves understood. The Americans had very little opportunity to observe outside life since the Russians are hard-living, hard-working, and hard-fighting people and such things as transportation for pleasure purposes are absolutely unheard of. Theirs is an all out effort to terminate the war. However, the men did have an opportunity to observe the operation of a small nearby village. The village functions on a cooperative basis, with all the natives living in the village and going out to work the land each day. On certain days, they hold a bazaar at which they trade items they do not buy and sell. This entire cooperative system is worked more or less since there are no government authorities there to supervise. It was quite an experience to those men, but they did welcome the opportunity to return since the simply clean, hard life and that Russians lead is so very strange to us. The men left there in October and returned by the long circuitous route, as they had gone.

MEMORIES OF A DISTANT WAR



God Bless
the U.S.A



**44th Bomb Group
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

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