

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS



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A SALUTE TO THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Again we depart from featuring an airplane for this issue. Instead we go back to the Summer, 1997 issue of the "Tails" when we initiated the "Memory Lane" page with a photo of our Red Cross lady escorting Col. Fred Dent and Norwich Lord Mayor William Finch on a tour of the Red Cross Club. We asked if anyone could identify the Red Cross lady and give us her home. We were successful in our search for our Shipdham Red Cross lady. It turned out to be a sad journey, for we found that Helen Hoback had died on April 20, 1949 at age 32 in a Baltimore, MD hospital following an operation to remove a brain tumor. Inside we will finish the Helen Hoback story, and in her memory we dedicate this issue of 8-Ball Tails to all of those dedicated Red Cross workers who so tirelessly worked to bring a little bit of home to wherever we were serving. We will always be thankful to them.



Miss Helen H. Hoback of Roanoke, VA, with her Red Cross Staff, greets Captain Eddie Rickenbacker during his visit with the 44th Bomb Group at Shipdham AB, Norfolk, England in early 1944.

OUR RED CROSS LADY

This all began when we started a new feature in the 8-Ball Tails we call "Memory Lane" (Vol. 2, Issue #3) and used a picture taken in Shipdham at the Red Cross club on the occasion of a visit to the base by Lord Mayor William Finch of Norwich. We asked the membership if anyone could recall the name of our Red Cross lady. FRANK BATA of the 66th Bomb Sqdn. came forth with her name, along with the story of what a great help she had been keeping him in touch with his younger brother stationed at another English base. He also recollected that she was from Roanoke, VA. With that to go on, we started on what turned out to be a sad search. I first asked Art HAND, our membership search expert, to give me a computer run on any members we have in Roanoke. He came up with JACK RUSSELL, 68th Sqdn. who responded to my request that he would see what he could find out about HELEN HOBACK. In no time at all he sent me a copy of the 4-21-49 Roanoke Times Obituary page which noted Helen's death. The notice also listed a surviving brother named SAMUEL HOBACK living in Baltimore. Once again a request to ART HAND quickly got me an address and telephone number. I called and first got his wife, and after telling her who I was and of my search for information about Helen, I was able to make a return call later. We made contact that evening and after talking with her brother Sam, the story began to brighten somewhat. I found in our search to see where life had led our pretty 44th Red Cross lady that, in the few post-war years of her life, she was happily fulfilling her dream to be an actress.

She had moved to Baltimore, found work in a publishing company which financed her continued studies in Shakespearean Theatre and was broadening her acting experience doing summer stock. In the pursuit of her dream, she never married. Her most successful theatrical venture was the development of an evening's program of her adaptations of Shakespeare's heroines in his most famous plays. With authentic Elizabethan costumes, she formed a small company of three which included her brother Sam and another stage hand. They travelled, giving her solo performances in Boston, New York and New Jersey, in what must have been a most happy time for our blossoming actress. Tragedy struck in the winter of 1947-8 when she slipped on an icy sidewalk and took a severe blow to her head. A year later she did not survive surgery undertaken to remove a brain tumor. So the curtain came down before the career of this developing actress could reach full bloom. So, as she served her country and fellow man keeping them in touch with home and what they were fighting for, so she must have brought the vitality of her persona to her audiences. The 44th Bomb Group honors her and is thankful for the precious time in her short life that she gave to us.



Helen Hoback

IN HER ADAPTATIONS

SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES

Designed and directed by PERCIVAL VIVIAN



ROSALIND AND LADY MACBETH

Comments

Here indeed is the Art of the Forgotten Language. Miss Hoback's every inflection is perfect and her scanning of the lines leaving nothing to be desired. She simply holds you entranced with her magic charm. I can imagine no more pleasant way of spending an evening than to watch Miss Helen Hoback in her characterization of "Shakespeare's Heroines."

Percival Vivian,
Well-Known New York Director

Miss Helen Hoback shows remarkable ability in action. She has a charming personality and a large general ability.

Binney Gunnison
Dean Emeritus Curry School

Miss Helen Hoback, in "Shakespeare's Heroines," gave us a delightful evening of entertainment. Her pleasing costumes and fine acting added much to the enjoyment of the scenes. All students and lovers of Shakespeare should especially enjoy her delineation of the various characters.

Ruth K. Coddington

Helen Hoback is an artist of unusual ability. She vividly presents her Shakespearean portraits in costume. Each personality steps straight from the story onto the stage. A delightful club program.

Mrs. George A. Layman
Past President, Roanoke Woman's Club

I have heard and seen Miss Hoback in her Shakespearean program. It was artistically done with much skill and effectiveness and well received by the audience. It gives me a good deal of pleasure to commend her program to anyone desiring a splendid evening of entertainment. She is a young woman of rare beauty and accomplishment and I predict for her a brilliant future.

G.A. Layman, President
Roanoke City Education Association

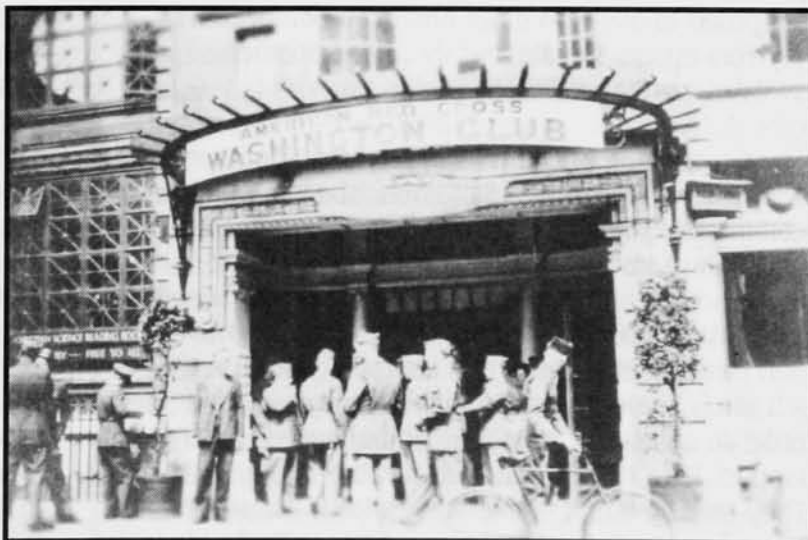


Helen H. Hoback, above, American Red Cross staff assistant, whose safe arrival in England was announced today, is the daughter of Floyd G. Hoback, 29 Riverland Road, Roanoke. She is a graduate of Jefferson high school, Roanoke, and attended Roanoke college and Curry school of Expression, Boston. She conducted a dramatic studio in Roanoke and appeared as reader in programs for colleges and schools throughout the State. Miss Hoback joined the Red Cross forces in Washington early in February.



Miss Helen Hoback

Below: Early 1944 London, The Busiest Red Cross Club on The Planet.



More on Rouen, March 8, 1943

Editor: You've often read my comments about having a story or letter from one person tickle the memory of another who will then come in with more to tell about the mission or incident which gives another view of the same subject. These different subjective views, put together, combine to give us an objective view of history. In this case we go back to the last issue of "The Tails" and our story about our visit to Villers-Ecalles, France. While there, we were honored to participate in the memorial ceremonies commemorating the 67th Squadron crew of Lt. Clyde Price, flying "Miss Dianne," who were shot down on the March 8, 1943 raid on the Rouen, France railway marshalling yard and crashed at the site of the memorial marker where we were assembled.

This first piece is co-authored by Jean Pierre Marie and Joel Huard, both members of the Non-Commissioned Officers of the French Army Air Force Reserve (I'ANSORAA). One of their organizational charters is to carry on research and documentation of the air wars over France in both World Wars. Our connection and correspondence with them began with an inquiry they made to us seeking information on the 44th Bomb Group losses on the March 8, 1943 raid.

Though much of their article has its basis from the Missing Aircrew Reports in the Will Lundy Roll of Honor records, it also offers us a view of the raid from the view of the German fighters defending that vital rail center. (Stele translated means monument or memorial marker). This article appeared in their I'ANSORAA JOURNAL.



"Stele to the allied aviators of Villiers-Ecalles note about the destruction of two bombers B24 "LIBERATOR"

Mars 8, 1943

On March 8, 1943, at 12h 03, 9 bombers B24 "Liberator" of the 44th Bomber Group, (67th squadron) of the 8th Air Force, took off from their base of SHIPDHAM, very near NORWICH. They were to meet 7 other B24's coming from the 93rd Bomber Group (329th Squadron), at BEACHY-HEAD, on the southern coast of England near EASTBOURNE.

The objective assigned to them was the switchyard of SOTTEVILLE LES ROUEN. This mission, important because of the switchyard's strategic position, consisted of a manoeuvre of diversion which was supposed to allow 54 other American bombers, B17 Fly Fortress, to simultaneously attack another switchyard, that of RENNES.

The Captain James O'BRIEN of the 68th Squadron with major POSEY, 66th Squadron, aboard, who was commanding the whole of the American formation, were constrained to interrupt their mission.

John HUSSELTON, one of the members of their team, had passed out because of a lack of oxygen. They left the formation, notified their base by radio in order to obtain the help of an ambulance and landed. John HUSSELTON was taken off the plane. They took off again immediately with the number of crew members reduced and caught up with the formation just above the English Channel.

When captain O'BRIEN was forced to land, captain Clyde PRICE of the 44th Bomber Group took the place of the leader of the formation, lieutenant Robert BLAINE moved up to the second place.

The crew members of lieutenant BLAINE, having had two wounded during a previous mission, was not supposed to take part in the mission, but after the briefing, they succeeded to put together a complete crew and received authorization to participate. Sergeant Kenneth L. ERHART, of the weaponry section, and Roy E. GOSLINE, of the mechanics section, volunteered willingly. They occupied, one and the other, a machine gun position aboard the B24 number 41 - 23784 to which the crew members had given the name of "MISS DIANNE." It was one of the 9 first B24 "Liberator" to arrive in England on October 10 1942. Will LUNDY was responsible for the maintenance on the ground of this plane. Today (May 10 1997) he has become the historian of the 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

The 16 bombers crossed the coast of France at 13h 53 at ST VALERY EN CAUX. A few minutes later, between YERVILLE and PAVILLY, the pilots were looking for their fighter planes: some P47 "THUNDERBOLT," expected to replace the 25 "SPITFIRE" of the R.A.F. who were stopping their coverage. This was supposed to be the first



participation of these American fighter planes on an escort mission since the beginning of the hostilities. However, delayed by the first attack of the objective at the north of France, they encountered severe opposition and were delayed too long by these combats, they were prevented from coming to ensure the protection of the "Liberators."

The crew members of the bombers, for whom the objective was to last no longer than a few minutes, were preparing themselves for the attack.

It was at this moment that 30 FW 190, of the JG 26 "SHLAGETER," of the Luftwaffe, were arriving at 14h. With the sun behind them, they made a surprise attack on the American pilots who thought they were seeing their own fighter planes arrive.

Wutz GALLAND, who was leading the patrol of the FW 190 German fighters, launched his attack on the bombers: from the front and on the right flanks of the formation with the help of major Pips PRILLER.

The "oberlieutenant" Peter CRUMP fired a long round from his machine guns at one of the airplanes. He was able to see clearly a good number of impacts around the pilot's position. As he distanced himself in a long nose dive, he saw with horror that he was in line with the deballasting of the bombs of a "liberator." He escaped by a very tight bend... The plane that he just hid crashed in the part of a wooded valley to the north of the Seine...

Their attack was devastating, the leading B24 caught fire, followed by the second bomber. The other crews were forced to break up the formation.

The leader, captain PRICE and the lieutenant BLAINE, his second man, were hit by the shot of numerous German fighter planes. These planes who were commanding the mission, now out of combat, left the other crews without information needed for the planned attack.

Without the protection of allied fighters, the crews had to resolve to set out for the North and rejoin the fixed rallying point at NEUFCHATEL EN BRAY, then set themselves out towards the point of passage on the coast, chosen for the return to BIVILLE SUR MER in between LE TREPORT and DIEPPE.

The plane number 2, piloted by lieutenant Robert W. BLAINE, crashed into French ground at SIERVELLE. The sole survivor, lieutenant Leo O. FRAZIER

succeeded in jumping from the plane with a parachute. A prisoner of the German troops, he had the chance, a few days later, to return to the crash site. The plane had not exploded, the bombs were still on board.

Leo FRAZIER finished the war at the Stalag LUFT III.



LT. LEO FRAZIER, 1997

He was the victim of a heart attack in 1995 which left him in fragile health and he decided not to participate in the trip of the 44th Bomber-Group Veterans Association organized to go to Europe from May 27 to June 7 1997...

It is only on February 2, 1997 that the point of impact of this was able to be confirmed thanks to the help of M. Yves LOISEL, mayor of SIERVILLE who, responding to the request of the author of the present note, addressed to him a death certificate, which reads thus: "The 12 Mars 1943, at 18h, Monsieur Gustave NEMERY, farmer at SIERVILLE, discovered on the plane, hamlet of Plix, the body of a male individual of which the particulars are the following: decapitated body, dressed in a khaki military uniform, possibility wounded by a bullet just about the ankle. The collar of the jacket had this inscription: KREISSIG - M C ATOR - MAC - DILI - FIELD. An identity plate belonged to the deceased and turned over to the mayor March 20 1943 by a

member of the occupation army at the moment of the burial. The plate carried the following information - OSCAR F. KREISSIG 110 105 44... According to every probability, the deceased was the radio operator on the BLAINE crew fallen at SIERVILLE, 400 meters from the place where the body was found at the time of an aerial combat taking place March 8 1943..."

The plane of the leader, "Miss Dianne" that captain Clyde E. PRICE was flying, was hit by the enemy fighter planes and by the Flak, seriously hit at the front and at the fuselage center, the oxygen and hydraulic circuits destroyed... The plane having immediately caught fire, the signal to escape was given ...It is sergeant Kenneth L. ERHART, one of the two replacement machine gunners who gave this information in the report that he made to the military authorities after his return to the United States.

Because of the frontal attack, the personnel at the piloting position could not evacuate. Kenneth ERHART helped sergeants Iris WYER and Deane DEVARS to jump from the machine gun posts of the right flank. He observed that sergeant FLESHMAN was already dead, after which, he was also able, he himself, to get out from the right flank.

Upon touching the ground, he saw lieutenant GROSS arrive. His abdomen was gashed open. He died in the arms of Kenneth ERHART under the regard of the Germans.

"He had asked me to take his watch and to give it to his mother, but the Germans seized it..." he declared.

Deane DEVARS and Iris WYER, wounded by the Flak and burned, were captured one or two days later, not having succeeded in getting themselves away from the occupants who were looking for them.

As for Kenneth ERHART, once that he become a prisoner and that lieutenant GROSS was dead, the German soldiers turned them over to the troops of the LUFTWAFFE and he was taken to a hospital. He never learned of what kind of medicine they used to treat his burns, but the burns left no scars. He was taken care of by French doctors and watched over by German doctors, then he was taken by train to Stalag-Luft to be interrogated and taken to Stalag VII, in MOOSBERG in Baviere.

Kenneth ERHART was a close friend to Will LUNDY, who was responsible for the maintenance on the ground of the B24 "Miss Dianne" during the war. He later became the historian of the 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION. The most part of this report succeeded in being established with his very helpful collaboration.

"MISS DIANNE" had exploded above BARENTIN, a section of the plane in flames fell upon the housing development of the BADIN Establishments and destroyed some houses. The greatest portion of the plane and the bodies of the 8 victims ended their fall at VILLERS ECALLES where a stele was erected in remembrance of the allied aviators of whom the identity was only able to be established by the confirmation of the points of impact that each of the two B24 of the 44th Bomber Group. This confirmation would only come February 2 1997.

The stele was inaugurated August 22 1948 by Maitre Andre MARIE, president of the Council (First Minister) and the mayor of BARENTIN, in the presence of Monsieur the Consul of the United States of America. A formal speech was given by Monsieur RICHARD, author and the one who brought the monument to fruition, adjunct of the mayor of VILLERS ECALLES, then a moving exaltation of the spirit of sacrifice by M. Andre MARIE preceded the deposit of a wreath of flowers while a plane of the Aeroclub of Normandy dropped flowers over the crowd.

Monsieur LEBLOND, the mayor then received the honored guests at the town hall. Among the spectators, a young boy of 11 years who dreamed of becoming an aviator... he became one... and since May 8 1983, a group of non-commissioned officers of the reserve, members of their national association (l'ANSORAA) participate each year, at the outskirts of the municipality, of the former combatants and of the inhabitants of VILLERS ECALLES at the commemoration of the remembrance of the allied aviators whose names appear ever since on the monument.



This next piece is a letter sent in by Jim O'Brien in which he relates the mixed emotions of having to relinquish the lead of the group to save the life of a crew member, then, upon rejoining the group, witness the simultaneous loss of both the Price crew, who had assumed the lead, then the Blaine crew who had taken #2 position.

2921 South Estrella Circle
Mesa, AZ 85202-7842

December 29, 1997

Dear Roy,

I wrote a letter to Will Lundy and mentioned how much I enjoyed the story of "The Trip" in the Winter Issue of the "8 Ball Tails." The visit to Rouen, the site of the memorial to the two 67th aircrews and the account of Lois Cianci receiving her dad's dog tag from Guy Cressant were real drama.

I thought I would add this postscript to the story of the two 67th Squadron crews that were shot down on the Rouen mission of 8 March 1943. I knew Lt. Clyde Price and Lt. Robert Blaine and some of their crew members very well. Clyde Price was a devoted family man who always talked about the day when he could complete his missions and return to his wife. We had many conversations together at the Officers club. We were not connoisseurs of the bar, but we found satisfaction in the side chairs listening to the music and news of the BBC broadcasts,

Major Jim Posey, Group Exec, and I were the designated Group Leaders for the Rouen mission flying in my aircraft "The Rugged Buggy" of the 68th Sq. We had taken off and assembled the Group over Shipdham when S/Sgt John Husselton, one of our waist gunners, was reported to have fainted at his gun position. Jim Posey and I concluded that we would have to give up the lead position and return Husselton to the base. Price and Blaine then took over as deputy leads and we quickly returned Husselton to a waiting ambulance at Shipdham and then took off again with nine crewmen to catch the 44th just as they were crossing the Channel.

One of the memorable quotes of the day was, "Are Those Spitfires?" from bombardier, Norius Crisan when we saw a bunch of fighters about 4000 ft. above us and to the left. The Polish Spitfire Squadron was to be our escort. They were not Spitfires and soon, from the typical head-on position, about 35-40 German ME109s and FW190s came in at us. The Price and Blaine aircraft quickly went down under the withering fire. Very few in that formation thought they were going to survive that German attack, but fortunately the Polish Spitfires showed up in time to chase them away. The Germans had achieved their purpose because in all of the confusion very few of our bombs hit the railroad yards.

I had many experiences in my 21 missions with the so called "fickle finger of fate," but I always felt that I owed John Husselton something for taking us out of that lead position on the 8th of March 1943, although there was no joy in the loss of the two 67th crews. As well stated by John Muirhead in his book, *Those Who Fall*, "it was kind of a Russian roulette that we played and we pulled the trigger as many times as we could." Another irony was that when John Husselton returned from his prescribed "R&R", his first mission was the Kiel raid of 5/14/43 when we were shot down in the "Rugged Buggy." He was one of our eight crew members who survived as POWs for two years. I have never been able to reach him after the war.

Sincerely,

Jim O'Brien

The last piece of these views comes to us by letter from Gloria Erhard, widow of S/Sgt. Kenneth I. Erhard, Waist Gunner on the Capt. Price crew. S/Sgt. Erhard was one of three gunners in the rear of the airplane who were able to bail out and survived the crash to become POW'S. The story, taken from his diary and recollections passed on to his wife prior to his death, give us a view of the tragic end of a tough mission. May I add that this mission took place at the height of those early days when the 67th was suffering terrible aircrew losses and the ground support personnel were asked to volunteer for aircrew duty. S/Sgt. Erhard from the Armament Section and S/Sgt. Roy E. Gosline from the Engineering Section were two of those valorous men who took that step forward. S/Sgt. Gosline did not survive the crash.

SLIGHTLY CONDENSED LETTER FROM GLORIA ERHARD

AFTER VIEWING SOME OF THE PHOTOS TAKEN AT THE CEREMONIES AT VILLERS ECALLES, FRANCE, JUNE 1997, THE MONUMENT, THE FLOWERS, THE CEREMONIES MUST HAVE BEEN AWESOMELY BEAUTIFUL TO HAVE BEEN SEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND SO DEDICATED TO YOUNG, HANDSOME AMERICAN FLYERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES AND FREEDOM BECAUSE OF THE WHIMS OF A STRANGE LITTLE MAN WHOM WE KNEW AS HITLER. IT MAKES ONE ANGRY, SAD, PROUD OF OUR YOUNG MEN WHO WILLINGLY LAY DOWN THEIR LIVES, THEIR FREEDOM TO SAVE OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD FROM ONE OF THE "ISMS" WITHIN AN "ISM" OF OUR OWN WHICH IS CALLED PATRIOTISM.

I WAS TRYING TO LOOK BEYOND THE PHOTOS TO WHERE KEN AND THE LIEUT. FROM DENVER (MORTON P. GROSS) MAY HAVE LANDED. KEN NEVER SPOKE OF THE FIERY CRASH. PERHAPS HE DID NOT SEE IT. THEY LANDED NOT TOO FAR FROM A ROAD WHERE GERMAN SOLDIERS WAITED IN A PARKED TRUCK. IT TOOK SEVERAL MINUTES TO COME DOWN IN THEIR PARACHUTES AS THE ENEMY PLANES "TOYED" WITH THE TWO "CHUTISTS," CAUSING THEM TO GO UP AS WELL AS DOWN, SHOOTING AT THEM ALL THE WHILE. WHEN THEY LANDED, THE LIEUTENANT CALLED, "KENNY BOY! KENNY BOY!"

KEN WAS TRYING TO DISENGAGE HIS HARNESS AND FIGHT OFF THE SOLDIERS WHO WERE GATHERING AROUND HIM AT THAT TIME. "HANG ON! I'M TRYING TO GET OVER THERE," KEN YELLED OUT. HE PUSHED AND SHOVED HIS WAY TO LT. GROSS BUT FOUND HIM FATALLY WOUNDED, ALMOST SHOT IN HALF. SO HE GATHERED THE LT. IN HIS ARMS WHILE BEING TOLD, "TAKE MY WATCH AND GIVE IT TO MY MOTHER. TELL HER I LOVE HER." HOWEVER, THE WATCH WAS SNATCHED AWAY BEFORE THE EXCHANGE COULD BE MADE, TAKEN AWAY BY AN ENEMY SOLDIER. KEN DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BODY OF THE LT. BUT HE

WAS MARCHED TO A BARN WHICH WAS NEARBY. WHILE RESTING THERE IN SOME HAY, KEN EXAMINED HIMSELF TO DISCOVER WOUNDS TO HIS LEGS, FLAK WOUNDS IN HIS NECK. HIS FACE AND HIS HANDS WERE BURNED WHEN HIS OXYGEN MASK HAD CAUGHT FIRE. TOO, HIS TORSO RECEIVED SOME BURNS AND A FEW FLAK WOUNDS, AND HE WAS HAVING A HARD TIME BREATHING.

LATER HE WAS LOADED ONTO A TRUCK AND TAKEN TO A SMALL HOSPITAL WITH FRENCH DOCTORS - BUT SUPERVISED BY A GERMAN DOCTOR. THE FRENCH DOCTOR WHISPERED, "WATCH YOUR BOOTS —" BUT WAS INTERRUPTED WHEN THE GERMAN YELLED, "NO TALKING". A SALVE WAS APPLIED TO HIS BURNS, WHICH AMAZINGLY HALTED THE PAIN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. THE WORST FLAK WOUNDS WERE TREATED, BUT THE REST OF THEM WERE LEFT UNTREATED.

HE WAS THEN TAKEN TO A TRAIN DEPOT AMPLY COVERED BY SEVERAL GUARDS, THEN ON TO AN INTERROGATION CENTER WHERE HE WAS HELD FOR 10 DAYS IN ISOLATION. THERE KEN WAS QUESTIONED EACH DAY BY THE HAUPTMANN AND HIS SERGEANTS. HE WAS SHOCKED THAT THE GERMAN SPY SYSTEM WAS SO GOOD THAT THEY HAD KEN'S COMPLETE 201 FILE!! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT! THEY EVEN HAD HIS MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME, FATHER'S NAME, KEN'S PREVIOUS OCCUPATION, CHURCH, ETC.

SIGN THIS PAPER OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE YOUR FAMILY AGAIN! AND "JOIN US - WE'LL DO BIG THINGS FOR YOU. DO NOT GIVE YOUR NAME, RANK, SERIAL NUMBER! WE ALREADY HAVE IT ALL! SIGN IT, OR YOU WON'T GET YOUR MAIL" ETC.

ONE SERGEANT PUT HIS FACE NEXT TO KEN'S AND THREATENED HIM. KEN SPAT IN HIS FACE, SO OF COURSE, THE GERMAN HIT HIM IN THE JAW WITH

HIS RIFLE BUTT AND KEN FOUND HIMSELF ON THE FLOOR. ONE DAY KEN DECIDED HE HAD HAD ENOUGH INTERROGATION AND REFUSED TO GET OFF HIS COT. HE PUT HIS ARM OVER HIS EYES, HEARD THE GUARD LEAVE, HEARD OTHER FOOTSTEPS AND NEXT CAME BRUTAL PAIN, NEARLY THE WORST HE'D EVER FELT. THE HAUPTMANN WAS BEATING HIS BARE FEET WITH A RIDING CROP! HIS BOOTS, BY THE WAY, WERE HIDDEN UNDER HIS COT.

BUT AFTER THE 10th DAY, KEN WAS SENT TO STALAG VII-A, MOOSEBURG, GERMANY WHERE HE MET OTHER AMERICAN AIRMEN, SOME OF WHOM REMAINED FRIENDS UNTIL HIS DEATH.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1943, THEY WERE SHIPPED TO STALAG XVII-B, KREMS, AUSTRIA. HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST AMERICAN CONTINGENT THERE, WHERE THEIR NUMBERS GREW FROM LESS THAN A THOUSAND TO OVER 4300 IN 1945.

AS THE WAR PROGRESSED, SUPPLIES BECAME MORE RARE. RED CROSS PARCELS WERE FEW BECAUSE THE GUARDS STARTED HELPING THEMSELVES. WHEN THE REGULAR GUARDS WERE REPLACED BY HOME GUARDS, CONDITIONS BECAME WORSE. MANY POWs BECAME ILL, BUT THE HOSPITAL HAD LITTLE MEDICINES FOR TREATMENT. IT HAD AN X-RAY MACHINE BUT LITTLE ELSE. THERE WAS AN AMERICAN DOCTOR, MAJOR BEAUMONT, BUT KEN KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT HIM, AND TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT HIM AFTER THE WAR.

KEN WAS NEVER FURNISHED WITH A UNIFORM OR SIMILAR CLOTHES, SO HE WAS FORCED TO WEAR THAT POOR OLD FLIGHT SUIT AND WHATEVER ELSE HE COULD SCROUNGE. TO KEEP REASONABLY CLEAN HE'D USE HIS THIN BLANKET, WASH HIS CLOTHES WHEN WATER WAS AVAILABLE, SHOWER WHEN HE COULD. FOOD CONSISTED OF SAWDUST BREAD, GRUEL, ACORN COFFEE AND WHATEVER ELSE THE RED CROSS PARCELS OFFERED.

IN APRIL, 1945, THE RUSSIANS WERE ADVANCING, SO THE GERMANS STARTED MARCHING THE POWs TOWARD THE ALLIED FRONT. THERE WERE ABOUT 4100 POWs WENDING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE ALPS IN ALL SORTS OF WEATHER. GENERALLY, KEN WAS IN FRONT, AS THERE WAS SO LITTLE TO EAT THAT HE WANTED A CHANCE TO FIND ANYTHING. THEY ATE TREE BARK, ANY LEFTOVER BERRIES, FIELD MICE, SMALL CHUNKS OF STALE BREAD.

ONE TIME, AFTER JUST CROSSING A BRIDGE AT LINZ, GERMANY, THEY WATCHED ALLIED PLANES STRAFE AND BOMB THAT BRIDGE! ALL IN ALL, THEY MARCHED 281 MILES TO BRANAU WOODS, AUSTRIA (HITLER'S BIRTHPLACE) TO REST AND AWAIT THEIR FATE. A FEW DAYS LATER, THEY WERE ALLOWED TO SCROUNGE FOR FOOD, THEN AT NIGHT LIE AWAKE LISTENING TO CREAKING NOISES WHICH THEY HOPED WOULD BE TANKS MOVING IN THE VALLEY BELOW.

IT WAS ON 2 MAY, 1945 WHEN AN ARMY JEEP DROVE UP TO THEIR ENCAMPMENT WITH A CAPTAIN AND A CORPORAL ON BOARD, LOADED TO THE HILT WITH WEAPONS. THE CAPTAIN STOOD UP AND SHOUTED, "YOU ARE NOW FREE! CONSIDER YOURSELF ON ACTIVE DUTY" OR WORDS CLOSE TO THAT MEANING.

KEN STAYED IN THE SERVICE FOR AWHILE, EARNED A PRESIDENTIAL CITATION AWARD (UNIT) FOR PARTICIPATION IN A B-29 FLY-OVER AT MANILA, CELEBRATING ITS INDEPENDENCE IN 1947. ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE BERLIN AIRLIFT WHEN RUSSIA CLOSED THAT CITY DOWN IN 1948(?). ALSO WAS IN A NON-STOP SITUATION THAT BROKE ALL RECORDS. THROUGHOUT ALL OF THIS, HE KEPT ASKING HIMSELF THE AGE-OLD QUESTION, "WHY ME? WHY WAS I SPARED WHEN MISS DIANNE'S CREW PERISHED?"

I AM POSITIVE GOD HAS SET KEN'S MIND AT REST WITH A SUITABLE ANSWER. KEN IS AT REST NOW, BUT HE LIVES IN MY HEART.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I can't believe it's 8-Ball Tails time again. The months are falling off the calendar and we will be heading for Savannah before we know it! There are all the preliminary registration forms in the centerfold of this issue, so be sure to get them filled out and on the way.

To bring you briefly up to date on the reunion, Mike Yuspeh, our Reunion Chairman, is up and running and busy making final arrangements for all the dinners, tours, transportation, etc. And it all looks great. You all will recall the centerpiece of this reunion will be the unveiling and dedication of our 44th Bomb Group display in the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. The display replicates the four ship lead element, Suzy Q, Horsefly, Buzzin' Bear and the borrowed 376th aircraft, at the instant before bombs away over the target at Ploesti. We will be commemorating all of the veterans of the Ploesti attack, additionally, we will be honoring those still living. In January, I sent a personal letter to each known living Ploesti veteran inviting them to the reunion and unveiling and telling each that we will be specifically honoring the living Ploesti veterans. Since this will, most probably, be the last gathering of this heroic group under one roof, we expect it will be an event of national news media interest and we don't want you to miss this historic event. The response from the Ploesti raiders has been terrific and we will have some of the raider widows joining us as well. If you have not yet visited the Mighty 8th AF Museum, this reunion is really a must. I placed a notice of our reunion in the Air Force Times inviting 44th veterans from the Bomb Wing, the Strategic Missile Wing and the Air Refueling Squadron to attend, let's hope we get some response.

Looking to the future; when my term expires and I move to the now vacant Board

seat of Immediate Past President, it is my intent to make the job description one of "Recruiter at Large" working to bring the 44th elements back together under the umbrella of a federation wherein each element maintains its identity and we share a common journal and meet annually at a joint reunion and pay dues to the parent organization. I am convinced that if we wish to avoid watching each of the 44th elements wither and die, we must reach out and join hands, younger with older, to maintain the strength to sustain this proud organization into the next millennium.

Our Bronze B-24 contributions were very good. Our members contributed approximately \$2,250. (A few sent their contribution direct to 2nd AD so we don't have an exact total) and we matched that from our treasury, so we made a respectable contribution to the USAFA Court of Honor presence of our great old warbird.

With the cancellation of our England/France trip, I see some room on the schedule for attendance to the 50th 2nd AD bash at Oak Hills Resort outside of Chicago May 22-25. My golf tournament winner's trophy from the 48th reunion is getting dusty; maybe I had better get back there and see if I can get a new one!

Lolly sends her best wishes. She loves Savannah and is looking forward to seeing ya'll (that's a Southern You All) there in October. I can hardly wait to get back to Johnny Harris' rib house!

See you in Savannah
Your Prez.

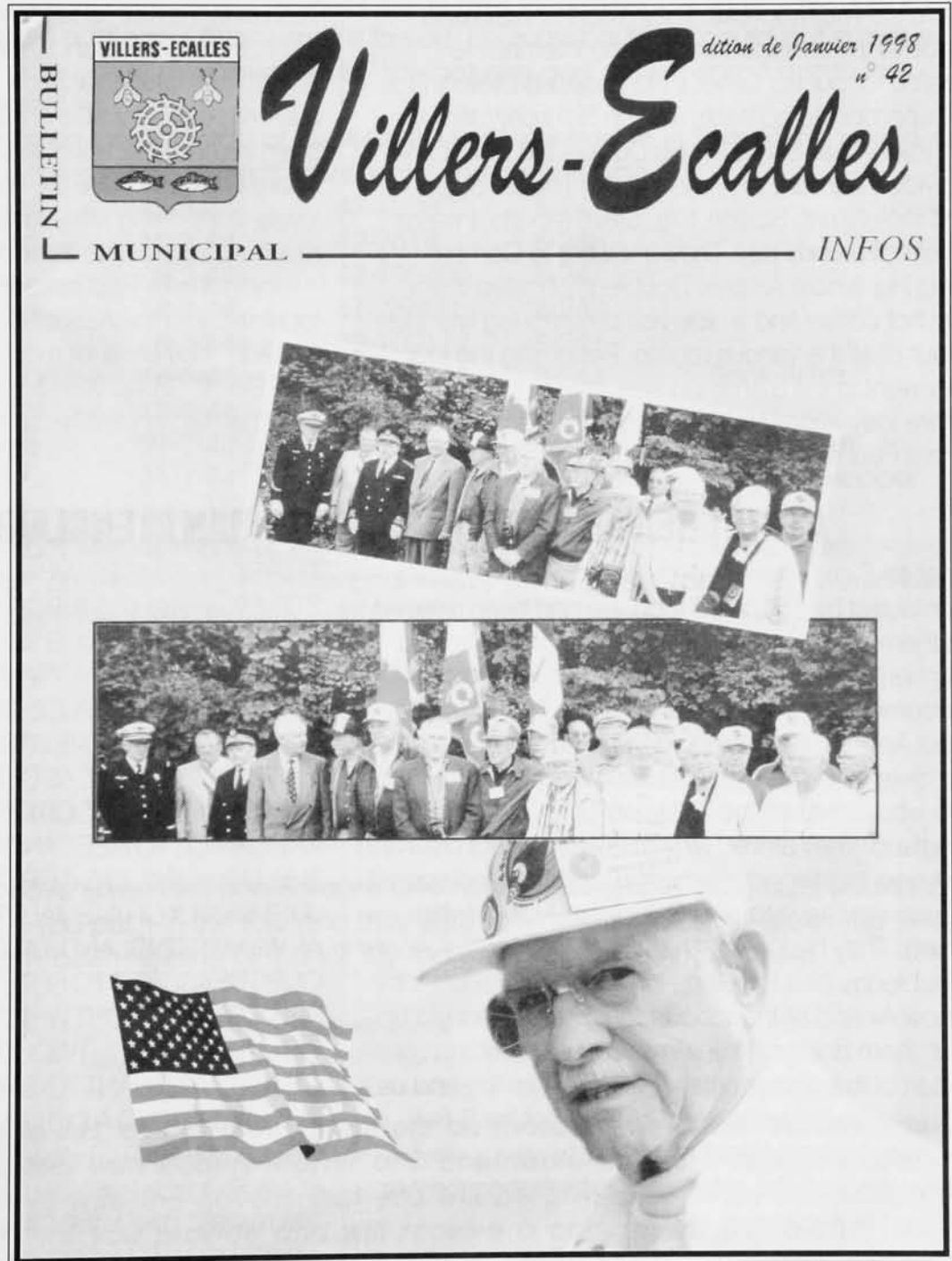


Miscellanea

1998 England-France Trip has been cancelled.

Regrettably, every once in awhile, we all make a bad call. It appeared from the survey we conducted at the General Membership Meeting that we had more than enough to fill a bus. A strange thing happened on the way to the Forum. When it came time to sign up, we barely came up with a dozen adventuresome travellers. Perhaps concern over the World Cup Soccer matches in Paris while we would have been there, or our own big Reunion this year in Savannah and the 50th Anniversary of 2nd Air Division Reunion May 23-26 in Oak Brook Hills, Illinois affected the sign-ups. Whatever, we are sorry to tell those who did make reservations of our cancellation. You should have been notified by Waterhouse Tours by now. It is too bad! We had some wonderful arrangements made with both our English and French friends.

As an example of the excitement displayed by the French at the prospects of our return, I have copied the cover of the January edition of the Villers Ecalles Municipal bulletin with photos of our '97 visit and an inside story about the plans for a '98 visit. Well, perhaps in '99 we will have occasion to travel to England to dedicate the new Arrow Air Centre, then go on to France for the occasion of meeting our friends by those who missed the last trip.



Our Hard Working U.K. Representative

In early January, Steve Adams, our always on-the-job representative in Norwich, got a call from Paul Wiatr, a U.S. Navy Reserve member living in the Chicago area. Paul is the son of, now deceased, Sgt. Rudolph Wiatr, Tail gunner on the Lt. Leonard Louik crew which joined the 67th Squadron in December, 1944. Paul was soon to arrive in England on a two week temporary duty tour. He made contact with the Memorial Library and obtained Steve's e-mail address. They made contact and made all the arrangements on the Internet. He wanted to tour his father's old base, so Steve made the appropriate contacts and on Saturday, January 17, accompanied by Phyllis DuBois (no doubt she provided the car), they met Paul at Thorpe Station and took him to Station 115. Steve reports it was a bitter cold windy day. They first went to Combat Wing Hq. where Andrew Doubleday hosted them with hot coffee and a nice visit before a log fire, then a tour of all the various rooms. Resuming the tour, they went to the 67th living site, then to the flight line where they walked to the end of the main runway where Paul stood in silence for several minutes. He

then stated that he felt close to his father while he stood at the very spot his father had started the take off roll on his combat missions. On with the tour it was down to the Tower and then to Arrow Air where Nigel Wright hosted lunch and gave Paul some 8-Ball Stickers. They lingered, visiting too long and were late for Paul's train so they had an additional hour of visit.

I wanted to relay this account of a "routine" visit by even a non-member such as Paul who has an interest in the 44th and is made to feel so welcome by "our Man in England." He does this year round, sometimes taking vacation days from work to see that 44th visitors visit and leave feeling they have been treated very special. Steve's address is in the Board Directory. Take the time to drop him and his lovely, supporting wife, Janice a note telling him how much we appreciate all he does for our proud 44th.

Incidentally, Paul asked Steve if it was permissible for him to join the Association, to which Steve replied: "You are a lot more entitled to belong to the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association than I am. With this, he handed him a membership application. Editor.

A LATE BREAKING STORY ABOUT OUR MAN IN ENGLAND

I got an E-mail from Steve telling me he had been contacted by CBS in London. He had been referred to them by the Memorial Library (does that sound familiar) when they called saying they wanted to do a documentary piece on the wartime 2nd AD bases in East Anglia. They were told Steve had the best photo archives and was the most knowledgeable man in the whole area on the B-24s and their bases in England. They arrived with an entire camera crew and not one, but two very attractive reporters and spent 5 hours with Steve touring Shipdham Airfield (what else!). They had a visit and coffee with Mr. Doubleday (this is getting to be a regular tour stop), Arrow Air and all the various sites. This all ended up with them doing an interview with Steve, which will be a part of the documentary. He promises to send us a copy of the tape and also not to forget his 8-Ball friends who knew him before he became a star of television. Isn't this great, our guy is putting the 44th right in the public eye.

THIS BRINGS ME TO WHAT CAN WE DO FOR STEVE? I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE HIM ATTEND OUR SAVANNAH REUNION TO SEE AND TAKE PART IN THE UNVEILING OF OUR PLOESTI DISPLAY. REMEMBER, HE IS THE 66TH SQDN. HISTORIAN AS WELL AS BEING OUR UK REPRESENTATIVE. ADDITIONALLY, I WANT HIM AND JANICE TO MEET AND FEEL A PART OF THE 44TH FAMILY AS A GROUP AND NOT JUST SINGLY OR IN SMALL TRAVEL GROUPS AS WE VISIT ENGLAND. I AM GOING TO ASK OUR TREASURER TO SET UP AN ADAMS REUNION ACCOUNT WHICH I WILL OPEN WITH A \$20 CHECK. I WOULD LIKE THOSE OF YOU WHO WANT TO SAY THANKS, STEVE, TO SEND ALONG A \$10 OR \$20 BILL OR CHECK MARKED "THANKS STEVE" TO: 44TH BGVA, P.O. BOX 2367, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84110-2367. THEN WE CAN THANK HIM AND JAN PERSONALLY FOR ALL HE DOES AND ALL THE SUPPORT SHE GIVES HIM. YOUR
PREZ THANKS YOU.

44th BOMB GROUP Swiss Internees—We Need Some Help!

This E-Mail from Steve Adams tells the story:

Subject:

Date: Tuc, 24 Mar 98 19:57:37 GMT

From: Stephen Adams <S.P.Adams@btinternet.com>

To: Roy Owen <rowen@sonic.net>

Hi Boss,

I have been helping an English boy with his research. He is interested in the aircraft from the 8th that were interned in Switzerland. I scanned his letter to me and tried to send it to you but it was too big, so I have condensed it a little so I can e-mail it to you. He is asking if you could put a request in the Tails asking if any of the crew members would contact him and answer some questions about their time being interned.

"I have enclosed the info on the 9 aircraft of the 44th BG who went down in Switzerland during 43-45. I have listed them by pilots name, aircraft serial, date and aircraft type.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| 1. 2nd Lt. Eugene N. Dyer | 18-3-44 | 42-109800 | B-24J | |
| 2. 1st Lt. George D. Telford | 18-3-44 | 42-7618 | B-24H | |
| 3. 1st Lt. Robert R. Lucas | 18-3-44 | 42-100400 | B-24J | |
| 4. 2nd Lt. Winston C. Irwin | 18-3-44 | 41- 29431 | B-24H | |
| 5. 1st Lt. Hollis R. Nichols | 18-3-44 | 42-100112 | B-24J | |
| 6. 1st Lt. Raymond J. Lacombe | 18-3-44 | 42-100643 | B-24J | Sack Artists |
| 7. 1st Lt. Rockford C. Griffith | 13-4-44 | 42-100330 | B-24J | |
| 8. 1st Lt. John R. Anderson | 21-7-44 | 42-110049 | B-24J | Mary Harriet |
| 9. FIO Donald F. Toffe | 21-7-44 | 42-95226 | B-24H | Channel Hopper |

I would like to get in contact with as many of the men on these nine crews, so I could ask questions about their flight and their time in Switzerland. I have some photos and info. I would be willing to swap or pay for anything sent to me.

Robert Martyr
120 Brendon, Laindon,
Basildon, Essex
SS15 5XN
England

Roy: He is a good kid. I have given him photographs and helped him where I can, but I would not give out any addresses. If you put it in the tails and they write to him that would be great. The Swiss Internees Association have been helping him a lot. My thanks to anyone who can help.

Steve

Editor: This request is to ALL of the crew members on those crews listed. Please take the time to make contact with Robert Martyr and contribute copies, I repeat COPIES of anything you might have with the caveat that you will be given credit for the material (diaries, photos, etc.) that you provide and will receive a copy of his research document when completed. This could be a very valuable addition to our own archives.



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P.O. Box 2367
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WILL SEZ

Back in March, 1995, Lt. Gen. F.G. "Buck" Shuler, Jr. Chairman and CEO of The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center wrote to all organizations connected with the 8th Air Force of WW #2. His message was that this new organization had a goal to create and maintain an electronic data base of individuals who served in the Eighth Air Force.

Shortly after that, your Prez Roy Owen and I met briefly with Buck at the annual reunion of the 2nd ADA in Kentucky to discuss his goals and means to accomplish this Herculean task. Later, we also talked with Mary Beth Barnard, Director of History and Archives at The Heritage Center who was involved with development of software with which to record that vast amount of data. Naturally, both Roy and I were pleased to cooperate with them, being aware of the large amount of data which we in the 44th BG already had accumulated and the pressing need to organize it for better usage.

With this goal in mind, we invited Tony Mastradone into the picture, as he had been instrumental in working with me for several years visiting the archives in Suitland to obtain many documents which I needed for our history. Happily, Tony agreed, so we decided to begin a project to copy the interrogation forms stored in our mission folders.

An Interrogation Report form had been prepared for each crew participating on each mission for every mission during our Operational period in England and Africa, so this was the obvious way to obtain the data required for the goal of The Heritage Center - Data Base for Individuals. These forms would provide most of the data required for our combat crewman, but would entail considerable expenditures to copy and handle many thousands of forms.

Happily, Tony and I had worked to obtain many of these forms in order to establish and confirm many facts regarding our Operational activities - Roll of Honor, missions flown, aircraft data and general history of the Group. We decided to start with the end of the war in England, last mission flown of 25 April, 1945 and work back to the first in 1942. This was done because we had relatively few I.R. previously copied and we could pick up more data for other purposes.

Tony has done an excellent job working with the staff, fighting his way through the massive tangle of government when they moved all of the archival documents in the Washington, D.C. to the new, huge complex building closer to his home. He recently advised me that his records show that overall, he has copied over 9,000 forms! His work has taken him into the records of early 1944, so he still has quite large numbers yet to complete. In order to hold down the expense, he plans his work as efficiently as possible, telephones ahead, asks his Archivist friends to "pull" the mission folders he will need, so that he can begin work on them immediately upon his arrival. This will lessen the number of trips which will ultimately be required. It costs 10 cents per copy for each form we need, and expensive to mail, so money has become a problem so far as our budgets are concerned. So he has cut back on this work for the present.

As one can imagine, it also becomes a problem for me to organize, separate and file these forms after I get them. I've been forced to purchase plastic filing containers, and now have to store them in my garage as there is no longer filing space in my war room. They must be kept in a safe place until we can begin the task of data entry.

Recently, it was learned that the software being developed by Mary Beth Barnard at The Heritage Center failed to handle the job requirements, so they have adopted a new

program. Procite, which was developed for use by libraries, and are utilizing it to compile listings of names only at this time.

Consequently, with precious time slipping away, it seems necessary that we take positive steps to do more than that with all of this precious store of records. Tennessee Tommy Shepherd has offered to develop some recording forms utilizing the common software which several of us already are using to be able to make data entry now. These "golden" years will not last forever, so bit in teeth, we plan to forge ahead, recording what we feel is essential and important. Hopefully, we can make it work well enough so that other members of the 2nd ADA Groups will join us so that what is developed can be shared with these other groups. In that manner, at least the 2nd Division records will be compatible among us all, for whatever purposes.

Thanks to all of these efforts, I am now able to utilize these papers for a multitude of purposes including the ability to verify missions for our combat men and to answer so many questions regarding missions, who flew them, on which planes they flew, etc. They have been a great boon to my ability to answer questions sent in by next of kin, crew mates, etc. I can serve you all so much better than in the past in answering your questions.

Hopefully our budget and treasury will be able to withstand these expenditures. We will keep you posted with developments. Too, if there are others willing to assist us in any way with this project, please don't be bashful. Drop a note and tell us what you think you can do to help. We will listen very carefully!

Will Lundy



The 8-Ball Tails ©

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc. ©

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Due to space limitations and to ensure the clarity and brevity of submitted material, the Publisher/Editor reserves the editorial license to add, cut or otherwise modify all submitted material so long as the original context of the material is maintained.

Savannah Reunion - 44th Bomb Group

Early arrival Saturday, October 24th

- Registration
- Tour Historic Savannah City Tour - Gray Line 1 1/2 hour (Cost \$16)
- #1 - Leave Hotel 1:00 p.m. - Return 2:30 p.m.
- #2 - Leave Hotel 3:00 p.m. - Return 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 25th

- Registration 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Historic Savannah City Tour with Admission and tour on one of Savannah's Mansions.
Leave Hotel 1:00 p.m. - Return 3:00 p.m. (Cost \$20)
- Reception - Days Inn: Cash Bar 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Dinner on your own.

Monday, October 26th

- Registration 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- First shuttle bus leaves Hotel at 9:00 a.m. for Mighty 8th Museum.
- Visit Mighty 8th Museum.
- Buffet lunch at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Program to dedicate Ploesti Exhibit - 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Shuttle bus returns to Days Inn at 2:45 p.m.
- Shuttle bus leaves at 5:00 p.m. for Convention Center.
- Banquet at Savannah Convention Center - Buffet and open bar.
 - ~Ceremony
 - ~Bag Pipes and Disk Jockey will provide entertainment.
- Shuttle bus returns to Days Inn 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 27th

Tours

- 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting for 44th Bomb Group Association (Hospitality Room)
- Low Country Tour (plantation site) - Cost \$25 - Leaves at 9:00 a.m., returns 12:00 noon.
or Leaves at 1:00 p.m., returns 4:00 p.m.
- Squadron Dinners - Mighty 8th Museum.
Shuttles to begin at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner served at 7:00 p.m.
Shuttles to return at 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 28th

- Annual Meeting 9:00 am. (Whereabouts to be announced)
- Tour on Savannah River Queen. Dock at 1:30 p.m., return at 3:00 p.m. (Cost \$17.50)
- Visit to Old Fort Jackson
Shuttles to leave at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:45 p.m.
Shuttle returns at 9:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 29th

- Leave for home.

44th Bomb Group Reunion

October 25 - 29, 1998

Days Inn/ Days Suites • 201 West Bay Street
Savannah, Georgia



(912) 236-4440/Reservations Dept. (9 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Please print or type only. All information must be completed.

Name: _____

Daytime Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zipcode: _____

Spouse or Guest's Name: _____

Reservation - Accommodation: Send (the 1st Night's Deposit)

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Smoking: ☐ Non-Smoking: ☐ Room Type: Standard Double: ☐ 1 Bdrm Suite: ☐

Cost + 12% tax - Total *or current tax rate.

1) Standard \$62 + 12% tax = \$69.44/night

2) Suites \$82 + 12% tax = \$91.84/night

★ 1st night deposit should be sent to hotel with reservation
prior to 9/25/98!

★DISCOUNT NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH 1-800 NUMBER!

You may send a check or indicate your credit card number and expiration date.

Hotel Policies

★ The hotel accepts credit cards and cash at check-in.

★ Check-in time is 3 p.m. Check-out time is 11 a.m.

★ Cancellation is no later than 48 hours prior to arrival.

We offer a cafe on property, open 6:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. , re-opens at 5:30 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. the next day.

If you are driving to the hotel, complimentary garage parking is available. Should you require taxi service from the airport or Amtrak, the following telephone number may be helpful: Coastal Shuttle ~ (912) 964-5999.

★Please send one copy with payment to the hotel and keep on copy for your records or call (912) 234-0841 Ext. #147 and identify your group for the discounted rate (Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) ☎

We look forward to seeing you in OCTOBER, 1998!!!





44th Bomb Group Reunion

October 25 - 29, 1998

Savannah, Georgia

Registration Form

Please print or type only. All information must be completed.

Last Name: _____ First (Name Tag) _____

Spouse: _____ Squadron: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Phone (____) _____

Guests & Relation: _____

Total to Attend: _____

REUNION COST: \$140 PER PERSON

Tour #1 October 24 - Historic Savannah City Tour \$16 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
Time: o 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. o 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 pm.

Tour #2 - October 25 - Historic Savannah City Tour \$20 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
w/Mansion admission 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tour #3 - October 27 - Low Country Tour \$25 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
Time: o 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon o 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tour #4 - October 28 - Narrated River Tour \$17.50 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
Time: 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Total Amount: \$ _____

Registration must be received by October 11, 1998. No Registration will be processed after that date.

Mail To: Mike Yuspeh • 7214 Sardonyx Street • New Orleans, LA 70124-3509

Phone: (504) 283-3424 • Fax: (504) 283-3425 (6 rings to pick up.)

NOTE: If you have sent in previous information, please fill out this form and mail with check.





COST OF REUNION - REGISTRATION

Complete Reunion - \$140

This price includes:

Registration

Reception Days Inn

Transportation to Mighty 8th Museum

Admission to Museum, Lunch at museum

Transportation to Banquet, Convention Center, buffet, open bar (45 min.).

Transportation & Squadron Dinner.

Transportation & Old Fort Jackson admission and buffet.

All tours subject to number of people who sign up.

If not enough interest, tour will be cancelled.



THE REUNION



Autumn leaves rustling, together
to the appointed place the old warriors come.
Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.
Where they meet is not so important anymore...They meet
and that's enough for now.
Greetings echo across a lobby.
Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces,
that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give,
too shy to accept so lovingly.
But deep, within these Indian Summer days they have reached
a greater understanding of life and love.
The shells holding their souls are weaker now,
but hearts and minds grow vigorous remembering.
On a table someone spreads old photographs; a test of recollection.
And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone.
The rugged, slender bodies lost forever.
Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.
Some are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles",
and even in this fact they manage to find humor.
The women, all those who waited, all those who love them,
have watched the changes take place. Now, they observe and listen,
and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.
Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again,
reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.
Mending one more time the banner of their youth.
They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as propellers whine and whirl,
and planes come to life.
These birds with fractured wings can see beyond the mist of clouds,
and they are in the air again, chasing the wind,
feeling the exhilaration of flight, close to the heavens;
the wild and blue yonder of their anthem.
Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit,
move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.
Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent another year.
The room grows quiet for a time.
Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.
The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility. So this is how it goes.
The past is so much the present.
In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches, and the prayers, one cannot help but
hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.
Finally it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but
the past cannot be held too long for it is fragile.
They say, "Farewell...see you next year, God willing", breathing silent prayers for one another.
Each keeping a little of the others with him forever.

Rachel Firth

From the DAEDALUS FLYER, Spring 1997

FOLDED WINGS

February, 1998



- Claudie E. Anglin* 11/11/94 Not data located. Notified by son, Gary
- George Bakantic, Jr.* 4/16/88 506th Sq. Pilot assigned on 20 Dec 44. Crash landed on 23 Feb 45 on the continent at A-64, St. Dizier, France. Plane was salvaged. Last mission flown was 20 April 45. Return to U.S.
- Harold A. Barnes* 1/97 68th S/Sgt. Barnes was a gunner on Lt. Robert C. Koablein's crew. Assigned to the 68th Sq. on 29 May 44. Harold completed his tour on 8 Sept 44.
- Norman E. Bartlett* 11/26/96 67th Lt. Bartlett was a 1st pilot in the 67th Squadron, assigned with his crown in June 44, and flew his first mission on 7 July. He was promoted to 1st Lt. on 1 Aug, and to Capt. on 24 Nov 44. In his later missions he was flying as a Lead Crew, completing his tour with 32 missions on 12 Dec, and on 19 Dec he was assigned to the 70th RCD for return to the U.S.
- Herman D. Bowman* 3/27/97 Served with the 1132 Quartermaster Corps as a Sgt.
- Samuel Bryan, Jr.* 12/16/90 66th S/Sgt. Bryan was a tail gunner on the Charles Craven crew. This crew transferred into the 66th Sq. in Aug 44 from the 492nd BG, flew their first mission 1 Sept 44. They concluded their tour on 29 Dec 44.
- James M. Burton* 2/14/97 506th S/Sgt. Burton was a tail gunner on Paul Durett's crew. Assigned to the 506th Sq. in July 44 and flew first mission on 12 Aug 44. Crew completed their tour in Jan 45 with 35 missions.
- John M. Butler* 10/30/92 67th Tail Turret gunner on Lt. Harold F. Hess crew. On their 6th mission to Mont de Marson, France, 27 March 44, their plane was badly damaged, forcing them to bail out over Spain. Crew eventually transferred to the 9th AF where they all completed 50 missions.
- James B. Caulfield, Cpl.* 1/7/98 Arrived Shipdham March 43. Assigned to 506th as communications specialist transferred to 492nd in March 44 returned to U.S. on 8 July 45.
- Carlisle Crutcher* 1983 HQ, 67, 506 50th Station Complement, ASN 0-905334 1st Lt. Crutcher sailed to England on the *Queen Mary* in Sept 42. At Cheddington he was the Group's S-2 Officer. Was promoted to Captain Dec 42. Capt. Crutcher was Group Public Relations Officer in April 44, was 67th Sq. Public Relations Officer in Aug 44 and Oct 44 was transferred to the 50th Station Compl. Squadron in the same capacity.

- Roy C. Cunningham 1994 67th T/Sgt. Cunningham was the engineer on Lt. Fred P. Hildebrand's crew. They were assigned to the squadron on 24 Jan 45, flew their first mission on 16 Feb 45, completed 23 more before the end of hostilities.
- George B. Davis, LTC 7/97 He was assigned to the 506th Sq. on 1 Dec 43. Davis served as a co-pilot in the 506th Sq. for both Lts. Dean Miller and John W. Grow, Jr. His first mission was 14 Jan 44 and nine more with Lt. Miller, then 10 more with Lt. Grow. They transferred to the 66th Squadron in April 44 to fly as a lead crew, finishing up with 31 total missions on 21 June 44. Stayed in the Air Force and retired as Lt. Col.
- Roy M. Devlin 1/21/97 66/68th Devlin joined the John W. Grow's crew as a navigator in April 44 when that crew transferred into the 66th Sq. On Sept 1 he transferred to the 68th Squadron to join Lt. Torrell's crew. On 5 Oct 44 he was on DS to Ketteringham until 14 Jan 45 when he was permanently transferred to HQ.
- William M. Duffy, Jr. 9/24/97 Lt. Duffy was 1st pilot in the 506th Sq. from Dec 43 to March 44. On 29 Jan 44 he made an outstanding landing returning from a mission, badly damaged with wounded aboard, and a ball turret which would not retract, he successfully completed a tricycle landing without any further damage to the plane or the turret. His last few missions he flew as Group lead for the 44th BG.
- Robert E. Gjestrum 11/26/97 68th T/Sgt. Gjestrum served as the engineer for the Richard Donald crew, which was assigned on 2 June 44. Robert completed his tour in Sept 44 and transferred to the 12th RCD on 16 Sept 44 to return to the U.S. We last saw Bob at the San Antonio reunion.
- Robert G. Godwin 10/97 66th S/Sgt. Godwin was a gunner on Norm Nutt's crew after being transferred from Leo Crooks crew. He completed the war with Norm's crew and flew home on 29 May 45 in the famous aircraft, Glory Bee. Robert was an active member of the 44th BGVA, attended the Salt Lake City reunion in October and suffered a fatal heart attack a day after returning home.
- Gonzales Gomez 1972 67th Death was confirmed by Arthur Hand when searching for this man in Superior, Arizona.
- Frank T. Goosen 11/19/74 Unknown Death confirmed by Arthur Hand when searching for this man in Michigan.
- Herbert A. Hastings 1/30/98 67th T/Sgt. Hastings served as a Radio Operator on the Capt. Edward Reynold's crew. This crew flew its first mission in Nov 44 and flew missions until the end of the war in 45. They returned to the States in U-Bar, 42-50539.
- Earle V. Hawkins Date Unknown Lt. Hawkins joined the 68th Sq. in June 43, served as a co-pilot for George Martin in Africa including the Ploesti mission 44 and flew missions until the end of the war in 45. They returned to the States in U-Bar, 42-50539.



Lee E. Howell, Sr. 7/28/94 1132 QM Lee's rank was Pfc.

Howard Lewis Hinman 12/97 67th Lt. Hinman was a 1st pilot in the 67th Squadron in Dec 44. On 16 Jan 45, while flying on left wing of Col. Snively, both airplanes were severely damaged by flak, causing both planes to be abandoned just inside Allied territory. Lt. Hinman was badly injured and taken off flying status. He was replaced by Raymond Maynard.

John R. Jaquis Unknown 68th Lt. Jaquis was a navigator on the F/O Donald F. Tofte crew which joined the 68th Sq. 8 July 44. Their first mission was on 18 July and on their third mission, 21 July 44, Channel Hopper was severely damaged by flak. Leaking fuel, he landed in Switzerland. Lt. Jaquis was interned, but returned to the Group on 31 Oct 44.

Albert Ed Jones, Sgt. Unknown 66/340th He served from Sept 42 to June 45. Sgt. Jones was very active out on the line, assisting the Tower personnel in handling operations, meeting and directing visiting aircraft, and helping with emergencies.

John Robert Kilgore 2/16/98 66th Lt. Kilgore served as a navigator for Capt. Louis Mazure in a lead crew. On 5 June 44, Capt. Mazure was killed, his aircraft badly damaged, but limped back to southern England where the crew bailed out. Lt. Kilgore broke both bones in his left leg, spent 8 months in hospital for treatment for his severe injuries. The Command Pilot, Col. Vance, 489th BG, was awarded the Medal of Honor for ditching this aircraft, as it had a live bomb on board.

Stephen Kincaid Unknown Still Researching.

Roy E. Kirkland Unknown Still Researching.

James R. Lewis, Lt. 1995 506th Lt. Lewis was co-pilot for Lt. Fred Rawson's crew. They were assigned to the 506th Sq. on 4 Feb 44, flew their first mission on 20 Feb. Their plane was badly damaged, had to be abandoned over enemy territory. Tail gunner RA Wapensky's chute was damaged and partially burned, so Lt. Lewis hoisted him onto his back, jumped while both hanging on tightly, but the opening of the chute caused the Sgt. to pull loose, falling to his death. Lt. Lewis was a POW until war's end, was recommended for a Silver Star.

Dixon C. McEver, Jr. 5/20/91 67th Lt. McEver flew as a co-pilot for the Capt. Joseph Herrmann crew. He was assigned the end of May, first mission flown on D-Day, 6 June 44. Many of their missions were aboard Fearless Fosdick. Completed tour of 31 missions on 15 Aug 44.

James H. McEver 5/6/77 506th Lt. James McEver was a brother of Dixon, flew his missions prior to Dixon's. James was a co-pilot for Lt. Jack M. Winn's crew, which was assigned in April 44. His first mission was 8 May 44, but a collision with a German fighter brought them down. Luckily, all crewmen survived to become POWs.



Howard A. Moore Unknown 67th Lt. Moore arrived at the 67th Sq as a navigator for the Gerald C. Grell crew in Oct 43. They had transferred from the 6th Anti-Sub Squadron at Gander. Lt. Moore and his pilot were injured in a crash, with Lt. Grell being returned to the States and the crew broken up. Later (Aug 44) Lt. Moore became Assistant S-3 and Gunnery Officer. He returned as a Major in 1972.

Anthony P. Mitchell 12/97 506th Sgt. Mitchell was a propeller specialist in the 506th Sq.

Joel Parker, Jr. 12/97 506th S/Sgt. Parker was the tail gunner on Lt. William M. Maynor's crew. They were assigned to the squadron in early Aug 43, then sent to Africa via ATC, flew on mission on 16 Aug. After a second trip to Africa in Sept and return to Shipdham, they were on their 11th mission, 20 Dec 43 when they were shot down. Sgt. Parker and seven of his crew mates survived to become POWs.

Hoyt D. Parsons Unknown 68th S/Sgt. Parsons was a gunner-armorer on the F/O Donald Tofte crew, assigned to the 68th Sq. on 8 July 44. This crew was on its third mission, 21 July 44, made an emergency landing in Switzerland due to leading fuel and other damages. S/Sgt. Parsons was interned for the duration.

Dr. Myron F. Sesit 4/25/97 68th Capt. Sesit served as the 68th Sq. Flight Surgeon for most of the war. He was among the ground echelon that went to England on the Queen Mary Sept 42. He travelled to Africa with the combat crews for the second DS in Sept 43. On 16 July 44 he transferred to the 93rd BG for one month, then returned to Shipdham till war's end.

Keith Sprenger Unknown 68th Letter of 1/30/98 returned to Jerry Folsom. S/Sgt. Sprenger served with the Lt. W.W. Warner crew as a gunner. This crew arrived in the 68th Sq on 4 Jan 45. They made an emergency landing 1/2 mile short of the Anthies-sous-Laon Airfield, France on 25 Feb 45 - no serious injuries. This crew flew a/c #44-50536 "One Weakness." Home on 22 May 45.

Gale B. Strank 12/14/88 No records at all for this man.

Col. Daniel C. Valenti 1/24/88 68th Lt. Valenti, Navigator, arrived in the 68th Sq. with the Lt. Thomas C. Kay crew on 23 June 44. Their first mission was 13 July and completed 35 for their tour on 21 Nov 44. Lt. Valenti flew one mission with C. Hill on 16 July and again on 18 July 44, and his own tour on 5 Dec 44. During his tour he also flew with other crews, including Lts. Keeler and Sterling Dobbs, while assigned as 68th Sq. Navigator. We last saw Dan at the Salt Lake City reunion.

James K. Warvell 6/18/97 T/Sgt. Warvell served as a Radio Operator on Lt. Frank L. Albert's crew which was assigned to the 506th Sq. in Sept 43, flew their first mission in Oct 43. On 18 March 44, Lt. Albert and crew were one of the 506th crews that were lost attacking Friedrickshaven, Germany. Badly damaged by flak approaching the target, Lt. Albert chose to continue to the target and bomb rather than to divert to nearby Switzerland. Shortly thereafter, the crew bailed out, but only Sgt. Warvell and three



James O. Wessinger, Jr. Unknown 68th Lt. Wessinger was co-pilot for the F/O Donald Tofte crew assigned to the 68th Sq. on 8 July 44. While on their third mission their aircraft was badly damaged by flak and fuel leaking, landed in Switzerland. Lt. Wessinger was interned. He returned to Shipdham on 27 Oct 44.

NOTE: The three F/O Tofte crew members listed above were confirmed deceased by their crew mate, Albert Browning. Exact dates could not be established.



I WISH I WAS 18 AGAIN

~George Burns~



At a bar down in Dallas
An old man chimed in...
and I thought he was out of his head...
Just being a young man, I first laughed it off,
when I heard what this old man said.



He said "I'll never again turn the young ladies head...
or go running of into the wind...
I'm three-quarters home, from the start to the end...
and I wish I was eighteen again.

I wish I was eighteen again, and going where I've never been...
But old oaks and old folks...
standing tall, just pretend,
I wish I was eighteen again.

Now time turns the pages, and life goes so fast...
The years turn the black hairs all gray. I talk to some young folks,
but they don't understand the words
this old man's got to say.
I wish I was eighteen again...and going where I've never been,
but old folks and old oaks, standing tall, just pretend,
I wish I was eighteen again....
Lord, I wish I was eighteen again.

January 10, 1998

Gerald Folsom
P.O. Box 2365
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102-3620

I appreciate the tremendous amount of work and effort you and Art Hand and others must have put into producing the 44th Veterans Association Roster. I feel that the least I can do is to provide some of the bits and pieces that I am aware of and let you fill in the big picture.

Dixon and James McEver from Waco, Texas, were both pilots and both served in the 44th. James didn't serve for very long. On April 8, 1944, on the way to Brunswick, and on his one and only mission, he met an FW190. The result was a mid air collision and both planes blew up. Miraculously all crew members survived and became POWs. (Pages 219-220 Lundys ROLL OF HONOR).

I did not meet James until after the war when we were both students at the University of Houston. James had saved his money while in the POW camps (actually, what else could he have done?) On the other hand, being in the 8th Air Force, I had very little incentive to save money. However, I did have a great time exploring London. After the war, things changed again. James was now affluent and sowing his pent up wild oats, and I was now broke and also had a pregnant wife. So, while I secretly admired his new life-style, I knew I could not keep up with him, so we kind of drifted apart. The last I heard of him was that he had accidentally drowned one Saturday afternoon at a swank private party. The date was June 5, 1977 in Houston, Texas.

Dixon McEver I knew well. In different planes, we sort of skipped along together from Casper, Wyoming in March, 1944 to Topeka, Kansas, and the 44th in England. When we arrived at Topeka, our crews were given brand spanking new B-24s and sent on our way. We went north by way of Lake Erie, New England, New Foundland and Iceland, and then on to the 44th in England. We did get an eight day layover in Iceland because of the horrible weather. We utilized the time mainly trying to thaw out. When McEver's crew left Topeka, they headed leisurely for England by way of the Caribbean and Africa before dropping in on us at Shipdham. We were proud of the way they managed to handle their rum and coca-cola on their way over.

You can believe that all the way over we had heard about what had happened to James. At that time we had no idea that we were also headed to the 44th. When we finally settled down in the 44th, we heard the details of what had happened to James. That is when we realized that the fun and games were over and the war was about to begin for us -- for real.

Dixon is listed in the deceased directory, but James is not. I think we should correct that.

Recently I received a new copy of the 44th Bomb Group's Roster and while checking it out to see if my name was spelled right, I discovered another John Butler listed in San Carlos, California. I was getting ready to visit my daughter who lives down the road in Cupertino, so I called the phone number that was listed. I was thinking in terms of having a cup of coffee and comparing notes. Mrs. Butler answered the phone and told me he had been deceased for over four years. When I explained who I was (another John Butler) and who I had called, she insisted that I come over and look at his collection of mementos. So my daughter and I went over to visit. We had a very pleasant and enjoyable visit. Their home is on a large hilltop with a spectacular view of San Francisco Bay. Now the part that I am sure will interest Art Hand, John Butler was on the Ploesti Raid. I saw his records of his trips from Shipdham to Africa and his records of Ploesti. Apparently he was one of the few that made it all the way back to Africa. Also, at some point he was transferred to the 15th Air Force in Italy.

Best regards,
John E. Butler
5931 Reamer
Houston, Texas 77074





Beating the Bushes

By Art Hand & Will Lundy

ISAAC ABEYTA: 1107 Harvest Rd, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Isaac was in the 66th Squadron, was on Lt. J.E. Flaherty's crew, served as a tail gunner, flew the Ploesti mission and many others.

THEODORE H. DOWALO: 127 West Richardson Ave., Langhorne, PA 19047-2827. 67th Sq. Gunner on Lt. Craig's crew.

MICHELE ANDERSON: 6363 South Fairwind Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84084 (801) 963-1387. She is Jerry Folsom's daughter.

BERNARD A. GREENFIELD: 322 State Street, Apt. 1, Carthage, NY 13619-1441 (315) 493-2317. Bernard was assigned to the 67th Sq. He worked with the DF Station out on "the line."

THERESA MURPHY McKENNEY: 308 Goodwin Road, Eliot, ME 03903 (207) 439-2866. Theresa is the daughter of Lt. William t. Murphy, Lt. Houle's crew, lost at sea on 18 Nov 43. See Page 33 herein.

MID AMERICAN AIR MUSEAUM: Liberal, Kansas.

DANI SU STRANGE: 9307 Gary, Lubbock, TX 79423. She is the daughter of Fritz Selasky.

JEAN B. ROBBINS: 9145 Ahmann Ave. Whittier, CA 90603 (562) 696-4638. Sgt. Robbins served as a nose turret gunner in the 506th Sq. flew with the Bakanic crew Dec 44 to April 45.

LINDA WESTON: 10 Sydenham Court, Berkshire Close, Portsmouth P01-1RE. Linda and her husband lived in the farmhouse next to Site 2. She was "mum" to the 506th.

LT. MATT YLITALO, USMC: 176 Glenwood Drive, Hubert, NC 28539. Sent in by Don Ukens.

"New" members, people who had previously been members who dropped out for various reasons, but have again "seen the light" and have again joined us, or been located.

WILLIAM BRADY, JR.: 3139 Sam Houston, Forest Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611. 67th Sq. Ploesti, flew on Suzy Q with Brandon.

CLIFFORD H. BAUER: 833 South Eliseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904 (415) 461-2936. 66th Sq. Wife Mildred.

DOUGLAS S. EDEN: Route 4, Box 4452 Lot 8 Donna, TX (956) 464-2571.

PAUL JAMES: 287 Starview Drive, Rutherfordton, NC 28139 (704) 287-7513. 66th Sq. Al Graham's crew.

HAROLD A. KRAMER: 7016 North Tahoma Ave., Chicago, IL 60646-1134 (773) 763-7128. 464th SD. Wife Beverly.

ADRAIN LANCASTER: 6218 Anglewood Lane, Cottondale, AL 35453 (205) 556-1309.

HARRY H. POWERS: 12400 Oak Leaf Court, Auburn, CA 95603 (916) 823-0610. 68th Squadron.

DOYLE V. SHARRETT: 19301 West Desert Forest Dr., Sun City, AZ 85351 (602) 933-2047. 806th Chemical.

ARCHIE M. THOMAS: RR #7, Box 7080, Palestine, TX 75801-9111 (903) 729-6779. 67th Squadron. Wife - Novella.

MEMORY LANE



A farm just off the base. ANYONE RECOGNIZE THE PYRAMID ROOF?



EXCUSE ME, IS THIS THE TRAIN TO BENGHAZI?



L to R 1st Lt. Bob Hook, Navigator, Capt. Bill McCoy, pilot (66th), and Lt. Col. Eugene Snavely, Group DO, this photo was taken about 15 Feb. '43. A few days later on 20 February, the entire McCoy crew were killed when, on a training flight, they mysteriously crashed near Watton.



A SUMMER bike ("borrowed?") ride NEAR THE BASE. Anybody you know?



MAIL CALL



Editor: This comes from Sue Johnson Vandenberg. After Gen. Johnson passed away, I sent some biographical material to Steve Adams and asked him to see that the English Press, especially in Norfolk, got the material and would "do right" by our General with a nice article. Steve turned it over to Steve Snelling, veteran reporter of the Eastern Daily Press, and between the extensive photo archives Steve Adams has and the intimate knowledge Steve Snelling has of the General, both during and post-war, he authored a "farewell to a legend" which was a magnificent tribute to him and was given a full page in the Eastern Daily Press published in Norwich. Steve sent me a copy to pass on to Sue. We got calls from all over England from English friends who knew or knew of General Johnson. It was so wonderful to see how revered our boss was in our beloved England.

Dear Roy,

Thank you so very much for the wonderful clipping! Steve Adams wrote and told me it was a wonderful tribute and I was going to ask you to make me a copy. It was so thoughtful of you to send me an original. I have one problem with the article—I wonder who told the author that Dad was "small"!!! That must have surprised you too! Oh well, I guess it made a better story!

We missed you at the funeral, but you certainly couldn't leave such a fine birthday celebration!

I want to thank the members of the 44th BGVA for the donation in Dad's name to the Air Force Aid Society. Barrett Taylor, who was such a great help to me, told me Dad had set up the program at the behest of General Arnold after WWII.

It was such an honor to have so many members of the 44th at the funeral. I wish I could have had hours and hours to talk to everyone. I heard so many wonderful stories.

My husband, Sandy, and I are in the process of nominating Dad to the National Aviation Hall of Fame. I am the portrait artist for the NAHF and I want to draw his portrait for posterity! I have already done the one for Sandy's father.

The Farewell to Dad in the 8-Ball Tails was beautiful. You all knew him the best and really wrote the very best article.

Thank you again for the news clipping.

Very Sincerely,
Sue

THE HONORARY pall bearers for GENERAL JOHNSON, left to right: Col. Ed. "Mike" Mikoloski (66th), Nancy Von Epps (14th CBW), ANTHONY MASTRADONE (67th), Col. Richard D. Butler (506th), Col. William Barrett Taylor (14th CBW), Col. William R. Cameron (67th/Hq. 44th BG), Brig. Gen. Jack Gibson (Hq. 44th).



THE USAF HONOR GUARD prepared to lower the casket of GENERAL LEON JOHNSON into his ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY final resting place.



To follow Sue's thank you letter, we have these photos and report on the funeral Service for General Johnson from TONY MASTRADONE.

The previous photo is of those 44th Veterans who were close to the General and who were present to serve as Honorary Pall Bearers for him. The next photo was taken as the USAF Honor Guard began to lower the casket. The Honorary Pall Bearers can be seen to the right.

The service was attended by many dignitaries of high Government and military rank which included GENERAL DAVID JONES, USAF (Ret) former Air Force Chief of Staff. COL. WILLIAM BARRETT TAYLOR made all of the arrangements for a post burial reception gathering with food and refreshments, which allowed the attendees an opportunity to pay their respects and visit with other friends present. COLONEL EDWARD "MIKE" MIKOLOSKI delivered a beautiful eulogy for General Johnson which brought many laudatory comments from those in attendance.



GUESS WHAT? THE "PING BOMBER" IS BACK!

Dear Will, 23 February, 1998

Putting things off is what I seem to do best. But three years? That is about how long ago this event occurred and I should have gotten it on paper and in the mail then. It involves a welcome phone call just about three years ago.

You may recall a story I wrote about those infamous "PING" candy bars that seemed to endure on our PX shelves at Shipdham long after all other items of any value had been sold. That tale appeared in the Spring 1995 issue of the 8 Ball Tails.

If you recall, I bought out the PX's supply of PINGS, (two 24 bar cartons) and dropped them over Germany on our next mission. Probably did more harm than our bombs on that trip.

The story, although entirely true, was written with tongue-in-cheek. As I recall, a couple of other Navigators took up the cause and also dropped PINGS over the Reich on their later missions. (Often wondered what the manager of that PX thought of the sudden 'popularity' of that item, especially if he had ever actually tried to eat one.)

Well, about a month or two, after the letter and it's PING story appeared in the 8 Ball Tails, I received a long distant phone call one evening. It was from Bob Lawson, former commanding Officer of the 1132nd Quartermaster Company, in the 14th Combat Wing. Apparently, the PX in our area was one of his responsibilities.

Lawson had just read that story and was calling to apologize to me for the shortages at the PX those many years ago. Said he wished he had known of the problem at the time.

Heck, I told him, if he had known about it and changed the conditions, he would have ruined one of the few good 'war stories' I still remember and can pass on in any memoirs I may leave with kin.

Sorry I didn't know the then Captain Lawson at the time. He sounds like a thoroughly great guy, and I wish him well at this very late date.

Funny how those incidents of almost a lifetime ago still keep flowing back, sometimes with a new slant added just to keep the events alive in our minds.

Anyway Will, I just thought you might care to hear just this one more crackle out of this old navigator.

With sincere best wishes,
Rob Fisk (Nav. Hinshaw's Crew)
562 Buckingham Ave.
Syracuse, NY 13210

Editor: p.s. Rob, I am saddened to report that COLONEL ROBERT S. "BOB" LAWSON, USAFR (Ret), Commander, 1132nd QM Company, passed away January 8, 1997. We last saw Bob and Ruthie at the 1996 St. Louis reunion. We miss our "Ping" supplier, he was a fine officer.



Editor: This is a blend of two letters from Al Cataldo, who married Peg, the sister of Shipdham's ambassador of goodwill, Don Dodd. Al worked at the Sub-Depot. The aircraft he talks about became named "The Flying Log." You have heard me say before "the craft of fighting a war is making do with what you've got!" For the Sub-Dept G.I.'s this was simple; you've got a B-24 with a back problem, you put in a splint and fly it to the B-24 Hospital, no sweat! Yankee ingenuity was a dimension in the American Citizen Soldier that the Germans never did get onto. Don't you love those stories like the "Flying Log?" Will, we'll have to do that complete story.

Dear Will:

Don't know if you could use this picture and story for publication in one of the Journal publications. Also, whom would I contact and what would the cost be to post a copy of our 44th BGVA Journal to Don Dodd. I brought my Summer, 97 copy over and three guys borrowed it. Yes...I keep all of my issues!

I have also enclosed a couple clippings from the Dereham and Fakenham times. One regarding Remembrance Day placing of the wreath. The other is

about a short talk I gave at the January meeting of the British Legion. They were interested in the amount of battle damage we had to contend with and did we have any crash landings. The one I did talk about---but don't remember the name---was the plane which came in---think a landing gear gave way and hanger #3 (464th sub-dept) replaced the bombay walkway (temporarily) with a telephone pole. Then it was flown to the Wattan Depot for the actual walkway.

There is an article on this but don't have time to look it up. I know I had some kind of a job on that plane the night it was in---they used to put me on de-icers or fuel cell replacement.

Oh...I did get an opportunity to make an entry into my log as the weather cleared one morning and I took up Piper Cherokee.

While visiting my in-laws in Shipdham, I had the privilege of placing a wreath on the 44th BG memorial located in All Saints church yard. The occasion was "Remembrance Day" Nov. 11th (celebrated on Sunday, 9 Nov 97). The British Legion conducted their poppy drive prior to this holiday. At their service, they remember all their veterans who sacrificed their lives in WWI, WWII, Lorea and Falkland wars. The names of the servicemen from the village who never returned are read and then a prayer is recited.

Regardless of the many years which have passed since WWII, members of the Shipdham British Legion never forget the airmen from the 44th BG who gave their lives for their country, as in the past, I went along that afternoon, with a contingent of the Shipdham British Legion to place a poppy wreath on the memorials in Watton, Deophas Green and at Arrow Air on the Shipdham Base.

Simple as these ceremonies are, it still gives one time to think and remember our friends who gave so much for us.

Sincerely,
Al C.

Alfred Cataldo
45 Wianno Rd.
Yarmouth Port, CA
02675-2178



This touching letter comes from Theresa Murphy McKenney, daughter of 2nd Lt. William T. Murphy, Navigator on the 1st Lt. Joseph L. Houle 67th Sqdn. Crew which, after suffering heavy battle damage over Kjellar Airfield, Oslo Norway, on the 18 November 1943 raid, were forced to ditch approximately 50 miles short of England landfall. The entire crew perished in the ditched aircraft.



THERESA MURPHY MCKENNEY AT THE MEMORIAL MARKER IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY FOR HER FATHER, 2ND LT. WILLIAM T. MURPHY. SHE IS ACCOMPANIED BY HER SON, RICK MCKENNEY AND GRANDSON, MATTHEW WILLIAM MCKENNEY AFTER THE MEMORIAL SERVICE IN HIS HONOR ON OCTOBER 10, 1997.

Dear Mr. Owen:

A memorial service was held at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia on October 10, 1997 for 2nd Lt. William T. Murphy, a native of Highland Falls, NY. He served in the 8th Air Force 67th Squadron 44th Bomb Group in WWII as a navigator, B-24 Liberator, and was awarded the Purple Heart and Air Force Cross. I am grateful to Will Lundy, Historian for the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Assn., for sharing information from his Roll of Honor. To quote from Mr. Lundy's report of November 18, 1943

Target: the Motor Works at Kjellar airfield, Oslo Norway: "Enemy aircraft made attacks both before

the target and again on the return. Many ships were damaged by an unexpected attack out of the sun on the return, and were lost due to these attacks and by running out of fuel and having to ditch. The 67th Squadron lost three ships and 68th lost two..."

Some would say "Why have a memorial service now?" Two years ago, during the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, my grandmother's niece, whom I had never met, contacted me. She had read an article in National Geographic about the World War II Cambridge Cemetery in Cambridge, England where the names of 5,126 Americans who gave their lives in the service of their country but whose remains were not recovered, are inscribed on a 472 foot wall, the Tablets of the Missing. The government must have attempted to let my mother know of this memorial when it was dedicated in 1956 but she had moved from the last known address which they had on file as I'm sure was the case with many WWII widows. Only someone who has been through a loss where there is no tangible place to go to pay homage can understand how moving this discovery was.

April 1996, this same relative, Kathryn Schoch, sent me information that the next of kin could request a memorial marker be placed at Arlington National Cemetery for WWII veterans whose remains were not recovered.

18 November 1997 There were months of phone calls and sending for forms. When I took the completed application to the post office. I sent it Certified Mail to be sure of its receipt. When they stamped the date, it was notable that the date was November 18th, the day he was reported missing in action August 1997

The last flying B-24 Liberator flew into the former Grenier Air Base Manchester, NH (where he had been stationed). My Mom read about it after the fact, but I was able to bring the picture of this plane that he was so proud of to show everyone when we assembled before the ceremony at Arlington. Next year I'll find out ahead about the tour and go aboard.

September 1997. Invitations to the memorial service went out and in the process, I heard from so many people who had known my Dad in so many different ways. To quote from a letter I received from someone in his 67th squadron: "November of 1943 was a deadly time in WWII and I salute Lt. Murphy and all who flew with him on those perilous days. I know because I was there also. They indeed "signed the skies with their honor."

10 October There was a room in the Administration Building for us to gather and the chaplain came in to meet us. I had brought his pictures and medals and documents and the rubbing of his

inscription from Cambridge Cemetery. We followed in motor procession to the site and 6 young airmen met us. The pace at which they moved, and the regard shown for the flag as they removed it from the car, unfolded it for the prayers then refolded it to give to me, was so calming and beautiful and full of respect. There was a 21 gun salute and seeing the men in uniform high on the ridge with the sun outlining each one was a powerful tribute, as was the playing of Taps. The day was perfect—warm, sunny, with a gentle breeze blowing the golden leaves from the trees. It was like nothing else and we were privileged to be there to remember him and pay tribute to him at last.

Many members of the family were able to attend, while others, unable to travel because of poor health, sent warm letters with information about my Dad. One, whom I had never met had saved a scrapbook of clippings which mean so much to me now. In a way, it makes not having known him more tragic, but I've learned so much more about him which I can share with my children and grandchildren. His great grandson, Matthew William, was among those present at the memorial service and will be able, like the rest of us, to return to pay homage to his great grandfather in the years to come...to remember him, to say a prayer and to give thanks for the sacrifice he made for us all.

Theresa Murphy McKenney
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Editor: Thank you so much, Theresa, for sharing with your 44th family, the emotional experience of finally, after 54 years, being able to honor and bid a loving farewell to your heroic father with your family at your side.

It is only lately, with witnessing situations like yours and that of Lois Cianci, where, time notwithstanding, the loss of a dearly loved one in a far away conflict in circumstances that prevent personal involvement in seeing to a final place of rest, we are coming to understand that the loved ones left behind will bear the feeling of an unfulfilled need. This is a need to have some sort of opportunity to bid a personal farewell which will be an assurance that the life of their loved one is truly over. When one comes to understand that feeling, we need not ask, "Why have a memorial service now?"

Theresa, we are very proud that you have chosen to remain a part of the 44th family. We will save a membership for both Rick and Matthew.



Dear, Mr. Lundy,

I received your letter a short time ago but have been to busy at work to reply at length. So I wanted to take a few minutes to tell you that I am grateful for your help. I am a coworker of Mr. Norman Greenberg, Albert's younger brother. He was troubled by the lack of knowledge about the part his family played in that time when the world was at war. Eventually I asked him what he did know, and all he had was a photo. Albert it seems, took most all his experience to his grave. I recognized the "Eight-Ball" patch, and told Norm that there must be more to tell. I mentioned that to have flown with the "Mighty Eighth" and survived those early years when combat aircrew losses were so high was in itself a story.

You, by your fine work have given Norman back a piece that is missing in the continuity of his family's life. I can tell you first hand that he beamed when I mentioned his address and Albert's ASN. I would like to know more about how I can continue to aid Norm in his quest. Perhaps you can forward some organization literature for us to peruse. I can only wonder if a crew photo exists. I am also curious to know if I can still find a color picture of the "Eight Ball" patch. I know the Greenberg family would find those wonderful.

As for myself, I continue to write my own family history, for whom the losses in WWII were keenly felt. I again thank you for your help, not only for what you have done today, but also for what you did in youth when the world was dark with war. Keep in touch.

Forever Free,
Terry Smith

Roy, - A nice letter.

Albert Greenberg was a member of Lt. Comey's crew, in the 66th Sq., arrived shortly before the crews went to Africa mid June. Albert Greenberg was moved to Lt. J. Reed's crew and flew several missions with them in July and August, but not Ploesti. He was a gunner and radio operator. Albert returned to Africa in Sept. back with his Comey crew and flew two missions, last one there was the infamous Weiner-Neuatrai, Austria when we

took another bad beating. I have sent more data to Terry and a photo to give to Al's younger brother and his family. It seems that Al related nothing about WWII to his brother.

DON'T WORRY

Do you know who in 1923 was:

- 1) President of the largest steel company?
- 2) President of the largest gas company?
- 3) President of the New York Stock Exchange?
- 4) The greatest wheat speculator?
- 5) President of the Bank of International Settlement?
- 6) The Great Bear of Wall Street?

These men should have been considered some of the worlds most successful men. At least they found the secret of making money. Do you know what became of these men?

- 1) The President of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab, died penniless.
- 2) The President of the largest gas company, Edward Hopson, became insane and died in a mental institution.
- 3) The President of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was released from prison to die at home.
- 4) The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cooper, died abroad, penniless.
- 5) The President of the Bank of International Settlement shot himself.
- 6) The Great Bear of Wall Street also was a suicide.

The same year, 1923, Gene Sarazen won the U.S. Open and PGA championships. Today he is wealthy and still playing golf.

Conclusion: STOP WORRYING ABOUT BUSINESS AND START PLAYING GOLF!



1998 Reunion



Savannah, Georgia

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