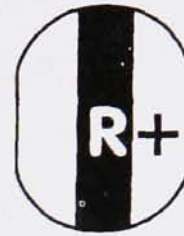


44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

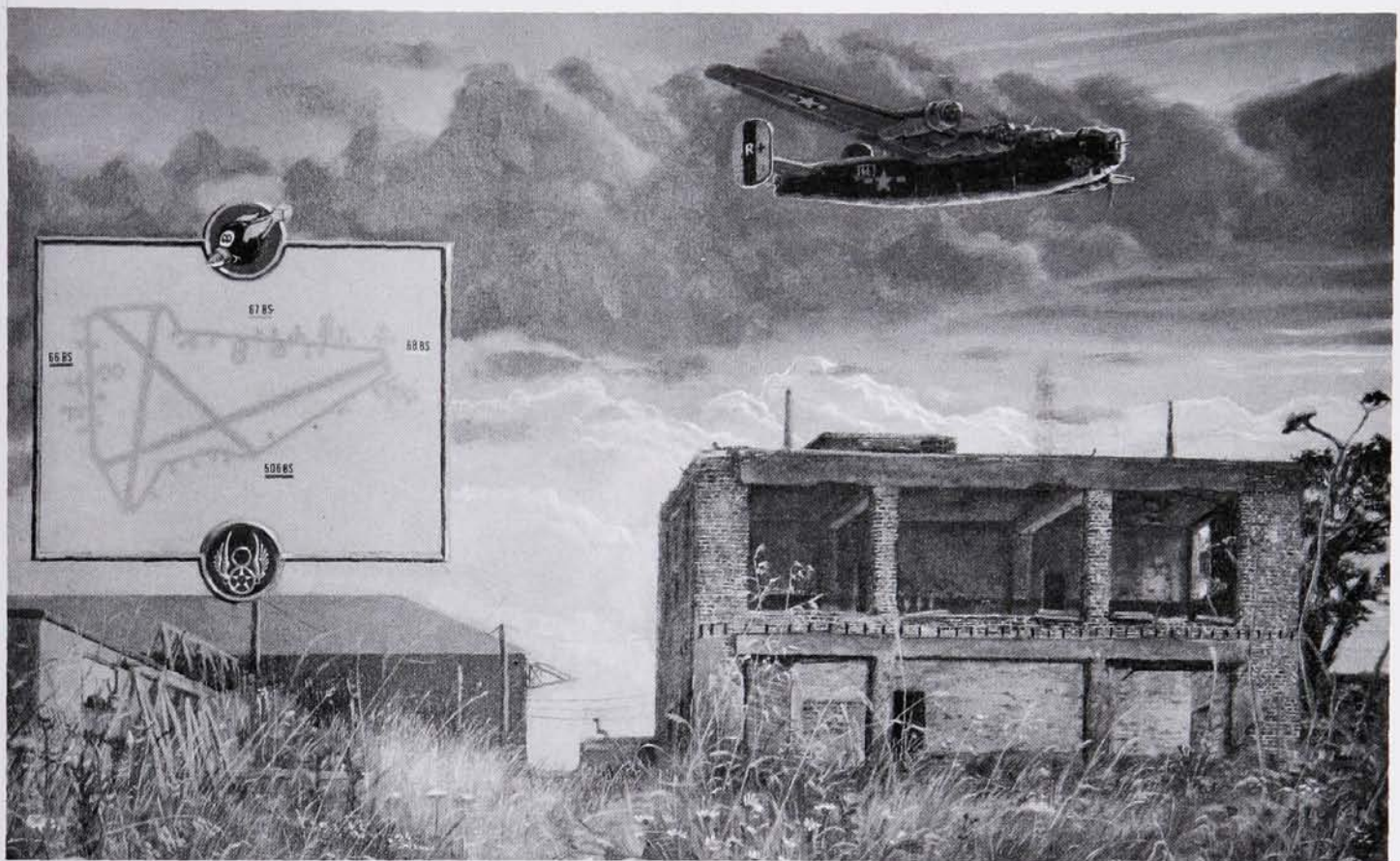
Vol. 1 - Issue #5

Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Spring 1996
EIN #68-0351397

Glory Bee

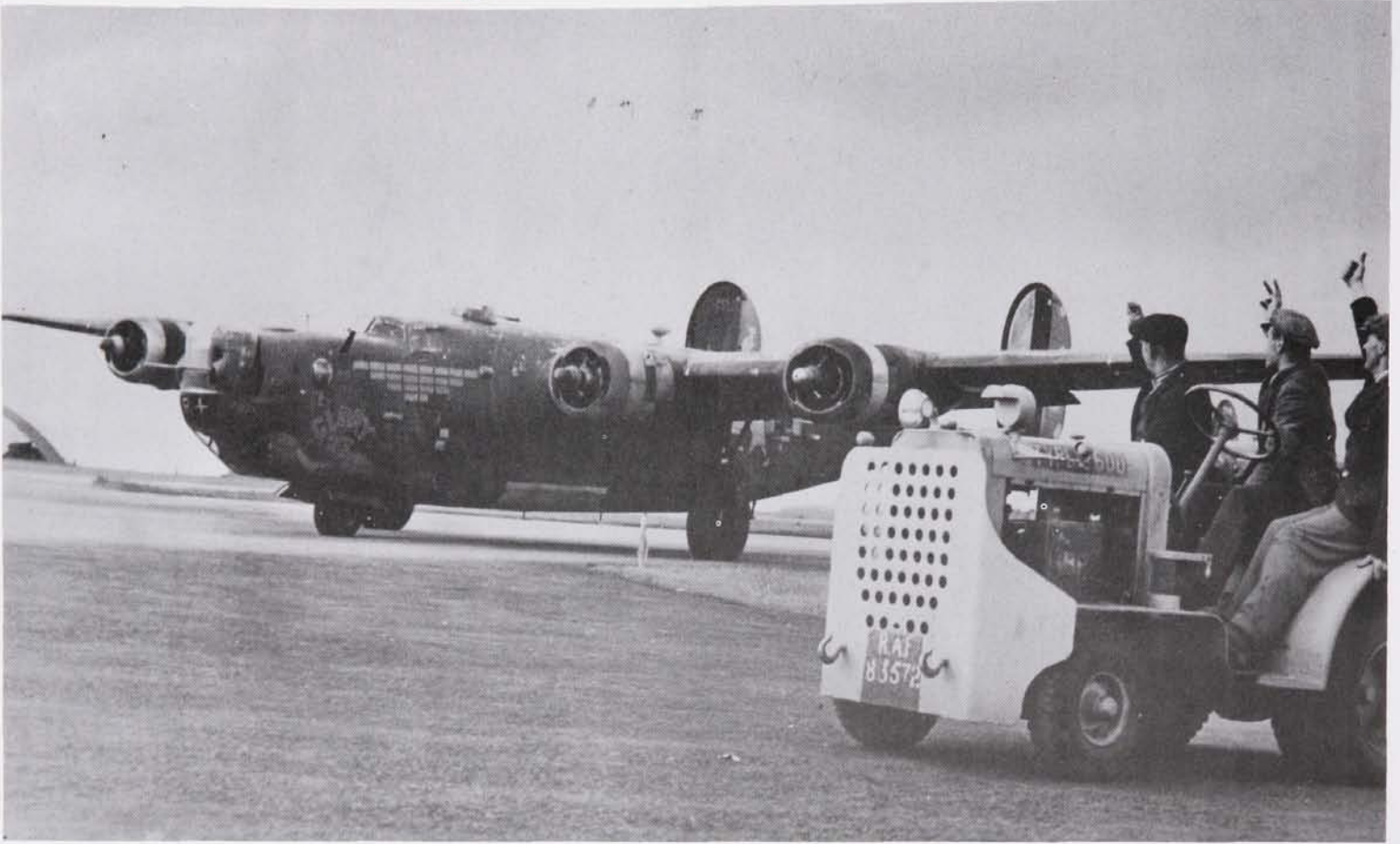


Pilot MERCER, NAME: "GLORY BEE", B-24H 42-52616, CALL SIGN R+. RETURNED HOME 31 MAY 1945

Our featured aircraft for this issue is B-24H #42-52616, Call sign C. She was assigned to the 67th Bomb Squadron in early April, 1944. On September 1, 1944 she was transferred to the 66th with a call sign change to Q+. On October 1, 1944 she flew her first mission under the call sign R+, which remained with her until the graveyard. In thirteen months of combat, "Glory Bee" was launched 107 times, completed 98 missions, suffered 7 aborts and was recalled 4 times with mission credit for two of those with bomb drops on targets of opportunity. After a couple of "Trolley Missions" after V-E Day, "Glory Bee" departed for the U.S. on 31 May, 1945 with the Capt. Norm Nutt crew and Ground Crew aboard. She flew from Valley, Wales to Bradley Field, Connecticut, thence to Willow Run. After some short-term test work she was flown to Kingman, Arizona to be scrapped.

Of the many crews who flew "Glory Bee," the Charlie Mercer crew got the most (18) combat missions credit, which included 2 sorties in "Glory Bee" on June 6, D-Day. Wilber Carter and crew got 15, and Arnie Kleinschmidt flew her 5 times; two of which were on 26 and 27 February, which ended a 5 mission back to back string. On 28 February she stood down, then beginning 1 March, she again launched 5 times back to back. This string was however broken by an air abort with Kleinschmidt piloting. On 21 through 24 March she flew another 4 sorties back to back. Her total for March, 1945 was 16 sorties launched with 2 air aborts. "Glory Bee" was maintained by S/Sgt. James H. "Red" Dixon and achieved this magnificent combat record under the care of S/Sgt. Dixon and his crew in only 13 months on the job.

Glory Bee



31 May, 1945 "Glory Bee" R+ 66th Squadron #42-52616 taxis out for takeoff leaving Valley, Anglesey Wales enroute home to the USA. 98 missions from arrival on April '44 until April '45.

"FLY-BY"

The front cover picture is a reproduction of an original painting by a Norwich artist, Mark Towler, commissioned by Mr. Doug Genge, who leases the property site of our Shipdham Tower.

It's purpose was the lithographs made from the painting, they were given to those who donated money for the restoration of the tower to its original state. It was to serve as a permanent memorial to those 44th members who were lost in the great air battle of Europe. That project has been abandoned due to the inability to obtain "Fee Simple" ownership of the land. (Refer to the Shipdham Airfield Project article elsewhere in this issue). In the meantime, there are approximately 200 copies of this beautiful rendition of our tower, more or less as it appears today, along with the original airfield layout. Flying by in the background is our featured aircraft R+ "Glory Bee."

Those desiring to obtain a copy of this beautiful memory can purchase it from Will Lundy at a cost of \$28.00 post paid. Make your check out to 44th BGVA Treasurer, P.O. Box 2365, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367. All proceeds go to our Treasury.

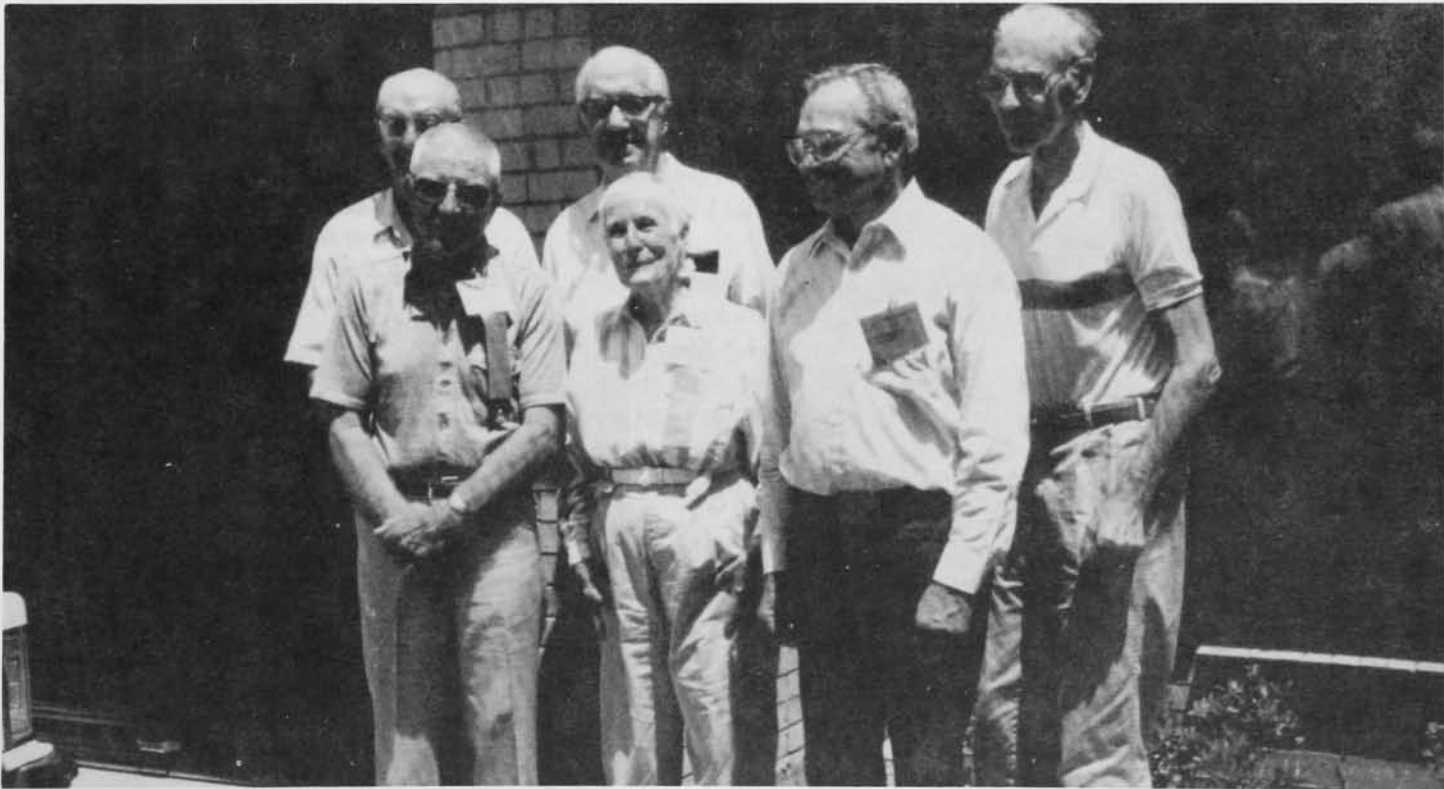


Glory Bee

Crew of "Glory Bee" 30 Missions June 6 to Aug 27, 1944

Back row: Harold Bergmann, Engineer; Donald Maul, LW Gunner; Colin Gregory, RW Gunner; Gene Wood, Tail Gunner; Reynold Whistler, Radio Operator; Wilbur Moretti, Ball Gun.

Front Row: Wilbur Carter, Pilot; Jack Still, Navigator; Roley Arterburn, Co-Pilot; Jess Kerr, Bombardier.



Back Row: Donald Maule, Harold Bergmann, Jess Kerr. Front Row: Wilbur Moretti, Madelyn Carter ~ Pilot's widow, Roley Arterburn.

May 18, 1989



*Norman Nutt Crew, 66th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group,
Shipdham Airfield, England, Spring 1945.*

*Back Row: John Grieshammer, Gunner; Norm Nutt, Pilot; Andy Hartung;
James Marsh, Flight Engineer; Elmer Kohn, Radio Operator; Roy Hutchins, Co-Pilot.
Front Row: Carl Sharf, Bombardier; Jack Kesling, Navigator; Bill Jangl, Gunner.*

Glory Bee

DIXON
*"Glory Bee" Crew Chief
S/Sgt. James H. "Red" Dixon*



*San Antonio Reunion - Oct. '95 - Breakfast
Norm Nutt's Crew:
Left to Right: Bob Godwin, James Marsh,
Norm Nutt and Jack Kesling.*



*Yankee Air Force 'Nose Art' Photo.
"Glory Bee" at Willow Run Airport.
It is understood that it was flown to Willow Run after it flew
home from Shipdham in June '45.*

ALL ABOUT ENGLAND - THE ARROW AIR PROJECT

In the last issue of "The Tails" we reported all the details of the decision to abandon the Shipdham Tower restoration in favor of offering the residue of the Tower project funds to Mr. Nigel Wright, owner of Arrow Air Centre, Shipdham Airfield. This money would be joined with Arrow Air funds to construct a new Pilot's lounge and ready room. The decor of this room would be a 44th Bomb Group Memorabilia collection.

On January 23, 1996, a letter, over the signature of the President, was sent to Mr. Wright with an offer of a £6,000 contribution to the construction of a new pilot's lounge, provided the interior motif of the room would take the form of a 44th Bomb Group Memorabilia/Memorial. We have a telephone acceptance (enthusiastic) of our offer and proposal. Mr. Wright is at present drawing up construction plans which will become a part of our limited partnership agreement. So, it appears that we are well on our way to seeing the reality of a viable perseverance of the spirit of Shipdham Airfield as the home base of the 44th Bomb Group.

.....

The Shipdham Tower Memorial Plaque

With the abandonment of the Shipdham Tower restoration project, the question of what, if anything, should be done about the beautiful bronze memorial plaque donated and placed by R. Lee Aston on the outer wall of the tower during the 1992 Reunion. It was agreed by the Board to query Lee as to his desires regarding the future of the plaque. His answer:

Mr. Will Lundy, Historian
44th Bomb Group
3295 North "H" Street
San Bernardino, California 92405

Saturday, 25 November 1995



Dear Will:

Your letter received today concerning my feelings/wishes about the granite memorial plaque at the Control Tower, Shipdham airfield. I respond immediately.

I am sorry to hear that the prospects for restoration of the Shipdham control tower are so dim, in fact, sounding as virtually a stand down. I agree that the granite plaque should be left on the field. It would be inappropriate, or misplaced, at any other location except on the tower, or at least, the field. I made it for the tower location.

As long as the tower stands, whether restored, or not, whether used as a historical museum, or not, it was meant to mark the tower as a historical site. My feeling is that it should remain on the tower as long as the tower stands, and hopefully, providing (1) that continued access, in perpetuity, i.e., beyond Genge's lease, to the tower may be granted by the owner for visitors to view, and (2) that should the tower ever be torn down, the memorial plaque would be returned to the proper persons (the 44th Tower Association or Steve Adams or Nigel Wright's mini-museum) for installation elsewhere on the field. The next most appropriate location after the tower would be Arrow Air Centre, or at least, some place on the field itself; not in the village of Shipdham. I believe the above is accord with the feelings you have expressed to me in your letter.

Sorry that I have not been able to be closer to the activities of the 44th B.G. for the past couple of years. It is not due to health as I am in fine shape for almost 72 years. I have been concentrating on completing my doctoral research (PhD) at University of Aston in Birmingham, England, hence, keeping a low profile or "my nose to the grindstone" to try and complete it in 1996. If I miss congregation in July '96, I will have to wait until July '97 for graduation. What month is the 1997 reunion in England planned for?

Hope this brief note sufficiently answers your letter. What is your fax no.? You did have one at a previous time. Fax is so much faster than the mail. My fax no. is 706-283-1337.

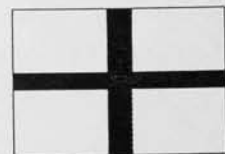
With best regards,
R. Lee Aston

The Return to England

While we still plan a return to England in '97, our planning now is, rather than a reunion, we will have an excellent 44th Bomb Group tour in June '97, to be followed in September by our regular reunion somewhere in the USA. Right now we are looking at Savannah, Georgia, in conjunction with a visit to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. The Museum is scheduled to open May 13-14 of this year. Vice President, Jim Clements will be officially representing the 44th BGVA at the Museum opening. While in Savannah, he will survey that city in terms of desirability for a '97 reunion.

Subject to refinement, this would be the general scheme of the England/France Memorial Tour itinerary:

- Assemble at a main terminal of our chosen airline for the flight to London.
- A two or three night stay in London (one night at the theatre).
- Then bus to Norwich for three nights (probably at the Lord Nelson).
- A day of leisure to stroll around Norwich and see the rebuilding of the Library (yes, and see if the Sampson & Hercules is still standing).
- Then a day and evening at Shipdham (more about this later) to visit our friends and to see our Arrow Air Project.
- We would then bus to Cambridge with a brief stop at the beautiful American Cemetery at Maddingly.
- Then on to Duxford for a visit to the new American Air Museum.
- We would then travel South to Portsmouth for a stay to allow a tour of the Overlord Command post where General Eisenhower directed the D-Day operations and a trip to Eastbourne to visit a memorial placed just last May in the memory of the James O. Bolin crew, which was killed in the crash of their 506th airplane "Ruthless" (see page 22 of the Spring '95 8-Ball Tails).
The 44th has a standing invitation to visit with the people of Eastbourne, who have for 52 years treated the loss of the "Ruthless" crew as if it were their sons who perished in the crash.
Incidentally, we hear from Kevin Watson, coordinator of the memorial, there has been so much interest in the Ruthless Memorial, the visitors have worn the grass surrounding the memorial to the point the Committee is making plans to lay a granite walkway surrounding the memorial.
- From Portsmouth, those so wishing, would have the option of returning to London for the return flight (or extend a London stopover). Otherwise, the tour would continue on with a Channel crossing to Cherbourg to tour Utah and Omaha Beaches and pay our respects to our 44th comrades buried at the most beautiful American Cemetery at Omaha Beach (something that every American should see).
- Then on to Paris for a three day visit.
- Return to London via Calais.



There will be more information to come as we finalize the tour, and there will be plenty of time for you to make your plans for this great trip. For the time being, pencil "44th Return to England & France" in on your June, 1997 calendar.

THE CAPTAIN VERSUS THE COLONEL

By: James Clements, 506th Bomb Squadron

It was an 8th Air Force lead. December 28th, 1944;
Target: Kaiserslautern, Germany: Command Pilot:
Colonel Eugene Snavelly, Commander 44th Bomb Group
(H) flying with the Captain James Clements crew.

As we flew to the target, we were atop of a solid undercast of clouds. Unable to see the ground since takeoff.

Approaching the IP, the GH Navigator informed us the blind bombing equipment was not functioning properly. The Colonel, after checking with the Deputy Lead aircraft, gave the direct order, "Turn over the lead." Colonel Snavelly was one commander especially fond of having his orders complied with.

Before I had time to react to the order, we were nearing the target. It was then that cries came up from the nose compartment, "Don't turn it over, it looks like the clouds are going to break." It did appear there would be some breaks, but certainly no assurance the target would be clear. Joe "Boogie" Bumbicka, our Bombardier and Dick Boykin, our Navigator kept screaming "the clouds are going to break. Don't turn over the lead!"

I put my faith in my crew and knowing how much more effective visual bombing was over instrument bombing, held the course. At that time, the tense and foreboding voice of the Colonel came loud and clear, "YOU GUYS BETTER BE RIGHT!"

Mother Nature was kind to us that day. The clouds broke at the very last minute and "Boogie" put the bombs "down the pickle barrel."

As we approached the home field, Colonel Snavelly radioed the photo people to meet the airplane, pick up the cameras and get the strike film developed with the greatest dispatch. Later at the Officers Club, he was proudly showing copies of the strike photos to all.

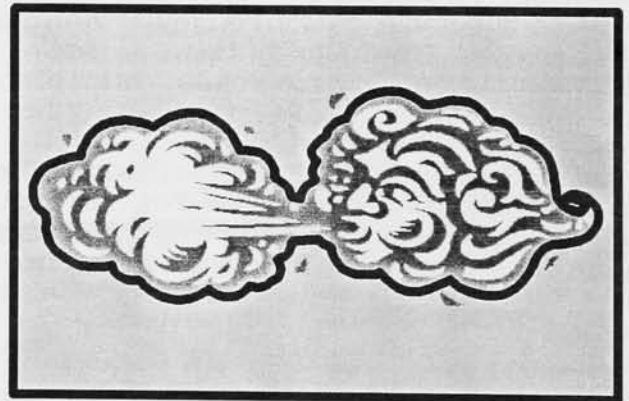
My memories of most of the missions I flew are not too clear. However, that mission is firm in mind. I never stop thinking, "What if the clouds hadn't broken?"

Editor:

*Shortly after receiving this story from Jim, I noticed in the Air Force Times obituaries that Lt. Col. Joseph R. Bumbicka had died November 30, 1995 (see *Folded Wings*). He was residing in Roanoke, VA and was buried at the National Cemetery, Culpepper, VA.*

I sadly notified Jim, since I was a "part-time" member of that crew. When I joined the 506th as Co-Pilot on the Bill Smith crew, the Clements crew were well into their second tour flying only lead missions. When the Smith crew was promoted to lead status, I became eligible to alternate with Dick Pederson flying co-pilot for Jim, as he had no regular co-pilot. In the course of flying six missions with that crew, I was privileged to see "Boogie" at work.

In all other aspects of his persona, "Boogie" was marching to a different drum. Difficult to know, harder to understand and loved doing the unexpected; until he went to Mission Briefing. From the time he walked into Briefing until he left Post-Mission debriefing, he was the epitome of the professional Combat Crew "Team" member. He knew his job and did it. "Boogie" struck me as a man born to the Norden Bombsight. He treated it like a fine violin and he performed magical things with it, as he did that day over Kaiserslautern. He loved and thrived on those "cliff hanger" bomb runs that took every bit of his concentration and sometimes most of his imagination.



"WE WERE A GOOD CREW": STORY OF A B-24 REUNION

By: Ann Carpenter Wing

I'd like to begin my story with a plea. To those of you who have not recorded your experiences during the war, please do so! It means so much to future generations. You are an important part of history. I can tell you from a personal viewpoint that this knowledge means a great deal to me, and to my children and grandchildren. Let me tell you my story.

My name is Ann Carpenter Wing, the wife of Lyle Paul Carpenter. He was the flight engineer and the top turret gunner of a crew in the 67th Squadron, 44th Bomb Group, and flew 31 missions over Germany and France from April to August, 1944. I would like to tell you of his crew, and how they finally found each other after 51 years.

When I first met Lyle, he had just come back from overseas, and was in a convalescent hospital in my hometown of Nashville, Tennessee. We met in a cafe, a soldier from Michigan and a Southern girl, and we started talking. During our courtship, he downplayed his role in the war, jokingly saying that he got his medal for brushing his teeth, or that medal for polishing his shoes. It was only later that he told me about his missions and how he felt each one would be his last. He would leave his personal belongings with his crew chief to make sure that his mother would get them if he didn't come back. He spoke with admiration of his pilot, Robert Gunton, who he credited with saving their lives numerous times.

Later, we married and had three children. The war receded into the past, and we didn't talk about it much, except for occasionally getting out the photo album of his buddies and the planes, telling anecdotes of the war days, and showing the children his pictures and medals. With the busy day-to-day of raising a family, there seemed to be no time for contacting the other members of his crew, who were also in the midst of building their lives in cities and towns scattered across the country.

Lyle passed away of a heart attack in 1968, and I often thought of his crew and that time period before I knew him. I felt that finding them would have been something Lyle would have liked to have done. So in 1994, I decided to tackle the task of being "detective" on his behalf.

Lyle had kept a photograph album of his crew with names on the back, so I started from there. At the public library, I entered the crewmen's names

into a computer program that has the national phone directory on it. I started with the pilot's name, because I had a middle initial, which cut down the number of entries considerably. After I wrote to Robert Gunton (Bob), he called me and gave me the complete list of the crew and their 1944-45 addresses, but no middle initials. Using the addresses, I tried each section of the country, and wrote many letters to the men whose names came up. Slowly, but surely, one by one, they responded.

We knew of San Antonio, so five of the original crew agreed to meet there with my children and me.

I cannot describe the feelings of anticipation and excitement I felt as we waited at the Holiday Inn for the others to arrive. We had just spoken to Bob on the house phone and were standing at the front desk, when a man asked the clerk to ring Bob's room. That's how we met the first person from Lyle's crew, Martin Stewart (Marty), his co-pilot. A few minutes later, in walked Joe Tobiaski, the crew's radio operator. We agreed to meet with Bob and the others in the hospitality room a few minutes later.

Marty, Joe, my children, and I got off the elevator to see Bob, Leroy Parker (navigator) and Dan Brandt (bombardier) waiting for us. Watching those men meet in the hallway, oblivious to all who walked by us, was an emotional experience I will never forget. To imagine them taking leave of each other 51 years before, and to see the years fall away as they became that B-24 crew again was wonderful to behold. Hours passed like minutes as the war stories flew - one man's memory would trigger long forgotten events experienced by others.

Sorely missed were James Cortez (Jim) and Kenneth Bradford, nose gunner and ball turret respectively. Jim was ill and could not attend; his fun-loving antics had made him popular among the crew. (They all remembered that "Cortez" would immediately fall to the ground and kiss it after each safe return.) Ken and his wife have a jewelry store and could not schedule time to come. Also sadly missed were Arthur Henshall (waist gunner, assistant flight engineer), John Krupka (tail gunner), and of course, Lyle, who are all deceased.

The next day, Bob obtained a private room for the crew to meet, bringing their pictures, diaries and



The Robert Gunton Crew, 1944

*Front Row L to R: Daniel Brandt, Bombardier; Martin Stewart, Co-Pilot; Robert Gunton, Pilot; Leroy Parker, Navigator.
Back Row L to R: Kenneth Bradford, Ball Turret; John Krupka, Tail Gunner; Lyle Carpenter, Flight Eng. Top Turret; James Cortez, Nose Gunner; Joe Tobiaski, Radio Operator; Arthur Henshall, Asst. Eng. Waist Gunner.*



records to "debrief." For six hours, they replayed those critical months, comparing notes and memories and sharing anecdotes. The men were amazed at hearing the stories from their crewmates. During the actual bombing runs, most were too busy doing their particular job or were not in a position to see what the others were experiencing. Here are some highlights of what was told in those hours.

All agreed that the most enjoyable, least stressful part of their time together was the trip from Topeka, Kansas (their point of departure) to Shipdham, England via the southern route. It was an eye-opening experience for them to see other countries and cultures. After pre-combat training in Ireland, they arrived in Shipdham on May 14, 1944 and were assigned their plane, the "A-Bar." Thus they became part of the "Flying 8 Balls," the insignia of the 44th Bomb Group.

A-Bar was a part of the D-Day invasion, and flew on the wing of the Commander, General Leon Johnson. Their job was to bomb the coastal installations just seconds before the troops landed on the beaches. Bob recalled the vivid image of being part of thousands of gleaming silver planes streaming toward France. Being busy piloting the plane, he did not have a good view of the ocean, and enjoyed hearing the others speak of the waters being full of Allied ships bristling with weaponry.

Two of the most dangerous missions were on June 27 and August 6, 1944. The objective of the June mission was to bomb a railroad tunnel. When the crew reached the target, a squadron of JU 88's was encountered. They hung behind the formation and lobbed missiles at the bombers. One of the crew recalled tail gunner John Krupka's response as he looked back, "Hurry up! They're catching up with us!" Many planes were lost on that mission, and the formation was forced to break up. Because the formation had dispersed, the crew flew home alone, a precarious position for a B-24.

The purpose of the August mission was to bomb the oil refinery in Hamburg, Germany. The crew recalled exceedingly heavy flak, resulting in the loss of one engine over the English Channel. They were forced to jettison all their ammunition and guns to keep the plane aloft. When they reached base, a second engine had to be feathered over the field. Some of the crew went as far as to say that on landing, there was only one engine operating! Everyone gave Gunton praise for saving their lives that day. Dan Brandt commented, "He just greased that landing!"

Dan also said that he thought one of the most important missions militarily was the July 25 mission to St. Lo, France, where their job was to clear the way for Patton's troops to advance toward Germany. The mission was extremely successful and allowed for the continuation of Patton's sweep across Europe.

Some of the most dramatic reminiscences were about brushes with death. Bob recalled having been assigned a plane on one particular mission

that had just had bulletproof glass installed in it. The planes they normally flew did not yet have this feature. As they were flying, a fragment of flak hit the windshield directly beside the pilot's position. On returning to base, they found it lacked a fraction of an inch coming all the way through the glass. Both Bob and Marty agreed that had there been regular glass on the plane that day, Bob would not be here to tell the story. In another incident that Lyle had often described, the tail gunner, Krupka had a close call. He was leaning out of his seat talking to Hensall when a bullet zipped by and grazed the tops of his legs. If he had been sitting in his normal position, he'd have been shot in the stomach. Lyle was called back to administer first aid, and promptly placed a bandaid over the wound, about which he always joked.

Towards the end of the marathon session, I played a cassette tape that Arthur Henshall's wife sent to me. He had made this tape in 1988 in order to tell some of his war experiences for his grandchildren's benefit. Everyone fell silent as Arthur's voice told of his memories during their time together. They chuckled at some of the lighter moments in his remembrances, and with solemn glances, they confirmed the combat events that he related. A moment of high emotion was felt by all as he finished with a word of gratitude to his comrades, and special praise for Captain Bob Gunton who brought them all safely home.

This is just a small part of one crew's story during a historical event that has changed the world. The pride in the tremendous job done by a remarkable generation of men is echoed in Arthur Henshall's words, "We were a good crew."



*The Gunton crew in San Antonio, 1995.
First Row L to R: Daniel Brandt, Martin Stewart, Robert Gunton,
Leroy Parker. Back Row: Joe Tobiasi*

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Coming down to the finish line, standing in the stirrups and pouring the whip to the Ole' 8-Ball Tails to beat the deadline - I can make it! I can make it! Some days, sitting in front of this computer, I say to myself: you've got to be a nut case to go through this scramble every four months, with all the phone calls, faxes and correspondence to handle. After all-WHO CARES? Then the mail arrives and there is a heartfelt thanks for helping to put a couple of long lost 44th guys in touch again or for assisting a relative to fill in the blank spots in the circumstances of one of our KIA crews. Those pats on the back are like a reality check. Everything comes back into focus and I know we are doing something good. Something that really counts. Helping to keep a bunch of men and women together who shared the experience of serving in one of the most glorious air combat groups in World history. Hell, this is what it's all about. I can play golf next week after I get this in the mail on the way to the printer!

Now with that bit of personal sentiment out of my head, let's get on with keeping you all abreast of what is going on in your Association. I think one of the nicest pieces of news is that the 44TH IS ONCE AGAIN COMING OUT OF RETIREMENT TO BE AN ACTIVE AIR FORCE UNIT! We have received a letter from the Department of the Air Force, Air Education and Training Command, stating that the 381st TRAINING WING is inheriting the honors and lineage of all of its 44th predecessors. Invitations are being sent to all of the living former commanders of the 44th to attend the activation ceremony. This doesn't mean you must have been a former commander to attend. I would hope that any 8-Baller, Bomb Wing member, Black Hills Bandit or whatever living in the vicinity of Vandenburg would attend. Call Major Gregory Ogletree (805) 734-3160 after 5 p.m. for details.

While it may seem a "come down" to be reactivated from a first line Ballistic Missile Wing to a Missile Training Wing, consider this...in this age of budget cuts and the big draw down of our military forces, it is obvious that the USAF is doing its best to keep the most illustrious, historically famous combat units alive and active. That the 44th has again been selected to be one of the diminishing number of active units is testimony to its prestigious ranking among the finest.

The next pleasing news is our finances. I know some of you are still adjusting to being privy to our financial status on a regular basis, but please take a look at our 1995 Budget Analysis and Closing Balance Sheet elsewhere in this issue. How quickly we have come from nothing but the echoes of the HMG in the till to some figures that mean we are at the point where we can really start to budget and expend some significant funds in the memorial and heritage areas that

are mandated in our Charter and Constitution. I commend your Executive Board for the programmatic and budgetary support they have given to the proposals submitted by your Treasurer and myself. Clinton and Gingrich take note: WE HAVE NO BUDGET STALEMATE IN THE 44TH BGVA!

We do have several requests for various commemorative and memorial projects which I will soon submit to the Board for review and prioritizing, if accepted.

Now for a bit on membership. I am so proud of the work our Membership Committee, ART HAND and TOMMY SHEPHERD are doing! Just look at the numbers in the new "Beating the Bushes" section. What we need now are some local "follow-up" recruiters that, once Art has located a 44ther who is not a 44th BGVA member, our local area (or state) recruiter gets on the phone to tell the comrade all the fun he or she is missing by not being with us at reunions and trips, etc. We have plans for a professionally designed promotional brochure all about the 44th to assist our recruiting program as well. Incidentally, we are wanting sons and daughters to join us also. We must have had about 18 with us at San Antonio. And speaking of family attendance, see my account of the 2nd Air Division Southern California Regional Reunion and our own 44th Julian Ertz gang! Anyway, get busy and call Art and become a 44th drummer!

I'll close up with some GOOD ADVICE. This issue has the initial blast on our ST. LOUIS REUNION. Read all of the program, the registration (both Reunion and Hotel) forms. FILL OUT THE FORMS, MAKE OUT YOUR CHECK, AND SEND THEM IN EARLY. JIM CLEMENTS and his assistant, GENE MCMAHON are predicting a BLOW-OUT...DON'T MISS THIS ONE! See you in St. Louis.



Roy Owen, President



**44th BGVA YEAR END BUDGET ANALYSIS
CALENDAR YEAR 1995**

	Actual	Budget	Over	Under
<i>Income:</i>				
Amortized Life				
Memberships 15 Yr s/d	1703	2175		472
Regular Memberships	8180	11250		3070
Reunion	9082	2500	6582	
Donations	2524	300	2224	
Interest Income	<u>1512</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>1012</u>	
Totals	23001	16725	9818	3542
Difference	-	6276	-	6276

Other Income (Not Budgeted)

Caps	554			
Rosters	<u>312</u>			
Total Other Income	866			

Total Income for Period \$23,867

Expenses (Budgeted)

8 Ball Tails	7179	6000	1179	
Historian - W Lundy	562	900		338
Unit Historians	-	600		600
Archive Research	-	200		200
Member Research- A. Hand	696	600	96	
Membership Roster-Shepherd	91	200		109
Treasurer	1037	400	637	
Directors Travel	3198	4500		1302
President (Adm & Travel)	1185	900	285	
Secretary	-	300		300
Tax Exempt IRS Fee	465	465		-
Bulk Mail Permit	<u>85</u>	<u>150</u>		<u>65</u>
Totals	14498	15215	2197	2914
Differences	-	717	717	-

Items Not Budgeted

Membership Mailing	747			
Insurance & Bond	105			
Condolences	<u>89</u>			
Total Other Expense	941			

Total Expense	15439			
Income for Period	<u>23867</u>			
Unexpended Funds	\$8,428			



The Dollar and Cents of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association

**44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
BALANCE SHEET
as of December 31, 1995**

ASSETS

Banks	11,319.38
Bulk Mail Deposit Balance	98.38
Inventories	
Roster Books	806.40
44th Caps	14.99
2nd Air Division Books	168.50
First Security Investors Services	<u>25,373.73</u>
Total Current Assets	\$37,785.38

LIABILITIES

Tower Fund	9,500.00
506 Squadron Fund	429.36
Strong Memorial	954.00
Life Memberships	14,550.00
Less Amortized Amount	<u>3,446.71</u>
Total Liabilities	\$21,986.65

SURPLUS - EQUITY NON COMMITTED FUNDS

Balance 1/1/95	7,370.50	
Non-Committed Funds		
12/31/95	<u>8,428.24</u>	<u>15,798.73</u>
Total Liabilities & Surplus		
12/31/95		37,785.38

The 8-Ball Tails

*Official Journal of The 44th Bomb
Group Veterans Association, Inc.,
A Non-Profit Veterans Association
Chartered in the State of Illinois*

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Those submitting letters, stories and photos to the Editor or Historian must do so with the understanding that this material will most likely be published as a matter of interest to the members/subscribers of the Association and this journal. While every attempt will be made to answer all of the material received, there is no explicit or implied guarantee that an answer will be provided or published. Except for specific requests for the return of original documents and photos, all material submitted will become property of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc.

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.



The 2nd ADIV Annual Southern California Regional Reunion February 24, 1996

Your President and wife, Lolly, were pleased to join with eight other 8-Ballers at the El Toro MCAS for the 15th of these annual affairs. Most impressive was the Julian Ertz family. Along with Julian was wife Paula, daughters Beth, Jill, Bera and husband Don Bordoni, and son Scott. With Beth doing vocals and Jill on piano, they were one of the highlights of the program. The featured speaker was former 467th BG pilot and post-war Academy Award winning Producer/Director (Marty) Delbert Mann. Del, accompanied by his lovely wife Ann, gave a beautifully described account of his training and combat experience. He then moved onto his

incredible success in the movie industry with such movies as *Marty*, *Strategic Air Command* and *Gathering of Eagles*, shot at Beale AFB, California. His talk was rewarded by a standing ovation.

Another highlight for your Prez was the attendance of Ed "Casey" Jarvis (506th) and his lovely wife, Helen. Casey was pilot of the sister crew to our (Bill Smith) crew (OTU'ed together, sailed over on the *Ile de France*, etc.). We hadn't seen one another for 51 years! Casey and Helen will be joining us again in St. Louis.



44th'ers at the 2nd ADIV So. California Regional Reunion.
Back Row L to R: Norm Tillner, Roy Owen, Casey Jarvis, John Milliken. Front Row L to R: Will Lundy, Julian Ertz, Jay Spencer, John Gately, Mort Weinstein.



Roy & Lolly with Helen & Casey Jarvis.



Del and Ann Mann
with the Prez.



BEATING THE BUSHES

by Art Hand & Will Lundy

STILL FINDING 44TH COMRADES

Refer again, if you will to the article 'Search-Roster-Mail List.'

Would you believe we are still getting letters from former 44th folks who, one way or the other, have just recently discovered the existence of any kind of 44th organization and are eager to join. That, along with the magnificent work Art Hand does with his CD-ROM telephone directory, we are keeping well ahead of our attrition. Time is marching on and we want to find those 44th comrades who still are missing the reunion visits and on-going friendships we enjoy within the 44th family. What we need here is some 'recruiting' help. Would you believe there are (at present) nearly 2,000 former 44th folks who are very much alive and who have never belonged to a 44th association of any kind. Art is finding these people and now we want to appoint some volunteers from each state who Art can depend upon to make contact with these former 44th veterans. Once Art provides the name, address and phone number, etc., could you help us bring these 'lost ones' into the 44th family? Contact Art Hand and give us a hand.

Editor: Beginning with the last issue, we started this section as sort of a balance for the Folded Wings section to introduce you to the comrades we are finding, as well as those to whom we say farewell. The amazing numbers are those many 44thers out there that Art is finding month after month. Here is a breakdown:

3,550 in the computer counting deceased & mail returned.

611 of these are deceased.

231 are mail returned.

2,708 are living and on the mailing list.

147 Life Members

6 Widows

1 Honorary

4 Associates

2 Complimentary

864 Total Membership

SEARCH REPORT: Last two years: 1,263 total searches.

170 located using phone disks.

Last six months: 162 searches

39 located.

24 located, deceased.

65 have not replied.

ELLIS R. SEATON: 209 South Grant, Clinton, Illinois 61727 (217)935-6019. 67th Sq. Gunner for Capt. Orthman. From 492nd BG August '44.

JOSEPH A. SALHANEY: 732 Cortez Avenue, Lady Lake, Florida 32159 (904) 753-3715. 67th Sq. Waist Gunner on Lt. Wards. Arrived mid-1944.

LAURENCE (LARRY) BLITZ, LT.: 76 Dresden Circle, Goshen, Connecticut 06756. 67th Sq. Navigator for Swartz & Monroe. Arrived Feb. '45.

WILBUR G. BENJAMIN: Box 1794, Estes Park, Colorado 80517 (303) 586-6750. 68th Sq. Navigator on Gildart's crew. Completed his tour 12 June '44.

CARLA HAMM: 2248 Honeysuckle Lane, Sumpter, South Carolina 29150 (803) 469-0246. Carl was with us at Barksdale Field, LA in '42.

STANLEY J. GERASIMCZYK: 105-01 Sutter Avenue, Ozone Park, New York 11417 (718) 641-3263. 66th Sq. Bombardier on Lt. Hoffiz crew. Sept. '44/Mar '45.

FRANK PECHACEK: 15614 Gypsy Street, Corpus Christi, Texas 78418-6455. 68th Sq. Navigator on Comstock's crew. Arrived in Feb. '45.

CLIFFORD D. POWELL: Box 625, Thompson Falls, Montana 59873. 506th Sq. Gunner on Lt. Lucas' crew. Arrived in Feb '44.

BRIAN J. MCKENNA: 190 Buttrick Avenue, Bronx, New York 10465. Associate member - Uncle was James P. McKenna. Lost on 6 Aug '44.

DAVID E. SAYLER: 31462 Waltham Drive, Birmingham, Missouri 48025 (810) 646-1458. 506th Sq. Lead Pilot. Arrived Jan '44.

SAMUEL H. LIPTON: P.O. Box 71833, Las Vegas, Nevada 89170 (702) 893-1093. Lt. Lipton transferred from 68th to 66th Sq. Nov. '44. Photo Interpreter and Radar Officer.

JOHN R. WALSH: 134 NW 4th Street, High Springs, Florida 33643. 68th Sq. Bombardier for Lt. Hamlyn crew. Arrived in time to make the Sept. 43 trip to Africa; wounded on 2/25/44.

FRANK B. SNEFF: P.O. Box 3994, Santa Susana, California 93093. Was Radar Navigator for lead crew pilot, Capt. Armstrong.

EDWARD R. HARRELL: Route #3, Box 16, Selmer, Tennessee 38375. Edward was accidentally dropped from an older roster. Was contacted again, and will join again.

ORVILLE P. BALL: 2520 North Island Drive, Shelton, Washington 98584-9403. Orville located the 2nd ADA, and Pete Henry gave us his address.

WARREN IGLES, JR.: 1711 Methodist St., Carlyle, Illinois 62231 (618) 594-4302. This is Warren's son who gave me the sad news that his Dad passed away back in 1956. Warren married a Scottish girl.

DAVID A. GIORDANO: 7402 Weather Worn Way, Columbia, Maryland 21046. Tony Mastradone has spent so much time at the Archives that he converted one of his contacts there. An Associate - Welcome!

NEW MEMBERS:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------|--|
| 4969 | Jos. W. Keebortz | 444 Cardinal Avenue
Harrodsburg, Kentucky 40330-2149 |
| 4971 | Robert Hensler | 2032 Pleasant Street
South Bend, Indiana 46615 |
| 4972 | Jeanne B. Chelsea | 4112 East 30th Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114
(Widow of Ray Ciesielski) |
| 4973 | Mrs. Dee Walters | Rt. 1 Box 389
Osage Beach, Missouri 65065
(Sister of Ray Ciesielski -
See Folded Wings) |

WILL SEZ

By the time that you read this, it will have been a long time after Christmas; but, please permit me to thank you sincerely for your many Christmas cards and good wishes. They were appreciated, though I failed to answer several. Please forgive me for not getting back to you.

Art Hand continues to do a fantastic job of locating many more of our long "lost" friends and buddies, as you will see elsewhere in this edition. It is sad to learn that so many have not been found in time, and are now listed in the "Folded Wings" section.

Tony and Cathy Mastradone continue to haunt the Archives, but now the Archives have been relocated much closer to their home. This new huge complex is only about five miles from Lanham, but during the heavy snows earlier this year, it took them nearly two hours to get home. Thanks to Tony's persistence and cooperation, he has become good friends with several of the workers. In fact, one of them has become so interested in Tony's efforts, that he has become an Associate Member of our 44th BGVA!! Perhaps we can get the Mastradones to write an article about their efforts in locating more of our historical records.

Let me again remind you that you can contribute to the "gravy" of our heritage by continuing to send in your stories about your time with the 44th - be it during World War II or up to the present time. Several of you have been good enough to permit me to copy your diaries lately, adding to the 44th BG records. Two of these diaries were rather extensive and compiled by ground personnel. Both Ray Marnner and Ted Morgenthaller have enriched our records with their day to day work and experiences, both on and off the base. To me this is priceless, as it gives me records and events not included in the official papers normally microfilmed. Norm Kiefer utilized some of Ray's diaries in his "Green Nosed Flying Eightballs" of course; but there is so much more in it about attacks on the field, or near it, dates and times that can be very useful for anyone wanting to learn more about daily routines on the base over two and a half years. Ted, too, has recorded many events which I had forgotten. He even has his daily schedule of train arrivals to and from Thuxton, as well as various trips on passes, etc. I am very happy to get them and hope to put them to good

use. These types of things make our history come to life for anyone wanting to learn more about us. So again, all you 44thers, try to remember my pleas for each of you to search your records, if you have any, or try to recall any events which still remain clear to you today. Please get these things recorded in any way convenient, writing, typing, tapes or videos and send them to me. I cannot do my work as a historian properly if I can't get your input. So again, how about it!!!

I must also tell you that a good friend and former C.O. of the 66th Squadron, Charles Hughes, donated nearly all of his official 66th Squadron records covering the last six months of the war! Also, he had many great photos which I have now added to our 44th BG albums. Best of all, he had obtained a file covering the Ploesti mission, from the planning phase through the actual event...some 150 pages, including a listing of (nearly) all the names of men who participated. Charles obtained this package at a meeting of all Ploesti POW Veterans, a copy supplied to each man attending. This work was compiled in 1945 and is great due to the fact that our entire mission folder for that mission by the 44th is missing from the Archives! It is helping to partially fill a big void.

Remember...keep those cards and letters coming.

Will Lundy



Herb Light with Will Lundy in San Antonio. Herb was Bombardier on the Reg Phillips crew flying Lemon Drop on the Ploesti Mission. One of our "old timers" he joined the 68th on 8/3/42 finished his tour 8/22/43. Credited with destroying one FW190. He's a "Senior Beach Boy" now living in Laguna Beach, CA.



66th Squadron from C. Hughes' files.

Station Headquarters
44th Bombardment Group (H) AAF
AAF 115 APO 558

A/JHG/15

20 June 1944

SUBJECT: Relief of Combat Crews.

TO: Commanding Officers, 66th, 67th, 68th, 506th Bomb Sq.

1. Your attention is invited to teletype 2BD U-764-B.
2.
 - a. It is anticipated that combat crews can be relieved upon completion of 30 to 35 missions until the flow of replacements operates sufficiently smooth to effect relief at 30 missions.
 - b. All missions flown between 0001 hours 6 June 1944 and 0001 hours 18 June 1944, are classified as tactical missions. While sortie credits will be given for these missions, relief from combat will be based on strategic missions flown. Each tactical mission over five (5) flown between dates indicated, will be credited towards completion of tour.
 - c. It will be necessary in some instances to fly crew members for as many as 35 missions before relief can be effected. It is not contemplated, however, to fly any crew member beyond 30 strategic missions.
 - d. If flow of replacements is sufficient to maintain minimum crew strength for this group, all missions performed between 6th and 18th of June will be given full credit towards completion of an operational tour.
 - e. Commanders will scrutinize all members of combat crews flying over 30 missions for evidence of flying fatigue. In such instances, relief from combat will be effected regardless of type of missions flown.
 - f. Priority for relief from combat among men having equal number of sortie credits will be given to men who have been in this theater the longest.
3. It is desired that the policy outlined above be disseminated to all combat crew members of your command. Emphasis will be placed upon the importance of the present campaign; the desirability and necessity for maintaining full combat strength and effectiveness at this time, and the difficulty in securing sufficient replacements during stepped-up operations.

John H. Gibson
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.



66th Squadron from C. Hughes' files (Continued):

66th Squadron

AM

COPY

KHI 072245 B MAY 45
SECRET

D-66755

EFF IMMEDIATELY 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD AIR DIVS ARE STOOD DOWN FROM ANY
FURTHER BOMBER AND FIGHTER OFFENSIVE OPR IN EUROPEAN THEATER.
SCOUTING FORCES AND WEA FLIGHTS OF AIR DIVS WILL BE DISCONTINUED
AND SQS RETURNED TO BOMB GPS TO WHICH ORIGINALLY ASGD.

--- DOOLITTLE ---

COPY

COPY

See you in St. Louis!
October 3 - 7, 1996



FOLDED WINGS

Allen, John W.	04/20/95	506th
Alvarez, Rafael C.	Unk	68th
Anderson, Ned	11/10/95	68th
Beiber, George	05/23/95	506th
Boyette, Donald	Unk	68th
Bumbicka, Jos. "Boogie"	11/30/95	506th
Cervallera, Samuel M.	Unk	Unk
Cicon, Michael J.	02/96	66th
Ciesielski, Ray	'80	506th
*name changed to Chelsea		
Cuddeback, Roger E.	2/96	66th
Curry, Tom P.	Unk	68th
Dolan, William	11/10/95	68th
Eichensehr, Walter H.	03/95	506th
Faust, Harold G. Eng Off	12/11/95	66th
Gilliland, J.A.	Unk	67th
Hedinger, Herbert A.	09/28/95	68/506
Holbrook, Charles	Unk	66th
Hornberger, Wm. H.	06/16/93	68th
Igles, Warren	'56	Unk
Jenkins, Harry W.	02/09/96	66th
Kerry, Ronald L.	Unk	67th
Marinos, Jack, M/Sgt.	'95	506th
Miller, Carl	10/01/95	506th
Nugent, George	02/04/96	67/506
Patrichuck, Andrew E.	'89	506th
Platt, Lawrence J.	02/21/96	68th
Ramsey, George K.	02/09/96	506th
Rausch, William H.	11/28/94	66/68
Ray, Joe	Unk	Unk
Smith, Kenneth R.	08/25/95	68th
Tarzia, Michael	Unk	68th
Welsh, Dr. Maurice	10/04/95	68th
Whitlock, Doy V.	Unk	506th

***The following Folded Wings were on the
Robert F. Lucas crew (506th):***

Capella, Bernard J., Navigator	'90
Kirchner, Donald E., Bombardier	Unk
Bass, John F., Flight Engineer	Unk
Hammer, Lloyd W. LW Gunner	Unk
DuBail, Arthur W., B Gunner	Unk
Luther, Ernest C., Tail Gunner	Unk
Waska, Charles D., Co-Pilot	Unk

This is a partial list of our deceased 44th comrades. We will continue to catch up on the list with each issue, as well as list new Folded Wings.

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BOARD

President: Roy W. Owen (506th)
6304 Meadowridge Drive
Santa Rosa, California 95409
Phone: (707) 538-4726 Fax: (707) 538-1212

Vice President: James H. Clements (506th)
4124 Calculus Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75244
Phone/Fax: (214) 243-4657

Secretary: Edward M. Dobson (67th)
118 South 15th Avenue, #1
Bozeman, Montana 59715-4130
Phone/Fax: (406) 587-2490

Treasurer: Gerald (Jerry) Folsom (506th)
954 Lowell Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102-3620
Phone: (801) 359-6159 Fax: (801) 533-8747

Office Historian: C.W. "Will" Lundy
3295 North "H" Street
San Bernardino, California 92405-2809
Phone/Fax: (909) 882-2441

44th Group Vice President to 2nd ADA:
Richard D. Butler
16494 Wagon Wheel Drive
Riverside, California 92506
Phone: (909) 780-7421 Fax: (909) 780-1459

Director: Edw. K. "Mike" Mikoloski (66th)
626 Smithfield Road #702
N. Providence, Rhode Island 02904
Phone: (401) 353-0144

Director: Robert I. "Bob" Brown (67th)
#8 Metairie Court
San Ramon, California 94583-3824
Phone: (510) 828-4529 Fax: (510) 828-1551

Director: Robert J. Lehnhausen (68th)
709 West Meadows Place
Peoria, Illinois 61604-3447
Phone/Fax: (309) 685-2490

Director: Sherman N. "Bud" Dowett (506th)
14550 Wolf Road
Grass Valley, California 95949
Phone/Fax: (916) 268-1019

Director: Melvin G. Trager (HQ Sq.)
2522 Red Oak Trail
Crest Hill, Illinois 60435-3197
Phone: (815) 725-3439



MISCELLANIA

A RED FACE OVER "CORKY"

Your President/Editor is obviously not a Journalism major, just a rookie doing his best. I would wager, however, that one of the elements of Journalism 101 is always get the name of a person spelled correctly. I really try hard at that, and in spite of the typo errors you occasionally see, I proofread 'till I'm blue in the face. Last issue, in fact, I proofread the 'Corky' article with such intensity that I overlooked the omission of the author's name at the heading, not a misspelling, I mean the whole name! I've had a big time case of the red face since. I've made my apologies to Doctor Robert 'Bob' Reid and am extending it to our members herewith. Bob, as he prefers to be called, is a 42-year old Physician of Nuclear Medicine who resides in London, Ontario, Canada. Since his acquisition of the original 'Welcome Sight' painting and the resulting quest to find the crew and the full story of 'Corky,' Bob has become a staunch member of the 44th BGVA. For him, the story you read in the last issue is far from being finished. The search of the crash site and the fate of the crew is an on-going quest. Bob returned once more to Dortmund to be there January 28 (the Anniversary of 'Corky's' last flight.) He has found eye witnesses and official documents which bring the factual fate of a downed crew never before revealed with such clarity. This from an amazing man whose odyssey began with the purchase of a piece of art depicting a part of the World War II Air War over Europe. The next chapter of the 'Corky' story is in being and will be included in the Summer issue of 8-Ball Tails. Stay tuned.



IF YOU LIKE YOUR 8-BALL TAILS

If you have a red spot on your address label, we don't have your '96 dues or Life Membership as of March 1, 1996. Your membership became inactive on April 1, 1996. This will be your LAST ISSUE of the 8-Ball Tails.

Please renew by June 1.
We don't want to lose you!

BACK ISSUES - 8-BALL TAILS

We have a limited supply of all four back issues of The 8-Ball Tails. They will cost you \$1 for #1 and \$2/each for #2, 3 and 4, plus \$3 (2nd day) for all four or \$1.10 postage each individually.



MORE ABOUT "WELCOME SIGHT"

Through the good efforts of our Treasurer, the 44th BGVA is the owner of one of the 1,000 autographed lithograph copies of the renowned aviation artist Robert Taylor painting, 'Welcome Sight' which depicts the return of several 44th Bomb Group B-24 Liberators from a combat mission on a course taking them over the famous Ely Cathedral. The cathedral was a welcome landmark to the returning combat weary crews. The new acquisition will be featured in the 44th Bomb Group display case in the new Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia sometime in 1997.

Since the distribution of our Winter issue of The 8-Ball Tails featuring 'Welcome Sight' on its cover, we have had a number of requests asking where one could obtain one of the 1,000 copies of this beautiful painting. Unfortunately (not for the gallery with the marketing contract), the entire 1,000 have been sold. At this point, they are only to be obtained on the secondary market which is very tight. Apparently there were very few speculative buyers in the initial release. In other words, those who bought intended to keep.

During our trip to attend the 2nd ADIV Southern California Reunion, Lolly and I visited the Virginia Bader Gallery in Costa Mesa, California who marketed the original issue. She informed me that a very few are available at a market price of about \$400. The gallery is located at: The Countryside Center, 355 Bristol Street, Costa Mesa, California; phone (800) 328-5826; fax (714) 662-3760.



44TH BOMB GROUP
VETERANS ASSOCIATION
1996 REUNION
OCTOBER 3-7, 1996



Do the
"Missouri Waltz"

&

"Meet Me In St. Louis"



so you don't
sing the



"St. Louis Blues"



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1996 REUNION - October 3 - 7, 1996

Holiday Inn Westport
St. Louis, Missouri



REGISTRATION FORM

LAST NAME _____ FIRST, (name tag) _____ SPOUSE _____ SQ # (one only) _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE # (____) _____
GUESTS _____ RELATION _____
GUESTS _____ TOTAL TO ATTEND _____

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #1: Full Reunion | \$110.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #2: Thurs, Fri (Sq. Dinner, Sat (Banquet) | \$70.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #3: Sat (Banquet), Sun (Buffet), Mon (Breakfast) | \$80.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #4: Saturday Banquet and Dance only | \$35.00 per person; | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
|
 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour #1: St. Louis 8:30 - 12:30 Friday | \$13.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour #2: Grant's Farm 1:00 - 4:30 Friday | \$13.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| | (Please check your arithmetic.) | Total: _____ |

Meat Selection (Banquet only) Beef Chicken
Sunday Champagne Brunch at Casino St. Charles @ 12:00. I would like to go? Yes or No How many?

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 16, 1996. NO REGISTRATIONS WILL BE PROCESSED AFTER THAT DATE.

****NO SHOWS FULL REFUND****



MAIL TO: Jim Clements • 4124 Calculus • Dallas, TX 75244-7311

✂ Cut on line!



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1996 REUNION OCTOBER 3-7, 1996

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

LAST NAME _____ FIRST _____ PHONE # (____) _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
OF NIGHTS _____ # IN ROOM _____ ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

SHARING ROOM W/ _____ SMOKING NONSMOKING KING 2 DBL

Check in time is 3:00 p.m.; Check out Noon. Rate: \$69 (up to two in room) + Tax 13.224%

CUT OFF DATE: September 9, 1996. Reservations received after this date will be processed on a space available basis. Rates are firm for days before and after reunion.

CANCELLATION: Deposit refundable if cancellation is received 48 hours in advance of arrival. Record your cancellation number. Call (314) 434-0100.

TO CONFIRM YOUR RESERVATION, INCLUDE FIRST NIGHT'S DEPOSIT BY CHECK PAYABLE TO HOLIDAY INN WESTPORT, OR MAJOR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION.

AMOUNT _____ SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____ CHECK # _____

CREDIT CARD # _____ TYPE _____ EXP. DATE _____



Mail to: Holiday Inn Westport • 1973 Craigshire • St. Louis, MO 63146

Airport Limousine Available: Call from courtesy phone in lobby.

1996 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION NOTES



REGISTRATION

It is absolutely imperative that registrations be received by September 16, 1996. No registrations will be processed after that date. If there is some question about being able to attend, send your registration in anyway as all no shows will be refunded. If, however, you have sent your registration in earlier and it becomes apparent you will not be able to attend, please let us know as soon as possible, so we can keep our numbers straight with the hotel.

The options listed on the Reunion Registration Form are designed to make your schedule more suitable and equitable. There can be no deviations.

The Registration Desk will be open Friday at noon for those arriving on Option #2. For those that selected Option #3, the Registration Desk will be open from 11:30 to 1:00 Saturday to pick up Registration Envelopes. The Registration Desk will again be open at 5:30 Saturday for those attending on Option #4, at which time late arrivals on Option #3 may get their tickets. Please double check your registration before sending it to ensure you are paying the correct amount.

There will be a large Bulletin Board in the lobby that will have complete information regarding the events of the reunion. Most of the questions you might have will be answered on the board. Dress Code: Informal, except Banquet night. Jackets and ties for the gentlemen and dressy attire for the ladies.

Tour #1: See St. Louis.

For those of you that have not visited St. Louis recently or never have, this tour will give you a chance to become familiar with The Gateway to the West.

A stop at the Cathedral of St. Louis is included. The interior contains one of the largest and most beautiful displays of mosaic art in the Western Hemisphere - covering domed ceilings, numerous arches and wall panels.

A narrated tour will acquaint you with the city's downtown/civic area. You'll learn both past and present history of Laclede's Landing and the historic riverfront.

A stop for picture taking will be made at the magnificent Gateway Arch.

Other interesting sights of the city will be included as time permits.

Metrolink

For those of you that would like to enjoy some of the other points of interest, the Metrolink is highly recommended. It will get you to your destination quicker than you can drive in your car, and with no parking worries. The Hotel will furnish Limo service to and from the airport Main Station. Fare to any station on the route is only fifty cents. There will be a map of the routes on the Bulletin with all the information you will need to make your trip a success.

TOUR #2: GRANT'S FARM

Located on the estate of the late August Busch, Jr., Grant's Farm is one of the most popular attractions in St. Louis. Built on land once farmed by Ulysses S. Grant, it now has a miniature zoo, bird and animal shows, a collection of horsedrawn carriages and a trophy room. Ride through the game preserve on a trackless train where you will see the various animals and a log cabin built by Grant in 1854. A visit to the Clydesdale stallion barn is a highlight of this attraction.

Enjoy a lunch or snack on your own in the Bauernhof Courtyard.

Tour No. 1 and 2 are so times that you will be able to enjoy both of them; even if it slightly delays your lunch until approximately 1:30 at the Bauernhof Courtyard at Grant's Farm.

HISTORIC ST. CHARLES

Founded in 1769, it is the oldest city of the Missouri River and was Missouri's first State Capitol. Many craft, antique and speciality gift shops line the cobblestone streets. There are wine gardens of the small Missouri's wineries.

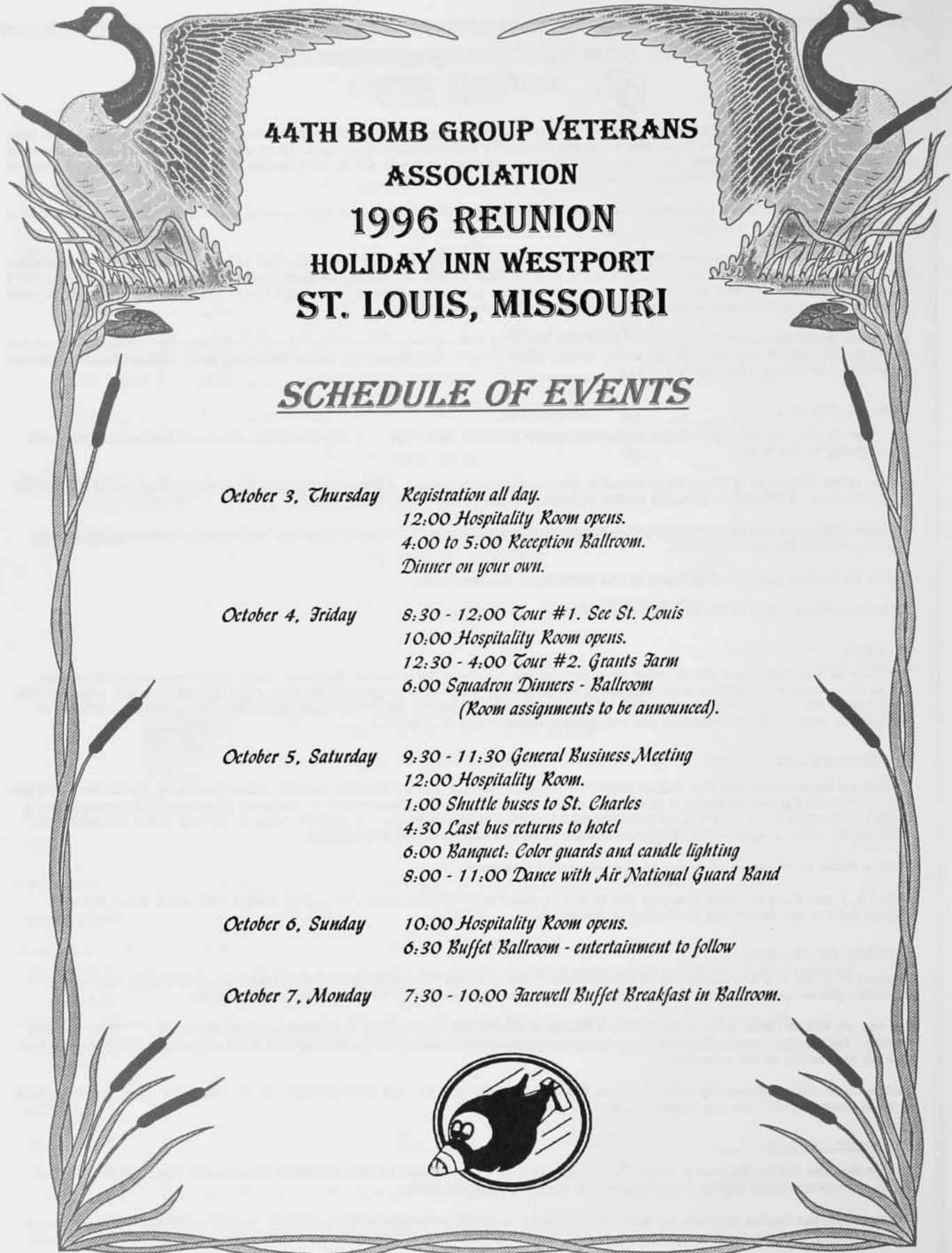
The day we will be there, St. Charles will be celebrating Oktoberfest. Oktoberfest is a citywide celebration of St. Charles' German heritage, featuring a parade, German bands, grape stomps, ethnic food, costumes and enjoyment. There will be a free shuttle bus making the rounds of the activities.

Shuttle buses will start loading at the hotel on Saturday at 1:00, and the last one will leave St. Charles from a designated location at 4:30. However, any one can return at any time on our buses.

CASINO ST. CHARLES

On Sundays the Casino features a lavish Champagne Brunch of more than twenty selections of palatable foods for \$8.95 (with discount coupon). There will be free admission to the casino after brunch.

The bus from the Casino will pick up those wishing to go at 12:00, returning at 3:00. As the bus is being furnished at no charge, it is necessary we have reservations before hand. Therefore, on your registration form, please check the appropriate place.



**44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS
ASSOCIATION
1996 REUNION
HOLIDAY INN WESTPORT
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- October 3, Thursday* *Registration all day.
12:00 Hospitality Room opens.
4:00 to 5:00 Reception Ballroom.
Dinner on your own.*
- October 4, Friday* *8:30 - 12:00 Tour #1. See St. Louis
10:00 Hospitality Room opens.
12:30 - 4:00 Tour #2. Grants Farm
6:00 Squadron Dinners - Ballroom
(Room assignments to be announced).*
- October 5, Saturday* *9:30 - 11:30 General Business Meeting
12:00 Hospitality Room.
1:00 Shuttle buses to St. Charles
4:30 Last bus returns to hotel
6:00 Banquet: Color guards and candle lighting
8:00 - 11:00 Dance with Air National Guard Band*
- October 6, Sunday* *10:00 Hospitality Room opens.
6:30 Buffet Ballroom - entertainment to follow*
- October 7, Monday* *7:30 - 10:00 Farewell Buffet Breakfast in Ballroom.*



KEEPING US INFORMED

If you hear of a 44th'er that does not belong to our Association, or has passed away, please notify:

Art Hand
517 Elm Street
Paris, Illinois 61994.
Phone/Fax: (217) 463-5905.

Change of address, please notify:

Tom Shepherd
10597 Cambrooke Cove
Collierville, Tennessee 38017.
Phone: (901) 854-6558 Fax: (901) 853-4229

NOTICE:

If you have a fax or an E-Mail address, drop Art a note so he can put it in the Roster.



44TH BGVA ROSTERS

For you late joiners and short memored long time members, we want to remind you that our membership rosters are still available from Art Hand for \$7 postpaid. It is a wonderful way to keep track of your crew and other squadron friends and it is kept up-to-date with addenda published regularly.

Send a check made out to 44th BGVA to our Treasurer (please note ROSTER) in the lower left corner of your check. Mail your order to:

Gerald W. Folsom, Treasurer
44th BGVA
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2367



Tom McKenna (r) with Percy Gaudin, Tail Gunner on the Lt. Jim McKenna crew ~ shot down over Hamburg, Germany Aug. 6, 1944. POW until 5/45.

We're looking for memories of James McKenna...

Editor: This comes to us from Tom McKenna who, with his son Chris joined us in San Antonio seeking anyone who could remember his brother, Jim, 66th Pilot, KIA over Hamburg August 6, 1944. We are printing this in hopes that among those unable to join us at the reunion, we may get some response from those who knew Jim McKenna. I'm sure Tom and Chris didn't reach all the people at the Reunion who may have known some or all of the 66th Squadron Jim McKenna crew. If you remember them, get in touch with Tom.

Letter from Tom McKenna (Brother of James McKenna)
February 2, 1996

Will:

I enclose 19 typewritten pages from the Graves Registration Dept. of the US Gov't in regards to the death of my brother, Jim. As well as the missing members of his crew - Byrne, Goo, Greno and Sheldon, I thought you would find this of interest (Very much so!)

I enclose photos of Jim, his co-pilot Grene and Stanley Sheldon. I have been unable to locate a photo of Wm. Goo thus far; but I will keep trying. I thought you would like to see what the people looked like that were involved in the tragedy.

It took over 50 years to learn what happened to my brother, Jim. It seems incredible to me that the US Gov't knew all along, but did not release this information until required to do so under F.O.I. 50 years after the fact. In addition, to how my brother died was not contained in his own individual deceased personnel file!! It was contained in the I.D.P.F. of Capt. Austin P. Byrne!!

Chris and I enjoyed our visit to San Antonio. I believe this is where Jim did his training to be a pilot. We went to several bases while in the San Antonio area and I recognized one base from the photos Jim sent home while in training. On the way back home from San Antonio, Chris pointed out that Percy Gaudin was in Bay St. Louie, MS on I-10 and that we would pass his home on our return trip. We, therefore, went in to see him. He was delighted. We talked for four hours. Unfortunately, he is blind from lack of Vitamin A while in the POW camps. I was so pleased to see him after 50 years, as he had visited our home in May, 1945 for one day after his release from POW camp. Therefore, even though I met no one at the San Antonio Reunion that knew Jim, your membership book for the 44th BGVA made it possible for us to locate and visit Percy Gaudin.

The 2nd AD and the 44th BGVA are great organizations, wonderful people making up both groups. I had to do a report for my local 8th Air Force Historical Association in regards to my trip to England for V-E Day. I was told it was pretty good, so I am sending you a copy. I think the enclosed is sufficient for the time being. I have more info for you, but unfortunately my work does not leave too much spare time. I will write again when I get a chance.

Best regards to you and Irene,
Tom
190 Buttrich Avenue
Bronx, NY 10465

We're looking for memories of James McKenna... (Continued):

Editor: This is reprinted from the December '95 issue of the New York Southern Wing Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society "Voice of the Mighty Eighth in N.Y."

A Brother Returns to East Anglia

Over fifty years had gone by since the death of my brother on August 6, 1944. Lt. James P. McKenna was a pilot of a B-24 Liberator, who was killed on a mission over Hamburg, Germany. He was a member of the 44th Bomb Group, 66th Bomb Squadron. He was flying deputy lead for the 492nd BG, and as a Pathfinder, had special equipment in the event of clouds over the target. The target was the Schlau Oil Refinery. Almost immediately after the bombs were dropped, the ship was hit by three or four antiaircraft shells. He managed to pull it out of two separate dives. During this time, ten chutes of a crew of twelve, were seen leaving the plane. The ship then went into a tight spin and crashed near the target area. It was 12:10 PM, English time. This was Jim's twenty sixth and final mission.

I had always wanted to see the base where Jim was stationed, and meet some of the men he served with. All we ever learned from his letters, was that he was "Somewhere in England." When the opportunity came about (through the Second Air Division) to attend the VE Day celebration in England, we jumped at the chance. The experience far exceeded our greatest expectations. My son Brian and I flew to London. From there we traveled by bus to The Nelson Hotel in Norwich. There was a planned activity most every day. We had the honor of meeting some people from the 44th BG and visited the base at Shipdham. Standing at the air base where Jim was stationed was awesome. This was the "Somewhere in England," that Jim had written about fifty years ago.

We met with the group from the Arrow Air Service which has a flying club at the base. Our tour group was headed by Will Lundy of the 44th BG. We wish commend



Lt. James McKenna, freshly commissioned from Aviation Cadets and home on leave, Oct. '45.

him for his excellent work. We were given a luncheon at the Club and then the tour group went to a reception at the town of Shipdham. We took part in their Memorial celebration; we could not have been treated better.

There was a service at the Norwich Cathedral which was most impressive. However, during the service, the recorded sound of bombers taking off from East Anglia for their missions over Europe, resounded throughout the Cathedral. When I realized that one of these planes could have been my brother Jim's plane, taking off on the final mission, it brought a lump to my throat and shivers up my spine. I saw some in the Cathedral with tears in their eyes for the memories of those that never returned.

We visited the 2AD Memorial Library in Norwich. We were quite impressed with the records that were available to us and with the graciousness of the staff. In spite of a devastating fire to the Library in August of 1994, this temporary alternative has done a marvelous job filling the void. The Roll of Honor has been replaced and the records of all the bomb groups are available for inspection. A larger and more beautiful library will arise from the ashes.

We attended a memorial at Maddingley Cemetery in Cambridge. This was by far the most touching and emotional experience of our visit to England. To see all those names of the men missing in action from this terrible conflict touched a nerve of remembrance, as Jim was M.I.A. for three years after World War II.

This trip was by far the best experience I have ever had. There is so much to see in England, and the English people could not have been more gracious or welcoming. It became quite apparent during this trip, that they are much more aware, and appreciative, of the sacrifices made by the men of the Eighth Air Force, than we are in America.

Butterfly Bombing of Shipdham Airfield

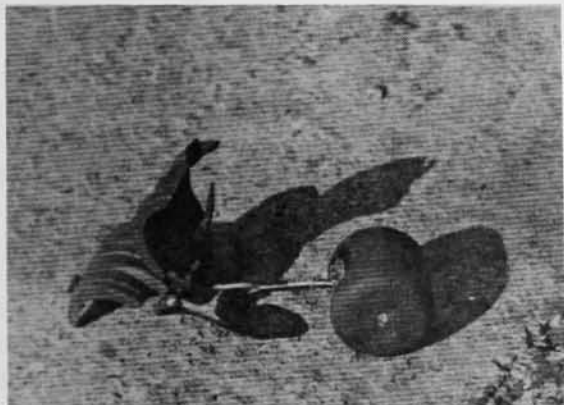
In the past two issues of 8-Ball Tails, there have been letters and photos relating to the bombing attack made on the field. I personally had a story to tell about it -- may appear elsewhere in this issue, but while at San Antonio Reunion, I was given yet another story, clarifying a couple items appearing in these accounts.

David Nathanson, who served first as the 67th Squadron's Ordnance Officer and the later Group Ordnance Officer, flagged me down to give me a copy of photos of the actual Butterfly bomb (hope that they will reproduce sufficiently for use here) as well as the unit that they used to detonate those bombs when located.

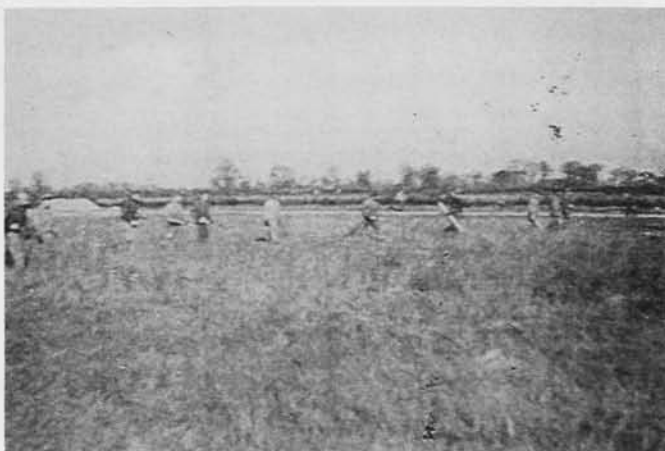
David also hastened to correct the method used to locate these nasty little antipersonnel bombs. The method used to locate them was by his personnel, not animals. It took three sweeps by his men fanned out a few feet apart, slowly working the entire area, one slow step at a time, eyes glued to the space ahead of each man, being ever so careful not to step on those devilish contraptions. David said that it took three sweeps of the field before it could be declared fit for operations again.

David's photos show a close-up of one bomb located, and the second photo shows one method used (instrument used) to detonate them. At least two others were later located - one as told by Charles Wagner on Page 28 and 29, Summer 1995, and my own experience.

Thanks David for your information. Are there any others?



Capt. Nathanson



Here's a Follow-On Letter from "Corky" Radio Operator, Lester J. "Jim" Dietz

Hi Roy,

In response to your request for a story connected to "Corky"; while there are vivid memories concerning certain incidents, I am sure many other crews had similar experiences and have better "war stories" to tell. There were two which I do believe to be one of a kind.

I believe we were the first to land a heavy bomber in France after the invasion and fly it out again. We had structural damage to the tail section which caused it to vibrate violently. Aluminum parts were cracking and control was difficult. We landed at a fighter strip at St. Lo, stayed overnight as I recall and flew back to our base at Shipdham the next day after some repairs by the fighter maintenance crew. The fighter people tried to keep us there as they felt we would be nailed by enemy ground fire as we took off. We took off without difficulty and returned home to complete the bombing mission to an airfield at Nancy, France on 18 Aug. 1944.

The other unique and perhaps "first" happened on a pass to London. These passes were utilized in different ways by air crew and other soldiers. Some went to see historical points of interest and sought cultural experience. However our crew, for the most part, had an affinity for gin and orange or whatever was available to do the job. Then there was the search for girls.

On one such foray, Steve Gilsenen and William Vafiadas made acquaintance with two charming ladies, and after a prolonged drinking bout in a pub, decided to leave. Inasmuch as Steve's lady friend found it impossible to stand, Steve picked her up and slung her over his shoulder and proceeded for the exit. As he wobbled off, her hair slid slowly off and hit the floor, revealing a totally bald head. This was good for a lot of laughs and jokes, of course, and though it has been 52 years, I can still see them laughing as they told the story. I wish I could hear it again from them one more time.

Sincerely,
Jim Dietz
Ukiah, California

*The Good Ole' Boys of the "Corky" crew.
Left to Right: William Vafiades, Oliver Cardinal, L.J. (Jim) Dietz,
Steve Gilsenen.*



A Great Response to the "Corky" Story

Jan. 15, 1996

Dear Will,

I feel compelled to drop you -- and the Canadian physician (Dr. Robert Reid)-- a note to express my deep appreciation for the very fine and detailed historical story in the Winter 1995 issue of the 8-Ball Tails relative to the last mission of "Corky" and it's crew.

This story served to answer perplexing questions that have lingered in my mind for all these long years -- since January 28, 1945! Here's why -- two of "Corky's" air crew -- Robert Lough (co-pilot) and Wayne Scott (navigator) were "hut" mates of mine in Hut 17. I recall that on this fatal date, when all the guys were stragglng back to the hut after evening chow, that Lough and Scott were absent. I just had the feeling that something was 'out of kilter' since these two mates were usually back in the hut way before bedtime. Then inquiries about their absence began to produce vague bits of information -- i.e., they went down over Germany. Some open chutes were observed...how many: 1, 2, 3 - maybe? Were there any survivors? If so, who? To these questions the answers never came -- until I read Dr. Reid's story! What a relief to finally learn all the answers to the questions that have been locked into my mind for so long!

Lough and Scott were sadly missed in Hut 17. They were not only "Comrades in Arms" but also our main source of night time entertainment! Often at night, when we were all hovered around the tiny pot belly stove trying to thaw out before hitting the sack, Lough and Scott would put on a little song and dance (follies style) routine for our enjoyment. They were pretty good at it...and, somewhat comical, for Lough was a giant of a guy who towered way above Scott, who was of average build. We called them our "Mutt and Jeff" song and dance duo. Yes, they were certainly missed in more ways than one by their hutmates. May God welcome them into his Kingdom as they were welcomed into Hut 17!

Again, thanks to the author of the "Corky" story and you for putting it into the current issue of 8-Ball Tails. Now that all my questions have been answered, my mind is now at ease. Thank you for a grand job superbly done!

Sincerely,
Lewis R. (Bob) Graham, Co-pilot on the Kent
Ackerman Crew (68th)
275 Perry Smith Lane
Caryville, TN 37714
(423) 566-0536

19 January 1996

Dear "Bob",

Your very fine letter just arrived here and it impressed me so much that I feel I must answer it right away. Thank you very much for including me in your thanks for that long and interesting article by Dr. Robert Reid, even though I had very little to do with it, except to provide some data from my papers. (The listing of crew, etc. on page 9 is from my Roll of Honor Book.)

I confess to the same perplexing questions that you had about what happened to your friends on Corwin's plane. Like you, these unanswered questions and concerns, though suppressed, have been with me ever since the war. When I retired, or shortly before I retired in 1978, I learned about the 2nd ADA's Memorial Library in Norwich, and in 1976 Irene and I went back to Norwich for a visit, and to see the library and their Roll of Honor. It was after seeing that large book full of names of our men who were KIA that my old questions came back to the front burner. I have been searching for those answers ever since.



Finally, about 1986, I had accumulated sufficient information about nearly all of the 44th BG losses of planes and men, that I compiled a book with this information and had it published in a local printing firm. However, due to the expense that must be paid in advance, and because it covered so much suffering and death, I had grave doubts of it selling many copies. So I ordered only 150 books, hardbound. I guessed wrong, as they all sold within a couple of months. When I requested this firm to honor their commitment, print more at the same cost to me, they refused; so I dropped it. I've been trying to find the time for the past three years to update the book -- have found many more answers, corrections, etc. but can't get it done. Even bought a new computer, printer, scanner, software, but still no progress.



Sorry, got carried away there, but what I want to say is that I am, and have been, willing to share this info with everyone who is interested. I often make copies of these individual stories, sent them to crewmen, families, etc. Will do this until I get it all revised and reprinted. As I was ground crew from start to almost the finish, I personally saw all those planes and crews go off, saw them return and wondered about those that did not. When I learned that all our men listed on that ROH had only their name, rank and serial number to show for their lives; that very little else was available anywhere about what happened, I first tried to get someone to do something to remedy that situation. Failing in that, I decided to dig in, look for the facts. Microfilm got me started, and then I couldn't stop -- still can't. I've donated some of those books to the Norwich Library, recopied them when the library burned in '94, and a few are scattered around -- like in the Air Force library, others in Norwich. Someday, I'll get a bigger and better one done, but not sure when.

So, if you have any more questions about what happened to men or planes of the 68th -- or the 44th, let me know and I'll give you all the information that I have up to date. OK? I've tried to get this info out to our people from time to time, but most people still aren't aware that I have it.

Just this week I got final confirmation about a 492nd BG plane which crashed six miles from the base. It was brought to my attention by a man who thought he observed a collision, watched in horror as the plane turned over on its back, circled until it landed on a house. The facts, just confirmed from papers in the Archives by Tony Mastradone, state that two planes loaded with bombs in late afternoon, climbing for altitude at 17,000 feet were on a collision course, both banked sharply and apparently missed, but this one plane could not right itself, nor regain any kind of control - (part of wing reported broke off) and crashed and burned with no crew member being able to get out. Fire trucks from the base attempted to rescue the men and extinguish the flames. Two of our firemen were killed when one or more bombs exploded.

We have just added these two men to our official ROH! Nearly 52 years to get it done.

I searched in vain for years to locate the two survivors from Corky in order to get the whole story. Now, Dr. Bob Reid has gone one better, got much more information. He called me night before last to tell me he was departing in a few days for Germany because he located a historian in Germany who has visited the crash site, has eye-witnesses, etc. He will have the true facts about the plane and crew when he returns. He promised to write up his trip when he returns. I hope to get it in a future newsletter.

If you don't mind, I'd like to submit your letter to Roy Owen for a future "Tails" as well, as you can inform us all about the fine men who lost their lives that day. We must not forget them.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,
Will Lundy
3295 North "H" Street
San Bernardino, CA 92405
(909) 882-2441



E.J. McKenney (66th) writes to Mike Caroon with some further word on his father, Ken Caroon.

October 13, 1995

Mike Caroon
4144 Durillo Place
Albany, OR 97321



Dear Mr. Caroon:

I saw your name in the letter to Will Lundy from George Insley that was published in the Summer 1995 issue of 8-Ball Tails (Vol. 1 Issue #3, page 28).

Your father and I were on the same plane on the Weiner-Neustadt mission, October 1, 1943. I was flying right seat with Oakley in left. I was hit with a 20mm cannon HE thru the windscreen on the first pass of 109's between the IP and the target.

The plane was pretty badly damaged and some time later Oakley rang the bell signal to prepare to bail out. I heard later that two men in the waist bailed out at that signal. One of these was apparently your father. I had gone to the open bomb bay ready to roll out when Oakley signaled me back, thinking we could make it. He did not give the steady ring to abandon the plane.

We made it back to the Foggia area in Italy in about two more hours and crash landed in a grain field. James Young, besides me, was pretty badly wounded. I saw him later in a hospital in North Africa and he looked like he was going to recover.

The British had taken the area about four days before and I was taken to a British field hospital in Foggia. That was my 6th and last combat mission. Also your dad's.

I understand Oakley was killed in a later mission out of Shipdham. I believe my navigator, Franklin D. Power was with him. Franklin Power bailed out low and was a POW for the rest of the war.

I was also told, I forgot by whom, that the 44th sent out 27 planes that morning for Weiner-Neustadt. Two aborted. Only one plane got back to the base that evening. I don't know how many diverted to other fields in Italy or Sicily but it was a rough day for the 44th (7 lost).

I did not know your father personally, but we did fly on the same plane on Oct. 1, 1943 on that mission.

Another coincidence, the man you met in Roseburg, George Insley was the first pilot of a crew with waist gunner Frank Bata. Frank was on my crew through phase training in the states and in England and North Africa. After I was no longer able to fly, he was on George Insley's crew. He, like Insley, went through two tours in the 44th. Frank speaks highly of Insley as a pilot. I am still in touch with Frank, who lives in Thatcher, Arizona.

Sincerely,
E. J. McKenney
1401 Eighth Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 442-7945

FIRST COMBAT MISSION

Editor: It seemed appropriate that we follow the E.J. McKenney letter, which praise the pilot skills of George Insley, with George's own account of the first combat mission of the Insley crew.

Primary: Danzig

Secondary: Gdynia (hit)

44th had 13 A/C

(44th had 6 A/C 392nd had 7 "H"s)

9 Oct 43

G 870 No Name

It was mid Aug, 1943 when we first arrived at the 44th Bomb Group in Shipdham, England. We were sent to combat training for a couple of weeks and when we returned, we found most of the group had gone to the Africa area to do some missions with the 15th Air Force. It was during their absence that we were sent on our 1st mission. Six new crews joined forces with another group for our "baptism of fire." The target in Poland, was the German (mission #110) battleship or its supply link. My position was low left and last in the "Purple Heart Corner." It was a long mission. I recorded 9:50 hours of flight time.

The course took us over the North Sea crossing Denmark and flying over the sea to Poland. In Denmark, the antiaircraft gunners were waiting for us. They were putting up a wall for us to fly through. Everything was new to us, the unknown and scary. As soon as I saw the flak, my feet were dancing on the rudder pedals and I was all over the sky (Who me? Scared?) and yet trying to stay in formation. The way I was flying, the fighters couldn't have hit me if they tried to, and they were going to try. Well, we flew through those black clouds and on to Poland. We climbed up to our assigned altitude and began our bomb run. The flak was larger caliber, bigger explosions, blacker smoke. It was right at our altitude. They were putting it right in front of me. The shell exploded and we instantly hit the smoke, and what a noise the explosions made. It was many missions after this one before I heard flak again, though we had it on every mission. Those gunners on the battleship were really top notch.

We experienced our 1st flak, 1st sound of flak explosions, and 1st fighter attack, a running battle with twin engine fighters which zeroed in on our element. The fighters that came up were black, so we presumed that they were night fighters. Fortunately, they were not overly aggressive. Here we were two groups, a B-17 and a B-24 flying parallel; so when the fighters showed up, the B-24 leader slid our formation in under the B-17 for more

protection as well as more defense against the fighters. (More guns shooting at the fighters.) Where did they attack? You guessed it! In my corner, low left and last. So you can see why they called it the "purple heart corner." My tail gunner, George Federlin, shot up all of his ammo and the waist gunner took more ammo to him. The fighters shot up all of their ammo and landed, refueled, and reloaded and came up again to have another go at us. I didn't see any fighters go down, nor did we lose any. Though I saw one engine with a little smoke from something damaged.

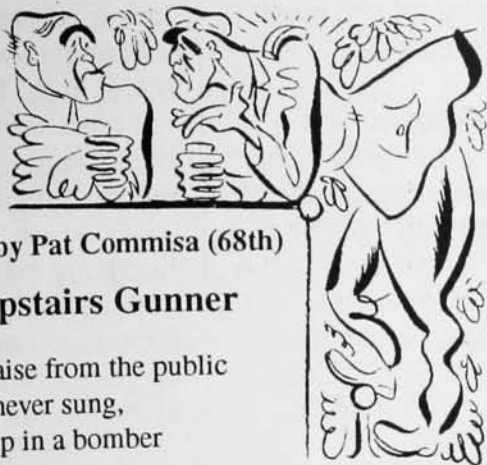
About 50 miles west of Denmark, the fighters broke off attacking, going back to their base. Suddenly I felt the ship yaw and I saw the fuel pressure of #4 drop to zero. I feathered #4 and called over the intercom about the engine emergency. Just then #3 pressure dropped and I feathered that one. Then #1 and 2 dropped off - sure was quiet; but everyone was too busy scrambling as I rang the emergency bell in preparation for ditching the plane in the North Sea. The engineer dropped out of the top turret and into the bomb bay to find the radio operator there who just pointed at the fuel shut off valves and the engineer turned the valves on and we had power again. We were going down at 2000' a minute and it looked like it was going to be a cold swim. What happened? The engineer had been transferring fuel when the fighters attacked. After they left us, the engineer asked the radio operator to shut off the transfer pumps, which were behind the bomb bay. Instead, he mistakenly shut off the fuel shut off valves, which were in the front of the bomb bay. Thankfully we didn't have to try our life rafts. We had lost several thousand feet of altitude, as well as distance; so we never got back to England. That was the first mission of the 48 that we flew in the 20 months we were in England. Glad that they weren't all like this one.

George R. Insley
865 Little Valley Road
Roseburg, OR 97470

Editor: The thoughts that strike me here, George, is with this harrowing beginning, how did you ever convince your crew to sign up for a second tour? Next, it seems to me with that big air to air battle that went on and the ammo expended by both the bombers and E/A, it is a miracle there were no shoot-downs. Could it have been that six rookie B-24 crews were, by fate, faced by a bunch of rookie German fighter pilots that day? Your story was great George, thanks.



TWO POINTS OF VIEW



Submitted by Pat Commisa (68th)

The Upstairs Gunner

They get no praise from the public
Their name is never sung,
They only sit up in a bomber
And operate a gun.

When the going gets the toughest
And the bullets fall like hail
How would you my dear public
Like to sit up in the tail?

The pilot only chauffeurs,
But when they start the fun
The guy that does the dirty work
Is the guy behind the gun!

When they go out on a mission
And the enemy you spot,
Suppose the gunner's nerve would fail
And give the guy a "sitters" shot.

But remember this, my dear public
When that mission is complete
The gunner gets no credit—
There's no glory at his feet.

He has no bars, no pins, no leaves,
no medals on his chest —
He doesn't have a uniform
To tell him from the rest!

But upstairs he has the glory,
There are no if's, and's, no but's,
He's the guy in the "hot seat"
He's the guy who has the guts!

His life lasts, eighteen minutes!
What a laugh that is to me;
We don't want the dubious glory,
Our job is just to set you free!

So my dear, kind, "fickle" public
You'll never know our name,
Give the pilots all the honey,
We don't need the doubtful fame!

~Just another Gunner~

Responsibility

By 1st Lt. David F. Parry
8th A.F. Pilot of the Flying Fortress
"Dull Tool"

If enlisted men meander
And indulge in rape or slander,
It's their airplane commander
They defame;
If his officers are lazy,
Alcoholically hazy
And, in fact, a little crazy,
He's to blame.

If they don't salute their betters,
If they fail to pay their debts,
Or write censurable letters,
Or get stewed;
If they come back late from passes,
Or decline to go to classes,
You can bet it's not their asses
That are chewed.

For the pilot has his uses.
He's the one who makes excuses,
Answers charges, takes abuses
From them all;
Though a flyer of acumen,
He's considered less than human
If he cannot keep his crewmen
On the ball.

When a gunner's fingers freezes,
Or the navigator sneezes,
Or unprintable diseases
Ground the crews;
It's the pilot's fault they're dying
(If they aren't they should be flying)
And don't argue—for you're lying
In your shoes.

If, returning from a sortie,
When the gas is down to forty,
And the plane's three engines short, he
Brings them down;
Is the crew more understanding?
Sympathetic? Less demanding?
No! They criticize his landing
With a frown.

Yes, it's certainly tough —
For the hero of this ditty,
But don't waste your tears of pity
On the fool;
For although he's nurse and mother
To Joe Blow and Joe Blow's brother,
He'd trade places with no other,
The dull tool.



Editor: Recall "The Support Units" article in the Spring '95 "Tails" where it recounted the death of two of our valiant crash-rescue fire fighters. Here we have an eye-witnesses account of that terrible evening by Jim Auman. The names of the two fire fighters, Sgt. Monroe A. Atchley and Pvt. Ted R. Bunalski are being added to the 44th Role of Honor.

CRASH OF A 492nd BG B-24 4 JUNE 1944

"On the evening of 4 June, 1944, my friend, Harm, and I were riding bikes in what may have been south and east of AAF 115 Station at Shipdham. The sky was clear and the sun was low in the west behind us. We were several miles from the airfield and enjoying the quiet, still air of the countryside compared to the extremely loud roaring of engines being run-up at the field.

As we coasted along, we became aware of a heavy bomber lumbering for altitude at what must have been 20,000 feet. The intense strain on the four engines was very familiar to me, and I knew the aircraft was loaded heavily.

Shortly after identifying the bomber as a Liberator, I saw two fighter-type airplanes appear from the south or west, at least one of which had a pointed nose and may have been an English Spitfire. As we kept riding and watching, we saw the fighters making passes, when I was not looking, I heard a crunch-like collision and saw the bomber with a large section of its right wing severed. The bomber then turned on its back and went into a slow spin earthward. The fighter went into a

shallow high-speed dive and went out of my line of sight and must have crashed miles away.

As the B-24 came down, the engines screamed in what must have been a wide open position - that sound is still with me. I also remember how long it took for the crippled Liberator to hit the ground. My buddy, Harm Krull, was screaming, "GET OUT...GET OUT," but no one ever made it.



There were no flames or smoke until the airplane hit upside down on a building that may have been a farmer's living quarters. The impact was more like a crunch, followed by a muffled explosion.

We rode to within about six hundred feet of the farm yard and took a position along the roadside. The entire building and airplane were now a solid ball of flames. Fire fighters arrived on the scene in very short order; however, the situation was hopeless.

It was still daylight when we saw the rescue squad pulling what we assumed were bodies from the wreckage. There seemed to be several smoldering hulks lined up in the farm yard about fifty feet from the wreckage. The squad was using long poles to fetch out the bodies.

Another four or five fire fighters took a position on a thick stone wall about five feet tall with their backs to us. Those firemen did not have enough hoses or water pressure to do any good in putting out the flames.

Suddenly, there was an explosion and we heard shrapnel ripping through the branches of the trees overhead. When we looked back at the fire, we saw two, three, or four firemen laying on their backs on our side of the wall.

I did not write this account of the collision as a story form. Rather, I told the facts as I remembered them. I am sure that my buddy, Krull, could have many corrections. We did not report this incident to anyone, as we were on alert and the next day, June 5th, we were transferred back to the 466th BG at Attlebridge."

Signed: James O. Auman

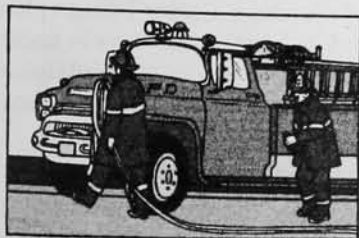
On June 9, 1944 the 2033 Engineering Aviation Fire Fighting Platoon, Headquarters at Shipdham prepared a recommendation for award of Soldiers Medal, posthumously to: Sgt. Monroe A. Atchley 35579833 Pvt. Ted R. Bunalski 32756508

"Sgt. Atchley and Pvt. Bunalski were off duty and eating supper on the night of June 4, 1944 when they heard men yelling (that) a plane had crashed. They left their meals, ran out on the road, and jumped on the first truck going to the fire. Upon their arrival at the crashed plane, they immediately went to the burning plane and proceeded to (attempt) to extinguish the flames., disre-

garding danger of bombs and a gas tank which was burning and full of gasoline...." The other fire fighters continued to fight the burning crashed aircraft (that was) loaded with 20lb fragmentation bombs until moved back by the officer in charge, in spite of the fact that two members of the crash crew had been killed from one of the bombs exploding."

Mr. Tony Mastradone, 67th Squadron medic, states: "I do know something about the two fire fighters that lost their lives at the B-24 crash. I drove an ambulance to the crash with Captain Worrall and George Houston, another medic. I have this written up in my small diary. I can still remember an officer waving his .45 gun at me and yelling to George and I that we were refusing to fight in the face of the enemy when we refused to attempt to retrieve the bodies of the two fire fighters while the fire was still raging. They wanted us to walk down to where the two men were laying face down to get them while the .50 Cal. shells were firing, oxygen tanks exploding and fire everywhere.

So we did crawl down a ditch, dragging a stretcher to get them, had to make two trips. When we got back to the base, a Chaplain met us, wanted to know if we had administered last rites to them. I had not, so he showed me how it was done in the event that it happened again."



UNSUNG HERO

This comes to inform you of the death of S/Sgt. Anson Daniels, on Jan. 31, 1996. He was residing with his lovely wife Ann at 8626 G SW 97th Lane Road, Ocala, FL 34481.

Anson has a very distinguished career. He joined the 44th Bomb Group in May, 1943 and went to North Africa with the Lt. Bunce crew as a Waist Gunner. He flew five missions before the August 1, 1943 Ploesti Raid, but was medically grounded for that mission. Sgt. Daniels flew missions with several crews, including Lt. McAtee, Lt. Landig, Lt. Borkowski and Lt. Clements. He joined our crew #53 Lt. Norman Purdy to fly missions in Dec. '43 and '44. When Lt. Leonard Wayne took over Purdy's crew, Jan. 21, 1944, Sgt. Daniels joined with this crew and flew two missions out of England before transferring with the crew to the 449th Bomb Group, 719th Bomb Squadron, 15th A.F. in an exchange program. All of those missions were tough in terms of American losses. Daniels had only six missions remaining to complete the 25 mission requirement in effect in the 8th A.F. at that time. The 15th A.F. requirement for completing a tour was 50 missions. He reached his 50 total with his last mission on April 4, 1944. This mission to Bucharest became ultimately known as "the Greatest Air Battle in the history of the 449th Bomb Group."

Only those of us who were there can imagine the exhilaration of being the first combat crew member in all of 15th A.F. to complete a combat tour and be leaving for the U.S.A. Especially with the terrible Four Fours mission (4-4-44, as it became known) as the climactic finish. That mission also resulted in the award of the first of two Presidential Unit Citations awarded to the 449th Bomb Group.

The general order accompanying the first citation read, "As a result of the repeated and determined attacks, this group lost seven aircraft to enemy fighters. However, in the air battle, this group performed with such gallantry they not only delivered their bombs on target, they responded to the intense opposition by destroying forty (40), probably destroying thirteen (13) and damaging six (6) enemy fighters. The extraordinary heroism and superior performance of duty by the 449th Bomb Group has upheld the highest traditions of the military service and has reflected great credit upon the Armed Forces of the United States of America." The Lt. Leonard Wayne crew were credited with destroying six and a half (6-1/2) enemy aircraft that day.

The words in that order of commendation certainly directly apply to S/Sgt. Anson Daniels and all members of his crew #45, yet this heroic career was, unfortunately, never completely recognized in terms of awards. His retirement certificate shows the awards of two (2) Presidential Unit Citations, the Air Medal with four (4) OLC, but never a recommendation for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

It is understandable how the 719th Bomb Squadron could be in such disarray on April 5, 1944 as to overlook, in some cases, the documentation to appropriately award the heroism displayed by their men. It had lost seven crews the previous day, including its Operations Officer and four of the original combat crews. Sadly, as a result of these circumstances, Anson Daniels folded his wings on January 21, 1996 without the recommendation for award of the Distinguished Flying Cross so richly deserved. In my memories, he is proudly wearing his DFC. He was a dear friend and I shall miss him.

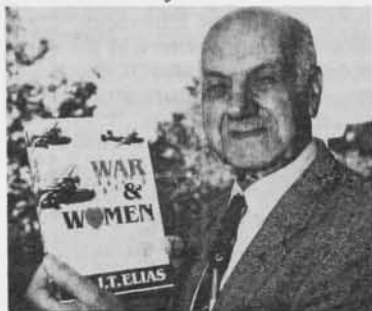
Respectfully yours,
Major Albert A. Martin
USAF (Ret)
2313 Hidden Valley Drive
Santa Rosa, California 95404-2310



MAIL CALL



This comes from:



Lewis Robinson - 506th
Gardner, Illinois
11/14/95

ANOTHER AUTHOR AMONG US

Roy,

I just received a card from Jake Elias. After San Antonio, he returned to England for the umpteenth time - no doubt doing researching on War & Women. Actually, Jake is researching Tom Paine for some future book. We know and love Jake! No doubt some bought his book War & Women; but how many have tried to author a WWII novel? It is a very competitive enterprise!

Perhaps "8-Ball Tails" is an entry for Jake. The story centers around two young men who enter the Air Corps in WWII and two who join the Army Paratroop Division, their experiences in the states and in battle overseas. Not many of us remember the women, most of us remember the battle. Some of us, like my navigator Tom Appert, were married just before takeoff, Topeka, Kansas, July of '44. A fortunate few returned with an English bride. We still "hanger talk" at reunions and look forward to our next in St. Louis. Let's do promote War & Women. We all belong in Jake's story!

About the author: J.T. Elias has had several plays produced in New York; a novel The Shy Nude and previously published short stories and articles in national magazines. He was educated and grew up in Wilkes Barre, PA. He worked and moved around the country in different jobs, travelled to Europe many times, finding a wife in Ireland and has four beautiful children. During WWII, he flew in B-24's as an air gunner in our 68th Bomb Squadron, being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart and air medals. Now he lives and writes in a small town, Natichoke, PA.

Let's promote one of our own!

Bev and I look forward to St. Louis. We enjoyed San Antonio and will help in St. Louis, if needed.

Thank you.
Lewis Robinson
"Tail Gunner"
"Clean Sweep"

Editor: I've just finished reading Jake Elias' book War and Women. An attention holding fiction novel woven around a lot of personal experiences that Elias has turned into a great story. This Lewis Robinson letter does a great review.



This warm response comes from:

"Mum"
Linda Weston

Hello Lolly & Roy,

Many thanks for your Journal Magazine regarding the 44th Bomb Group. It delighted both Beryl and me. You certainly boosted us, but I'm sure many others would have, or should have helped young boys miles from home. I'm still a mum to anyone who wants my love. Anyhow, thanks a lot, it was great reading. We are looking forward to you all coming to England, I believe next year.

Beryl also lives in Portsmouth. I'm in a sheltered home 15 minutes walking from her and yes, I do almost everything for myself. If I don't feel like doing it, Beryl does. She is a wonderful daughter and she still has the grand children. Yes, your kind words and the one above have made me so much better in health. Thanks a lot. Do hope you had a grand Christmas and all the best for this year to you both.

Love from Mum Linda

Editor: A warm response from "Mum" Linda Weston after receiving the last issue of the "Tails."



Speaking of new members, here is a very welcome letter from:

Our "Letters of Love" Lady
Lois Cianci
1/12/96

Dear Roy,

Thank you so much for sending me the copies of the 8-Ball Tails. The reprint was great. You did a swell job. I feel so proud.

I received mail from Joseph Crandell, Groveland, Ill. containing information on receiving a color lithograph of the Ardennes Cemetery and its history; also how to obtain a passport free of charge when I make the trip to Belgium. He lost two brothers. One a B-24 pilot in the 44th Bomb Group whose entire crew was lost and is buried in the Netherlands Cemetery. The other was a tank commander in Patton's 3rd Army. He is in the Luxembourg Cemetery. I already had the information he offered, but I was very glad to hear from him anyway.



The other letter I received was from Ralph Golubeck, St. Louis, Mo., a pilot in the 506th Squadron of the 44th Bomb Group. He said he did not know my dad but checked his flight log and discovered he also had been on that mission. He said it was a tough one and losses were very high. He was touched by my dad's letters and wished he could have read more of the originals with the picture, but they did not print well.

The address you need for Dawn Drago is Reading Eagle Co., 345 Penn St., Reading, PA 19601. I know she will appreciate your sending her a copy and a thank you.

If you receive mail from anyone else in reference to the article, I would appreciate it if you would forward me a copy. I am excited about hearing all these new comments and details. It is really wonderful.

I am interested in joining the 44th Bomb Group Association and would appreciate an application.

Please excuse the tardiness of this reply.

Sincerely,

Editor: Ok you 68th guys, how about following Ralph Golubeck's letter with some more details of the 21 January 1944 mission against the Pas de Calais V-1 missile site. The 68th put up seven aircraft and only three returned. I see in the MACR that the bombing altitude was 12,000 ft. "to assure better accuracy." I'd bet those crews puzzled over whose?



2/16/96

Mrs. Lois Cianci
871 North Church Road
Reading, PA 19608-9734

Dear Lois,

Your very welcome letter arrived today. I am so happy that you were pleased with the 8-Ball Tails article. The credit really belongs with Dawn Drago authoring the beautiful story to begin with. Believe me, the research by Will Lundy and the fill-in story I wrote was the labor of love for a daughter whose faith never faltered that she would find the final chapter of her Daddy's heroic life.

Regarding your question on the reactions of others to the story, space does not permit inclusion of the many, many compliments we have received on your touching story. I think the comments of Gerald J. Gross, 336 Greens Farms Road, Westport, CT 06880-6332 says it best: "Congratulations on the excellent Winter '95 issue of the 8-Ball Tails. I've read it carefully, and with considerable interest and pleasure. The Lois Cianci story sure carried a wallop!" Gerry served both in the 68th and the 506th Bomb Squadrons.

I am indeed pleased with your decision to take a membership in our association. First, it will really keep you in the communication loop so far as any follow-up correspondence we receive in connection with your story, because you will be receiving the 8-Ball Tails directly. Next, I am beginning plans for a 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association return trip to England, France and Belgium in the late Spring (May or June) of next year that may interest you and your husband, Anthony. Lois, you may join the Association by merely writing a short note to our Treasurer — name, address, phone, squadron affiliation (68th) and send along a check made out to 44th BGVA for \$15 and mail to:

Gerald Folsom, Treasurer
44th Bomb Group Veterans Association
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, UT 84118-2367

Welcome aboard Lois, and may I pay my respects to Anthony. I am certain that his pillar of support in your quest for the facts of your Dad's sacrifice to his country made your search possible. I will look forward to the day Lolly and I can meet you both and have the privilege of introducing you to the membership (perhaps in St. Louis?)

Sincerely,

Roy Owen



This comes from:

Edward R. Harrell
Rt. 3, Box 16
Selmer, TN 38375
1/11/96

Dear Will,

Thanks for answering my letter. I didn't expect an answer too soon, because I seem to be aware that some of you travel to England and other places from time to time.

Your suggestions as to where to send the issues of the Logbook and the lithograph of the Tower was appreciated and I think I will send them to those two places.

You ask if I was an officer in the service, no I wasn't. My service time was from 1951 to 1971. The early part of it was a Base Operations Dispatcher, then as a Command Post Specialist.

I was affiliated with the 44th when I was at Lake Charles from 1957 to 1960 as a Base Operation Dispatcher. The next time I heard of the 44th was when an article in the Air Force Retiree newsletter written by Major Klaus wanting contact with anyone who was either in the 44th or affiliated with it. I responded and joined on that basis.

No, I am not giving up on the 44th BGVA. I didn't pursue a membership because I don't think I am eligible to join, having never been a member of the 44th BG/BW.



From Lake Charles, I went to Ellsworth AFB. When I arrived there, the missile silos were being built around the area. Little did I know the missile unit would eventually be named the 44th. SMW.

Thank you again for the letter.

Editor: Ed, you're all paid up and in the roster. Welcome aboard.



This comes from:

Merritt E. Derr
153 Smith Road
Gilbertsville, PA 19525-9646
12/8/95

Dear Will,

I immensely enjoy and appreciate the featuring of individual aircraft of the 44th with each issue of "8-Ball Tails." It is very interesting and enlightening to learn the history of aircraft of the 44th; those we flew and those we didn't fly.

Since you began this feature in Vol. 1, Issue 2, Spring '95, you featured the aircraft whose tail marking appeared on the heading of that issue, as an example "N" in Vol. 1, Issue 2.

The original issue of "8-Ball Tails" featured the tail marking Bar A; but no story or history of that aircraft. Because I flew most of my missions in Bar A, I'm curious as to why no history of that aircraft appeared in Vol. 1, Issue 1.

Will this aircraft be featured in a future issue?

More from Merritt

MORE ON DECISION MISSION 24

Having read Bob Foust's "Decision Mission 24" in the Summer '95 issue, pages 7 and 8, of the 8-Ball Tails, I feel compelled to tell our readers what was happening in the forward section of that same airplane on that mission. I know you've seen this account before, but it may be interesting to our readers.

I remember our crew - Stone's - was feeling pretty cocky by this time in our tour, maybe even invincible. How stupid that was, we were to learn later in the day. At briefing, I was glad we had been scheduled for this mission. It looked like it would be an easy mission and it would be one more toward completion of that thirty-five mission tour. A/C Bar W-209 (not Bar A). Also see my ROH, page 270.

It was always customary for Stone to fly the mission to the target, and after "bombs away" for me to fly us back to Shipdham. This mission was no exception. As we approached the target, flak became very intense and accurate, and over the target we were bracketed to it.

Just about the moment of bomb release, there was a tremendous explosion which seemed to be just outside the co-pilot's window. At that moment, Lt. Scuddy's plane, Q-496, ahead of us and on our right, turned belly up and went down on fire. We received numerous hits which resulted in a fire in #3 engine, a large hole in a fuel cell that poured gasoline into the open bomb bay, cut hydraulic lines, and sent flak flying through the cockpit. Why we didn't blow up I'll never know, though our prayers may have had something to do with it.

I glanced over my shoulder toward the bomb bay and the stream of liquid pouring into the bomb bay reminded me of a cow taking a leak. A piece of flak entered the flight deck from below, lodged in my armor plated seat, and literally lifted me up against my seatbelt. (I still have it.) Another piece entered on the left side of the cockpit, flew across the instrument panel and out the window on my side. Had Stone and I not switched jobs at that precise moment, his hands would have been on the wheel and would have been shattered.

There was debris flying all over the cockpit. I feathered #3 and then hit the fire extinguisher button which killed the fire. Charlie Brown, our flight engineer, and Lt. Herman Flugman, who flew with us on this mission, stopped the flow of petrol from the ruptured fuel cell as best they could by stuffing clothing into the hole.

We started losing altitude and the squadron kept going farther away from us. Stone called the various positions to determine damage and casualties if any. It was then that we learned from Foust that Strange had bailed out. Surprise! Surprise! No bail out signal had been given and it was obvious we couldn't go back and pick him up. Realizing our vulnerability as a straggler, we called for help by our "Little Friends." Along came the most beautiful P-51 I've ever seen. He stayed with us to the coast.

The rest of the story is as told by Foust and need not be repeated here. That night we all went into town, got thoroughly soused, and nearly suffered casualties by guys who rode their bicycles into road ditches on our way back to base.

Yours truly,

Editor: Here's the skinny on the Tail Markings, Merritt. Will Lundy first suggested 8-Ball Tales as the name of our journal and I was toying around with some way to use our old tail markings in the masthead when I came up with the play on words Tails for Tales. The selection of Bar F and Bar A for Volume 1, Issue #1 was a shot in the dark really. I was, at that time, concerned more with the design than the identity of any particular aircraft. Then before the second issue, Will and I talked about making the tail marking different in each issue with a combat record and some stories from the crew(s) that flew the aircraft. Good old "Lemon Drop" was one everyone knew, so she was #1 in terms of a featured aircraft. Thanks for the question, and the "Shack Rat" record. We've got Bill Cameron's "Buzzin

Bear" coming out on the next cover, but you're right, we haven't had a 506th airplane featured; so look for "Shack Rat" for Xmas, ok?

Some Differences of Opinion about "Down De Hatch."

This comes from:

Jack B. Morgan
USAF (Ret.)
3309 Cherokee Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33611
1/6/96

Dear Will,

I read the letter from Ken Adrian in the December issue of 8-Ball Tails about Down De Hatch. I think Mr. Adrian is confused.

I was the assistant crew chief of Down De Hatch from March, 1943 until the end the war. I actually flew home in Down De Hatch.

Bob Iverson was not the crew chief of Down De Hatch. Staff Sergeant Eugene Salas (better known as Blackie) was for the entire period the 506th was stationed at Shipdham. I think it is unfair to Blackie to have someone else given credit for what Blackie did.

Please find enclosed a copy of the letter which I have written to Ken Adrian regarding his confusion.

Respectfully,

Editor: Jack, it seems your memory (or personal record) is a little skewed as well. "Down De Hatch" arrived at Shipdham in May, 1944. So you must have been on another aircraft from March '43 to May '44. I talked on the phone with Capt. Jim Meiner, 506th Engineering Officer at the time and he confessed to "memory meltdown" as well. I had a visit with Lt. Ed "Casey" Jarvis on 24 Feb. who flew her on several missions, as well as flying her back to the U.S. He, like Ken Adrian, praised the reliability of the aircraft. The point is all of you "knuckle busters" who were keeping the old war horse with the none too glamorous name on the job, carrying the crews and bombs to the target then coming on home, were doing your job. We flew your airplane at least twice. I've said it before here in "The Tails," and I'll say it again; every time we returned, I wish now I had hugged and thanked each of you grimy guys with the skinned knuckles who launched us and then and "sweated us out" till we got home. What a helluva job you did! I also know how you kept warm in those little huts alongside the parking stubs (war ain't all bad, right?). The message for the aircrews here is, Boys, it's not too late to thank 'em all. In fact, come Banquet Dinner night in St. Louis, we're going to have our support folks stand up so we can all say THANKS!

This comes from:

Albert Bernard
(LTC USAF Ret.)
28923 Bay Tree Place
Zephyrhills, Florida 33344

Dear Art,

After reviewing the 8-Ball Tails Summer issue, I would like to go on record to register my memory of the part that the crew of the AVAILABLE JONES played in the history of the 44th Bomb Group. We joined the group as a replacement crew early in June just in time to make the trip to North Africa. Our operational activity was limited to nine missions including THE PLOESTI mission of 1 Aug 43.

The crew on this last mission is as follows:

*Jones, Fred H.	1st Lt.	Pilot	Century, FL
*Dukato, Elbert L.	2nd Lt.	Co-Pilot	New Orleans, LA
*Sweet, Adolphus J.	2nd Lt.	Navigator	E Northport, NY
Bernard, Albert F.	2nd Lt.	Bombardier	Brooklyn, NY
Spann, Leo G.	T/Sgt.	Engineer	Chapman, AL
*Becker, Robert H.	S/Sgt.	Asst. Eng	Lincoln, NE
Paolillo, Michael A.	T/Sgt.	Radio Oper	Carona, NY
*Savattiere, Anthony J.	S/Sgt.	Gunner	Brooklyn, NY
Sigle, Michael P.	S/Sgt.	Tail Tur	Clayton, NJ

* Deceased

Patterson, Robert P. 2nd Lt. Injured in a ground accident prior to last mission, returned to duty and completed his tour as Navigator.

Grushkewich, Aaron Asst. Radio Operator did not fly the Ploesti mission, but was KIA on a mission to Norway 18 Nov '43 after the group returned to England.

According to information provided in previous issues and from other sources, the record of Folded Wings on the crew of the Available Jones is as follows: Fred Jones, Elbert Dukato, Adolphus Sweet, Robert Becker, and Anthony Savattiere. I would appreciate any information on the missing members of the crew.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Editor: Al, thanks for the "Available Jones" data. I'm sure Art Hand has provided you with the addresses of Spann and Paolillo by now. I'm happy to see that all of you are members of the 44th BGVA.



Another Eight-Baller Out of the Woods...Robert L. Hensler, a long lost 66th gunner finally reports in with this:

S/Sgt. Robert L. Hensler
AOL Barongrin
2032 Pleasant Street
South Bend, Indiana 46615
(219) 287-5759

Dear Sir,

As a subscriber to the 8th Air Force News, I find your name in the February, 1995 issue as a contact for the 44th Bomb Group. Since I served as a gunner on 24's from about Nov. 20, 1944 to April 25, 1945, I would like to join any organization or newsletter of the 44th. I flew with the 66th Squadron and would be delighted to have a chance to possibly contact some of my old buddies of 50 years ago. I would appreciate any information of any publication that you author or know of.

Thank you.

Editor: We've sent Bob the 8-Ball Tails and a membership form. Glad to have you with us. It amazes me how after all these years, folks like Bob suddenly, somehow find out there is a 44th Bomb Group Association. Of course, it's never too late, but it saddens me to think of all the years of friendship, correspondence and visiting that Bob and others we have not found could have enjoyed at reunions. We are trying very hard, and Art Hand is finding people like Bob almost every day (witness the "Beating the Bushes" section). Anyway, Bob, let's get you back in the fold by meeting us in St. Louis. We had a lot of "First Timers" at San Antonio, and we'll have more like yourself October 3-7.



This comes from:

Dr. & Mrs. Raymond W. Bethel
27473 Pelican Ridge Circle
Bonita Springs, Florida 33923-4550
(813) 495-9613
2/5/95

Dear Will,

I am very happy to learn that the "44th Bomb Group Veterans Association" has come about. Hopefully my wife, Barbara and I will attend the 44th BGVA Reunion in San Antonio, Texas October 19-22.

I had the honor and privilege of being pilot for a great B-24 crew, which was formed at Westover Field, Massachusetts in mid-1944. After being apart many years, our crew had a wonderful reunion in July, 1993 at Florence, Massachusetts, near Westover Field. We met there to honor our late co-pilot, Joseph H. Bonneau, who passed away 3/14/93, 67th and his gracious widow, Elaine Bonneau. Besides myself, attending that remain were:

Joseph A. Andreotta - Radioman & his wife Ceil, 5770 SE Palm Road, Belleview, FL 34420

Hobbs Williams - Nose Gunner & his wife Doris, Rt. 1 Box 110-E, Hawkins, TX 75765

Eugene S. Root - Waist Gunner and his wife Ginny, 217 Thornberry Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Robert A. Moore - Tail Gunner and his wife Delores, 308 Laurel Street, Morgantown, W VA 26505

Melvin R. Coughenour - Engineer and his wife Betty were unable to attend, 208 Sherman, Sheridan, WY 82801.

Hopefully, all of us will be in attendance at our next scheduled reunion at Hobbs Williams' ranch in Texas in October, 1995. We've lost track years ago of:

Willis D. Abrams - Navigator
Stanley L. Wirth - Waist Gunner

I don't wish to bore you, but at this point, I'm in a nostalgic and philosophical mood. Very recently I visited the "All America" B-24 when it was here at the Naples Airport, Naples, FL. That brought back many memories.

On 11/11/94, I reached my 70th birthday. My son Bradley H. Bethel, MD, he practices medicine in Laurinburg, NC, and his wife Kyle and my granddaughter Bryn, visited at that time. They presented me with the gift of airfare to and from England; so, Barbara and I plan a springtime trip there to visit Shipdham and Norwich "one more time." I've found that Brad and many others of his generation, our descendants, have a sincere interest to know what our motivations and efforts were all about.

That's enough! Best wishes to you and everyone who have succeeded in bringing the 44th BGVA about.

Sincerely yours.

Editor: This crew flew 15 missions, first with 489th BG, 844th Sq., started their 67th Sq. on 18 Nov '44. I advised him about V-E Day ceremonies May 5 to 12th, 2nd ADA itinerary, Shipdham "party" on 8 May, Bank Holiday Monday, when the 44thers have their "villages" day. Wrote to both members with "new" addresses, sent copy of 8-Ball Tails and invited them to join, and also to join us in San Antonio.

"Mike" Mikoloski presenting General Leon Johnson the proclamation of love, respect and admiration held for him as our Commander by the membership of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association.



This comes from:

Edward "Mike" K. Mikoloski
626 Smithfield Road
Unit #702
North Providence, RI 02904
11/3/95

Dear Roy,

My compliments to you for the overall direction and management of the highly successful reunion in San Antonio. Like you, I too heard many complimentary comments about the reunion....: "refreshingly different," "well organized and run," "great to see some of the old faces," "could not be any better," etc.

The "refreshingly different" comment was made in reference to the business meetings you conducted. So, congratulations are indeed in order to you.

I took quite a few photos, but believe the enclosed two are particularly good, especially the one with my son and grandson with Bill Cameron. The one with Generals Brandon and Gibson are not bad either.

kindest personal regards.

*Vincent E. Mikoloski,
M/Gen. Wm. H. Brandon
B/Gen. John Y. Gibson,
Col. Edward K. Mikoloski*

*"Mike" Mikoloski and Ed Dodson
visiting General Johnson
during the Holiday Season.*



This comes from:

Forrest S. Clark
703 Duffer Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34759
(941) 427-0371

To C.W. Lundy

We need crew photos and/or individual crew member photos of the crews of Lt. Houle, Johnson, Mitchell, and others lost on the 18 Nov. 1943 mission to Oslo-Kjeller, Norway. We need data of these crews, mission records, photos of aircraft they flew on missions and biographical data on crew members.

This information is needed for the 8th Air Force Heritage Center Museum in Savannah, Georgia. If you have such information or know of anyone who does, please forward it to:

8th AF Heritage Museum
P.O. Box 1992
Savannah, GA 31402

as soon as possible, or call 1 (800) 421-9428.

This comes from:

Albert Martin

Dear Jerry,

It was real nice seeing you at the 44th Reunion. All in all, Archie Soltka and I enjoyed all of the activities very much!

Congratulations to Roy Owen and his very capable Board. Thank you very much for your prompt attention to my request of our dues for 1996. I'm enclosing a check for \$45 to cover the dues of:

Leonard Waine (pilot) Rt. 4 Box 1524, Pelatka, FL 32177

*Anson Daniels, 8626 SW 97th #6, Ocala, FL 34481-4522

Albert A. Martin, 2313 Hidden Valley Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Sincerely yours.

**See Folded Wings and Al's letter in Mail Call.*



This comes from:

Walter "Pat" Patrick
66 Sq. Combat - Original Crew
1058 Cottingham Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464-3552
3/1/95

Dear Will,

I just got the 2nd Air Division Association Spring '95 issue and it reminded me through Pete Henry's Eightball article that you folks in the revitalized 44th BGVA of which I wholeheartedly endorsed owe me my "lifetime" membership card...I think myself and Ray Ward were both two of the early on endorsers and 100 percent backers of your fight with the "eightballers"...I may add that I sent in my check #573 for \$105 on Aug. 26, 1994 and that it was made out to you as the treasurer of the 44th Vets Assn.

Will Lundy, processed through channels and returned to my treasurer (wife - Ha!) and duly misplaced since. End of sad story. So what's new! I see that my olde and old friend and former Navigator Ed Mikolowski routed himself into a new job with the new board. Please make him "earn his wings." I know he will because he was an accomplished determined combat navigator. He has a great sense of humor and is a great team player. He was a basketball coach at Westover AFB when I worked as his NCOIC of the base Information-Education Office for two years there soon after the war was over and he was the one that got me started as a sports writer, which was the first step into my overall Air Force specialty as a writer/editor for 20 years. In mentioning Ray Ward up there in the first breath, we laughed and said we expected we should be in the top ten; but it looks like we'll be lucky to be in that first 600 the article spoke about. Congratulations on that, as I know you worked hard on that project. You should get some sort of a Distinguished Service Award for that one. With all the bad weather, fires, earthquakes, etc., I'm surprised that San Bernardino has survived the onslaught; but am glad it has and you along with it...

All the best to you and yours. Hope to be hearing from you soon.

All the best.



*44th Bomb Group Association
1996 Reunion*

October 3 - 7, 1996

St. Louis, Missouri

**44th Bomb Group™
Veterans Association**
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2367



Address Correction Requested

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Reunion '96 October 3 - 7