

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS

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These rare images of A/C # 44-10553C and 42-110057Q came to the 8 Ball Tails editor through a circuitous route. This colored photograph was snapped by the late Capt. Bob Seever, who gave the glass-encased negatives to Will Lundy. The post office rattled the pictures around for seven months before delivering them. According to Steve Adams, the lower plane (68th Sq.) crashed in Merville, France 28 December 1944, after a mission to slow German troops moving toward Bastogne. The upper A/C crashlanded at Shipdham 8 September 1944, salvaged the following day.

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MISSION MEMORIES WITH A POST-WAR FINALE

GERALD GROSS

NAVIGATOR/BOMBARDIER

POST-WAR BOOK AND UNIVERSITY VP

In thinking about the missions of WWII, we tend to forget the long days of intense and skillful training which anticipated the risks to come. From the first moments of marching-drill on the boardwalk of Atlantic City, to classrooms at the University of Vermont, to Florida landing strips for pre-flight, to exhausting physical training in Nashville, lengthy navigation sessions in Quonset huts in Texas, to our first crew assembly in Mountain Home, Idaho, I had been honed to be part of a combat-ready team.

I and my crew members were an easy, efficient fit as we joined our pilot, **Tom McKenna** for final training and flights in B-24 rejects. We were a typical mix, drawn from Minnesota farmland, Pennsylvania coal mines, the plains of Texas and union halls of Brooklyn. Tom and I had broken away from our college years; he from Michigan and I from New York City.



Cadets leaving Burlington and the University of Vermont, off to their next base of training. Gross is second from left of first group of four at the turn.

In that final stage of training we flew seasoned crates that had known the heavy engagements we would soon encounter. Young brides, waiting for our return to base, would often enough look up to the skies to see our smoking B-24's coming in to land. Years later, I published the writer, Randall Jarrell, who had been with the Second Air Force, stationed in Tucson, and had trained briefly at Mountain Home. Poet, critic and teacher, he wrote what eventually became the most anthologized poem of WWII. *The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner* ends with "black flak" and "When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose."

Our crew had no such thoughts as we left Mountain Home for our last base in the States – Lincoln, Nebraska. There, for Division and Theatre assignments, one of our first briefing officers was Captain Eric Rhodes. He sure surprised his audience in coming on stage. Many of us had known him only as the foppish, feather-brained comic character, Beddini or Tonetti, of our favorite Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movies. An Oklahoman and not a Franco-Italian via Hollywood, his presence on stage emphasized how many of us were in the war effort.

To the U.K.

I went to bed every night with a prayer that our crew would be sent to the U.K. and not the Pacific. It worked. Tightly packed into a small French liner, the *Louis Pasteur*, we dodged subs and swiftly arrived at Liverpool. Introduced to Britain by a first meal heavy on brussels sprouts, we were issued all of our basic gear for the months ahead. It was a strange sensation to feel a small arms revolver under my armpit and a bayonet knife strapped to my leg as we

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The McKenna Crew

Front L-R: Gerald Gross, Navigator/Bombardier; Russell Dowell, Co-pilot; Tom McKenna, Pilot. Rear L-R: Louis Spektor, Tail Gunner; Mike Allen, Radio Operator/Gunner; Jacques Jacobson, Left Waist Gunner; James Johnson, Armament Gunner; William Hornberger, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Glen Allen, Right Waist Gunner.

entrained to East Anglia and our airbase at Shipdham.

It was Fall of 1944. In September of 1942, on approaching the age of 21, I had enlisted in the Army Air Corps Reserve. Not called up until February or March of 43, it had taken me more than a year a half to reach Shipdham and the full engagement of war, as a navigator/bombardier in the 506th Squadron of the 44th Bomb Group.

At Mountain Home we had been surrounded by rolling countryside with sheep tended by Basque shepherds who had been brought to Idaho years ago. Now we were walking along English hedgerow. Planes from our group were just returning from a mission as we ambled through the fields to our base. One plane had been seriously hit. Hobbling into the landing strip, it didn't quite make it. The ship exploded before our

eyes as it attempted to land. It was an unforgettable beginning for a green crew arriving at Shipdham that day.

Our Missions

Our crew did 23 missions 'til the end of the war. Our pilot, Tom McKenna, had made it clear from the very outset that we would perform as a disciplined group, and we did. No joking around in flight. No idle chit-chat on the intercom. On only one occasion I was called up to serve as navigator/bombardier for another crew. That group seemed awfully strange to me. Joking on the intercom and lots of casual talk made it somewhat unnerving for me as I went about my work. It was a relief not to ever go up with an unfamiliar crew again. In our twenty-three runs we had many close calls, turbulent rides, and damaged areas to

our ship as we encountered our share of fighters or flak. Often enough, I saw fellow planes go down on my left or right. We were lucky and were never forced down in combat. But weather could do it. On returning from one mission over Germany, Britain was so socked in by heavy fog that we had to be directed to a fighter base landing strip in France for an overnight. The Quonset hut that we stayed in was festooned with a galaxy of champagne corks. The fighter boys had hung them from the ceiling with strings or wire, happy evidence as how our buddies supported the local vintners. We were in Saint Quentin.

I had the time to walk into town. I then had a deep interest in music history, as I still do. Walking by the local bookstore, I noticed a book about a great fifteenth century composer. The title, *Was Josquin des Pres a Native of St. Quentin?* intrigued me. On inquiring about the author, I was told he was the local mayor. So I called on him, struggled through his English, and had a pleasant talk about Josquin.

Another music-related mission started when our early A.M. briefing officer told us we were going to Beirut. That's what I first heard when I wondered how in the world we were to reach Lebanon. It turned out to be Bayreuth. That, in turn, alarmed me because I had visions of accidentally hitting the famous Richard Wagner Festspielhaus. I kept careful notes as to where we dropped our bombs that day. Later in the evening, I went to the nearest phone booth and was able to obtain the phone number of the eminent Wagner scholar, Ernest Newman. Reaching him in London, I introduced myself and immediately told him that I was breaking regulations in talking with him because I was about to tell him just where we had dropped our bombs. I described the location of the ordnance area, whereupon Newman replied: "My dear young man, I am sorry to say that you may not have hit the Festspielhaus, but you may very well have hit that delightful rococo Bibiena theater at the Residenz." As

we did. Years later, I saw it completely restored.

It Wasn't All Bad

On occasion, the anomaly of a stunning visual moment in the drab course of a mission evoked emotion well apart from the tension of the hour. An unexpected rendezvous in Belgium around Louvain University, or circling about as early daybreak broke in East Anglia over the magnificent quads of Cambridge, or following the French coastline on return to base, to look down and see Mount St. Michel. These were special tokens of air warfare.

Meeting the Jets

We went to Berlin twice. It was a long jaunt, some 550 miles from Shipdham. Heavy flak on arrival, but our luck prevailed, as it did near the end of the War. On missions in southern Germany, we were among the first crews to be attacked by the newly developed jet fighters. Fortunately for the Eighth, as I later learned, almost two years earlier Hitler had bluntly vetoed production of the ME-262 twin-jet fighter. The fastest plane in the world, it was capable of more than 700 mph in level flight.

Although we had been given prior instruction as to how to fire at these new fighters, nothing could prepare us for the severe swiftness of their attack. Off one wing and then off another while we had barely time to aim our machine guns. Fortunately, the German fighters' jet propulsion was of short duration. If some of our long range escort fighters were nearby, they could deal with those jets. But there must have been a higher KIA rate for nearby 24's on those missions.

Harrison Salisbury may have written this in '42 or '43. It still applied when we flew in '44 and '45, although increased fighter escort had reduced casualties. The words from The New York Times correspondent were: "To fly in the Eighth Air Force in those days was to hold a ticket to a funeral. Your

own." Young men, and well trained, we were entirely unaware of such momentous sentiments. For example, I don't remember ever being downright scared during the conflagrations of a mission or during the heavy flak of a bomb run. Awfully pre-occupied, resigned, determined, angry, fatalistic; but not scared. However, I'm sure I would have been if we had ever gone down.

Wesel

Toward the end of the war, though, I experienced some moments of panic. B24's had been selected over 17's because they could fly more effectively at low levels, and we had to drop supplies on the German side of the lines, as our transports and gliders came in to land troops. That mission to Wesel was a well-coordinated effort, but in dropping supplies for our troops at a very low level of about 200 feet, Tom had to fly well into German lines, in order to circle properly for our way out and return. We seemed to fly lower than some of the tall smokestacks in the area. The German small arms fire was intense (rifles included!). Much of it ricocheted through my nose turret area. And that was the only mission for which I had forgotten to wear my flak vest! The debriefing session following that engagement was the only occasion where I drained more than one double Scotch.

Although our low level run in aiding glider troops during the Battle of the Bulge was unforgettable because of heavy arms fire and the number of gliders destroyed on landing, my absent flak jacket on the Wesel low level jaunt "takes the cake" in the close call category.

An Engine Problem

Another close episode, ironically enough, was not in action. We had just taken off for a mission when two of our four Pratt and Whitney engines, which normally carried 1200 horse power each for take-off, were not functioning properly. Tom, our pilot,

could not gain altitude, and it was immediately clear that we would have to abort our mission to Germany that day. In addition, it was also clear to us that we could not gain sufficient altitude to circle and land the plane, given our heavy bomb load. Tom, therefore, had to make the decision to salvo the bombs, knowing they would not explode with the pins still in them. Some of us were still assembled in the cockpit area while Tom sought to find his control to release the bombs, in order to keep us from heading into the ground. His control failed to function. The only thing left to do was for me to crawl up to the nose as quickly as possible. There, I was able to release the regular bomb control. And just in time.

On returning to base, Tom and I, along with our co-pilot, **Russ Dowell**, decided to see where our bombs had landed. We hopped into a jeep, drove into the countryside, and found the bombs which had ploughed up a narrow macadam road. A number of locals were nearby, puffing on their pipes as we approached. Looking up at us, not the least bit upset, one of them, standing next to their little building, merely said, 'Well, boys, you almost got our pub, ya' did, almost got our pub.' If I hadn't gotten up to the nose in time, we would not have been with those blokes for such a pleasant exchange.

The Trolley Missions

Our first mission had been to Altenahr, near Cologne. It was a source of relief to see the Cathedral still standing at the end of the war.



The Ruins of Cologne

While we waited reassignment to the Far East, the 44th, as with other Groups, conducted what we called 'Trolley Missions.' We took up all our ground personnel to fly low level over now-silent Germany, to closely inspect the results of our bombings. We were incredulous as to the damage we had done. The ruins of Hamburg were unbelievable.

After The War

After the end of the war, I decided to seek out a career in book publishing, while, via evening hours, I completed course credits for my truncated college degree.

The profession of book publishing can allow one to become involved with many individuals of consequence, as it did for me. From high table at Oxford's All Soul's, to a gathering of "old China hands" to celebrate Barbara Tuchman's Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45 with a festive dinner at the Hoover Institution, or overlooking Paris at midnight from her apartment building with Marlene Dietrich, there were many memorable occasions. For about five or six years after the war, I had a complete aversion to flying. It was only when I had to be in Washington on short notice for my company's publication of *The Economic Report of the President* that I could get myself back into a plane. After thirty years, I left book publishing to go on to academia,



where I served as vice president for a large university in New England for almost another twenty years. Both careers provided me with exceptional linkages to Germany.

I expect that it is correct for me to say I am the only member of the Eighth Air Force to have had an extended relationship, some twenty years after the war, with one of Hitler's closest associates. During the war, London's *The Observer* posited that one man in Germany was responsible for having extended the conflict by an additional six months: Albert Speer, Hitler's Minister of Armaments. I surely could not envision that I would meet with him some twenty-odd years later.



Albert Speer with Adolph Hitler at the Eiffel Tower



28 June 1940. France defeated, Hitler was at the height of his powers. On his one and only visit to Paris, which lasted about three hours in the early morning, he chose to have favored architect, Albert Speer, on his right and his favorite sculptor, Arno Breker on his left. Hitler saw the visit as cultural, not military. He appointed Speer Minister of Armaments in February 1942.

As a senior executive of the Macmillan Publishing Company, I would each year manage business negotiations at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The first year that I attended and saw the vast and meticulously ordered expanse of exhibitors from a balcony in the large hall, I immediately thought of the regimented troops of a Nuremberg rally.

The only defendant to declare himself guilty at the Nuremberg trials, Speer, sentenced to twenty years at Spandau, came out of prison in October, 1966. Then at the Frankfurt Book Fair, I and the London publisher, Andre' Deutsch, decided to call Frau Speer at their home in Heidelberg to express

our joint interest in the English language publication of her husband's memoirs. That phone call eventually produced the international best seller, *Inside the Third Reich* and it initiated a relationship that I maintained with Speer over the years, even after I left Macmillan to join Boston University.

On settling in Boston and meeting trustees of the university, I encountered someone who knew more about the 44th Bomb Group than I did. He was Arthur G. Metcalf, owner of the Electronics Corporation of America. He had been a test pilot and had served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the war. Involved in the development of the Norden bombsight, he and Ira Eaker were good friends. Out of that relationship and my affiliation with Speer, I, at Metcalf's behest, was able to arrange a significant post-war meeting, wherein General Eaker met with Speer at his home in Heidelberg to review the WWII bombing results. The talks were taped and published in *Air Force Magazine*.

Upon reading this text, Dr. John Silber, President Emeritus of Boston University, wrote to me as follows: "You will recall that you arranged for me to meet with Albert Speer at his home in Heidelberg, and subsequently arranged a meeting for Arthur Metcalf, General Eaker and me with Speer. On that occasion, Eaker returned to Speer all the medals that had been confiscated from him after the war. Speer seemed pleased to receive them."

Translated chapters came to me from Richard, one at a time. I would then send them on to Speer. In discussing a chapter on the bombing of Berlin, Speer said to me: "I must have been looking up when you were looking down."

For the sake of my own conscience in working with Speer, I had him agree to direct his share of his American royalty income to a refugee aid association in the States. This

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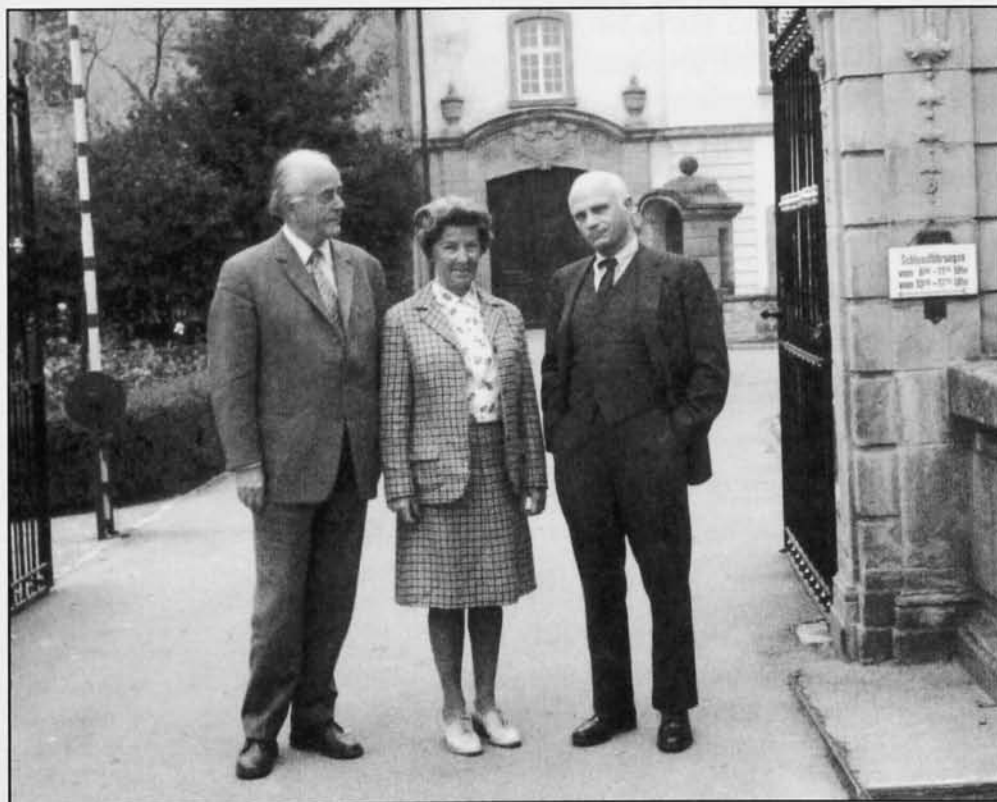
never became public knowledge. Til now. I still have a page that Speer wrote out for me, to indicate the relatively small amount of income that he realized from the world-wide success of *Inside the Third Reich*. Much of the income went to the original German publisher, Ullstein. The supervising editor there, Wolf Jobst Seidler, had been a tremendous help to Speer in polishing off the final text. Wolf had brought in Joachim Fest, then a member of the editorial board of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung for close assistance. On occasion, I would meet with the three of them in Heidelberg.

Speer and I had much to discuss in the translation of his memoirs, which were being translated by my close friends, Richard and Clara Winston. Clara and my wife, Flora, had been college classmates. Flora could recall the day when Clara decided to quit college to go off to live on a farm with Richard, who was a conscientious objector. There, deep in

Vermont, as language experts immersed in German translation work, they were, on occasion, thought to be German spies.

We did not discuss the war much over the years. However there was a memorable exchange when I happened to mention end-of-war missions when my squadron was attacked by jet fighters. Speer then recalled how he, Milch, Jodl, Galland had urged the rapid development and production of the Messerschmitt ME-262. It was 1943. Hitler, obsessed with the need for bombers to strike Britain, ordered that all work on the ME-262 cease. He then reversed the order in early '44; but time had been lost, and it took months for the first jets to go into action.

When I told Speer how relieved we were, having engaged those planes, to come to the end of the war and the end of our missions, Speer looked at me, and in his somewhat droll, ironic manner, slowly said, "Well, I suppose we can say Hitler saved your life."



L-R Albert Speer, his wife Margarete and Gerald Gross In Heidelberg

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER Roy Owen



Now that I am (temporarily) on the other end of the Pecking Order from semi-retired to Head 8-Baller, I am again suffering. In my term of Vice President, I had become relaxed from the harassment of our Editor, "Please won't you sit down and write your President's Column?" So it's "Hello again, folks." In a personal note, this first six months of my serving in fulfillment of the last year of Bob Lehnhausen's term, has been hectic. First, which was to be a nice two week vacation in Hawaii was ruined by my contacting what has become known as "The Airline Virus" on the flight over. I was feeling so bad and coughing 'til my chest and stomach muscles were aching. I flew home after the first week. Although I was more comfortable being home, I was still so weak I was unable to attend the very important Mid-year Board meeting at Carlisle Barracks, PA. That will be covered elsewhere by our Secretary/Editor who, so ably, arranged and managed that most eventful meeting.

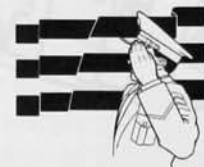
Two facets of the meeting I will comment on are: First, the object of the meeting was the survey of and meeting with the U.S. Army War College and Historical Center toward their becoming the repository for the treasured 44th Bomb Group archives collected by **Will Lundy**. His apprehensions over the capabilities of the Carlisle staff and facilities apparently vanished during the visit. It has been reported he is exhilarated over the choice and supports the Board decision to affiliate with the U.S. Army.

Next, I note in the Minutes of the Board meeting, the briefing by Archivist Chris Clark, dealing with high interest he has cultivated in the management of the Xerox Corporation. What Chris has provided them describes our Master Database program, and our intent to distribute a MDB Compact Disk to our living veterans or a living family member. In doing so, he has projected, not only inclusion of the combat histories of all the other Bomb Groups in the 2nd Air Division, but the salvation of those priceless combat archives which are preserved on common paper, transcribing their content into the digital recorded format developed in our MDB

Chris and I co-authored and signed a letter to Dr. James Cahalan, the Xerox Vice President, requesting a meeting with him (04-28-05) Dr. Calahan is responsible for administering their corporate grant program. We are talking about grant money in the range of \$7-800,000 per year for two years here! Fasten your seat belts folks. Big Chris has gotten their attention! That's all for this time. May I say, it was some fun getting back to again with the President's Letter. I'm looking forward to seeing you in Tacoma.

Roy Owen

Roy Owen, Your (Well-Worn) President



THE ESCAPADES OF THE LATE ARCHIE BARLOW



Archie Barlow

I stormed no hill, I took no ground, I brought no secrets back,

I captured not a Boche at all, I just don't have the knack.

I harmed not a hair on a German's head, I left no scars to see.

He hardly knew I'd been around, although he looked for me.

Sixty years have gone by, but the cost and the pain of wiping out the V-I Missile Sites at Escalles Sur Buchy continues to throb in the 44th Bomb Group. When T/Sgt. Archie Barlow jumped out the bomb bay of Ram It Dammit, and pulled the ripcord on his parachute, he had no way of knowing that six planes were going down, thirty-two airmen would be KIA, sixteen would become POW, three little girls would become orphans, and that he would be one of only nine who managed to evade the Germans. The date was January 21, 1944. His pilot was **Hartwell Howington**.

Barlow hit the ground in northern France, twisting his ankle on impact. Immediately he was surrounded by villagers who thought he was German. He shouted 'No Boche, no Boche'; then when he said 'American', he was surrounded by smiles, warm greetings and warm handshakes. He knew a good French word, 'Cache', which meant 'hide,' and immediately a middle aged lady took command. She directed young men to hide his parachute, then motioned for him to follow her.

Unfortunately, the sprained ankle made the walk an agonizing experience, but he made it to a wooded area and found to his delight, **Charles Blakley**, Waist Gunner on the Ram It Dammit. As they crunched in the bushes, German soldiers in trucks passed them, scanning the woods as they rode by. Other Germans walked by, supposedly on a search, but more interested in their own conversation. When they had the opportunity to size up their situation, Barlow realized that he had left his dog tags in Shipdham. If the Germans captured him without military ID, he would be shot as a spy.

The lady did return after dark, accompanied by an elderly man, who led them to a house where, to their delight, they met **Alvin Rosenblatt**, Radio Operator, and **Alfred Klein**, Waist Gunner. Their hostess fed them potato soup and coarse bread, and they slept—some in a bed; some on mattresses on the floor. Their hostess had a collection of dog tags, so Barlow's identity rose from Sergeant to 1st Lieutenant in one big jump. In a day they were outfitted in civilian clothes by Underground operators who would not divulge their own names. That was too risky. In the event that the Germans captured the group, they could be tortured to reveal the identities of the French helpers.

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Germans Were Everywhere

The train to Paris was filled with German soldiers, and by minimizing the limp on his aching ankle, Barlow and other crewmen walked past them and were met by another nameless member of the Underground.

For the next few weeks, Barlow was relocated from one household to another, as it was considered dangerous to stay in one place very long. His fellow crewmen were all smokers, so they asked their French friends to pick up butts that were thrown on the street. They took them apart, collected the loose tobacco and rolled it in any paper they could find.

Word of their existence was radioed to England. They were given forged French identification cards, complete with photographs of them looking clean shaven and spruced. Getting the photo involved a trip to a photo booth, waiting seven minutes for the picture, and having to look unconcerned when he happened to be elbow to elbow with German soldiers. One at a time, all four members of the Howington crew got their photo ID's, and were ready for the next step on their trek to freedom.

Bad Bedding, Worse Food

Time after time they were alerted that they would be departing by train to Toulouse, and time after time the trip was cancelled. Finally, they were enroute on an Express train, wondering whether the conductor was part of the Underground system. The next trip took them to the town of Foix; where, after a three hour walk, they slept on hay, freezing in an unoccupied cabin and were fed moldy cheese.

Their guides turned them over to friendly Basque guides, who were to lead them to the neutral country of Andorra, then on to Spain. French guides helped airmen for love of country; Basques were in business—they received \$500/each for every airman they turned over to Allied representatives in Spain. The food they had to offer was mutton broth. By this time they had accumulated eight more airmen, British and American, who were to join them on the next three hour trek.

Turning Back

After a ten day wait, they started out with their new guides, but bad food and freezing conditions took their toll on Barlow. He became violently ill. He passed out in the snow, and guides shook him to bring him back to consciousness, only to pass out again. Finally, the highest ranking officer in the group, a Major, decided the group had to push on without him. They gave him ration tickets, money and some frozen mutton, and the group pressed forward. Barlow returned to the freezing cabin.

His situation continued to be increasingly grave. At one point he tried to start a fire with his few matches, but they were damp and would not ignite. He tried to dry them in a sun-shiny window, but to no avail. Neither could he defrost his mutton.

Finally, in desperation, he walked several hours to a village, where a kindly couple fed him, fixed his shoes, gave him a comfortable bed and instructed him how to get to the town from which he had started, Toulouse. He had hoped to proceed forward toward Spain, but his new friend told him of German outposts along the way, and that his I.D. would fool no-one. Armed with a lunch which the wife had packed, he set forth again, hoping to find the railroad station where, with luck, he could get back to Paris and helpful Underground personnel.

After buying a ticket to Toulouse, he laid down on a bench and fell asleep, only to be awakened by two policemen, demanding his identity. Time after time, he gave his newly acquired French name, and with great severity and drawn pistols, they continued to question him.

Finally, he admitted he was a downed American airman, whereupon they greeted him with back pats, kisses, hand shakes and hugs. They asked a routine question, 'When will the invasion begin?' to which he gave his routine answer, "Soon."

Back to Paris

He could not find his 'safe house' in Toulouse, so he made the decision to go back to Paris. German soldiers were all about, and would surely notice his faulty French when he was trying to purchase a ticket. Taking a chance, he prevailed on a policeman, who fortunately was not a German sympathizer. He bought the ticket for him. Next there was a problem of food. He laid down a large bill, asking for 'Bread and Beer,' the only French words he could handle fluently. The waiter misunderstood his request, and handed him stacks of pretzels to the value of the large bill. Barlow stuffed and stuffed until he got the last one in his pocket. In time the train arrived and he was off to Paris to find his former rescuers.

Simone, a waitress, befriended him, and again he was back among friends who sympathized with his misfortune in becoming ill, but marveled that he had found his way back without being captured. For weeks he sat in a friend's house, watching German troop trains heading east. German crews were constantly scanning the skies, as though looking for a raid which never came. At times they pointed their ack ack gun directly toward his window, reason enough for him to move to another room.

By now Barlow was thirty pounds lighter, and his Underground advisors hesitated to send him back across the mountains toward Spain. The only alternative would be escape by submarine, which was considered more dangerous. He opted for another trip over the mountains, so they put new wooden soles on his shoes, and fed him to the best of their ability to build his strength.

At that time the "City of Light" was truly the City of Darkness; scarce food; fuel for cooking once a day; and for lack of gas for vehicles, horses were used for delivering merchandise. Potatoes were the mainstay of the Parisian diet, always accompanied with a bit of wine. Determined to get in good shape for the trip, Barlow religiously did push ups, sit ups and running in place. Good fortune smiled when he was joined by a young P-51 pilot with whom he could hold a conversation in English.

Together they set forth again where they were joined by five other airmen. A young lady led them the length of the train, off the back and onto another train, then separated them in groups of three. It was apparent the Underground had studied all aspects of train travel, and figured ways to get their charges safely to their destination. Hours later the train stopped at a desolate place that had no station. About sixty people debarked; and after the locals had left to go to the nearby houses, the men learned that they were all airmen.

Automobiles barreled them through hairpin curves with no let up in speed. Again they were placed in the care of the Basque guides, armed with submachine guns and pistols. Also armed were two Underground members who were leaving France, as their identities were known to the Germans. They hoped to get through Spain and eventually join DeGaulle's forces in England.

The Pyrenees

For days and days the group plodded on, dogged by German patrols that had a shoot-out with their Basque guides. Of course, the Germans won. Fortunately, one of the travelers had a map, so their trek continued. With the shooting, some of the group ran in different directions, so Barlow found himself with only three companions, Jim, Stan and Lynn. When avail-

able food hit bottom, Stan produced a pound cake which he was carrying for a 'real emergency.' They split it four ways, and it gave them the energy to climb the rest of the way up the snow covered peak, and over the border into Spain.

Jim, one of the four, began passing out; and finally, could not be rallied. They had to leave him, as German soldiers with dogs were within eyesight. The three slogged through foot high snow to the top of the crest, and somehow got separated. At that point Barlow thought of a fast way down the other side. He flattened out on top of the crusted snow; and using his overcoat for a sled, traveled long distances, using his arms and legs as rudders to avoid colliding with huge boulders. When he reached the valley road, he stopped at the first house he came to and asked, 'France or Spain?' The answer, 'Espana'. He had arrived!

In time he caught up with Lynn and Stan. They shared their time with an interesting conglomerate of many nationalities, including German soldiers who decided to desert, rather than return to the Eastern front.

Five weeks later they were transported to Gibraltar, and immediately flown to London.

As if fate had one last fright in store for Barlow, on his last night in London, V-1 rockets began to fall. He survived that also. Without his dog tags, he had to prove over and over, his true identity. Then, on June 19, 1944, he arrived in Washington, D.C. Within a week he married Aline Morgan.

*Archie Barlow passed away in 2000. Aline lives with their daughter Pat in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. She is a skilled seamstress, and she spends her time making quilts for needy people. Later events in the 44th led to discovery of three orphans whose fathers were lost at Escalles Sur Buchy—Lois Cianci, daughter of **Clair Schaeffer**; Jackie Roberts, daughter of **Jack Ostenson**; and Linda Guyton, daughter of **Hartwell Howington**.*

Pursuit in the Pyranees can be purchased by writing to Aline Barlow, 160 Jackson Drive SE, Calhoun, GA 30701. The price is \$20.



"I would rather have a German division in front of me than a French one behind me..."General George S. Patton

Bumper Sticker:

If you can read this, thank a teacher. Since it's in English, thank a soldier.

No Longer A Secret

Arthur W. Schueler sent his story, "Why Me?" for the last publication of the 8 BTs, up until he was transferred to the Secret Squadrons. He did not tell us what he did there. However the book by Pat Carty, *Secret Squadrons of the 8th Air Force*, records an amazing variety of operations that took place at Cheddington, all part of the plan that led to ultimate victory.

This quiet spot in the English countryside became first a home for the RAF. They conducted squadron exercises in Tomahawks in technical and artillery reconnaissance and message dropping sorties in support of British troops.

Next came the Mighty Eighth. The Ground Crew of the 44th BG came to Cheddington first, waiting the arrival of B-24s, who were still patrolling for subs in the Gulf of Mexico. When the first nine crews from the 66th Squadron arrived 1 October 1942, they found the airfield too small and the runways too short. Off they went to Shipdham.

Cheddington went through a wide variety of uses before it moved into its most serious work—confounding the Germans. For a while Army tactics, such as jungle warfare were taught there. When the Stars and Stripes took over, it became a training school for new combat men. An Intelligence Library was established with radio facilities, bombardment & navigational equipment; an old B-24D became available for hands-on study. Pilot training involved pre-op checks, air-sea rescue, interphone control, enemy tactics, ditching equipment, bail-out information, flying control, formation flying, aerodrome lighting, engine operations and much more. Navigators, bombardiers and radio operators all had their special classes.

There were frequent surprise visitors. Once a captured German JU-88 landed at Cheddington, escorted by P-47s. It became a valuable resource for learning the enemy plane's capabilities. A C-47 secreted Major General John Hodges and Commander

Butcher--Ike's Naval Aid onto the base. They were enroute to London to meet Ike. 'Blood & Guts' Patton came through, as did film star, James Cagney.

B-24s became available in Anglia, replacing the Fortresses for night surveillance of enemy operations. The Liberators were painted black to deflect German searchlights from the planes. The men used jamming devices to mask radio talk when groups were forming. They were frequently able to spoof the enemy into believing that more groups were enroute to attack than was the case.

One major contribution of the Secret Squadrons was called PSYWAR--Psychological Warfare. This involved dropping leaflets in Germany to tell the German citizens the actual progress of the Allied Troops, and the hopelessness of resistance. On the eve of D-Day, they dropped them to villagers of France, Belgium & Holland, informing the citizens of the imminent invasion. 45,000 pounds/day were dropped over occupied territory. They appealed to foreign workers to sabotage the German war effort. On two momentous occasions, D-Day and the day of the Rhine crossing, 1,000,000 copies were dumped upon enemy troops. When German soldiers surrendered, most had copies of the pamphlets in their hands or in their pockets.

As the war progressed, 'Carpetbagger Missions' dropped supplies and agents to resistant groups. "Gas Missions" flew with the bomb bay full of fuel, carrying them to Patton's Allied Troops that were moving eastward too quickly for normal supply lines to handle.

Although the number of losses did not nearly equate to that of combat airmen, the missions of these Secret Squadrons were anything but safe. Their list of KIAs, MIAs and POWs represents the many groups that served at Cheddington. It has been said, "The pen is mightier than the sword", but the men of the 44th know that "The value of the pen was mightily enhanced by the bomb."

YOU CAN CLEAN OUT YOUR ATTIC NOW



Paul Kay and Will Lundy at Ridgway Hall

"We're from the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, and we are looking for a home for our wartime memorabilia," I told Major Michael Lynch, when Perry and I dropped in to look around.

Immediately the United States Army Heritage & Education Center at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania opened their hearts and their arms to us.

Major Lynch immediately reminded Perry, "You were in the Army Air Corps, and you have come to the right place."

Chris Clark from Monassas, Virginia, a researcher in the National Archives, was first to know that this one year old facility was operational. Perry's and my casual drop-in led to an eye-opening tour of a huge library, replete with many computers and tables for group meetings. Major Lynch promptly pulled up the names of General **James Hodges**, then General **Leon Johnson** on the computer. **Greg Statler**, Registrar, gave us a tour of their unique method of displaying heroes of many wars, particularly the memorabilia of General **Matthew B. Ridgway** of the XVIII Airborne Corps, for whom the building is named. Their photo repository is temperature controlled. They handle all memorabilia with rubber gloves. The build-

ing has been in use for only one year, so computers are busy tapping out collections of army stories. Major Lynch said, "We consider our job to tell the story of the Army, one soldier at a time."

In the coming year, an Education Building will be started, expressly so school children, researchers, historians or community organizations can come in and learn the details of army life, starting with the Spanish-American War and onward to Operation Freedom in Iraq.

You've heard this before, but I'll say it again----- No group has documented their history so thoroughly as the 44th BGVA.

The Board met at the Museum several weeks ago, eager to know **Will Lundy's** opinion of the facility, as a home for the treasures he has collected and guarded so valiantly. With his nod, the Board voted for Ridgeway Hall to be the repository for 44th materials.

Arlo Bartch's demonstration of the Database drew the attention of the highest officials in the museum. **Bob Lehnhausen's** recollections of high level decisions captivated them. He is going to put his memories on audio tape, to become part of the collection.

Do you have treasures that you have not decided where they belong? Contact the Heritage Center. A hundred years from now, your great-grandchildren can come and look at them. Let the museum know what you have, and if it is suitable, they will pay for shipping. If you have photos, label them with pencil. (Ink will eventually come through the front of the picture. Do not send your old uniform to the cleaners, before passing it on. They will take care of that. Years later, the chemicals of dry-cleaning will be destructive to the fabrics. Contact Major **Michael Lynch**, 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle, PA 17013. Tel. 717 245-4114; or Greg Statler at the same address.

LETTER FROM SHIPDHAM

As I write this letter to you all, we are fast approaching the end of the 60th anniversary year marking the end of WWII. As Shipdham Aero Club celebrated at the beginning of this special year, so we will mark the end of this year in a manner befitting the occasion. On the Saturday we will have a Victory Fly – in at the club with memorabilia and V.E. support items provided by the Royal British Legion (One of the UK's top veteran associations.) On the Sunday we join with the villagers of Shipdham who are holding a victory Fete to be held on the village green in the center of Shipdham. No doubt some of you will remember the area well. From the photos I have seen, it appears to have changed little since your day, except the Flying Standard pub has since closed and is now a private dwelling.

The English historic aviation magazine *Fly Past* has confirmed that it will soon be publishing an article that covers stories about English children who met and befriended Shipdham air-crews and occasionally flew with them. I'll make sure a copy gets to Ruth as soon as it is published and the dear old snail-mail can make its way across the pond.

On a personal note, I have collected enough material and been provided with enough photos by the 44th's UK representative, Steve Adams, to put together a lecture about Shipdham and what you guys did while you were here. It is called Station 115 – The Story of an Airfield. It lasts for a couple of hours and is supported by overhead projector slides and a short black and white film. I have delivered it five times so far this year, and have two or three more bookings for it before the summer. It goes out to businessmen's dinner clubs, aviation enthusiasts groups, young farmers clubs and similar civic groups across Norfolk and the wider East Anglia. If any of you guys have any stories or photos that you feel you could share with me to add a personal touch to the lecture, I would be delighted to hear from you and include your material. You may be surprised how interested these folks are in hearing about what you guys did. At the last lecture, the Question and Answer session afterwards went on for over forty minutes, and only really stopped because it was time for the staff to clear up and close the hall.

Our flying season has just about got under way over here, and your old home is starting to reverberate once more with the sound of aero engines on a daily basis.....No great changes in that department then.

Look after yourselves,

Peter Bodle (President of the Shipdham Aero Club)

FOUND: THE TWO IDENTIFIED MEN



At the Omaha Reunion I met Walter Dunbar and Wayne Miller (506 Sq.), members of the John Doctor's crew. At later reunions, I tried to identify them by their photo; but

nobody knew them—until I ran their picture in the 'Tails. Sam Miceli had a better magnifying glass than I had; he read Miller's name tag, identifying Miller. Then Dunbar called, and here are his recollections:



Walter Dunbar & Wayne Miller

"We flew 33 missions in 78 Days," Dunbar recalled. "I will never forget the trip to Brunswick, May 19, 1944. Our engine got hit over the target, and we fell behind. Six fighters made passes at us, but Doctor kept going up, then down, so shells were passing over and under us. We made it back to safety. "Another wild adventure was over an airport near Nancy, France. We were going after an ammunition dump. There was a heavy cloud cover, so the Lead Crew took us around a second time. The anti-aircraft gunners got one engine; then the lever to salvo the bombs didn't work. We got out of formation, and got back an hour and a half late.

"Major James McAtee met us in a jeep. He was ready to send out the news—that we were MIA."

Dunbar was happy to see his Commander's picture in the last 8 BTs. Major James McAtee had pinned both the Air Medal and DFC on him.

When Dunbar wants to check out his list of missions, he reads a plaque on the wall. His son honored him by creating this unique wall hanging for his father.

Wayne Miller, Navigator on the **John Doctor** crew, was the only one who reported an error in the *Winter 8 Ball Tails*. Remember the picture of the planes in flight, and a request for information about the photos? (Page 26) The picture is upside down. Turn it around, and you will see that Wayne is absolutely correct.

Miller also remembers the Brunswick mission vividly—six fighters making passes at them, with shells going over and under the plane.

He remembers living in a Quonset Hut with 8 officers (two crews). Life was comfortable until they added more beds and more crew officers. He remembers that things got a bit testy at times; but he agrees, that was only one tiny inconvenience of being in combat in ETO. Wayne commemorates his experience on his license plate.



Wayne Miller's License Plate

From the Diary of the Late William Uvanni

From the Diary of the late **William Uvanni**, Radio Operator on the **George M. Beiber** crew: July 7, 1944. Bernberg, Germany. "They woke us up for our first mission at 1:00 A.M. We knew we were going last night, and I doubt any of our crew got any sleep. Trucks took us to the mess hall and then to briefing.

"On the wall-map of Europe a red line (tape) was stretched all the way from England to Bernberg, deep in Germany. We were briefed to expect fighters, as this is in a fighter region, and also, to expect heavy flak.

"We were pretty tense on the way to the target. About 5 minutes before target time, we were hit by fighters. We flew in the lead element and were right up front. Approximately 60 fighters lined 15 abreast came in at us from 2:00 and slightly high. They fired as they came in, and you could see orange 20 millimeter shells as they came through the air. None of the planes from our squadron were hit, but an entire squadron (12 aircraft) were knocked out on the first pass. Some blew up and others went into dives and never came out.

"Some of the crew saw several chutes come out of these planes, and a few minutes later the report came over VHF radio, that the Germans were strafing the airmen hanging in their chutes. We had been warned to delay our chute openings until a lower altitude to avoid this, but under tension, we don't always do the proper thing.

"We were in heavy flak all of this time, and I watched through the open bomb bays. We had P-38 fighter escorts, and they gathered where the German fighters were in a few minutes, and really paid them off. The ones that hit us were ME-410s (Germany's latest) and the inter-phone rang out with "There's a 38 on a 410 – he blew up!! "There's another 410 on fire!" "Hey, do you see that B-24 burning on our right?" "Another B-24 blew up behind us!" "Look at that P-38 after that German – there he goes – look at him – he's coming apart!!"

"I saw Bernberg below and it looked rather small. Our target was a bomber assembly plant right on the edge of town. It was easily identified because of the large runways in front of the plant. Our bombing was excellent. All the bomb explosions I saw were on the plant area and a few minutes after 'bombs away', the whole place was nothing but smoke and flames.

"We were about 7-10 minutes in the flak, and when we broke away from it, all the enemy fighters had disappeared. We had no further trouble on the way home.

"At interrogation the intelligence officer told us that missions didn't come any rougher than today's, and we were relieved to know that they would not all be like this one.

"Our group lost five aircraft; and **Paul Luthman**, Waist Gunner on **Walter Zerman's** crew was hit by a 20 MM shell, which broke his ankle and shattered the bone. (Five months later he returned to combat to complete his tour.)

"The mission lasted 7 hours, and we were on oxygen for 4 hours. Our bombing altitude was 19,000 feet, and the temperature was a minus seven degrees."

*Perry Morse was Tail Gunner. Morse remembers saying to Waist Gunner, the late **Harold Maggard**, "If all the missions are like this one, we won't make five, let alone thirty-five." However the Beiber crew did fly thirty five, and not one member of the crew was injured or killed. That was a record. Four members off the Beiber crew are still with us: **Jerry Folsom**, Co-pilot, **Paul Boensch**, Bombardier, **Nathan Woodruff**, Engineer.*

YOUR HISTORY IS IN CYBERSPACE

The idea of creating a Database with the history of everybody in the 44th Bomb Group seemed like an unimaginable task; that was ten years ago. Today it has become a reality.

Arlo Bartsch, a B-17 pilot with the 379th Bomb Group, and an 'Adopted 44th Bomb Group member', wrote a computer program that encompasses the 44th's story during World War II. No other organization involved in the war has managed to preserve its history so totally as the 44th Bomb Group.

Technology and the dedication of Will Lundy, who has done an amazing job of documenting and preserving the record of the 44th Bomb Group for the past 60 years, has made it possible for a dream to come true – a permanent record of the events that brought us to victory.

Check it out. On your own computer (or your grandchildren's). Access the Internet by typing in the following. <http://www.8thairforce.com>.

When you have accessed the Web Site

- - - SELECT Search Database from the selection menu.

Next, from the Search Our Database screen

- - - SELECT If Not A Member – Click Here To Join

Identify yourself, invent a password, type in your address & phone number, submit the information. You will receive confirmation of your selected ID and PASSWORD at your e-mail address.

You will now be a registered member and be able to enter your selected ID and PASSWORD and search our database. From there, you can click on any of the following categories:

All Missions and Crews Flown By - - - type in your name or anyone you wish to research.

Group Mission Listing - - - you can check out any mission that you or the Group flew.

Aircraft Special Status - - - tells whatever happened to any plane.

Roll of Honor - - - is where Will Lundy's careful recording of lost buddies is available.

Personal Legacy - - - contains personal stories from letters and diaries.

Search Biographies - - - where your personal history is recorded.

All data retrieved and displayed from the Database is printable. Share it with your family and friends.

Don't be intimidated by this technology. **Jump into it.** This trip into Cyberspace is FREE.

You will soon be receiving your own computer disk, from the 44th BGVA, which contains more complete information about the Legacy of the men and women of the 44th Bomb Group, during WWII and later.

Why not get a head start by checking out this Website?

If you have any problems accessing 8thairforce.com, please contact Arlo Bartsch @ 510-922-5247.

T/SGT. ROBERT PADGETT REMEMBERS D-DAY

Padgett kept hour-by-hour account of the most important date in WWII—D-Day. He reported 'wake up time' was 12:30 a.m. He put on long handles and flying suit, went to the Mess Hall for a cup of coffee and some kind of food. Then he went to the Equipment Room for the flight gear, then to briefing for the status. That's when his crew learned that it was D-Day. (Actually they suspected that something big was going to happen, as all crews were on a stand down on June 5th.)

The flight route was laid out with the return to England. They picked up the guns for the turrets, Use Easy Text, entries to save a signature block, a special notice, etc. --all routine requirements preceding all flights. At the site of *Wendy W* they listened to ground crew comments and waited for the start up flare.



Robert & Juanita Padgett
September 1944

"02:20 am. It's semi-dark and we have a light ground fog, the planes are lined up, my take-off CAP is on and the blessings have been made as we pass the run-way Chaplain, and are starting the take-off run. The plane in front of us rolls, a crew member of that plane and ours is in the back of the plane to flash a colored light for us to follow. I, the flight engineer, standing between the pilot and co-pilot on the flight deck, will count off about 30 seconds before we start our take-off run, also to be sure that plane ahead of ours made it off the runway; then call out the air speed and operate what controls the pilots call for. We take off and start the climb out, later breaking out of the fog, but it's still hazy; and we are still following the light of that plane. All of a sudden there's a call over the intercom, and I see another B-24 coming under us. I shouted 'PULL UP'. The pilots, **Charles Gayman** and **Clair Hill** and I were pulling controls and pushing throttles, trying to avoid a midair collision. The other plane's right rudder struck the lower left front of our plane. We moved up and away from the other plane, and after recovery, we found that we had a hole in the left front side of the fuselage, and lost an air speed line. All other lines were OK. We did not see the results to the other plane; the crewman in the tail of that plane using a flashing light must have been just a few feet away from our left side engine props. A REAL SCARY ENCOUNTER."

Wendy W continued on the mission, to hit coastal guns, but due to weather conditions, no bombs were dropped; besides they were too close to the Invasion Forces. So the flight returned to England. He later learned that the plane which bumped them was *Battlin Baby*, #42-94892, piloted by **Ted Weaver**.

The next mission at 1620 hours was in support of the ground forces at Vire, France on *Patsy Ann II*. After reaching their target

...continued on page 22

and were returning to the English coast, their A/C was fired on by Anti-Aircraft guns from ENGLAND!!! Turning back from the coast, they checked their IFF electronic and fired flare identifier colors, but again they were fired on by anti-aircraft guns. They fired flares again, checked in identification information for the day and turned back to try again. As it happened, a flight of B-24s came in range. They tagged on and made it back to Shipdham. At debriefing Lt. **Joseph Woodlock** found out he had received the wrong identifier packet for that time of day.

The flight time on D-Day was 13 hours,

20 minutes. Padgett looks back on those events and wonders how the crews survived with so many planes in flight over such a small area. As he summed it up, "There were no flight ground controllers then, just good planning, practice and an alert CREW."

*(Padgett shared these frightening moments with **Charles Gayman**, Pilot; **Clair Hill**, Co-pilot; **Joseph Woodlock**, Navigator; **Frank Kuneth**, Bombardier; **Richard Breon**, Radio Operator, **Alonzo Collins** and **Joseph Wawerna**, Waist Gunners, and **Leo Remkes**, Tail Gunner.)*

The Angel and the Eagle by **Joseph E. Milliner**

The Angel and the Eagle by Joseph E. Milliner is a personal story, written in 3rd person, of his experiences as a pilot, a family man and a distraught father whose son, a helicopter pilot, tragically disappeared in Laos during the Vietnam War.

Milliner describes the fury of the Ploesti Raid, target White V in dramatic detail. Then there was Foggia, where Buzzin Bear crashed, and four of the crew were lost. According to Joe, his ever faithful Guardian Angel JOSEPH saved him from parachuting into the flaming plane.

Milliner's signed hardcover book is available for \$11.95, (postage incl.). Write 281 Fincastle Way, Shepherdsville, KY 40165. E-Mail Mackie0126@aol.com

For Sale

Mary Aston is selling lapel pins of WWII Medals: 8th Air Force, DFC, Air Medal, Purple Heart, POW, European-African Mediterranean Theater and WWII Victory Medal. The price of each is \$9 + 37 cents postage. Also, a leaded glass depiction of the Flying 8 Ball. Proceeds go to the 44th BGVA. Contact Mary at 830 Cardinal Drive, Elberton, GA 30635. Specify pin name and number of each type.

LIBERATORS AND LITTLE FRIENDS

From a student at Scarning Primary School in Norwich:

LIBERATORS AND LITTLE FRIENDS

Dark, daring and noisy bombers
Dangerously growling as they rattle over Norfolk,
In formation 'Lead', 'High' and 'Low'.
Following the Assembly Ship
Loud, brightly coloured and patterned – like a fighting butterfly.

Leaving Norfolk at Lowestoft, Yarmouth or Cromer
Patterned fields, hedgerows and woods disappear.
Replaced by the blanket of the North Sea
Green and grey, capped with white galloping horses.

'Little Friends',

Zooming like wasps in a foul mood
Snakes weaving through the cotton wool clouds
Wild and free
Protecting the boisterous bombers
Together they head to the target.

Ed. Note: A grandparent had to have been the source of this information for such a young child.

44TH BOMB GROUP PX

Flying 8 Ball Golf Shirts	\$25.00 + 3.00 Postage
Flying 8 Ball Caps (Indicate Squadron)	15.00 + 2.00 Postage
Flying 8 Ball Felt Patches (about 6 inches diameter)	15.00 + 1.00 Postage
Flying 8 Ball Squadron Pins (Indicate Squadron)	5.00 + .50 Postage
Blue Liberator Shirts (Light Blue with B-24 designs)	30.00 + 3.00 Postage
44th Bumper Stickers	2.00 (Postage Incl.)

Order From:

Sam Miceli

(Make check payable to Sam Miceli)

6398 Dawson Blvd., Mentor, Ohio 44060-3648

MAIL & E-MAIL



From **Dick Butler**: **David Patterson**, a much admired member of the 2nd Air Division passed on April 13, 2005. David served as Secretary of the 2AD for many years. His death is a tragic loss to the organization he served so diligently.



A great historical recollection from **Bob Lehnhausen**: In an old issue of a 1991 issue of a 68th Newsletter, I was reminded of T/Sgt. **Norius Crisian**, who was not a member of one of the 68th's nine original flight crews. He came to the ETO on the Queen Mary with the ground echelon.

Crisian was assigned to the 44th on 15 January '41. He attended AM (aviation mechanics) school, bomb sight maintenance school and armament school before going to bombardier school. Later, at Barksdale, he trained bombardiers.

In the March 1991 issue of the publication, he is mentioned in **Jim O'Brien's** story about the tragic results of our mission of April 5, 1943 to Mortsel, Belgium, a suburb of Antwerp. (Coincidentally, this mission was my first.) Crisian responded in the May 1991 issue, his evaluation of the bombing.

I don't recall much about him, for I joined the 68th March 16, 1943. He was **Jim O'Brien's** bombardier. They were shot down over Kiel on May 14, 1943; both were POWs for the balance of the war. To assure that I have not confused anyone, the pilot of their A/C on the Kiel mission was **Malcolm Howell**. Howell had been O'Brien's co-pilot. When Jim became the squadron CO, Howell got the crew. On the Kiel mission, Jim opted to fly as Howell's co-pilot. The point I would like to make here is that Crisian, a M/Sgt. must have been a very good bomb aimer to have flown with the squadron's CO.

It is also to be noted that squadron com-

manders did not often fly as the co-pilot of a crew, if they were not serving as the Command Pilot for that mission, and O'Brien was not. Colonel **Leon Johnson** was the command pilot of the 44th on the Kiel mission.

Forgive my lengthening this story, but as I pointed out, it was unusual for the CO to fly as a co-pilot, if not flying as a Command Pilot. O'Brien, our CO, was lost on the Kiel mission. He was succeeded by **Tom Cramer**. On our first mission out of Benghazi, Cramer chose to fly as co-pilot for **Robert Peterson**, but later lost his life on the mission to Lecce, Italy on 2 July 1943. Strange as it may seem, after these two great losses, I have no knowledge that squadron commanders were ever told that they could not choose to fly in this manner.

In reviewing this paper, a fact sticks out that has always impressed me, but has seldom been mentioned. I believe I am right. Our beloved leader, Leon Johnson was the command pilot on Kiel. The 44th was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for its action in that air battle – the first such award given in the 8th AF up to that time. He was also our leader when we earned the second at Ploesti on the low level mission of 1 August 1943. Perhaps one of you blokes that have more historical resources than I would be so kind as to check that. In my mind, I have always believed that he led both. If not, it will not diminish the tremendous respect I have always held for him. If true, it adds to his valorous lore.



These observations from an unidentified airman: "You know you've landed with your wheels up when it takes full power to taxi." "If God meant man to fly, He'd have given him more money."



...continued on page 25

From an unknown source: The controller was working a busy pattern told the 727 on downwind to make a three-sixty (do a complete circle, usually to provide spacing between aircraft.) The pilot of the 727 complained, "Do you know it costs us two thousand dollars to make a three-sixty in this airplane?"

Without missing a beat the controller replied, "Roger, give me four thousand dollars worth!"



From **Forrest S. Clark**: I met a man in Florida who, as a 15 year old teenager in Germany during WWII, was in an anti-aircraft battery shooting at our American bombers. Helmut Kern of Mannheim, Germany was assigned in a flak battery to shoot down our planes.

Kern said he remembers the bombers coming over his city of Mannheim and dropping bombs. He told how he narrowly escaped the bombs and survived. He said he was lucky and remembered all those men who were in the war.

We parted friends and gave tribute to the men who were serving with us. I was a bomber crew gunner on the missions that his anti aircraft battery must have fired at. Kern was recently a tourist in the Kissimmee area vacationing at Cypress Cove.

He got one of my wartime memoirs. It was quite a meeting and we parted friends.

This story proves that even enemies can become friends in the passage of time. We agreed that each of us was doing our duty at the time; but today we see the war as a place where our friends died; and in a way, they bring us together to pledge our efforts for peace.

Mannheim in WWII was a major German industrial city making armament for the Nazi armies.

Clark's book, Innocence and Death in Enemy Skies, can be purchased by writing to Forrest at 703 Duffer Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34759-4114. The price is \$10.



From **Jerry Folsom**, two thoughts: "Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into the jets."

"What happens if you get scared half to death twice?"



From: Ivo DiPiero: Mr. & Mrs. Ivo DiPiero of Macomb, IL celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary January 7, 2005 by returning to Norwich to the same church where they had been married. They had been married in Norwich, England on January 7, 1945, where he was a Sergeant in the 44th Bomb Group, and she was a Lance Corporal in the Royal Air Force. They are the parents of two sons, Michael of Hillside, FL and Robert of Alaska. They also have five grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.



Ivy and Ivo DiPiero



The 44th BG Web Site has been folded into the 44th BG Military Heritage Database. The technology skills of two gurus brought this happy event about: Guy Adams (Son of Beverly Folsom) and Arlo Bartsch, a B-17 pilot who couldn't resist collecting B-24 tales. Click on 8thairforce.com. This Website was created by Arlo and his company, **Computer Generated Data**. The 44th BGVA Website was created by Guy with the help of **Jerry Folsom** and the courtesy of a Salt Lake City organization, XMission. Guy has a very commanding job at the University of Utah, but was willing to take the time to place our organization's history and activities into cyberspace. At this point in our lives, we have no idea who will use this information in the future. We can just be grateful that it is available.



From Luc Dewez: Luc's father, Lucien, chronicled the experience of living in Belgium when the Nazis took over his country. Luc preserved and translated his manuscript and shares it with his American friends via e-mail. May 10, 1940 "A lot of gun shots awoke me. I sat up straight in my bed. It was daylight. By my watch: 5:15 a.m. From the street I heard a number of voices speaking all together. Before I had time to go to the window, my father called me from downstairs. His voice had an unusual tone: 'Lucien, hurry up, it's war.'

"Every quarter of an hour there was a news bulletin. The first one I heard repeated: 'This night at 3:00 a.m., German forces, without declaration of war, have invaded the territories of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Brussels, Malines, Wavre have already been bombed by the Luftwaffe.'

"Between the news reports, I thought of all that my parents and grandparents had told me about their life during World War 1. In my brain I turned over thoughts of oppression, food shortages, lack of essential products or means of life, the appearance of the black market, economic and political collaboration, denuncements, deportations, resistance and repression.

When Lucien came home from work that day, he saw handbills with a government message: 'All men ages 16 through 35 will go to Quievrain without delay with food for two days and equipment such as blankets, shoes and underwear. All reservists who have not yet received your call-up papers will conform to this command.'"

WWI had ended only 23 years previously. For the Dewez family, the nightmare of another war was upon them. It lasted five long years.





WILL'S ACCOUNT

Over the past quarter century I have managed to collect and keep a considerable amount of paperwork, photos, records, letters, and you name it. However, it appears now that Jim Hamilton and I, together, have the revised Roll of Honor book to near completion. I feel it is time for me to "retire". As a consequence, I should then find the best institution to store permanently so much of the material that I've collected from many of you and the records collected from almost everywhere.

When I first began my searches for 44th BG records, I learned that Maxwell Air Force Base had rolls of microfilm covering both the records of the 44th BG and the individual four Squadrons. I purchased them and found they contained much of our history. So I was sure that this would be one of the best places for my records now. Many people who had visited there spoke very highly of it, as they had greatly improved their facilities.

A second facility was brought to my attention, but I was not certain of the origin. Apparently, Chris Clark, who attends our reunions and who is increasingly involved with our history, learned about the new facilities recently built at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He got the word to Ruth and Perry Morse. They drove the 40 miles to learn more about it and were deeply impressed. Ruth, in turn, related their experiences to Roy Owen, and when he learned that Major Michael E. Lynch would like us to hold our meeting at those facilities, he requested that the mid-year Board meeting be relocated to Carlisle.

Paul Kay suggested to me that he would like to accompany me on my proposed visit

to Maxwell, and then we both could continue on to Carlisle for the Board Meeting. I hastily agreed, as I was eager to have someone accompany me, due to my limited hearing. I have always had a problem understanding speaker directions at airports. In the past, I had Irene to do the interpreting.

On Monday, March 28, Paul and I visited Maxwell AFB, met with Joseph Caver, Archivist, who gave us a grand tour of the Air Force Historical Research facilities. They did, indeed, have state of the art facilities for the many old documents placed in their care, many rooms full. However, there was absolutely no place available to display any papers, photos or items.

On Wednesday March 30, the Board of Directors meeting took place at the Army Heritage & Education Center in the new state of the art building near Carlisle. Here we were most graciously met by Major Lynch, who quickly made us feel "at home", pointing out that during WW #2 the 44th BG was officially identified as Army Air Corps, so we are a part of the Army history. We were given a complete and in-depth tour of their most modern facilities, shown their processing of material received from the public, and the fine care given to each and every object received, no matter how small. Best of all, to me, at least, was the space available for displays in this large building, and that they periodically take different items on display throughout the U.S.

One more very large plus, in my estimation, was the facilities available for the public's use while doing research work. There is a very large room, amply spread with work tables, computers, chairs, etc. Here historians, students, or interested persons have the

facilities to work with the staff, be provided with whatever data or item(s) that are available; and on request, can have items brought to the library for their research or study.

Needless to say, here is a facility of which I have been dreaming, but never really expected to find. Now, I wholeheartedly agree that this is by far, the best location for the 44th BG's historical records and items. Major Lynch assured us all that they are eager to obtain whatever we choose to release to them. He and his team offered to visit me, examine these items, catalog, package them and take them back to Carlisle. The problem is now solved. As of this writing, they expect to arrive within the next ten days.

The other very important happening that I mentioned above, I now want to cover in more detail. That subject is the completion of the revision of my old Roll of Honor book. Thanks to the diligent and expert assistance of Jim Hamilton, the revised text is completed. As soon as possible, this revised and expanded text will be provided to Arlo

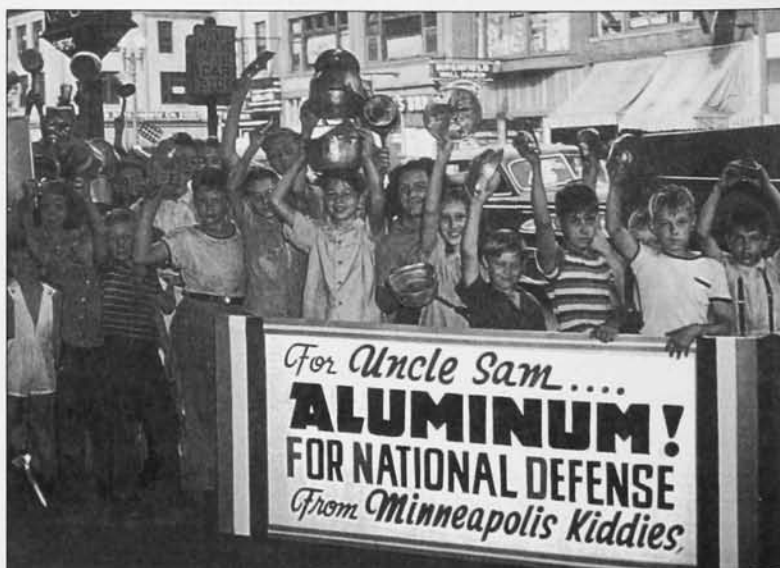
Bartch, for him to process into the Master Database.

Following that, there will be a minimum number of books printed. Cost figures are not yet available, of course, but will be investigated, and will depend upon the size of the new book and the number of copies ordered. It definitely will have more than 400 pages, and will have a good hard cover. Several of these books will be donated to various military libraries across this country. It would help us decide the number to print if those of you that believe you might want to purchase one would send a card or note. My addresses are shown in the inside opening page of every 8 Ball Tails. Either address is OK.

I send my very sincere thanks for your support over these many years. I could never have done all of the 44 BG historical work without your assistance over so many, many years. Thank you most sincerely.

WILL LUNDY

ON THE HOME FRONT





FOLDED WINGS

*"I shall not see the shadows, I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale sing on, as if in pain."*

Christina Georgina Rossetti

COX, MARVIN #19855 68th Sq. September 11, 2004 Sgt. Cox flew the first Group Mission of the 44th on November 7, 1943, as Engineer and Top Turret Gunner. It was a diversionary to Holland in *Rugged Buggy*, with **James Hodges** as Command Pilot. He flew a total of eight missions, the last as a Waist Gunner with **Wilmer Garrett** on *Miss Virginia* on May 29, 1943.

FITZSIMONS, WILLIAM #20222 506 Sq. December 7, 2004. 1st Lt. Fitzsimmons was a Bombardier. He flew with the following pilots: **J. W. Grow**, **Sidney Paul**, Major **Benton Greene** (Command Pilot) and **Ralph Golubock**. His first mission was February 24, 1944. He flew in *Oh my Sufferin' Head*, *Southern Comfort* (Replacement), *Greenwich*, *Prince/Princ-Ass/Princess*, *Pistol Packin' Mama*, *M'Darling* and *Ole Cock*. On his 27th flight the plane was hit by fighters. They lost too much fuel to make it back to Shipdham, so Golubock took the plane to Sweden where the crew was interned

GOLDSTONE, EDWARD G. #20407 66th Sq. 7 March 2005 T/Sgt. Goldstone was a member of the 1 Bomb Squad and Loading Bomb Group. His death was reported by his son-in-law.

HUBBARD, WILEY C. "Cliff" #20739 66th Sq. Date unknown. 1st Lt. Hubbard was a Navigator with the **Thompson Daley** crew. He flew 28 combat missions, the first on 30 September 1944. All missions except one were to Germany, knocking out oil refineries, marshalling yards, bridges and tunnels to prevent German tanks and troops from moving

west toward the advancing Allied Forces. One mission was to Metz, France, striking gun positions. The Daley crew flew on *Fifinella*, *Down De Hatch*, *Big Time Operator*, *Judy's Buggy* and *King Pin*. Hubbard's last mission was 24 February, 1945.

HULPIAU, GEORGE E. #20554 68th Sq. May 3, 2005. Capt. Hulpiah was a bombardier on many crews, most of which he flew with **W.D. Hughes**, but he also flew with such prestigious pilots as **Robert Norsen**, **Thomas Cramer**, **Roland Houston**, **Charles Hughes**, **Robert Lehnhausen**, **George P. Martin**, **David Alexander**, **William Cameron**, **Frederick Dent** and **Charles Benton**. He flew a total of 28 missions, his first, April 4, 1943. He flew in many different planes: *Victory Ship*, *Captain & His Kids Ride Again*, *Wing and a Prayer*, *Black Jack*, *Flak Alley*, *Avenger*, *Margaret Ann III*, *Satan's Hellcats*, *Pistol Packin' Mama* and *Full House*. His missions took him to Italy, Sicily, France, Austria, Romania and Norway.

Hulpiau was a part of **Bob Lehnhausen's** crew, formed at Geiger Field (Spokane) WA in October 1943. They trained in B-17s, joined the 44th on March 16, 1943, were assigned to the 68th Squadron, one of the five crews who were the 44th's first replacements. Lehnhausen remembers Hulpiau as a bombardier who practiced constantly to develop his skills, becoming the 68th Squadron bombardier. He led the St. Jean D'Angley and Meppen missions. Both of these attacks earned the praise of General Hodge. Of the St. Jean mission he wrote, "Your bombing today was the finest example of precision bombing yet accomplished by the Division."

...continued on page 30

FOLDED WINGS

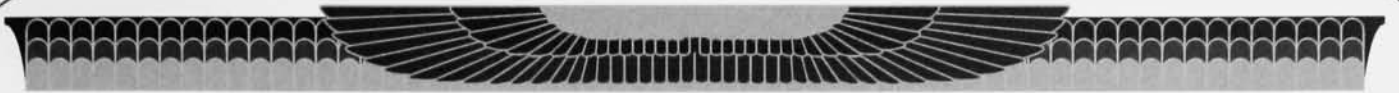
Hulpiau flew the two PUD missions, Kiel and Ploesti, and both of the Weiner-Neustadt raids. He was regarded as a hard-nosed combat veteran with a marvelous sense of humor. Lehnhausen stated, "He was a 44th BGVA loyalist. He and his lovely wife, Marian, seldom missed a reunion. He treasured his association with all you blokes and your ladies. They supported enthusiastically, whatever the leadership proposed."

KELLY, WILLIAM D. (Bill) #20903 68th Sq. 6 February 2005 1st Lt. Kelly piloted 32 missions, the first 4 August 1944. At that time the 44th was bombing Marshalling Yards and Bridges ahead of the eastward-moving troops, Kelly flew with such renowned Command Pilots as Capt. **J. E. Pennypacker**, Major **H. Sather**, Capt. **J.N. Keck**, Major **A. Hayduk** and Major **Charles Hughes**. He flew in *Gallivantin Gal*, *Lone Ranger*, *T.S. Tessie*, *Flak Magnet*, *Gipsy Queen*, *Corky*, *Puritanical Bitch/Puritanical Witch*, *Lili Marlene*, *Louisiana Belle* and *Helza Droppin*. He flew a total of 32 missions, his last on 11 December 1944. **Lee Aston** was successful in acquiring Kelly's DFC and OLC #5 to his Air Medal. His DFC was earned by being a Lead Pilot. Unfortunately, Kelly died while arrangements were being made for an Air Force Presentation to be made at Springfield. However, the information of this upcoming event was FAXed to him while he was in the hospital, for which he expressed his gratitude. Kelly is fondly remembered by his traveling companions on the Larry Herpel European trip. Although he had serious physical problems at that time, he undertook the task of pushing the wheelchair of a handicapped member of the group through many areas in England and on the Continent. A graveside ceremony will be held at his burial in June at Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield, IL.

LEVEGREN, HAROLD #25716 67 Sq. 1998 S/Sgt. Levegren was a member of the **Ernest Kyle** crew, sometimes serving as Waist Gunner, once as a Tail Gunner. He flew 12 missions, the first on February 16, 1945. Most of the twelve missions the crew flew were to marshalling yards and railroad viaducts, slowing the advance of the German troops who were headed to battle the Allies who were moving toward the Fatherland. The crew flew in *Mi Akin Ass* and *Lady Fifi Nella*, and many unnamed planes. Levegren's last flight was March 17, 1945.

POTTS, JAMES A. #21708 68 Sq. January 28, 2005. Reported to Bob Lehnhausen by his co-pilot, **William Burlingame**. S/Sgt. Potts was a Waist Gunner on the **Walter O. Franks** crew, later serving as Nose Gunner/Toggler on some missions. On two missions he served on the **Fred Heichemer** crew. Potts flew 33 missions, the first September 9, 1944. He flew in *Flak Magnet*, *Puritanical Bitch/Puritanical Witch*, *Gipsy Queen*, *Lili Marlene*, *Louisiana Belle*, *Gallivantin Gal*, *Lady Geraldine* and *T.S. Tessie*. Most of his missions were to marshalling yards within Germany, as allied forces were progressing toward the fatherland. His last mission was May 30, 1945.





FOLDED WINGS

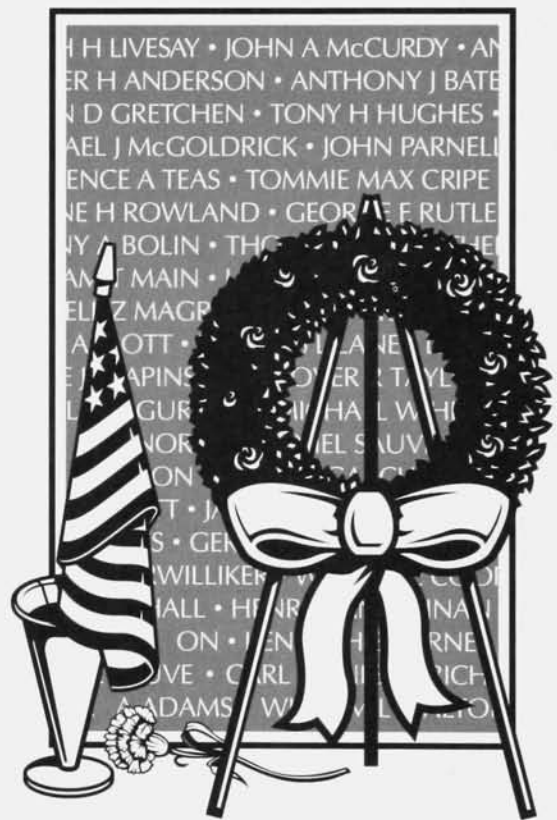
ROBERTS, JOHN # 25804 68th Sq. Date ??

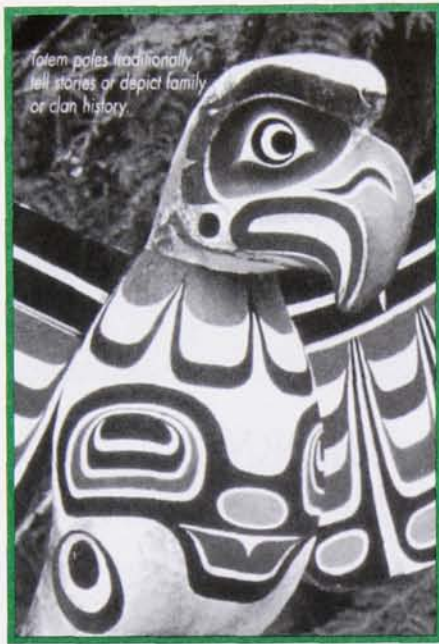
Roberts was a Tail Gunner and sometimes Nose Gunner/Toggler on the **Clayton R.**

Roberts crew. His first of twelve missions was March 10, 1945. The crew flew in *Black Sheep, Jose Carioca, Myrtle the Fertle Turtle, One Weakness* and *Lousiana Belle*. Their last mission was April 18, 1945, 24 days before VE Day.

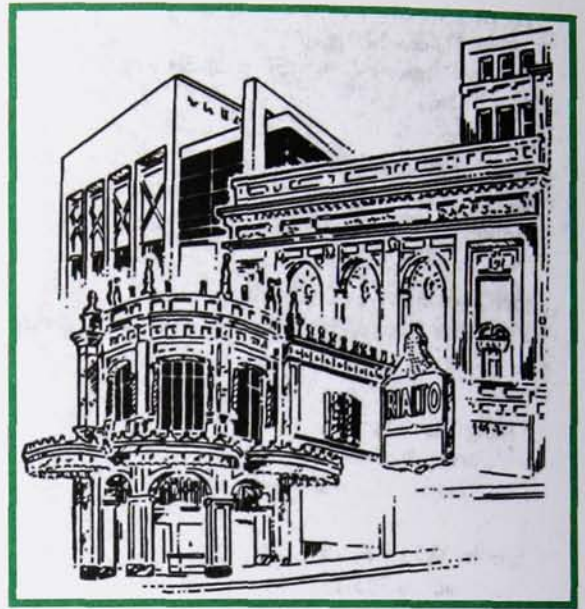
VILLELA, GEORGE B. #22414 30 January 2005 Corporal Villela was assigned to the 68th as an engineer clerk. He arrived at the ETO on the USS Mariposa on 1 May 1943 and received his assignment on May 10. He stayed in the war and returned home on the Queen Mary on 16 June 1943.

WARD, RICHARD C. #22460 4 December 2004. Sgt. Ward enlisted 10 January 1941. He was assigned as Line Chief, 67th Sq. His first arrival to ETO was 10 October, 1942. After three months, returned to USA 26 January 1943. He returned to the ETO on 28 August, 1943 and stayed until May 30, 1945. While flying the northern route the first time, he was one of the members of the B-24 that dropped food and survival material to the "Lost Squadron" the P-38's and B-17 that were forced down in Greenland on the Ice Cap. He was awarded the **Bronze Star**. When he returned home, he became a Jeweler and Watchmaker.





Eskimo Artwork



Interesting Architecture

Have you registered for the Seattle/Tacoma Reunion? Hurry. We need your registration to guarantee prices. The date are September 4-5-6-7, 2005. Registration forms are in the Winter issue of the 8 Ball Tails. If you lost the magazine call me, 717 846-8948.

Don't miss this northwest extravaganza of a grand mixture of cultures—Eskimo, Indian, Oriental, Wild West and Wartime to Modern Flight. And please don't miss another great opportunity to kibitz with that grand bunch of buddies—the veterans of the 44th Bomb Group.

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