

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS



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Victory Ship arrived at Shipdham on 20 September 1942, and the **Walter 'Tommie' Holmes** crew climbed aboard for its Maiden Flight on 7 November 1942. Two months later, when the 68th Squadron was leading the 66th & 67th Squadrons on a raid to an Airdrome in Abbeville, France, the mission was recalled, whereupon the 66th & 67th turned back. The 68th did not receive the message, so they plunged onward and hit their target.



VICTORY SHIP NOSE ART

On the return flight, off the coast of France, an FW 190 attacked. A shell burst about a foot above the pilot's head, knocking out both pilot and co-pilot; a second burst knocked out the #3 engine and a third exploded into oxygen bottles just aft of the main cabin.



FIGHTER DAMAGE

Victory Ship barrel rolled to the left and was diving steeply. Centrifugal force kept the crew from bailing out, and despite the roll, they kept firing. Minutes later when Holmes woke up, he looked through a hole on the top of the plane. He was staring at water...*Victory Ship* was upside down!!!

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VICTORY SHIP

Lt. **Howard Klekar**, Bombardier, gave his pilot, '**Tommie**' **Holmes** a breath of oxygen, and he recovered sufficiently to bring the plane back to Shipdham., his head aching all the way. For this raid he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, British DEC and French Croix de Guerre.

On that same mission **James D. Du Bard** was flying on *Victory Ship's* right wing. The German fighters brought #41-23786 B down, and it entered the water with guns still blazing. Ten men were lost.

Twenty two different crews flew on *Victory Ship's* 50 missions. It was part of the formation that hit Kiel on the Baltic Sea. When the 44th BG went to Africa, this plane joined the bombings in Sicily and Italy; and when the 44th went to Ploesti, it was flown by Lt. Col. **James Posey**, leader of the group that hit Target Blue (later recognized as the source of Nazi air fuel.)

Disaster struck this trusty plane on its 50th mission to Escalles sur Buchy, 21 January 1944. Piloted by **Alfred A. Starring**, the plane was hit by enemy A/C, setting # 1 & 2 engines ablaze. The fighters persisted and the plane went down in flames. Five members of the crew were KIA; 1 evaded, 4 were POW.

This mission was very costly for the 44th BG: five planes were lost; twenty eight men were KIA, fourteen became POW, nine succeeded in evading.

Tommie attached that piece of flak onto his key ring, a reminder of the Abbeville mission. It's a reminder of what he survived.



Holmes was awarded the Purple Heart in a hangar in Shipdham.



'Tommie' was visited in the hospital by Kay Francis.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



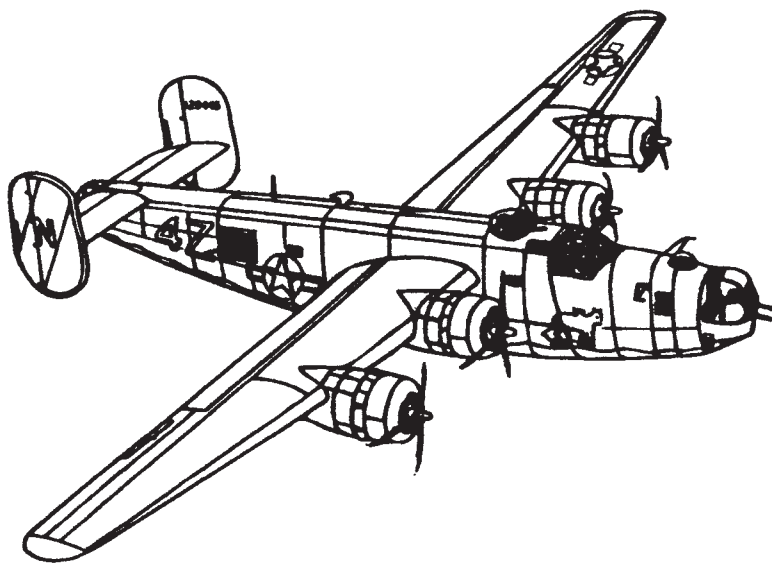
Organizations such as ours always have a few people who do most of the work required to keep the organization going. The two things that accomplish this are the 8 Ball Tails and our annual reunions. Neither of these would happen except for dedicated people like Perry and Ruth Morse and Jackie and Lowell Roberts. Ruth and Perry have spent countless hours dealing with the folks at the Army Heritage Center in Carlisle which we will be visiting during our reunion in October. As part of that visit there will be a ceremony honoring our esteemed commander, General Leon Johnson.

Jackie and Lowell, although living far away from Harrisburg in Oklahoma City, have travelled there to make arrangements. This should be an outstanding event and I urge all that can possibly make it to do so.

We still have about seven hundred members in our group. We have almost 300 life members and so far about 300 others have renewed their membership for 2008.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in October.

George



WALTER 'TOMMIE' HOLMES' MEMORY OF PLOESTI

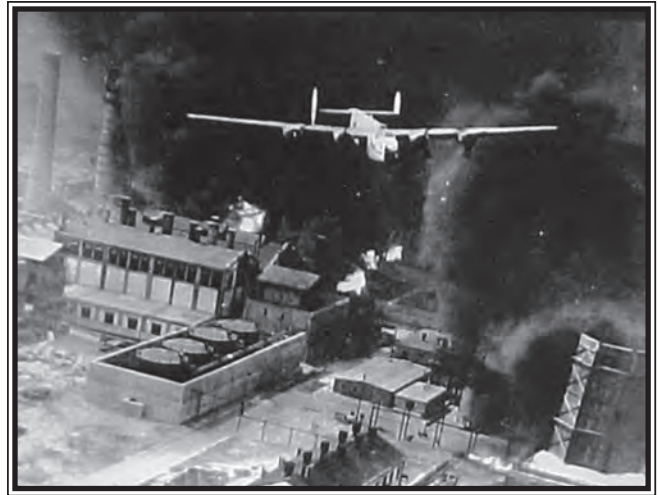
This raid – 187 B 24's – took place on Sunday, 1 August 1943. The target of this raid – one of the most important air raids of WWII – was the destruction of the Rumanian oil refineries, which furnished Germany's supplies for the Russian front.

Even before we left England in June 1943, we knew something big was going to happen that would involve low level flying. Since everything was top secret, we were told only that we were going to Libya, but we had no idea what a contrast in climate we would encounter, and how very hot and desolate this land would be. The temperature would rise to 130 degrees, and we would be assaulted by lots of hot wind, dirt, grasshoppers and scorpions.

While practicing in the desert we flew very low, which we enjoyed, but I am sure some of the crew were somewhat upset or nervous about flying into the ground. We did hit two hawks, one hitting the #2 engine prop governor, and a second hawk coming through the Plexiglas window in the nose, leaving blood, guts and feathers through the entire airplane, even to the tail. Luckily, no one in the nose was injured.

Benina – name of our airfield – was a large base about 15 miles east of Benghazi, where the remains of previous battles fought there were scattered all about – abandoned German planes, trucks and armoured vehicles along with thousands of oil drums everywhere from Cairo west across the desert. We lived in tents and were introduced to rations that we had not previously experienced – dehydrated foods – which were not particularly tasty.

We continued to practice low level fly-



PLOESTI

ing; and in between, flew about 14 missions over Sicily and Italy. We had no ice in the desert, so we took great pleasure in returning from these missions, drinking ice water frozen at altitude, eating K or C rations and listening to Axis Sally on the radio. To keep from perspiring so much, and to keep our clothes dry, we would remove them for takeoff and dress as we ascended. This may not have been Standard Operating Procedure, but it kept us dry.

To keep the sand from being drawn into the air scoops, we always had to be careful before takeoff to keep our engines at low RPM or turned sideways to the wind.

We lost our third squadron CO – **Tommy Cramer** – on 2 July 1943 – over Lecce Airdrome, Italy. **John Diehl** was promoted to CO and I became operations officer. I had finished my missions and hence did not fly many of the missions while at Benina. I did fly a mission to Rome where we bombed the railroad marshalling yards with strict orders to bomb only our target.

During the invasion of Sicily in mid-

...continued on page 6

July 1943 we were assigned to bomb the communication center in Catania. As we flew over Sicily we saw the largest armada of naval vessels assembled just off shore that we had ever seen.

When we were ordered to go to Ploesti, the mission was of such importance that we needed every available plane and crew, even though several crews had finished at least 25 missions. Capt. **Roland B. Houston** and crew would be doing #32.

Even though he was recuperating from a traumatic crash at sea a few weeks earlier, we needed pilots so badly that I had to ask **Robert J. "Bob" Lehnhausen** if he would fill out a crew. He graciously consented.

On the morning of the raid on Ploesti we were up very early for breakfast and briefing; and then to the planes for take-off at 7:00 A.M. We were eager to get started on this exciting low level raid after three months of practice and getting ready. All the planes got off okay and headed over the Mediterranean Sea toward the Adriatic Sea just east of Italy and west of Yugoslavia.

I observed a very strange event as we were flying at 8000 to 10,000 feet, just south of Italy over the Ionian Sea. A B-24 suddenly dived straight down into the sea. Later we learned it was our lead plane. I could not imagine what could have gone wrong. As usual, we were too busy to dwell very long on the unusual event and proceeded on with our mission. For various reasons we had 20 to 30 planes turn back. Most were attributed to mechanical failures caused by the desert sand.

We flew a loose formation over the

water, gradually climbing to about 11,000 or 12,000 feet, and then turning on a heading of about 70 degrees across the mountains of Yugoslavia and clouds which gave us trouble, but didn't stop us. Later, we began a slow descent down the east slope to the Blue Danube River – which was a muddy brown, I suppose from rains. As we flew lower, we could see the countryside cities, animals, people dressed in bright colors, as if we were out for a pleasant Sunday afternoon drive.

Before we knew it, we arrived at the IP (initial point) where we changed course and flew southeast for approximately 25-30 miles to the target. At this time we were flying very low, passing a downed B-24 on my right. It appeared to have landed wheels up, but fairly well intact. The crew was standing beside the plane, waving as we flew by. How I did wish we could land and pick them up.

Next we came upon a power line, and I remember pulling up to get over it, thinking of the planes on my wings. By this time the anti aircraft guns were in full swing and many shells were exploding all around us. This was the first time we had ever been this close to 88 MM guns, and the impressive thing was the rapid rate of fire and the flames and bright flashes which seemed to be 30-40 feet long out of the muzzle.

We were now able to see many of the other targets burning – B-24s were coming back, over and through us. One plane – Bar D – flew directly over the top of our planes. I looked up about 100 feet and saw a hole about six feet across between #1 and #2 engines burning fiercely with the metal burning brilliantly around the outer edges. I'm sure he did not go far

before crashing. The sky was full of B-24s returning from the other targets. They flew over the top of our planes as we were approaching the target, flying extremely low. Our target was less than a mile straight ahead. There were numerous guns around the refinery and they were all firing. We had one or two fixed 50 calibre guns in the nose for the pilot to fire, but I do not recall firing them. I was too busy flying toward the target to concentrate on a target for the nose guns. I remember seeing a ground soldier literally explode when hit by some of our 50 calibre guns. He was less than 400 feet away.

We had the target in sight from about 10-15 miles away, and now we were rapidly approaching at a very low level – less than 50 feet high. I remember very clearly pulling up to get over the smokestacks on the power house, which was my assigned target, and I feel sure we put our bombs directly over target. The bombs were delayed action bombs, and they exploded at intervals of 30 seconds to 72 hours. This was to keep fire fighters away from the refineries.

After releasing our bombs we continued on a course which led us to the southwest and toward home. The fighters jumped on us on the retreat, and several of them flew into the ground, as we were still at a very low level. Our gunners were well trained and experienced at shooting enemy planes, and they did an excellent job.

I noticed one B-24 trailing heavy black smoke from the tanks in the bomb bay. He was flying very low and about 200-300 yards in front of me. The smoke got bigger, and I knew he could not last

much longer. I never did understand why he did not gain some altitude in order to bail the crew out. After about 20 miles he pulled into a steep climb to about 700-800 feet. I was so close behind, I had to observe the direction of his nose, in order to dodge his plane. I turned to the right as he veered off to the left. When he stalled, the nose fell abruptly and three chutes opened as the men in the tail were thrown 15-20 feet above the tail section. I felt sure they landed okay and probably made their way to the wreckage. The plane passed under our left wing and exploded, which I believe ended in the deaths of all the men at the front – six, probably. I never heard anymore about this plane or crew.

We lost #3 engine as our fuel ran out because of a faulty pump. We were not far from the target when this happened, so we transferred fuel and restarted the engine until we were off the coast. In the meantime I ordered the crew to throw everything overboard – guns, ammunition etc. I remember the long strings of 50 calibre ammo snaking through the air and into the mountains of Yugoslavia. We saved 100 rounds for the top and tail turrets, in case we ran into enemy planes. We dropped behind after crossing the coast, in order to save fuel. All engines were reduced – both RPMs and manifold pressure. Our flight across the Mediterranean was uneventful. We encountered a number of low cloud banks and felt that each one would be over landfall, but was not to be until about the fourth or fifth cloud bank. It was nearing dark as we finally crossed the coast and our field was now only about 20 miles ahead. We proceeded

directly to the field and landed promptly, as we knew we were extremely low on fuel.

I thought we flew about 14 hours, but later records showed 13 hours and 26 minutes. The next day I was told by the crew chief on our ship *Wing and a Prayer* that we had less than ten minutes of fuel. He drained the tanks to be sure.

We were very tired but elated at the excellent results of our mission – 'Blue Target' which was the Brazi refinery – the largest and latest American built refinery in Rumania – 100 percent destroyed.

We were all saddened by the loss of fifty or more planes in the five groups making the raid, but especially touched by the loss of one of our squadron piloted by **Roland B. 'Sam' Houston**. He and his entire crew were lost. This plane was shot down by German Fighter Pilot Willie Steinman in an ME-109, whose story has been recorded. This was his second B-24, but he paid a high price for his victory.

German's story: "The American machine guns were spitting all around," Steinman said, picking up Houston's ship at about 150 feet from the ground, attacking from the rear.

"I cut back on the throttle and gave the Liberator a good raking from wingtip

to wingtip. I could see tracers walking across the width of the plane and flames coming out everywhere. The top turret and tail turret were shooting me up. I closed to within 70 feet. My engine caught fire and there was a tremendous quivering. My speed carried me under the left wing as the Liberator went out of control. I was caught between the ground and Liberator with no control. I slid open the canopy and loosened the harness. I don't remember crashing. First thing I knew, I was seated on the ground, pants torn and cuts on my legs. Near me the two planes burned. I got up and walked away. No one walked away from Houston's ship."

Houston and his crew were on their 32nd mission.

All of us felt the importance of this raid and had practiced long and hard to make it. Patriotism was very much alive in America on August 1, 1943, and most certainly in our crews as well.

To this day I am thankful I do not have to rise and make another mission. The experience was something we endured with hope and gratitude, but never desired to repeat.



THE ESCAPE OF SIDNEY BOLICK

After crossing the narrow stream that flowed between Switzerland and France, Bolick lay face down at the top of the bank for a few minutes to catch his breath.

When I raised my head and looked at the scene in front of me, I knew that I was in France. Directly in front of me was a mound of rubble that had once been a building. Although there was very little light, from my position on the ground, the empty shells of burned out and half standing buildings were silhouetted against the night sky. At first it appeared that there wasn't a complete building standing anywhere, but as I stood up and looked around, I could see a house here and there that seemed to have escaped destruction. However, in the light of the next day I later saw that most of them were pockmarked and riddled with shell holes and bullet holes.

Emile told me to follow him, and we set off down the hill toward what we thought would be the center of town. We hadn't gone very far when the muted beam from a flashlight struck us, and a voice called out in French for us to halt. We stopped in our tracks with our hands slightly raised in front of us, and Emile replied that he was French and I, American, and that we had just crossed over from Switzerland.

The figure holding the light walked up to us, and we could see by its dim glow that he was dressed in a patched up uniform, and that he carried a British Sten gun in his hand. He and Emile engaged in a rapid fire conversation in French, and while I couldn't follow it all, I did catch enough to tell that his name was Andre, and that he was a member of the Maquis

band that had attacked and killed or captured the German garrison that had been occupying the town. It had been a bitter fight, as the devastation around us showed.

We followed him down the hill to the center of the town and into a three story building (one of the few left intact on the street) that was the Headquarters of the Maquis Unit. After we were interrogated by their Commanding Officer, a Captain with the Cross of Lorraine insignia of De Gaulle's Free French Forces on his shoulder, we were given a supper of watery soup and bread, and were taken to a room on the second floor, which was to be our billet for the night.

The next morning two U.S. Army sergeants arrived in a Jeep. They were couriers, running the loosely held German lines along the Franco-Swiss border, and carrying dispatches between the liberated French towns. They put Emile and me in the back seat of the Jeep, with a fifty calibre machine gun mounted on a post between us, and set off in the direction of Annemasse, a liberated town just across the border from Geneva, Switzerland.

These sergeants had obviously done this before. They kept close to the safety of Lake Lemman on our right, and on two occasions pulled the Jeep off the road into the woods and hid while a truckload of German soldiers passed by, heading eastward back toward Germany. With these delays and numerous detours along the back roads and country lanes, we reached Annemasse in the late afternoon.

Annemasse seemed to be a fairly large town, and was the headquarters of the French resistance forces for the entire

...continued on page 10

Haute Savoie sector. We were dropped off by the American sergeants at a building on one side of the central square that was the Command Center for these forces. Here Emile and I were separated and taken into different rooms. This time I was put through a very intense interrogation, which seemed to be more about Emile than about me. The only identification that I had was my dog tags, but this seemed to satisfy them, and they told me I would be sent to Annecy, where I would be put in touch with an American liaison officer. I asked about Emile, but they would only say that he was being sent to a Free French unit, and that he had already left.

I never saw Emile again. After the war I wrote to him at the address in Paris that he had given me, but the letter came back about a month later marked, "Inconnu" – (Unknown).

I spent that night in a barracks in the headquarters building, along with five other Americans who had either escaped from Switzerland, or had been evading capture by hiding out with the French Underground. The next morning we were put in the back of a truck and driven to an old villa outside the city of Annecy, that was the headquarters of an American OSS Captain. He had been dropped into France by parachute to coordinate the activities of the French Resistance forces with the American Seventh Army that was advancing from the South, and he had radio contact with General Patch's headquarters in Lyon.

Annecy was a beautiful city built along the edge of a clear blue lake, with a breathtaking view of Mont Blanc to the east. Although the town itself was in the hands of French, the Germans were still all around us, making a fighting retreat

out of France back into Germany. Three or four times during my ten day stay there, the Germans came within a few miles of the town. When that happened, the French trucks would roll out of town, loaded down with a motley looking group of fighters, and a little later we would hear gunfire in the distance, which might go on for several minutes or several hours. Soon after it stopped, the trucks would come roaring back with the French firing their rifles into the air and waving captured German flags or banners. Each time this happened, our waiting got a little more nerve wracking.

Within a few days our ranks had grown to more than twenty Americans, as escapees and evadees who had been hiding out in that part of France were funnelled into Annecy. The OSS Captain told us that he had contacted Lyons, and that a plane would be flown in to pick us up. For three days in a row we were taken to a farmer's field outside town to wait for the plane, since Annecy had no serviceable airport. And for three days we sat on the ground and listened to the sound of engines circling overhead, then fading into the distance because the weather was too bad for landing.

Finally, on the morning of the fourth day, there was a break in the clouds, and we saw one of the most beautiful sights in the world, an old twin engine C-47 Goony Bird dropping through an opening in the clouds and making a bumpy landing in the field. It had barely rolled to a stop and the cabin door opened, when twenty of the most unmilitary looking Americans that the crew had ever seen, charged across the field and boarded it. Within minutes it was airborne again, and we were on our way.

We stopped at Lyons for refuelling,

and about three hours later we landed at the U.S. Eighth Air Force Base at Bovingdon, England. It had taken me just ten days less than seven months to complete the Mission that I had started on March 18.

I was at Bovingdon four days, going through debriefing and being provided with new uniforms. On October 12th I reported back to the 44th Bomb Group at Shipdham. Since I had been behind German lines in civilian clothes, I could technically be considered a spy if I was ever caught by the Germans, so I was not allowed to fly combat in Europe again.

I received my orders for transfer to the Zone of the Interior, cleared the base and took a train to Preswick, Scotland. Twenty hours later, after a twelve hour Air

Transport Command flight that stopped at Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland before landing at Langley Field, Virginia, I was back in the USA!!

Bolick had the experience of serving in the RCAF, RAF, AAC in the 44th Bomb Group. His POW and Escapee escapade was one of many unique experiences of our men in WWII.

Every time I find a story about the help that our men received from the Marquis, I want to go over and thank them. They risked death daily, as did our men. They are now in their 80's or 90's now, and they can always be proud that they helped liberate their country. Thanking them is part of the unfinished business of WWII.

Among the members of the DFC Society is President George Herbert Walker Bush. It is believed that he will be our last President with combat service in WWII. He was shot down while flying an Avenger off the USS San Jacenta; the target was radar installations on Chichi Jima, part of the island chain that includes Iwo Jima .

When you think about it, old age is a very high price to pay for maturity!!!

According to an unnamed history researcher, the expression **'the whole nine yards'** came from the ammo belts of the air corps gunners. They were 27 feet long. Is that true?

At the time of Pearl Harbor the top USNavy command was called CINCUS (pronounced "sink us"), the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry Division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named "Amerika."

All three were changed for PR Purposes.

Source: Col. D. G. Swinford, USMC, Ret.—a history buff

LETTER FROM SHIPDHAM

For the first time in the years I have been updating you on what is happening at your old station, I have to start on a really serious note. Over the past two to three years the airfield and club at your old station have been under threat by an ex-director of the club who wanted to take over the club and flying activities at the airfield for his own ends.

Fortunately I can now advise that his efforts have failed following legal action by our landlady Mrs Paterson, and that the club, museum and all that it stands for, now have a bright long-term future; but it had seemed touch and go on several occasions. The club members, three of its directors and Mrs Paterson and her family have worked long and hard to achieve this outcome and we are indebted to each and every one of them and delighted that it has brought the three factions that make Shipdham work, even closer together than before. So much so that Mrs Paterson's son-in-law, Ken, will now be part of the senior management team of the club itself.

For legal reasons we will now be called Shipdham Flying Club.

On to brighter things, weather permitting, the ground works of the memorial garden get underway January or early February. Club director Mike Artherton and Museum Curator, Peter Steele have recently been seen in a huddle in front of the club buildings studying the Memorial garden layout plan in great detail, so ...Watch This Space!

We welcomed our first American visitor to the airfield in 2008, during the second week in January. The Children's author Derek Benz dropped by to see the place where his wife's grandfather served during WWII. Her grandfather was William C Doughton. (506 Squadron) He arrived at Shipdham in Oct '43 as ground crew and stayed through the duration of hostilities until after VE day '45. At some stage he became Adjutant of the 506 Squadron. He folded his wings in the late '70's.

His widow is still alive and well, and Derek was able to phone home and talk to her as he left Norwich station to get the plane home. As it happened it would have been William Doughton's birthday, the day Derek visited Shipdham. As always the Museum team were delighted to be of service.

Literally as I write this I have just received an e-mail from the daughter in law of Lt Richard Hruby, also of the 506th Squadron, who is planning a visit to Shipdham later this spring. We greatly look forward to their visit.

Obviously the British winter weather is not the greatest on the planet (you may well remember that...it hasn't improved any!) and we get some good flying days and some that are total rubbish. Today as I write this, we have a total rubbish day with low cloud, occasional light rain and winds with a mean speed of 18 knots and gusts up to 30 knots! As the old Shipdham saying goes...even the pigeons are walking today.

All our best wishes from the Shipdham team.

Peter

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CAPTAIN MILTON FEINSTEIN AS REMEMBERED BY HIS SON



Captain Milton Feinstein

Milton Feinstein was born in 1920, the only boy in the family. At age 6 he contracted polio, and for nearly six years he was bedfast, recovering

from this crippling disease. When his parents split, tragic circumstances arose, and at age 12, in the middle of the Great Depression, he was living on the street.

Milton found his way to New Jersey, looking for his father, but found him to be a tragic soul, barely able to care for himself. Again, Milton was forced to live on the streets. He was able to earn 25 cents/day selling papers; and despite his unfortunate circumstances, he faithfully attended school. He graduated from high school with honors, and also excelled as a basketball player, even though one leg was three inches shorter than the other. Aside from the fact that he walked with a distinct limp, he was in good physical shape.

Feinstein became a Machinist Apprentice and worked in a factory, wearing clothes wherever he could get them. **Pearl Harbor changed his life.** He joined and received new clothes and three square meals a day. His son believes he chose the Air Corps because he knew he could not march in Europe or the Pacific on a bum leg. He started pilot training, finished primary, but washed out in advanced training, probably because of the limitations of his short leg.

This gentleman was extremely bright. He was a member of Mensa, and could do the New York Times crosswords in minutes. He could have been sent home after wash-

ing out in pilot training, and being the only boy in the family, but he insisted on serving. He was sent to Navigator School and passed with flying colors. Next he went to Bombardier School, earning a double rating. From there he was assigned to the **George Insley** crew, and along with Insley, signed up for a second tour, flying a total of 50 tours. (The records of three are in the lost April files.) He flew in the Bomb Group's last tour, April 25, 1945.

After the War, Feinstein stayed in the reserves, married Juliet Scheanblum, and attended Boston University where he received a degree in accounting. Then came the Korean War. He was called back to the service, served through the Vietnam conflict, earned a Bronze Star and retired as a Lt. Colonel. At some point he changed his name to avoid Jewish prejudice in the area where the family lived.

His next venture was to become Vice President of First National Bank of Arizona, now Wells Fargo, where he worked for about 10 years. He passed away 7 January 1991, leaving four sons.

Who is the son who shared this story of a man who rose from a tragic start in life to make a major contribution for his country? It is Roger Fenton, 44th BG Vice President and Historian. Roger is in his 35th year in Law Enforcement. He spent 27 years with the city of Tempe Police Dept. (Home of Arizona State University). He and his wife Lori have two children, a son and a daughter.

Roger worked with Will Lundy to accumulate knowledge about the 44th BG which he makes available to family inquiries which come via the Internet. He mails out copies of the 8 Ball Tails to prospective members, and jumps into Board projects with enthusiasm and expertise – all this out of devotion and respect to a father who was truly an outstanding member of The Greatest Generation.

GEORGE TEMPLE MADE IT THROUGH PLOESTI, AND WIENER-NEUSTADT, BUT FOGGIA WAS A DIFFERENT STORY

Ploesti: When **George Temple** got to Shipdham, his crew immediately joined the group that headed to Africa. Three missions to Sicily, three to Italy, then flying with **Eunice Shannon** as pilot, **Robert Lehnhausen** as Co-Pilot, they made the 13 hour trip to Ploesti.

Both Temple and Lehnhausen saw Lt. **Flavelle's** B-24 inexplicably dive into the sea; but the formation continued onward to Target Blue. Following *Suzy Q*, and seeing planes exploding and tumbling downward, and with flak, ME 109s and ME 110s creating havoc all around them, *Natchez Belle* made it through unscathed. They landed at Benina at 1800.

Wiener-Neustadt: The defences at the Messerschmidt plant at Wiener-Neustadt could not prevent a successful bomb run. Temple was flying with **David W. Alexander** in Flak Alley. The twelve hour trip ended happily at Benina.

Foggia: While those missions were going on, General Eisenhower was working on the goal of capturing Rome, which would be the first capital city to be taken on Europe's mainland. Troops had already taken Salerno, but he needed an airfield close to the port of Naples. Foggia, a German-held airbase, was the best solution.

George Temple, Navigator on *Natchez Belle*, recalled the attacks of 24 yellow nose Me 109s. "The first 20 mm shell hit the flight deck near the radio, setting the upholstery and other flammable materials on fire. The next thing I knew, two engines were burning and we started down on a long glide. All the way down

we were under attack; the waist and belly gunners were killed by enemy fire.

"At 18,000 feet the pilot gave the signal to bail out. He did a good job of trimming the ship and giving everyone a chance to clear before abandoning his post. We all jumped except the two dead men and the Co-Pilot. (Temple learned later that **George Hersh**, Co-pilot, had forgotten his chute. He refused the offer to share a chute with his pilot.)

"I opened the nose wheel and bailed out. I figured I needed a minute before opening my chute, and I was afraid that I would get excited and open up too soon. As I fell, I followed the second hand on my watch with my finger. When it had been around once, I pulled the cord and she opened up nicely.

"I was coming down in a valley with mountains all around me, but the last fifty feet seemed to come up in a rush, and I miscalculated the slope on which I landed, so I broke my left ankle. It seemed only a moment until an Italian farmer with a shotgun appeared over the top of the hill. He got me on a mule and took me to a main road where a truck was waiting. The truck took me to the local police station in the town of Atella."

A doctor took care of the wounded, then all were moved to the Provincial Hospital in Saint Carlo, a mile north of Patenza. Then..... on September 10 American forces were targeting the road lines and rail junction in town, and one bomb hit the room and stairway next to Temple. The prisoners escaped the hospital, spent the night in the mountains, watching the bombings. When they

...continued on page 15

returned to town, they were promptly arrested and spent the night in jail.

Two days before that, with Mussolini out of power, the new Italian government signed a peace treaty with the Allies. Italian officers gave the prisoners the opportunity to leave, but cautioned them that Germans were everywhere, and escaping would entail great risks. So they waited, engaging in a cat and mouse game with suspicious Germans.

On September 18 British planes dive bombed the prison, whereupon Americans and Italians alike set forth. The Italians gave the Americans guns, food and clothing and a safe conduct letter. Temple travelled with another wounded American, (**Ralph Knox**, Well Gunner on *Timbah-A-Ah*), scrambling into the hills to avoid the bombings. A friendly farmer fed them, an Italian officer directed them toward the safety of British troops. Just when his travelling companion could go no further, five twenty-five pound shells went over, so they shoved off again. Traffic moved past them, but they were not certain whether it was British or

American. So they spent another night in the hills.

The next morning a farmer approached them, along with a tall blond fellow in an unrecognizable uniform. Just as Temple was ready to shoot, the man addressed them in English. He was a Canadian.

Nine days after parachuting from *Natchez Belle*, he found transportation to Tunis, and then was able to get back to the 68th.

The events of those who flew to Foggia and went down were directly related to the politics of the War. It was a costly mission for the 44th. The 66th lost *Lady Luck*; the 67th lost *Suzy Q*, *Black Sheep* and *Buzzin' Bear*; The 68th lost *Natchez Belle*; and the 506 lost *Southern Comfort* and *Timba-A-Ah*. Three members of *Baldy & His Brood* were wounded. The pilot brought that plane in to Malta so the wounded could rapidly get medical attention.

In all, 33 men were KIA; six became POW; 25 were POW but escaped; 1 managed to escape and return to Shipdham.



CAPE COD SPECIAL

George Washburn recognized **Lou Rabesa** in this picture. He was Crew Chief on *Cape Cod Special*, in the 506 Squadron, later transferred to the 68th. Rabesa came from Cape Cod and still lives there, but spends winters in Florida. Once, while visiting the Cape, Washburn went to play golf and found the flying 8-Ball in the clubhouse. He learned that Rabesa had built and owned the course for many years. The 68th Squadron once held a reunion there.

**44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
HARRISBURG/CARLISLE REUNION
SHERATON HOTEL, HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**

Lodging at Sheraton for three or four nights

Thursday, October 16, 2008

Optional Arrival

Registration 1:00-5:00

Friday, October 17, 2008

9:00 AM-5:00 PM Registration

9:30 AM General Meeting

Lunch on your own

2:00 Bus Tour to Civil War Museum

7:00 PM Welcome Reception

Saturday: October 18, 2008

Breakfast

9:00 AM Bus Tour to Army Heritage Museum, Carlisle, PA

Box Lunch in Mess Hall

7:00 Squadron Dinners

Sunday, October 19, 2008

Breakfast

8:00 AM Bus Tour to Gettysburg

Lunch on your own

5:00 Return to Hotel

7:00 Banquet

Monday, October 20, 2008

Breakfast & Farewells

*If you wish to stay in the area for a few days, notify the hotel on arrival,
and you will receive the reduced price. If you decide to leave early,
notify the hotel of your departure date when you first arrive.
Otherwise, you will be charged for the extra day.*

**REGISTRATION FOR REUNION OF THE
44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
SHERATON HOTEL**

4650 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111

October 16-20, 2008

Please fill out a form for each registrant.
Please print or type. All information must be complete.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Spouse/guest _____ Squadron _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

PRICING, 4 HOTEL NIGHTS:

Single \$682.00 Double \$933.00 Triple \$1,207.00 Quad \$1,482.00

Please indicate bed preference: King _____ Queen _____

Includes Welcome reception, Three Breakfasts, Hospitality Room, Free Parking,
Transportation to Civil War Museum, Carlisle Army Heritage Center, Gettysburg,
Squadron Dinners, Banquet.

SQUADRON DINNER: Please indicate choice of entrée:

_____ Chicken _____ Cod w/wine & spices

BANQUET: Please indicate choice of entrée:

_____ Delmonico Steak _____ Chicken Wellington

PAYMENT

Number of Registrants (See Prices Above)

Single _____ \$ _____ Double _____ \$ _____

Triple _____ \$ _____ Quad _____ \$ _____

Please send checks to 44th Bomb Group Treasurer:

Jackie Roberts, 11910 SE 44th, Oklahoma City, OK 73150

TO OUR MEMBERS:

Once again, it was to our financial advantage to pay the hotel bill through our Registration Fee. We are staying in a Harrisburg hotel because of its easy access to the Harrisburg airport. Also, the fact that Carlisle is a Truck Terminal presents a problem for drivers.

The employees of the Army Heritage Center are eager to show their delight, that we have chosen this facility to store our history. Their current displays represent the Army, starting with our nation's early wars. The 44th Board has taken on the task of placing the imprint of the Army Air Corps into the fabric of the Education Center.

Our late president, **Paul Kay**, planned the Gettysburg part of the Reunion. It is so unfortunate that neither he nor **Will Lundy** will be among us. In their memory, we are determined that this Reunion will be a great success.

AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Before the 44th BGVA arrives at the Army Heritage Museum in Carlisle in October, the Board is planning to create a highly visible symbol of our great leader, General Leon Johnson. Many of the additions to the Museum must be by private donation. (The Center is under the jurisdiction of the Undersecretary of the Army)

If you care to make a contribution to the Leon Johnson Memorial Fund, please send it c/o our Treasurer, Jackie Roberts, 11910 S. E. 44th, Oklahoma City, OK 73150.



THE MEMORIAL GARDEN

Among the plans that are unfolding at the Heritage Museum is a Memorial Garden, which will include a 'Soldier's Walk'. Identifying bricks can be purchased. Each has space for three lines, fourteen characters for a price of \$100. For an additional \$50, you may have the 44th BG logo above the name.

If you would like to have your name or that of a family member placed on the Walk, contact me and I will send you an application. My phone number and e-mail address are on the inside cover of the 8 BTs.

Ruth W. Davis-Morse



S/SGT. WARREN MCPHERSON'S THIRD MISSION
KIEL, GERMANY: 4 AUGUST 1944
GUNNER, 66TH SQ., JAMES M. WILLIAMS CREW

The briefing began earlier – at 6:15 AM today. We took off in Bar M again, just one heavy bomber among 1,200, and headed on course over the North Sea. As I did on every mission, I studied everything below us. Often I saw the shadow of our airplane on the clouds, and if weather conditions were right, there would be a halo around it. That was always encouraging.

On every mission I prayed all the way and asked God to be with us. I sang the Doxology over and over. Behind my oxygen mask and the noise of the engines, I could sing as loud or as much as I wanted, and no one could hear me. I revised it a little and sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures *there* below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost." The more dangerous things got, the louder and faster I sang and prayed!

We noticed many planes from groups ahead of us turning back before we got to enemy shores. We passed over Helogoland, a small island in the North Sea where the Nazis had a submarine base. Everything seemed to be going OK for us when we passed over the enemy coast. As we began shoving out chaff, we ran into lots of flak. We went right up the Kiel Canal, and just as we started the bomb run, Willie told Copilot **Everett (Wellman)** to handle her easy, as No. 1 engine was going out! Willie also alerted Flight Engineer **Len (Leonard Schiavonne)** about the ailing engine. My

heart skipped several beats before the engine regained itself.

At last **Mike (Salvatore)** called, "Bombs away!" **Hal (Woodson)** was to close the Bombay doors, but he got so fascinated watching the bombs fall and the flak, he forgot to close them. In fact, we were all watching the flak like a bunch of ninnies. It was ferocious! Finally someone yelled, "Let's get out of here and go home." Our twelve 500 pound bombs were delivered right on one of Hitler's submarine manufacturing plants. Woodson finally got the Bombay doors closed, and we were on our way out. In spite of the flak, we only found one flak hole in the nose turret. This was a 7 hour, 15 minute raid with minus 21 degrees and a terrifying blue yonder!

It was always a tense moment when we saw fighter planes in the distance coming toward us. *Were they our? Were they theirs?* We constantly studied silhouettes of the fighters, both ours and theirs, so we could recognize them as far off as possible. It was a thrill, the moment we could tell they were our P-38s, P-47s or P-51s. Man how we loved those guys! Today P-38s escorted us. At times a crippled fighter joined us and flew close up under our wing, so we could protect him.

Ed. Note: McPherson's Doxology and prayers reached the Highest Level. According to the Roll of Honor, no planes were lost on that mission. When the War was over, McPherson fulfilled a lifelong dream. He became a minister.

MARVIN W. COX HONORED IN PORT GIBSON, MS

The memory of **Marvin Cox** has become a part of the prestigious Chamberlain Hunt Military Academy in Port Gibson, MS, one of the few Christian military academies left in the U.S. Donna Cox Bozarth, daughter of Marvin Cox, and her husband helped a young man in need of structure in his life, so they sent him to this Academy. Their goal of helping this young man was so successful, he has been accepted at two Mississippi colleges, and is anticipating acceptance at the Citadel.

Next this benevolent couple provided the funds to build a new cafeteria on the campus, and the cafeteria will be named for Donna's father; it will be called the *Cox Cafeteria*.

Inside this beautiful facility will be a meeting area for small groups. The plan is for the room to resemble a man's study...with bookcases, leather chairs, desk, etc. The room will also be used to tell the story of Marvin Cox's service in WWII. On display will be his dress uniform and pictures of his experiences in England.

In addition, the building will house a mini-museum about WWII. Of course, The Flying Eight Balls will be highlighted.

Bob Lehnhausen had a warm relationship with Marvin Cox, remembering him as the flight engineer on the **Jim O'Brien** crew, one of the 68th original nine crews that constituted the Squadron as it began operations.

"Cox's combat career was ended when he had the misfortune of ruptured ear drums. He flew one more mission after that, then asked to be assigned to the Squadron Engineering Section where he became a valuable aircraft mechanic.

Like the rest of that wonderful group of 'grease monkeys', he spent the duration nursing those big ugly birds for those of us who depended upon their talent and skills for our survival."

"In my conversation with Mrs. Bozarth, I was in awe of what she and her husband have chosen to do to honor the memory and patriotism of her father. In our conversation she sounded just like Will Lundy in her desire to let succeeding generations know what sacrifices were made in those days, to insure the liberty that most of the rest of the world enjoys because of those frightful years of youthful dedication."

REMEMBERING THE O'BRIEN CREW

Every story has an addendum, and the Marvin Cox story aroused this memory with Lehnhausen.

"Looking at the record causes me to reflect, once again, upon the rigors of those early days at Shipdham. **Jim O'Brien** was a superb airman, he had a very fine crew. This crew had a terrible experience on the Wilhelmshaven mission of 27 January 1943. They survived a vicious fighter attack upon their plane, although two of the crew were KIA and two were WIA. The 68th also lost the crews and airplanes of Lt. **Nolan Cargile** and Lt. **Maxwell Sullivan** on that mission. One of the Sullivan crew managed to parachute to safety, but was so badly wounded that he was later repatriated by the Germans."

"Major **Francis MacDuff**, the 68th CO returned to the States on April 12, 1943 and Jim O'Brien became the new CO."

On 14 May 1943 the 44th flew the famous Kiel mission. **Malcolm Howell**, O'Brien's original co-pilot, had been checked out as a first pilot and had taken

over the O'Brien crew. This was to be his first mission as the pilot. Jim O'Brien opted to fly as Howell's co-pilot. In the course of battle, the Germans shot down this very fine crew. Howell was KIA, O'Brien became a POW. Because of his ear problem, Marvin Cox was not with his crew on these two fateful missions.

"Consider this though: Of these nine men on the O'Brien crew, who left the States with such high hopes in their combined airmanship and skills, only two completed a combat tour. Three were

killed in action, two were shot down and became prisoners of war. One was wounded in action, so severely that he never flew again, and Marvin suffered a disability that ended his combat career. It took a lot of pluck to enjoy high morale when one gave thought to such odds, but that was Shipdham in the Spring of 1943. Better yet, this was the situation in the whole of the 8th Air Force at that time."

FROM THE EDITOR TO THE SECOND GENERATION:

In this issue I have received two powerful stories from sons, told about their fathers, Roger Fenton; and in the *Folded Wings*, Leon Lowenthal. At Branson, Coleman Vickery brought a book, written and cartooned by his father, Eugene Vickery.

Ken Burns, the famous video producer of "The War", has expressed sincere regrets that he never talked to his father about his WWII experiences. As he expressed, "When a veteran dies without his story being told, it is like a library burning down." (How true)

Did your father keep a record of his war experiences? If he is still with you, talk him into recording it on a tape. If he is gone, write the things he told you. WWII was unique in our country's history. 44th Bomb Group members are a part of the path that led to victory. Put it in writing.

**FROM THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS NEWS:
BASIC FLYING RULES:**

"Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges of it. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there."

MISSIONS IN POETRY

As remembered by Douglas D. McPhee In honor of his Navigator, Jim Richardson On his 50th Wedding Anniversary

*After a long and weaving voyage across the deep blue sea
We finally landed in England, our whole crew and me.*

*Then with our former lives to ponder,
Off we flew into the "Wild Blue Yonder
To give those Nazis their come-up-ance,
Once they shot flak, trying to stun us.*

As we cruised to 22,000 feet in the sky

*Jim Flaherty saw the Plexiglas fly,
As the flak shot all around in his turret
And at 53 below, a strong wind current,*

*But we kept flying high in the air,
The cold cold wind a hardship to bear
Luckily Dick, who was gunning the tail
Just as the flak from those Germans did sail.*

*Right over his head, just passed his ear,
Had just bent down to adjust some of this gear.
Surely God was with him where he had been sitting;*

We had to agree the situation was fitting.

*Whitey and Mac each losing his mask,
Each saving the other, as that was his task.*

Trying to fly back with the engines on fire,

We landed in Paris and had to inquire,

*Who will be stuck guarding the plane on the ground
While the rest of the crew made the rounds of the town?*

Well, Mac did, of course, while the others had fun,

Mac guarded the plane with his life and his gun.

After 25 missions and four Oak Leaf Clusters,

The Germans are finished, and now we find

We can go back to our homes that we left behind.

As in the Battle of the Bulge when the weather was bad,

We are now stuck in England. How sad!

*Again Iceland and Newfoundland
More delay- Will we get back to the USA?*

To all of our officers and all our crew

For getting us home safely, we all

Thank you!



S/SGT. DOUGLAS D.
MCPHEE

Ed. Note: The trip to Orly Air Field in France after a mission to Dresden. The Bombardier who saw Plexiglas fly was Jim Flaherty. The Tail Gunner was Diego Indelicatto.

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Two members of the 44th BGVA attended the 8th AFHS Reunion in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in July 2008. **Tom Parsons**, formerly a Board Member, and **Frank Schaeffer** have been diligent members of this organization. The AFHS are strong supporters of the Mighty Eighth Museum in Pooler, Georgia, the area in which the Eighth Air Force began in 1942. The renowned author, Roger Freeman, named it the "Mighty Eighth".

Membership in this organization includes those who flew in B-24s, B-17s, P-38s, P-47s and P-51s.

Half of the U.S. Army Air Force's casualties were suffered by the 8th AF—more than 47,000 casualties, more than 26,000

dead. 17 Medals of Honor were awarded to 8th AF flyers; plus 220 Distinguished Service Crosses and 442,000 Air Medals. Thanks to the diligence of **Lee Aston**, the number of awards are still growing.



Frank Schaeffer and Tom Parsons

THERE WAS A V-3 ROCKET



V-3 Rocket

The 9th Army found this awesome weapon near Danberg, Germany—a piloted 'Buzz Bomb'. In fact there were nearly 1,000 of them in a well camouflaged factory which workers unsuccessfully tried to destroy before evacuating. It is assumed that the pilot bails out when approaching his target.

For Sale: 8th Air Force Suncatcher, a fundraiser for the 44th BGVA. Here's a decorative item for your window or your local VFW, a great reminder of the most powerful aerial group in history—The Mighty Eighth Air Force. Diameter: 11.5 inches. Price: \$100 + \$20 shipping. Call **Lee Aston**: (706) 283-1337. E-Mail leeaston@elberton.net



THE 44TH BOMB GROUP PX

When we lost Sam Miceli, the PX was boxed and dropped into the hands of Dick & Betty Lynch. An appeal in the 8 Ball Tails brought a wonderful phone call from Don Prater, volunteering to help. Here is what is available:

Blue Liberator Shirts	\$30 + \$4 postage	List size
Flying 8 Ball Shirts	\$25 + \$4 postage	List size
Flying 8 Ball Golf Caps	\$15 + \$3 postage	Indicate Squadron
Flying 8 Ball Pins	\$ 5 + \$1 postage	Indicate Squadron
44th Bumper Stickers	\$ 2 + \$0.50 postage	

Contact Don Prater, 1608 E. Candlestick Drive, Tempe, AZ 85283.

Phone 480 820-3838 E-Mail donprater@msn.com

Make checks payable to the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association

DON PRATER, MANAGER OF THE PX

When we lost our devoted shopkeeper, **Sam Miceli**, we requested someone to step up and become our new salesman. Don Prater, a member of the 44th Bomb Wing, called and offered his services.

The 44th Bomb Wing evolved from the Bomb Group, and was active in the Korean War. Through the influence of **Will Lundy**, Prater joined the 44th BGVA and attended the Reunion in St. Louis. He has fond memories of dining with **Bob Lehnhausen, Bill Cameron and Roy Owen**.

Since then he has organized his own group, the Air Police Unit, and arranges reunions with them.

Prater sells 44th BG products from his own home; his wife Phyllis runs a home jewelry business. The couple have adopted a little boy, so they keep busy with their many chores.

His decision to volunteer for PX salesmanship is based on his true admiration and appreciation for those who flew the dangerous skies during WWII. ***The 44th is truly grateful for his service.***

TO ALL MEMBERS:

One of the biggest chores that the Board has undertaken is to place the 44th Bomb Group History in every historical museum and library that can be reached. As the Folded Wings list grows, more great heroes are lost. Their wartime experiences should never be forgotten. If you have a contact with any historical library, ask the librarian whether they will accept copies of the 8 Ball Tails. Let me know, and I will promptly send them a bundle. My phone number and address are on the inside cover.

Ruth Davis-Morse, Editor



FOLDED WINGS

*Remember all the best of our past moments...
And so to where I wait come gently on.*

Ellen Terry

BALLES, LLOYD R. Date of Death 28 September 2007. The family reported that Balles served as a Bombardier with the 44th BG. For unknown reasons, he is not in the Database.

BOENSCH, PAUL A. #19440 506 Squadron 25 January 2008 1st Lt. (later Major) Boensch was a Bombardier on the **George M. Beiber** crew. His first of 35 missions was 7th July 1944. The crew learned of D-Day when they were enroute to England, and had stopped in Greenland for refueling.

The Beiber crew flew in eight different A/C: *Consolidated Mess, My Peach, My Gal Sal, Down De Hatch, Lakanookie, Clean Sweep/Dragon Nose, Joplin Jalopy* and *Sabrina III*.

While stationed in Shipdham, Boench joined Major **Larry Linck** in establishing the 44th Bomb Group Band, into which they enlisted any GI with musical skills to join in entertaining various groups—American and British. Among the areas where they performed was the prestigious Black Friars Castle. Boench fondly remembered taking off his flight outfit and immediately dressing for a musical performance.

After the War he became a teacher of Instrumental Music in the Memphis City Schools. He remained in the Air Force Reserves, and during the Korean Conflict he became Civilian Recreation Leader for the 516th/463rd TCW of the USAF in Memphis. He organized and directed a Voluntary Military Band and Orchestra; through his musical service he rose to the rank of Major.

Boensch and his late wife Helen had five boys and one girl; two boys are deceased. Their son Paul rose to Lt. Col in the Army, James became a Major in the Air Force,

William became a Master Chief Petty Officer in the Navy.

Boench passed away in the Tennessee State Veteran Home in Humboldt, Tennessee.

BOYKIN SR., RICHARD A. #19487 506 Squadron 3 December 2006 Captain Boykin was a Navigator on many crews, most frequently with **James Clement**. He also flew with **Earl Johnson, James Bunce, Jr., Lyle S. Davenport** and **Sylvester Hunn**, and with ten different Command Pilots: **David Saylor, Addison C. Davis, Eugene Snaveley, Marion Tiemenier, A. T. Reed, Charles Hughes, J. G. Merrell, Dale Benadom, James Stevens** and **Joy Smith**.

Boykin flew in many unnamed planes, also in *Sad Sack II, M'Darling* and *Prince/Princess/Princess*. His first mission 1 October 1943 was part of the 8th Air Force's preparation for D-Day. The importance of these missions is exemplified by the number of Command Pilots that led the formations. Frequently flying in the lead plane, Boykin's navigational skills were invaluable through 8 April 1945 when he flew his last mission, his thirty third.

Upon his return to the States he married to Margaret Lillian Rumble, then attended Washington Lee University, graduating with a degree in history. After graduation he worked for International Paper Company; later he established a custom furniture company in Matthews, Virginia. The couple had four children, many grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

BROWNING, FREDRICH #19556 67th Squadron 26 August 2007 The Database has no information on this 44th BG member.



FOLDED WINGS

BURLINGAME, WILLIAM A. #19595 68th Squadron 19 February 2007 1st Lt. Burlingame was the Co-Pilot on the **Walter Franks** crew. He started as a Flight Officer, later rising to 1st Lt. His first of 32 missions was on 9 September 1944.

Burlingame flew with four different crews, including that of **Jack Liebrich, William Ritter** and **John Vaughn**. He flew in many unnamed planes, also in *Flak Magnet, Puritanical Bitch/Puritanical Witch, Gipsy Queen, Lili Marlene, Lady Geraldine, T. S. Tessie/Beck's Bad Boys, Hellza Droppin* and *Louisiana Belle*. His last mission was 21 March 1945.

Previous to his death, Burlingame and his wife Elna resided in Canon, Colorado.

COLLINS, ELWOOD #233251 68th Squadron Passed away Summer 2006 Lt. Collins was the Bombardier on the **Eustice Shannon** crew. He flew all missions with Shannon; the Navigator on that crew was **George Temple**. On the mission to Ploesti, Co-pilot was **Robert Lehnhausen**.

Upon arrival to Shipdham, the Shannon crew was immediately assigned to North Africa. Collins's first mission was 6 July 1943 to Sicily. The crew flew several missions to Sicily, then to Italy, Romania, Weiner-Neustadt and Foggia. His first flight to Foggia was uneventful; on a return trip on 16 August 1943, *Natchez Belle* was brought down by enemy fighters. He spent 18 months in Stalag 17A.

All of Collins's ten missions were flown on the *Natchez Belle*, except for one on *Eager Eve/Hag Mag/The Moth Ball Queen*.

Information about Collins demise came from his niece.

COX, MARVIN W. #19855 68th Squadron 11 September 2004. T/Sgt. Cox was an Engineer/Top Turret Gunner on the **James O'Brien** crew. His first mission was 7 November 1942, flying with **James Hodges** as Command Pilot. He flew a total of eight missions, but was grounded because of ruptured ear drums, whereupon he was transferred to the Squadron Engineering Section where he became a skilled A/C Mechanic. All of his missions were in *Rugged Buggy*, except the last which was on the *Miss Virginia*, piloted by **Wilmer Garrett** on 29 May 1943.

Cox and his wife Grace lived in Mississippi until his death. They are fondly remembered for hosting a reunion in Biloxi, MS. Grace is currently living in a retirement facility in Ridgeland, MS. Their daughter, Donna Bozarth lives in Orlando, Florida.

DELANEY, WILLIAM J. 13 June 2002 Name from Social Security Records. No information available.

DELLAFAVE, CARMEN R. 6 June 1999 No information available

DEUTSCH, ALAN S. #32968 66th Squadron Date Unknown. S/Sgt. Deutsch was a gunner on the **George R. Insley** crew. In his two tours, 48 missions, which began 27 September 1943, he served in all gun positions. The Database credits Deutsch with having flown in no less than thirteen A/C: *Nice & Naughty, Big Banner, The Banshee, Avenger, Lemon Drop, Scourge of the Skies, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle, Patsy Ann II, My Ass'Am Dragon, Shoo Shoo Baby, M'Darling, Southern Comfort III* and *Joplin Jalopy*. All missions were flown with Insley, but also with three different Command Pilots: **Sylvester Hunn, Devon Davis** and **Joy Smith**. Deutsch's last mission was 15 February 1945. When he became a member of the 44th BG, he listed his home state as New York.



FOLDED WINGS

DWELLE, LEONARD #22965 66th Squadron
Date of Death Unknown 2nd Lt. Dwell was a Bombardier, flying most of his missions on the **George Insley** crew. His first mission was 27 September 1943. He was Wounded in Action on 8 April 1943, separating him from his crew for a period of time. He flew with the following crews: **H. K. Landahl, Saul Fineman, J. I. Kearney, M. D. Mendenhall** and **Conrad Menzel**; also with two Command Pilots, **Sylvester Hunn** and **James Kahl**. When Insley was on his second tour, Dwelle returned to that crew.

In his twenty seven missions, he flew in no less than fourteen A/C: *Big Banner, The Banshee, Lil Cookie, Avenger, Lemon Drop, Scourge of the Skies, Patsy Ann II, My Ass'Am Dragon, The Banana Barge, My Peach, Southern Comfort II, My Gal Sal, M'Darling* and *Southern Comfort III*.

His last mission was 3 August 1944.

EDMONDS, THOMAS #22969 66th Squadron
Date of Death Unknown S/Sgt. Edmonds was a Gunner on **George Insley's** first tour. All of his 22 tours were with Insley, one with **Sylvester Hunn**, Command Pilot.

Edmonds flew in *Big Banner, The Banshee, Scourge of the Skies, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle, Patsy Ann II, My Ass 'Am Dragon, Shoo Shoo Baby* and *M'Darling*.

His last mission with the 44th BG was 20 April 1944. As the only married man in the crew, Edmonds opted to return home when he had completed his missions. He later decided to do a second tour, flying with the 15th AF for 38 additional missions. His explanation for choosing the 15th AF was that they had better weather, being based in Italy. He hoped to complete his assignment more quickly and return to his wife. During that period he had three missions to Ploesti. He did return home safely.

FARMER, HAL #20162 68th Squadron 1st Lt.
Farmer came to the 44th BG as a Flight Officer. His first mission was on D-Day, flying to Ferets De Cerisy as a Bombardier with **Robert Knaublein**. On some of his twenty one missions, he flew with **William Ritter**. In the post-D-Day missions, he flew on *Jose Carioca, T.S. Tessie/Beck's Bad Boys, Wendy W, Channel Hopper* and *Corky*. By the time he completed his last mission on October 3, 1944, he had been promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

GALVIN, GERALD M. #20317 18 April 2003
No available information on the Database

GAUDIN, PERCY J. #20336 66th Squadron 21 May 1997 S/Sgt. Gaudin was a Tail Gunner on the **James McKenna** crew. He flew twenty four missions with that crew, the first on 19 May 1944. His last mission, 6 August 1944, in *Stormy Weather*, was disastrous. **A.P. Byrne** was Command Pilot on a mission to the oil refinery in Hamburg, Germany. This unnamed plane was flying Deputy Lead for the 492nd BG. Both Byrne and McKenna were KIA, along with the co-Pilot, Navigator and Engineer. The GEE Navigator, PFF Navigator, Bombardier, Radio Operator, and all three gunners became POW.

Previous to this tragic event, Gaudin had flown on D-Day to Vire, France. On one mission to an A/C Factory in Brunswick, Germany, he flew with **Devon Davis** as Command Pilot.

The McKenna crew flew in *My Peach, Flying Log/Pregnant Pet, My Ever Lovin' Gal* and *Cape Cod Special*.

At the time of his death he was residing in Kiln, Mississippi.



FOLDED WINGS

GORDON, CLYDE F. # 20420 68th Squadron
30 September 2007 S/Sgt. Gordon was a gunner on a number of crews, most with **Parke Jones, Jr.**, but also with **Arthur Marcoullier, Raymond E. Hamlyn, Arthur R. Anderson, William Altemus** and **Robert Lee**. He flew in *The Jinx, Flak Alley, Victory Ship, Heaven Can Wait II, Pizz and Moan/Tootie Belle, Paper Doll/Lady Dot, The Exterminator*, and *V for Victory*. His first of 24 missions was 18 October 1943, his last was 9 April 1944.

JANDREAU, PAUL #22967 66th Squadron
Date of Death Unknown T/Sgt. Jandreau was an Engineer and Top Turret Gunner on the **George Insley** crew. His first mission was 20 December 1943; like his Pilot, he signed up for a second tour, which brought him to 15 February 1945. On one mission Jandreau flew with **Robert E. Felber**, another with **James Tucker**. Twice the crew with Command Pilots **Devon Davis** and **Joy Smith**.

Besides many unnamed planes, Jandreau flew in *Big Banner, Victory Ship, Lemon Drop, Scourge of the Skies, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle, Patsy Ann II, My Ass' Am Dragon, Southern Comfort III, My Gal Sal, Joplin Jalopy, Gallavantin' Gal* and *Nice & Naughty*.

Jandreau flew a total of 40 missions. On the second tour the crew was flying as Lead Plane.

KITTLE, PAUL #22966 66th Squadron Date of Death Unknown T/Sgt. Kittle was a Radio Operator and Gunner on the **George Insley** crew. Like other members of the crew, he followed the leader and signed up for a second tour. His first mission was 27 September 1943. At that time, long before the Normandy invasions, missions were directed to industrial sites, many in the Ruhr Valley where the Krupps factory were turning out war materials

at a rapid rate. While flying with Insley, Kittle also flew with three Command Pilots—**Sylvester Hunn, Devon Davis** and **Joy Smith**. In his 48 missions, Kittle flew in *Lil Cookie, Avenger, Scourge of the Skies, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle, Patsy Ann II, My Ass' Am Dragon, Shoo Shoo Baby, M'Darling, Southern Comfort III, My Gal Sal* and *Joplin Jalopy*.

His last mission was 15 February 1945.

LOWENTHAL, LEON #21144 7 May 2007
Leon Lowenthal was a Meteorologist and Photographer, assigned to the 44th Bomb Group. Because of his weather-forecasting duties, he had occasion to work closely with other meteorologists advising General Eisenhower, particularly about the decision to launch the D-Day attack.

According to his son Noah, Lowenthal frequently flew as an observer on different missions, particularly on D-Day. He accumulated a large collection of photographs which he placed in the 2nd Air Division Museum in Norwich, England.

As the Invasion progressed, Lowenthal was based in different areas; one of his most vivid memories was his assignment to Normandy after D-Day.

After the War, he entered the business world, producing pinball machines for local bars. Later he owned several bars and restaurants. He and his wife, Delores Lawlor, started a Day Care Center and Sports Camp, both of which are still operational.

The couple resided in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. They had four children, Noah, Rhea and Lisa. Their son Ira is deceased. Lisa and her husband Adam Silverstein have one child, named Ari.

Unfortunately, Lowenthal's bio is not on the Database.

FOLDED WINGS

MARKLE, ROGER SANFORD #21197 67th Squadron 26 September 2007 2nd Lt. Markle's first flight was with **Newton Condray** on 27 February 1945. After that he piloted eleven missions with his own crew, only three of which are still remaining. The crew flew in *Mi Akin Ass, Old Iron Curtain, Lady Fifi Nella, One Weakness, and Three Kisses for Luck*. His last mission was 18 April 1945.

MILLER, LOUIS F. #21350 506 Squadron. 30 April 2007 There is no Bio on this member. He belonged to the 44th BGVA, but did not submit any information to the Database. He and his wife Eileen resided in Towson, MD.

MURTAUGH, BERNARD #21467 66th Squadron 30 October 2007 Previous to coming to the 44th Bomb Group, S/Sgt. Murtaugh flew 20 missions with the 492nd from June 1944 to August. His first mission with the 44th BG was 9 August 1944, flying with **Arthur Rasmussen** as a Gunner. In his fourteen missions, he also flew with **Harold Koven** and once with **Gilbert Magaziner** as Command Pilot.

Murtaugh flew in *Big Time Operator, Jersey Jerk* and several unmarked planes. His last mission was 27 November 1944.

NEEPER, LOY L. "POTSY" #21491 67th Squadron 31 January 2008 T/Sgt. Neeper was a Flight Engineer, flying his early missions with the **Walter Bunker** crew. **Richard Butler** was Co-pilot on that crew until the 7 September 1943 mission to Holland, when he moved to the pilot's seat. On one mission they flew with **James McAtee** as Command Pilot. On later missions Neeper flew with **Robert E. McCormick**. He flew in some of the most challenging missions of that period—Ploesti, Wiener-Neustadt, Kjeller and more.

In his twenty-five missions, Neeper flew in *Earthquake McGoan, Ruth-Less, Mr 5 by 5, Calaban, Old Crow, Miss Emmy Lou, 4-Q-2,*

Miss Emmy Lou II, F for Freddie and Chief & Sack Artists. His last mission was 8 March 1944.

The relationship between 'Dick' Butler and 'Potsy' Neeper has been ongoing. They first met at Davis Mânathan Army Air Field, both assigned to the 506 Squadron, Butler as pilot and Neeper as Engineer. On 21 December 1943 on a test hop in a recently repaired plane, Emmy Lou II, an explosion occurred in the #3 engine, whereupon all engines failed, and Butler brought the plane down to a crash landing. There were many injuries, Butler being the worst, but Neeper distinguished himself by carrying the unconscious **Robert Nicholson** to safety. With fire and explosions around the A/C, Neeper carried his Bombardier to safety.

Despite serious medical problems in later life, Neeper and his wife Irene attended 44th BG reunions. At the 1990 Reunion he handed his pilot the keys to *Earthquake McGoan*. Their last meeting was at the Ploesti Tidal Wave 60th Anniversary Reunion in Salt Lake City, 2003. In death, he wore a B-24 tie, a gift from his pilot, 'Dick' Butler.

ROBERTIE, WILLIAM #21823 There is no database information about the activities of this 44th member. He paid dues, and when he passed on, his wife Hazel continued her membership. It would be interesting to know what he did in Shipdham. Everybody's job was important.



FOLDED WINGS

SMYTHE, WILLIAM D. #22096 68th Squadron 26 January 2008 Major Smythe was an Intelligence Officer who debriefed the crews upon the completion of their missions. According to his Commander, **Bob Lehnhausen**, Smythe was so impressed with the sacrifices of the flight crews, he volunteered to fly on a number of missions. After his fifth mission, Commander Lehnhausen pinned his Air Medal, noting that Smythe was one of the few Air Force ground officers who earned a combat award for participating in aerial operations.

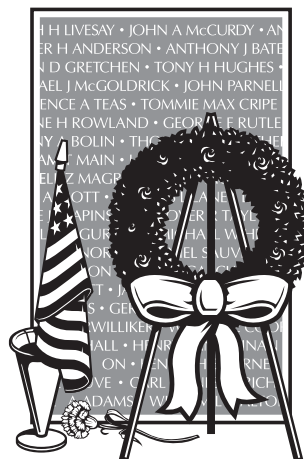
Before the war Smythe attended Duke University. When he returned home after the war he established an automobile dealership. His dedication to the automobile industry brought him numerous awards and recognitions; and his generosity to religious, educational and civic organizations brought him great respect and many accolades in the Santa Clara Valley. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Carol Jean Smythe, six children, 16 grandchildren and one great grandchild. He was residing in Woodside, California at the time of his death.

YOUNG, JOHN S. #22664 66th Squadron Date of Death unknown T/Sgt. Young was a gunner on the **George Insley** crew, and along with his pilot, flew two tours, the first on 27 September 1943. In his 66 missions he filled all gunner positions. On one mission he flew with **Joy Smith**. On the second tour, the Insley crew flew as the Lead Plane. Twice they flew with Command Pilots: **Sylvester Hunn** and **Devon Davis**.

The Insley Crew flew in *Big Banner, Nice 'N Naughty, Lil Cookie, Avenger, Lemon Drop, Scourge of the Skies, Myrtle the Fertile Turtle, Patsy Ann II, My Ass 'Am Dragon, Shoo Shoo Baby, M'Darling, Southern Comfort III, My Gal Sal*, and *Joplin Jalopy*, plus many unnamed planes. Young's last mission was 15 February 1945.

After the War Young entered the practice of Medicine.

Ed. Note: This issue has many names from the George Insley crew. These were submitted by Roger Fenton, who wanted everyone in that crew to be honoured, even those who died before the 44th BGVA was organized.





THE ARMY HERITAGE AND EDUCATION CENTER

This Museum and Educational Center is a major component of the U.S. Army War College at the Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA. The Carlisle Barracks is the second oldest military base in the country. Many great officers attended classes in the Barracks, among them General John Pershing (1905), Dwight D. Eisenhower (1927) and General Omar Bradley (1934) The Army Air Corps was under the Army in WWII, and the Army Museum officials greeted us warmly. Will Lundy made the decision to place the 44th BG's memorabilia here—all seventeen file cabinets full.

Leon Johnson and those who flew in the formations behind him will be on parade at the Reunion in October.

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association

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