

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 13 Issue #5

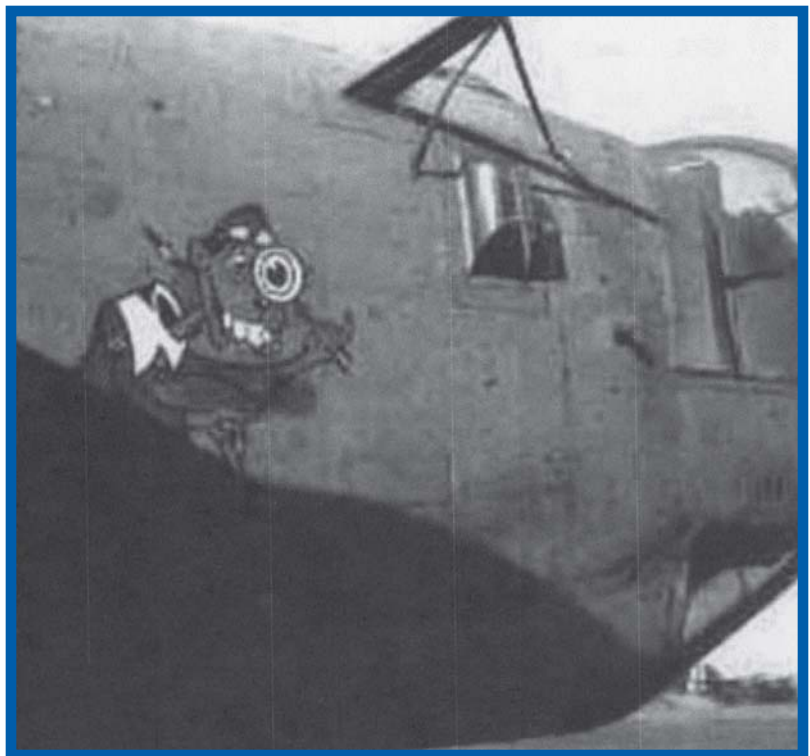
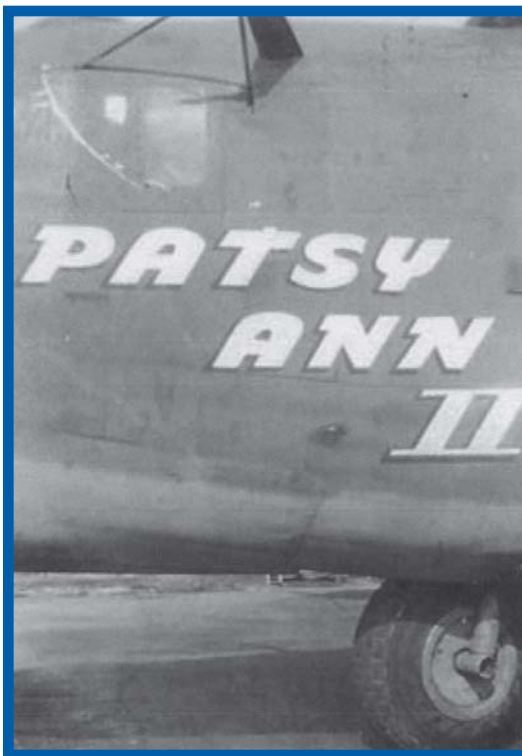
Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Fall 2013

Non Profit Veterans Association

EIN # 68-0351397

PATSY ANN II



Patsy Ann II came to the Shipdham, and was assigned to the 66th Squadron. Her first mission of 46 missions was to Gotha, Germany on 24 February 1944. Eighteen different crews flew in Patsy Ann II: **George Insley, Shelby Irby, J. M. Schwensen, John Winchester, Harry Yoder, Harold Morrison, Dale Benadom, Keith Schuyler, Robert Rose, Joseph Parks, Jr., Arnold Sarson, Robert Edmonson, Ted Weaver, Joseph Principle, Quintin Torell, Charles Gayman, Robert Edmonson and James Wilson.**

The last mission of Patsy Ann II was to Bernberg, Germany on 7 July 1944, flown by James Wilson. Shot down by enemy fighters, one member of the crew was KIA; nine became POW.

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The 8-Ball Tails[©]

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

THE GEORGE INSLEY CREW 66TH SQUADRON



Back L-R: **Allen S. Deutsh**, Ball Turret Gunner; **Paul Kittle**, Ball Turret Gunner; **Frank Bata**, Waist Gunner; **John Young**, Waist Gunner.

Front: **Rudolph Jandreau**, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; **George Insley**, Pilot; **Milton Feinstein/Fenton**, Navigator; **George Federlin**, Tail Gunner.

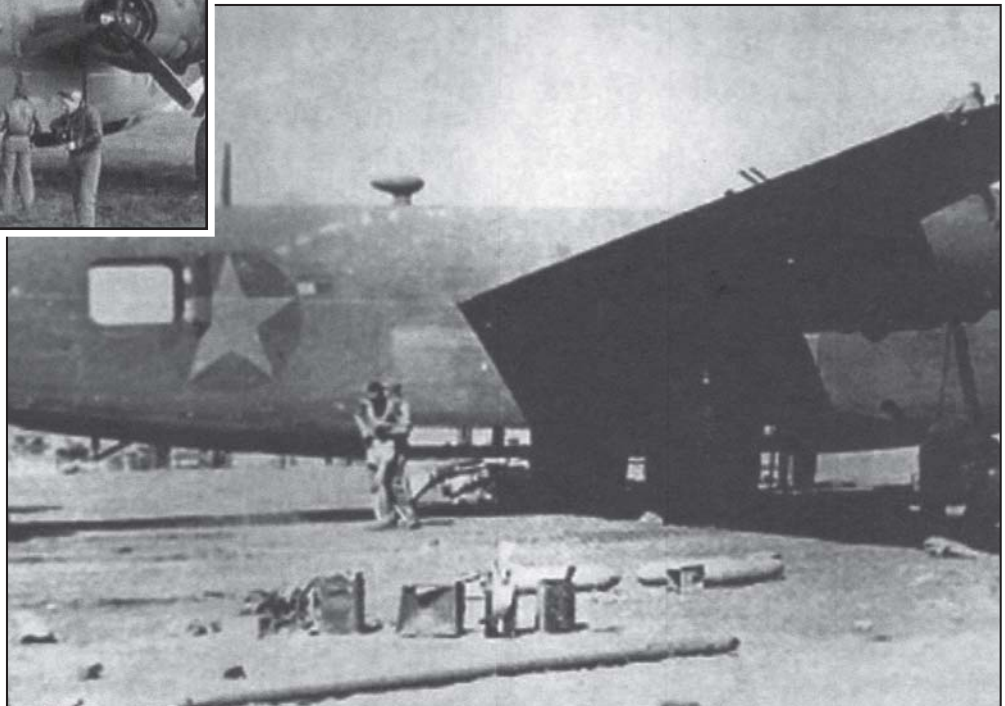
Missing from the picture: **James Harper**, Co-Pilot; **Leonard Dwelle**, Bombardier

The George Insley Crew flew two tours, starting 27 February 1944. Three of those missions were in *Patsy Ann II*, to Gotha, Germany, which was *Patsy Ann II's* first flight. After that, to Friedrichshafen on 16 May and to St. Dizier/Robinson, France on 24 March 1944. In their two tours they also flew in *Myrtle the Fertile Turtle*, *Scourge of the Skies*, *The Banshee*, *Shoo Shoo Baby*, *Avenger*, *Big Banner*, *M'Darling*, *Southern Comfort III*, *My Ass Am Dragon*, and *Lil Cookie*.

Their last mission was 15 February 1945.

THE 8 BALL TAILS SALUTES

THE MOST FAMOUS PLANE IN THE 44TH BOMB GROUP



Suzy Q came to the Shipdham on 20 September 1942. She was assigned to the 67th Squadron, and was one of the 67th's original ships. She flew 28 missions, the most famous was on 1 August 1943 to Ploesti, the Romanian oil fields.

Leon Johnson became the Group Commander on 15 January 1943. The database shows that he led the group on 11 of the first 33 missions after he assumed command. These leads included Kiel and Ploesti. Each of those missions earned the group a Distinguished Unit Commendation. He also led the mission to Rome, Italy, and a portion of the initial D-Day assault.

Suzy Q was lost on the Foggia mission of 16 August 1943. On that day it was being flown by the Walter Bateman crew. The entire crew was KIA.

The Crew Chief was Marian Bagley.

The Ploesti Raid earned Leon Johnson the Medal of Honor.



General Leon Johnson

The leadership skills of Leon Johnson were recognized early in his career. He was one of the first flying officers in the 8th Air Force, serving as Assistant Chief of Staff during its formation period in Savannah, Georgia. In 1942 when the 8th AF flew to England, Leon Johnson accompanied them; and the following year, assumed command of the 44th Bomb Group in Shipdham.

He led the mission to Kiel, Germany, earning a Unit Citation for the 44th. On August 1, 1943 he joined the 9th AF in the low level attack in Ploesti, Romania. This brought another Unit Citation to the 44th, and earned him the Medal of Honor.

His next assignment was to the 14th Combat Wing, a position he held until the end of the war.

After VE Day he became Chief of Personnel Services of the AAF, Headquartered in Washington DC; then served in the Strategic Air Command as Commander of the 15th AF in Colorado Springs, CO. Following that, he became Commander to NATO in Washington, DC, next he was assigned to SHAPE in Paris, France. Later he was reassigned to the Pentagon in Washington, DC. He retired in 1961, after 34 years of service.

It is indisputable, Leon Johnson was one of the most admirable leaders that the 44th BG could have ever wished for. Always eager to share his Medal of Honor when he was alive, and crediting all the men who joined him in the Ploesti mission, it is now located at the Army Heritage Education Center in Carlisle, PA. It had been presented by his grandson, Leon Johnson Abbott.

I DON'T MAKE JOKES. I JUST WATCH THE GOVERNMENT AND REPORT THE FACTS.

- WILL ROGERS

IN GENERAL, THE ART OF GOVERNMENT CONSISTS OF TAKING AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE FROM ONE PARTY OF THE CITIZENS TO GIVE TO THE OTHER.

- VOLTAIRE (1764)

JUST BECAUSE YOU DO NOT TAKE AN INTEREST IN POLITICS DOESN'T MEAN POLITICS WON'T TAKE AN INTEREST IN YOU.

- PERICLES (450 BC)

Our extra special editor has granted me the privilege of addressing a farewell note to our beloved 44th family. I would like to use this final opportunity to thank each of our large and faithful family a sincere THANK YOU. Your determined dedication to honoring the memory of the 44th crews and their ground support echelon has been extraordinary. Will Lundy constantly implored 'Never Forget', and you have not.

Perhaps the most significant mission assigned to the 44th Bomb Group (H) during WWII was its participation in the low level attack upon the Ploesti oil complex on 1 August 1943.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of that epic air-land battle, an impressive reunion was held in Salt Lake City. The highlight of the reunion was the Memorial Service held in the Base Chapel at Hill Air Force Base. It was my honor to have been asked to represent the 44th in that very dignified memorial ceremony.

My remarks that day remain the same as I wish to express today. The 44th Bomb Group was blessed with unusually brilliant Command leadership, possessed Combat Crews of unusual courage, and those crews were the beneficiaries of a superb ground echelon.

While Ploesti was only one of our assigned combat tasks, it gloriously represents the whole of the effort that the 44th contributed in 33 months of uninterrupted combat duty in Europe and Africa, assisting in the defeat of the Axis powers and assuring world freedom.

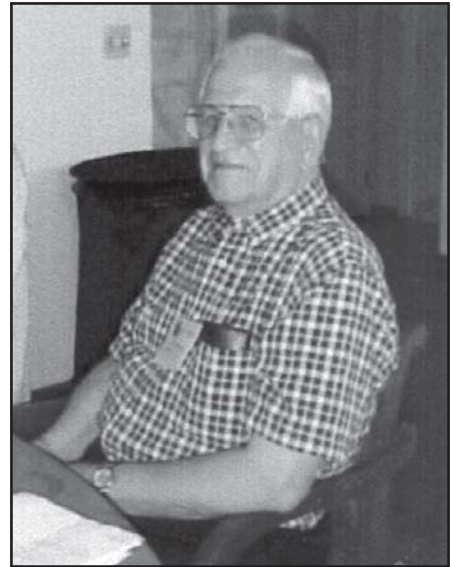
I salute each of you for your avid support of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association. I especially compliment George Washburn and each of our officers and Board members for their willingness to lend their individual talents to the meaningful organization. Finally a huge virtual bouquet to our gifted Editor, Ruth Davis Morse, whose many years of amazing energy have produced a wonderful publication, 8 BALL TAILS, that has been our organizational life line.

NEVER FORGET

Bob Lehnhausen

Ed. Note: Bob has been the silent leader of the 44th BG since its inception. He was one of the Founders of the group, has served many years on the Board, and attended all reunions until ill health limited him.

Bob has served as peacemaker, problem solver and adviser on all activities of the Board. His memories of historical moments in Shipdham have added to the 8 Ball Tails stories. This 68th Squadron Commander never stopped being a great leader.



Bob Lehnhausen

FINAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of this fantastic organization on October 1. I have been attending reunions since 1976. The 44th Bomb Group usually had the largest attendance at their reunions. Then Joe Warth started doing separate reunions for the 44th and finally the 44th BGVA was formed - thanks to several people including Bob Lehnhausen, Will Lundy, Roy Owen and others. Then to become president in 2007 upon the passing of Robert Kay and finally give some small contribution to the organization. The real workers, of course are the secretary, the treasurer, the historian, and the awards chairman. Many thanks to Ruth and Perry Morse, Betty and Dick Lynch, Will Lundy, Roger Fenton, and Lee Aston. My thanks also to my Squadron CO, Bob Lehnhausen, who I could always rely on for sound advice and guidance, then and now. It has been a great ride.

We all owe a special thanks to that B-17 pilot, Arlo Bartsch, who developed and continues to maintain and add to the Data Base program - a unique system that, sadly, no other bomb Group has. He also has really developed and maintains our web site which is undoubtedly the best one for any 8th AF group! You can be sure that the web site will be there for many years thanks to Arlo and his son. He certainly deserves being an honorary member of the 44th BGVA!! I look back to those war days and think of the great leaders we had - General Johnson, Col Gibson and Lt. Col. Lehnhausen .

I clearly remember General Johnson addressing the briefing for the first close troop support mission in Normandy a few weeks after D-Day. He rose and said we had never done such a mission before - it might be quite rough - he wanted to see firsthand how it went and would be in the lead plane. I believe he had to get special permission to do that as he had done his quota!

As voted at our 2010 reunion, our remaining funds (about \$20,000) will be distributed - 10% to the Mighty 8th Museum in Savannah and 90% to the Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle PA where all of Will Lundy's records reside. Although we are dissolving our formal association, let us still keep in touch and continue to answer inquiries from anyone looking for info about the 44th Bomb Group.

George Washburn

LETTER FROM SHIPDHAM

By Peter Bodle



As my time in this chair draws to a close, it would not be right not to publicly do a bit of the academy award 'Thank You' lists. In my 10/12 years of writing, your editor Ruth has been the easiest and most understanding editor I have ever worked with, and has always inflicted the very minimum of 'cutting' on my pieces. Thanks for that Ruth...I'll send you a few names and addresses of some of my other editors and perhaps you can give them a master class on how to do it? To 'our man' in the UK Steve Adams, a mighty thanks for getting me involved in the first place and for sharing so much that it would be impossible to list in this single page. To George (and

Cynthia) a further thank you for many years of great friendship and several wonderful moments together at your old home in Norfolk. And final of course to all of you, for your service and devotion to duty all those years ago when my country was standing alone in Europe and really had its back against the wall. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you, some like Lee Aston and Mary, on several occasions, and I look back on those times with great fondness. However for me the greatest pleasure has been the ability to write about you and what you did during WWII, and the fact that the books I have written will be read by thousands and will enshrine your story in words and pictures (and now in e-book form) for hundreds, if not thousands of years to come. I am also pleased to say I have been asked to re-work some of my books by a new publisher who feels that there is still room to produce further books about the life and times of the 44th and the rest of the boys of the 2nd Air Division. This project is underway as we speak.

In my last copy of 'Tails' I was sent a copy of Old News, which some of you may be familiar with. It described England's darkest hour in those bleak war days when we had to evacuate an entire army from Dunkirk. When I had my house in Norfolk built, one of my sons found and recovered a solid brass porthole from one of the 'little ships' that did that fateful 'England to France and back' journey with many escaping soldiers aboard and passed it to me as a gift. It seemed the best thing to preserve it forever was to physically build it into the brickwork of the house. That way it had a really great chance of lasting many hundreds of years. So now it is permanently cemented into the west wall of the house and, rather fittingly, greets the rising sun on a daily basis, with its position allowing a golden shaft of light to be thrown across the house on those days when it all lines up correctly. I will make a small plaque to fit under it so that in the year 2513 people will still know what it stands for. The efforts and sacrifices of you all during that time must never be forgotten, and they must and will be preserved.

Take good care of yourselves.

Peter



Roger Fenton

For most of the readers of the Tails, my name is Roger Fenton. I have had the honor for several years to be a member of the Board and over the last four or five years I have held the

post of Vice President and Historian for the Association. I am a second generation member as my father served with the 44th from September 1943 until May 1945 completing two tours as a Navigator with the George Insley crew. He broke in as a Second Lt. and left as a Captain. It has been an experience of a lifetime for me. I have met many heroes and made several friends during my stay with the 44th Association. I have learned so much and made so many lifelong friends that it is a very sad time for me seeing the Association retiring and members not meeting any longer. The accomplishments of this organization have been many and the history of this group will live on forever because of the efforts of this Association. The Association has set up a repository for their history at the Carlisle Army War College in Carlisle PA. Every history buff, and anyone with a connection to the 44th BG. should make a pilgrimage there and see the material that the 44th BG. Association has placed there. The College is a moving history of our nation's army's contribution to our freedom. I know that there are several 2nd and 3rd generations concerned that with the ending of this Association, the 44th will fade away and be forgotten. I would like to say this: that will never happen. Dave Webster, one of our very good members who adopted the 44th BG

Association as his home, although his family history was not a part of the 44th, began a Facebook page simply called the "44th Bomb Group". As I write this message there are over 70 members all second and third and so on generation, plus several folks who live in the Shipdham area of England that are members. We meet daily on Facebook and exchange our father's and grandfather's experiences, along with hundreds and hundreds of pictures. Anyone can join and their input is welcomed. Maybe one day we all will get together and meet in person. In any case all are invited to join at no expense except your time and participation in keeping the 44th alive. In any case I just wanted to say that I have enjoyed my time with the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association and that it has been an experience of a lifetime that I will never forget and will continue to help preserve the great history of this group. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be a part of the 44th BGVA and I considered each and everyone one of you as family, please be sure to stay in contact if at all possible.

Ed. Note: Roger Fenton has been the greatest Vice President/Historian that the 44th could ever ask for. He and Steve Adams have supplied most of the plane photos that have graced the covers of the 8 Ball Tails. I remember the one year he drove twelve hours to get to a Board Meeting in Chicago. He has supplied jokes and philosophical sayings that were appropriate to break up the sobering combat stories, much of which what the 8 Ball Tails is about. I have been with Roger only a few times, but we are the best of e-mail friends. The 44th BG and I have been so lucky to have him aboard. He was appointed to the Board, courtesy of then-President, Jerry Folsom. Later, he was nominated VP by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Robert Lehnhausen.

THE JACKIE ROBERTS STORY



Jackie Roberts

21 January 1944 My father, Jack N. Ostenson was shot down. I was born 9 days after his death. My Mom went to Washington State and worked in the shipyards during the war. And she left me in Idaho with my grandparents. They raised me, and I have always been forever grateful to them. My mom and I spent years trying to get records and information about my father, but was always told the records had burned in a fire at St. Louis where WWII records were stored. NOT TRUE. In 1999 my husband, Lowell Roberts, and I started looking for my father's family. We knew they were Mormon, so we went to Salt Lake to start our search. We found information about all of Jack's sisters, brothers and their spouses, but not where they lived when Jack was in England. We looked for one sister in Denver, CO, and we found information about a cousin living in Enterprise, Utah. She had all of Jack's personal things the member of the crew (John Cleary) explaining about the last flight. With the help of my oldest grandson and the computer, we found the address of a lot of John Clearys.

He wrote that only three men got out alive. I sent this letter out, and wrote to fifty gentlemen with the same name, to see if I could find the one that had written the

letter, and asking that they please contact me if you knew my father.

I received all fifty back, telling me that my story was so heartfelt, but they were not the one I was looking for.

Then I received a call from a lady, saying her husband was not the one either, but she could put me in touch with a lady in the Pentagon. The lady in the Pentagon got me in touch with the 44th Bomb Group, and said they could help me. Oh, if I had a dollar for every time I heard that! But I wasn't giving up. So I called a **Roy Owen**, and that was the start of something I could never have dreamed was going to happen in the next thirteen years of my life.

I might have lost my father to WWII, but he was with the Greatest Heroes of the War. Little did I know I was about to get more fathers and Heroes that I could ever imagine.

When I called Roy and told him my story, he said, "You won't believe what I have in front of me right now." He asked if I was sitting down. He had the last mission in front of him that my father was on, including when and where he was shot down!

He had been looking at it because he told me that there was another little girl whose father and my father were flying side by side when both were shot down. Her name was Lois Cianci. Would I like to meet her?

This was 1999, and they had just had their reunion. But in 2000 they would be having another, and would I like to come and meet everyone? Well, yes. And from that time until now, 2013, oh, how my life has changed.

At the 2000 reunion I didn't want the night to end. Listening to the men tell their stories gave me some idea of what these brave men did. They promised me they would be there in the morning, I could hear

more. We went every year. I went from one billfold size picture to two large suitcases full of every piece of information about my father that I could have imagined...thanks to **Will Lundy** and **Tony Mastradone**.

In 2001 we went on the overseas tour, saw his name in a gold lined case at St Paul's Cathedral and many other places, along with others lost in action. We walked down the road that he walked at the Air Field at Shipdham, where he had been stationed. I saw his name on the wall at Normandy.

Also, from **Lee Aston**, I received all of my father's medals. I also shared all of this information I got with my Dad's family; because like me, they were also uninformed.

In 2007 we were asked to take over the Treasurer's job. And my husband, Lowell,

and I have arranged the last five Reunions for you wonderful folks. We took over the Roster, which is great, because once a year I get to update it. So this means I call every one of you, to make sure your address and phone numbers are correct. And I love talking to each and every one of you.

At this time I would like to take this time to thank my wonderful husband of 54 years. If it wasn't for him, all of this would never have happened. **THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR MAKING MY DREAMS COME TRUE.** As we said, this has been the **BEST** years with all of you WWII guys and your families. We will never ever forget all of you. This has been such a **GREAT HONOR.**

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US.

Lowell & Jackie Roberts



Back Row: **John Richardson**, Crew Chief; **Donald Hoeltke**, Bombardier; **John Cleary**, Navigator; **Norm Ballangrud**, Co-Pilot; **Gary Mathisen**, Pilot.

Bottom Row: **Richard Allen**, Radio Operator; **Joseph Playford**, Tail Gunner; **Leo Tyler**, Ball Turret Gunner; **Jack Ostenson**, Left Waist Gunner; **Victor Adams**, Right Waist Gunner.



Ruth Morse

As Editor of the Eight Ball Tails for about twelve years, I have received many letters of thanks for people who enjoyed reading it; and a few letters

complaining about the errors – deservedly.

My response: The opportunity to write these stories has been humbling. I have come to know greatness. I have worked with great leaders – Roy Owen, Mike Mikoloski, Bob Lehnhausen, Jerry Folsom, Paul Kay, and George Washburn. I have had the opportunity to meet great heroes; and those that I didn't meet, I wrote about. Some made the history books – Leon Johnson, Bill Cameron and many more. Many had fantastic achievements after the war – Will Lundy, without whom we would have no history; Tony Mastradone, who aided in the research; Arlo Bartsch, who spread the history across the world with his Database; and Tommy Shepherd, who found Arlo in the first place. One thing for sure: **They were all heroes—the ones I knew and everybody I wrote about.**

I had more stories than I could fit in the magazine. With the help of Jackie and Lowell Roberts, they got bundled in groups of 150 pages, bound into books, and are safely in the library at the Army Education Center in Carlisle. Your children and grandchildren or a history researcher can go and read about your courageous history.

It has also been a great pleasure, working with wonderful members of the 44th BG Board. Each one had a special interest in

the well-being of the Association.

Our group achieved many goals: we wanted a voice-over for the Ploesti exhibit at the Mighty Eighth Museum in Poole, Georgia. We ended up with a video on display beside the exhibit; it far exceeded our original request.

Our publication, the Eight Ball Tails, has been placed in a dozen historic libraries, here and in England.

Thanks to Lee Aston, who owns a property with granite, with his Georgia contacts, he found a company to cut and design according to our specifications. It stands in the court yard at the Army Heritage Center at Carlisle. No other marker compares to the grandeur of this beautiful edifice.

I would be remiss if I did not include the great help in preserving our history at the Carlisle Center: Michael Lynch, who convinced the group to place our history in their library; Jack Gibbon, who helped us design a great reunion on their premises; Greg Statler and Michael Mira, who keep copies of our 8 Ball Tails and a great deal of other pieces of history, written by our members; and Mike Perry, who helped us in so many ways, particularly in getting clearance from the Secretary of the Army, for granting permission to place our beautiful monument.

It is impossible to walk the court yard trail, without seeing the array of bricks, each with that famous 8 Ball design. It is like a 44th reunion, walking among those familiar and beloved names.

I am grateful for our young members of the 44th, even though they have no kin to inspire them: David Webster, Richard Holliday and Charles Runyon, all have collections which are available for display. Blain Duxbury plans reunions for the men who flew the Ploesti mission. Chris Clark's connection was his Uncle Frank. Chris has

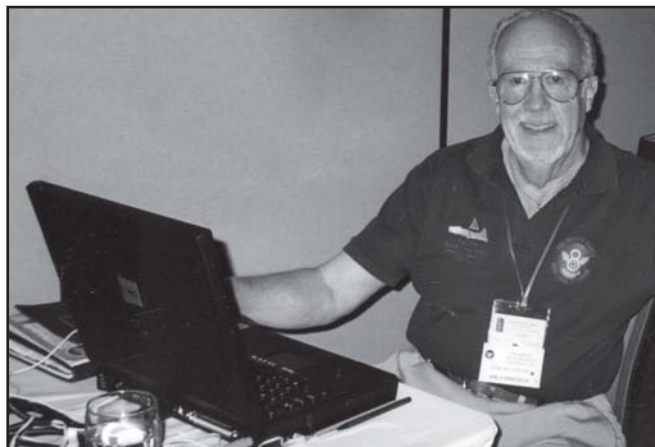
become an expert researcher at the National Archives and a leader in the Heritage League.

Everything in life is temporary; and with great sadness, I am putting out the last issue. I hope our veterans can find joy that they have made a major contribution to the continued freedom in this great

nation. I also hope our young readers will be active with the Heritage League, and continue to perpetuate the 44th Bomb Group's glorious history.

God Bless all of you,
Ruth W. Davis-Morse

On a regular basis, Arlo Bartsch attended the 44th Reunion and displayed his skills at locating the combat histories of 44th members on his computer. He urged them to write their personal stories, to become part of the history of this courageous group. Many did. It is all on the website. Arlo was the answer to a prayer of Will Lundy, that our history could go into Cyberspace. Even Will could not have imagined the size of his dream that came true. The web site is seen around the world.



Arlo Bartsch

A B-17 pilot, Arlo found a home with the B-24 airmen, and his unique program became a fixture at reunions. Now, 60 years after the war, it is even more valuable, as more and more young people use it to learn about the life their fathers and grandfathers led when they were flying out of Shipdham.

Here's Arlo's opinion about his position as Webmaster:

"I can never say how grateful I am to the 44th BG for accepting my program. It is an interesting challenge, every day, for me to think of ways to improve it. Getting to know all of you, and having the opportunity to post your stories has been one of the great bonuses of my later years."

WE LOST A FRIEND FROM ENGLAND

George Washburn received the sad news of one our greatest English admirers, Brian Peel has passed away. Brian supplied newspaper information to this editor on a regular basis, any news related to Americans who visited and were honored in the Shipdham/Norfolk area. A teenager when the war was on, Peel frequently visited American airmen in their barracks. He was a regular visitor to the Shipdham air base, and enjoyed talking to Americans who visited.



Steve Adams, our British Board Member

I write this letter with a heavy heart, knowing the greatest group, the 8th Army Air Force is calling time. The 8 Balls blazed a path into history. You were second to none.

I was lucky to have been with

the group since Will Lundy contacted me in 1979. We became friends.

The new group was formed by Will, Roy Owen, Bob Lehnhausen and others. It was during the first reunion in Norwich that I was asked if I would be the UK contact and look out for the 44th by Will and Roy.

We have been truly blessed and enriched to have known every one of you. Where has the last 30 some years gone?

God Bless You All,

Steve and Jan Adams

The 44th has been the luckiest group in the world, working with Steve. He has been a tremendous help to us, in distributing our 8 Ball Tails to the Memorial Library in Norwich and the Museum at Shipdham.

Steve wrote a book, The 44th Bomb Group in WWII, a book to which I reference regularly, to learn details about the planes in which you gentlemen flew. Anytime I need a picture, either

Steve or Roger Fenton promptly produce one for the cover of the 8 Ball Tails. Now he and a friend are working on a book about the Second Air Division.

Steve was a 16 year old kid when our airmen were flying down that runway at Shipdham. He started collecting memorabilia, and has the largest collection of plane and airmen pictures of anyone that I know. He has given much to the Shipdham Aero Club Museum.

Steve sent a picture of the design on his jacket – which is truly unique.



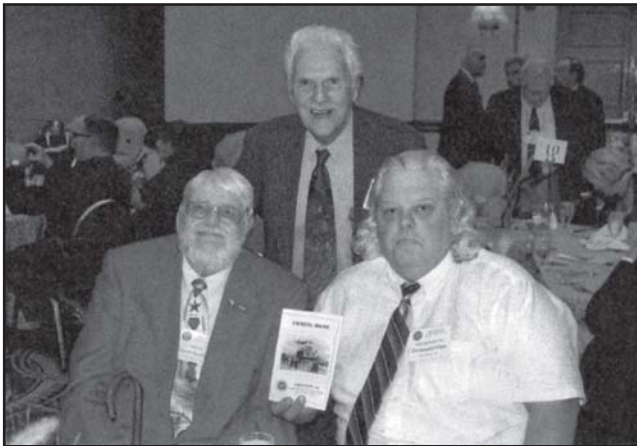
LIGHT TRAVELS FASTER THAN SOUND. THAT'S WHY SOME PEOPLE APPEAR BRIGHT UNTIL YOU HEAR THEM SPEAK!

IF THE SHOE FITS, GET ANOTHER ONE JUST LIKE IT.

GIVE A MAN A FISH, AND HE WILL EAT FOR A DAY. TEACH A MAN TO FISH, AND HE WILL SIT IN A BOAT ALL DAY.

LETTER FROM CHRIS CLARK

I want to thank the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Assoc. for all of the memories over the last 12 years. Meeting all of you would never have happened but for my, uncle S/ Sgt. Charles Frank Clark being in the Second World War. When I started with the group, Will Lundy, used to answer my questions and in the end, I would go to the archives to answer questions he would ask me. Recently, the 44th bomb group gave me \$300 to cover expenses, postage, copy fees, gas cost. I went three days with Leon Abbott, General Johnson's grandson, to try to find the 4-8th of April 1945. We looked for three days, but unfortunately were not successful in locating the files. I know this is the last issue of the Eight Ball Tails, but I will never stop looking for the files. I have just



Donald Brubaker, Chris Reid and Donald O'Reilly

been successful at finding where the files are not.

I would also like to report that the recent reunion of the 8th Air Force in Savanna, GA for the 39th reunion that there were three members representing the 44th. One was David Brubaker, the second Chris Clark, and the third was a 44th veteran M.P. Donald O'Reilly. Donald was a recipient of the Heritage League Challenge Coin that I gave him in Chicago. As a member of the Heritage League Board, I strongly suggest people join the Heritage League and keep in contact with the 8th Air Force reunion committees. All of us in the 2nd Air Division had a wonderful time in Savanna, and because of the 2nd Air Division's participation, the number of bomb groups represented was the most in all of their history. We were thanked by the 1st and 3rd divisions for our attendance. I just wanted to share that with you all. Again, thank you for all the memories. I will never forget you.

Sincerely,
Chris Clark

Ed. Note: The League has agreed to report in their publication, all Folded Wings from the different groups. Please report them to me, your Editor, and I will research them and pass them to Chris.

CREW CHIEF HONORED

A tribute to a Crew Chief by **Reginald Phillips**, pilot on **Lemon Drop**: " I was blessed with having an extra caring and super capable ground crew, headed by Crew Chief **Charlie Pigg**. I want to publicly thank him for taking care of 'her' and thus 'us'. The **Lemon Drop** became one of, if not the last of the

original 44th airplanes to remain flyable, and 'she' became the Assembly Plane, complete with bright stripes, during the last part of the war. Please take a well-earned bow, Charlie!"

This message found among papers preserved by Will Lundy.

RICHARD HOLLIDAY, HISTORY BUFF, FOUND A 44TH BOMB MEMBER'S GRAVE MARKER IN THE FAMILY PLOTS IN GETTYSBURG, PA



Richard Holliday found the grave of **Earl M. Kosch**, a waist gunner on the **Charles Whitlock** crew, 506 Squadron. The target was the Airfields and Marshalling Yards in Foggia, Italy.

The Germans fought hard to hold onto that territory. Flak was heavy and the fighter planes were accurate. Seven planes were lost, including Whitlock's plane, *TIM-BA-A-AH*. Kosch exited the plane through the waist window; unfortunately, his chute did not open. This was his first flight.



Five members of the crew were KIA, five became POW, two of whom escaped and returned to Shipdham.

On Memorial Day, Holliday placed a wreath at Kosch's gravesite.

RICHARD HOLLIDAY AND THE 44TH BOMB GROUP VA

In the few months that have passed since the passing of my best friend and the father I never had, **Tony Mastradone** (67th Sqd. Medic 1942-1945), I am constantly reminded of just what the 44th Bomb Group has meant to me in the few years I was an Association member. While I do not have memories or stories of piloting a B-24, dropping a payload, navigating the crew home, manning a .50 caliber machine gun in a turret, turning a wrench, or even

of celebrating VE Day (I wouldn't be born for another 32 years), I reflect on memories and missions of a different kind. You see, Tony had this drive to help people. He worked tirelessly in his efforts to assist **Will Lundy** in getting copies made of the files on record at the National Archives, and in helping relatives of 44th members find information on their loved ones who hadn't made it home.

This drive of his to help people is probably what made him such a good medic during the war, and for a young guy like me who had a passion for history. When Tony first brought me to the Archives in College Park, to assist him in digging up 44th BG records, I was astounded by how many people there knew him both by sight and name, as he made his regular, almost weekly visits, and spent hundreds of dollars copying various files on people, planes and missions.

The knowledge he shared with me on our research sessions was the spark that ignited my passion for the 44th Bomb Group. When Tony brought me to my first reunion in Washington DC, I had the pleasure of meeting so many of you, and many who have since folded their wings. The stories shared around those hospitality room tables over the years brought me closer and closer to knowing not only Tony's, but the war all of you experienced in so many different ways.

Each reunion (and I never missed one after joining) strengthened the bond I felt, so much so that I stopped thinking of you all as just fellow members and friends, but gradually as part of my own family. It is a type of bond that I never experienced during my own military service with either the Navy or the Army. This close, indescribable connection I formed with many of you saw me through some very difficult times in my life, as I lost the last of my own family, the loss of my career through a horrible injury, and the end of a marriage when I wasn't known if I would

ever walk again. I always had the annual reunions to look forward to, and the opportunity to speak with people who not only cared, but who helped me to forget about "me" for a few days and honor others.

As many of you know, that is no small feat for a young person in these times, when we are so focused on ourselves instead of our neighbors and communities.

When I think of all the enjoyable times I have had with the 44th BGVA, the memories of all the happy moments we shared come crashing over me. Laughing with Cynthia and Beryl at the stories they would tell me over a couple of drinks, listening flabbergasted as **Bill Newbold** would tell me of his recent sky diving experience and desire to bungee jump, marveling at **George Washburn** moving through the room like a 20 year old, and hoping that I would be able to flirt like **Don Williams** when I am 90; these are just a few of the unforgettable moments I have shared with you. The names, the faces, the wonderful times will never be forgotten, and it is my hope to continue to share these memories with future generations in the coming decades. The accolades of the 44th won't be found just in print or engraved in stone and bronze, they will be shared the memories etched upon my own heart, and I will never forget you.

Richard Holliday added his special touch to the hospitality room. He brought uniforms from his collection, reminding you of the apparel you once wore.

Attention family members of veterans: I have quite a few back issues many of the 8 Ball Tails. If anyone wants extra copies of a particular magazine, contact me. They are free, but we do ask to be reimbursed for postage.

Call me: Ruth Morse, 717 846-8948.

FOUND AT SHIPDHAM, A BRACELET LOST 65 YEARS AGO



Adelbert H. Snell, a Waist Gunner on the Leslie Lee Crew, lost a bracelet which his wife had given him, someplace on the airfield at Shipdham. It was found by a 15 year old boy, Glenn Morgan.

Here is his account: "I found this bracelet on Thursday, 27 June 2013. You can imagine my excitement when I saw the name and serial number on it: Adelbert H. Snell, and engraved on the back was 'Love Edna'."

When Glenn and his father David returned to the states, Glenn looked at a 1995 roster and found five people with the name of Snelbaker. He called five and none answered. The sixth was Adelbert's son, 69 year old Gary Snell, who told him his father was still alive. At age 92, he was living in a nursing home.



Adelbert could not remember losing the bracelet, but the name Edna was certainly a clear indication of its origin.

Glenn has become a true history buff; he has accompanied his father David to England for the past eight years. David Morgan has taken many 44th veterans back to Shipdham, where they can reminisce about the years they spent there.

Much of the Shipdham Airfield has been returned to the original owner; however the Morgans send pictures back to the Snell family, of its appearance 65 years later.

*Ed. Note: It is an amazing coincidence that this story arrived soon after the *Folded Wings of Co-Pilot of the Leslie Lee Crew, Donald Wells*, came to the 8 Ball Tails Editor. Donald Wells and Adelbert H. Snell flew 31 missions together.*

NAME OF THE CREW CHIEF

In the last issue of the Tails was a picture of a Crew Chief for the **Consolidated Mess**, but nobody could remember his name. A phone call from another Crew Chief identified him: **Alfre Peyrougth**. I could not find him in the Database, but the caller said his picture is in **Ursel Harvell's** book, *Liberators Over Europe*. My copy is at Carlisle, but someone can check it out.

The caller's name got thrown away by my overly-efficient phone service.

Gerald Folsom, Co-Pilot on the Beiber Crew, remembers the day they left Shipdham

to sail home. An officer told him that his crew was the first crew to finish their missions with every member of the crew intact; they completed 35 missions with no injuries or losses.

The Beiber Crew flew to England as part of a group of four Liberators. At least one member of the other three had either lost a crewman or had a number who had been wounded.

According to **Perry Morse**, Tail Gunner, the crew made a circle, held hands and prayed on the plane, before starting out on any mission.

**NAVIGATOR KENNETH ADRIAN,
LOUIS WINSATT CREW, 506 SQUADRON
REMEMBERS THE MISSION TO OBERPFAFFENHOFEN**

On this mission, many bombers did not get to the target was because the top of the clouds was above 25,000 feet almost all the way! I'm sure some of the planes must have had runaway engines and others with mechanical problems as we were trying to stay above the clouds. So engines were under a terrific load, many aborting.

The planes ahead of us were making their own clouds in the form of vapor trails, so the followers had to go up higher to be able to see each other. Very few of the planes could have done it if we had not burned a lot of petrol on the way in.

From the IP I was buried under flak suits (one above and one below) and had my helmet on, too. The flak was intense from the IP on. I stayed buried through two bomb runs and came out on the 3rd one, as the flak was less intense. I was getting curious - especially because they'd warned us about running out of gas due to the long flying time involved.

As I was observing this fiasco, there were some breaks in the cloud – and the bombs went out; I saw many of them explode in what appeared to be a pasture, with little black specks – cows?? I knew we hadn't hit anything (reported to be Schorndorf RR Junction), but hoped we had cut their availability to have a good supply of meat and milk.

Whoever was lead pilot made a diving turn to the right, into clouds right after the bomb run. This took care of the formation. As far as I know, everybody started out for home alone. If the clouds had not been about 15,000 feet thick, the German fighter pilots would have had a field day with our planes scattered as they were.

We decided to go under the clouds at 11,000 to 12,000 feet. I saw a Pathfinder and told Lou we ought to fly with him for more firepower against any possible German fighters. I also thought he might know where we were, which way home. Rule No. 1 for Navigators: never tell a Pilot you're lost!

Shortly thereafter, he took us through a tremendous flak barrage – (he was lost too.) I later calculated back from my first GEE fix and found he had taken us over Stuttgart with its 1000 shells bursting, at a time that would make your underwear turn brown in back.

We took off on our own. The B-17s were in trouble, too, as they had their little clusters of 5 or 6 planes.

I picked up my first GEE fix at Charlesville, France, which was close to the French-Belgian border, not too far from Luxemburg. We were supposed to pick up our fighter planes (escorts) at halfway between Charlesville and the IP (P-51s) and the target, P-38's near Stuttgart, and then P-47s to take us home from there at Charlesville.

That was a lucky GEE fix, as normally the Germans had us jammed as we got closer to England.

I navigated us between the flak areas until we hit the coast at Ostend. One '88' was right on. He would have gotten us, if Lou hadn't taken evasive action. But we got two wounded – our Nose Gunner (*Raymond Robertson*) and our Bombardier (*Eugene Bockstedt*). I had to pull the gunner out of his nose turret, and he was a mass of blood, scared to death. He had been hit in the middle of his forehead, but it didn't penetrate his skull. He probably could have been fixed up with a bandaid.

**NAVIGATOR KENNETH ADRIAN,
LOUIS WINSATT CREW, 506 SQUADRON
REMEMBERS THE MISSION TO OBERPFAFFENHOFEN**

CONTINUED

Naturally, it scared him badly. I don't believe he'd been to church (Catholic) for ten years, but he led the pack for communion on the next mission.

Our route back was a lot shorter (thanks to the navigator being) lost, as we were very close to the main bomber stream coming in. But we were 15,000 feet plus lower than them. The planned route was way to the south, but after three bomb runs, we'd probably ended up as POWs and a belly landing.

Luckily, this shorter route got us to Shipdham with, as I recall, four of our planes landing in France, the Channel and all over England – out of gas.

The Bombardier got a piece of flak in his back that he really did fix with a bandaid.

He didn't report it, as he wanted to fly every mission with **Lou Winsatt**, who was a former Co-Pilot on B-24s, and a hellava good pilot. I talked to the Bombardier's wife in 1986, and she knew about the flak.

I have two black and white prints of the plotted course that day. The original route was 2 hours and 15 minutes shorter, but apparently the course and targets were changed – possibly by the weather, too.

As a result, we had two planes go into Switzerland, two shot down, and many wounded and POWs.

*According to Will Lundy, the 68th Squadron lost two planes, **Mary Harriet** and **Channel Hopper**. The 506 lost two, **Southern Comfort III** and **Cape Cod Special II**. There were 19 interned, 2 KIA and 19 POW.*

**JOHN RENZI, BOMBARDIER ON THE LESTER HUNDELT CREW,
67TH SQUADRON, REMBERS AN ABORTED MISSION**

We were taking off on a mission to Kiel, Germany with a load of 12- 500 pound bombs. When the time came to retract the landing gear, it would not come up, no matter how hard our pilot tried.

As we still had the pins in the bombs, we decided to retain the bombs and come back with them, as we weren't very far from the base.

We landed OK with the landing gear still down, but our pilot said "no brakes". The plane went past the runway, through a fence, jumped a ditch, skidding on to its belly and finally stopped.

As we were about two fields away from our base, by the time the meat wagon and fire engine arrived, we were all out of the

plane. Hag, our Navigator, (Darell Hagenah) and I broke a track record, I think, running and diving into a ditch.

There was just a small fire. Two of the crew were taken to the hospital for observation and released. The rest of us were O.K. We took about a dozen pictures.

After lunch, what was left of our crew was informed we were to fly as deputy lead on a mission to the Pas De Calais area. This was a composite squadron. We also had to replace the two gunners who were taken to the hospital.

We flew the mission, which was a milk run, and in fact, came back before the group returned from the mission to Kiel.

All in all, it was a hectic day.

A SURPRISE INVITATION TO B/GEN. ROBERT CARDENAS

A pilot from the Swiss Airlines visited Bob Cardenas with a happy surprise: the Swiss Air Force invite him to participate in the 100th Anniversary of their organization. He will be honored for his contribution to breaking the sound barrier for the first time in history. They will also extol him for his role in teaching members of the Swiss Air Force how to fly B-17s and B-24s during his interment in Switzerland.

Cardenas was Command Pilot on **Chief & Sack Artists** on a mission to Friedrichshafen; Raymond Lacombe was pilot. On the second attempt to reach the target, the plane was beset by fighters and flak damage. Cardenas was shredding classified documents when he was blown out of the plane on the German side of Lake Constance. He began to swim, but a man in a small boat picked him up and delivered him to Switzerland and interment. The rest of the crew got the bedraggled plane to safety in this neutral country.

The aviation world owes a debt of gratitude to the Swiss lady who helped him escape interment, freeing him to become a test pilot for Wright Patterson AFB.

Breaking the sound barrier occurred when he was the officer in charge of the Supersonic project at Murok (now Edwards Air Base). He was the Command pilot of

the B-29 "Mother Ship" that carried the X-1 rocket ship aloft. He launched Chuck Yeager in the X-1 at 20,000 feet; Chuck flew through the sound barrier at Mach One+.

Cardenas couldn't be more amazed at the invitation. He said, "I didn't know I was a celebrated man in Switzerland."

After discharge from the service, Cardenas was involved in many activities to promote the memory of the WWII air war. He also took time to find homeless WWII veterans; and upon their death, made certain they had a proper burial.

His most recent effort has been to give recognition to the unfortunate prisoners in Wauwilermoos, a filthy prison camp in Switzerland, where airmen who tried to escape were placed. He felt that the physical and mental anguish these men had endured should not go unnoticed.

Cardenas wrote to the Honorable Daniel Ginsburg, Assistant Secretary of Defense, based in the Pentagon. He asked for a special recognition to be extended to the few living survivors of that ghastly experience. 44th members will be eager to know that the authorities will heed this request, and act on it.

THE CATERPILAR CLUB

While **Charles Selasky** was in prison camp, he sent a card to this organization, and they promptly sent him a Membership Card for this elite group. It was followed up with a Caterpillar Pin.

The requirement for membership: that you had to bail out of a plane to save

your life.

There should certainly have been many 44th BG members who qualified for wearing a furry worm on their lapel, but not on their uniform. (It was not an official decoration, so it could only be worn on civilian coat lapels.)

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOW LEVEL PLOESTI MISSION

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, DAYTON, OHIO, 1 AUGUST 2013



A conclave of World War II airmen was recently held at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, in Dayton, Ohio. The gathering commemorated the most highly decorated single military action in U.S. history. August 1, 2013, marked the 70th anniversary of the low level bombing mission on the oil refineries of Ploesti, Romania. Ploesti was considered Hitler's "gas station" since it provided 40% of the gasoline and diesel fuel for Hitler's war machine. A gathering of roughly 100 family and friends joined the Ploesti veterans for a time of remembrance, reflection, laughter and tears. 44th Ploesti veterans at the reunion included Judge Richard Tuttle, Bill Newbold, Bill Reese and William Morton.

The Ploesti reunion was a three day event with activities at the Air Force Museum and the reunion headquarters, the Holiday Inn Fairborn. A panel of veterans was one of the highlights of scheduled events. Ploesti vets took questions from a moderator and reunion guests. Judge Tuttle described his Ploesti experience in vivid

detail. The attack run to the target saw them exchange gunfire with German flak positions. Judge Tuttle's B24 shuddered and vibrated with the recoil of all ten fifty caliber machine guns firing at once. The indicated airspeed in their aircraft was in excess of two hundred miles

per hour at an altitude of only twenty feet. The continuous fire was so intense that the gun barrels were in danger of warping from the intense heat of rapid fire. Judge Tuttle described his experiences within the context of his recently penned autobiography, NEVADA CITY & BEYOND, An Unscripted Life. Tuttle signed copies of his book for reunion guests and enthusiasts. Copies are available on Amazon or directly from Judge Tuttle.

Bill Newbold was also asked of his experiences on the Ploesti mission. He gave a vivid account to the hushed crowd. "As *Earthquake* entered the area, we hit the cable of a barrage balloon with our No. 3 engine. These balloons had explosive packets spaced at intervals for blowing a wing off as it slides up the tether; we were lucky that the propeller sliced through the cable. Moments afterwards, our No. 4 engine also stopped! Suddenly, we feared we would be with those not returning today. We had two engines out on one side, dropping the wing dangerously close to the ground and losing

air speed. My thoughts were that unless something good happens in the next few seconds, we'll be on the ground burning. Something good happened—with extraordinary effort, the pilots kept the right wing from scraping the ground while the cabin crew got No. 4 started and churning out enough power to avoid disaster. Bill Newold also recalled that his beloved *Earthquake* landed with ten minutes of gasoline left in the tanks.

Bill Reese was one of the 110 men who became POW's on the mission. He was bombardier on the Worden Weaver crew. Unable to stay in the air from battle damage, their ship crash landed in a corn field. We pick up the story from Will Lundy's monumental work, 44th Bomb Group, Roll of Honor and Casualties. **"One of the men who escaped, bombardier William L. Reese, Jr. went through the fire and exploding ammunition and cut away Sorenson's (navigator) harness. Reese and radioman Jesse L. Hinely hauled both trapped men clear. The crew then split up and ran in several directions while a German fighter circled the area, evidently reporting their location and directions. Weaver obtained help from a Romanian farm boy who led them to a village where some women dipped feathers into a homemade balm and gently brushed on it on their seared flesh."** Bill Reese spent a little over a year in a Romanian POW camp. His experiences in POW camp could fill a book in itself.

William Morton flew the Ploesti mission as a member of the Bill "Doc" Hughes crew. Bill Morton was an original member of the Robert Lehnhausen crew. Bill was an engineer/top turret gunner. Bill survived the mission and made it back to Benghazi in one piece. After Ploesti, William flew the

tough missions to Foggia on August 13th and the Wiener Neustadt mission of October 1, 1943. We pick up the story of William Morton's heroic actions on Wiener Neustadt from the book, Liberators over Europe, the History of the 44th Bomb Group, The "Avenger", piloted by Capt. "Doc" Hughes with Lt. Raymond D. Hamlyn as co-pilot had made both missions to Wiener Neustadt. At interrogation the crew reported. "The first mission the Wiener Neustadt was easy, nothing much happened and we thought that this trip would also be just another step towards home. The 93rd and the 389th were ahead of us as we hit the I.P. Our hopes of an easy mission soon faded as gunners started to call out fighters at twelve, one and two o'clock high, sitting right on top of the target. They had let the two groups ahead of us through without attacking, preferring to jump the tail-end group, which was us. They were queuing up for a head-on attack and in flights of three and four abreast they started tearing through the formation. The first attack crippled some of our force and broke up our formation. We managed to get our bombs away and started a running battle for home. The Luftwaffe was out 120 strong, attacking by twos from every position of the clock. It was every man for himself, as the pilots attempted to get back into some semblance of a formation. The "Avenger's " gunners were fighting desperately alone and drove off attack after attack, shooting down three Me-109's and damaging several others. However, before we were out of the battle area, our hydraulic system was shot out and an elevator cable was cut. Sgt. Morton, our engineer, cinched the hydraulic lines to save the fluid by bending the severed ends, and affected a splice in the elevator cable, thus making it



possible for us to return to base."

For his outstanding ability to act in extreme emergency, Sgt. Morton was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Sgt. Morton went on to receive his officer's commission and served with distinction in Korea and Vietnam. Colonel Morton's story is one of remarkable achievement and dedication to duty.

The stories told by these gentlemen held the crowd spellbound. Bill Newbold and Dick Tuttle both became POW's on the Wiener Neustadt mission. The reunion had a number of families who came to the reunion seeking information about their loved ones. Their common thread is their loved ones were killed on the Wiener Neustadt mission. It was a poignant scene as Judge Tuttle and Bill Newbold described the mission in detail. Prayers and questions were answered as to what actually happened on that terrible mission of October 1, 1943.

Other reunion highlights included a memorial service at the Air Force Museum at 0930 hours on the morning of 1 August. Gen. Jack Hudson, Director of the Museum, gave a warm welcome and outlined the mission of the Museum. The Ploesti veterans were all seated on stage in chairs of honor. After a brief program the events concluded with media interviews. The turnout by the media was absolutely amazing. The Associated Press outlet in Cincinnati, Ohio, picked up the story and wrote a tremendous tribute to the veterans that literally went around the world. Local television was present and interviewed many of the vets. Local six and ten o'clock news reports were

full of coverage of the reunion. It was a fitting tribute to those brave men who flew into history over an oil town in Romania seventy years ago.

The author would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the 44th veterans who attended this reunion. It was not an easy journey to make. You helped make the reunion a huge success. I would also like to thank Col. Robert Lehnhausen who could not be there but was an anchor of support throughout the planning of the reunion. Thank you Col. Lehnhausen! Thanks also to George Temple who also was a keen supporter of the reunion. Last but not least, thanks to Ruth for her untiring help in getting the word out about the reunion and allowing this space in the final issue of the 8 Ball Tails. Thanks to all of you!

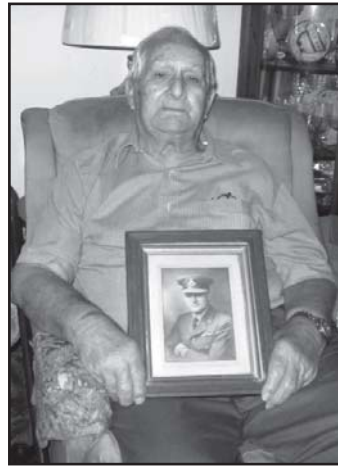
Reunion Coordinator: Blaine Duxbury

THE CREW OF BLACK JACK AND THEIR LEGACY

BY CHARLES RUNION

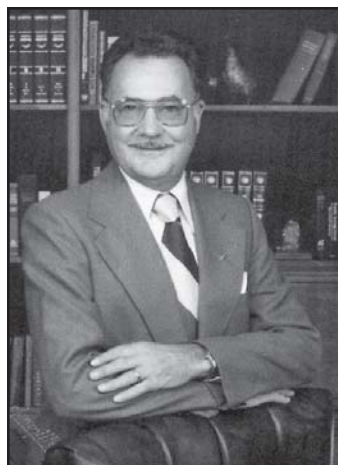
On 1 October 1943 the 44th Bomb Groups mission was to bomb the Messerschmitt aircraft factory located at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. B-24 serial number 41-23816, named Black Jack of the 68th squadron was hit by flak shortly after dropping their bomb load while turning away from the target. The plane was on fire and crashed shortly after being hit. Of the ten man crew five survived. Here are the crew and their stories. May we never forget.

Pilot Coleman Scott Whitaker



Coleman was from Petersburg, TN and a graduate of Morgan School. He volunteered for service with the RAF several months before Pearl Harbor; afterwards he transferred to the US Army Air Force. On 3 August 1943, two days after the Ploesti raid, he wrote home finishing his letter by saying "Have had a good hand in what has happened in these parts". Coleman was survived by three brothers and one sister.

Co-Pilot Ted Scarlett



After the war Ted started a career in accounting and later became a CPA. He retired in 1982 and passed away in October 1985. Today he is survived by two sons Roger and Ted, one daughter Lynn and nine grandchildren.

Navigator Gene Vickary

After the war Gene returned to his job at Arkell and Smith in Canajoharie as a press operator. When the Korean War started he was reactivated and served two years one as a navigator. After Korea he returned to Arkel and Smith as a foreman in the art department. He remained there until 1958 when the company moved. He and his wife decided to purchase the 5 & 10 store in town, naming it Vickary's Variety Store. They operated the store until 1969 when they liquidated it. He then went to work for the US Soil Conservation service in Fonda, NY. He designed ponds, waterways and drainage systems for the agriculture community of the county. He retired at the age of 67 due to his increasing disability due to the Parkinson's disease. He lived independently until age 76 and then went into a nursing home until his death at 81 in February 1997. His family believes he was very proud of his war service, especially the Ploesti raid. He never considered himself a hero, but rather just another guy who did what was asked of him by his country. He is survived by four children Dara Lee, Robin, Coleman and Maple Ann and three grandchildren Timothy, Regina, and Dominic. Gene named his son Coleman after his friend, the pilot of Black Jack.

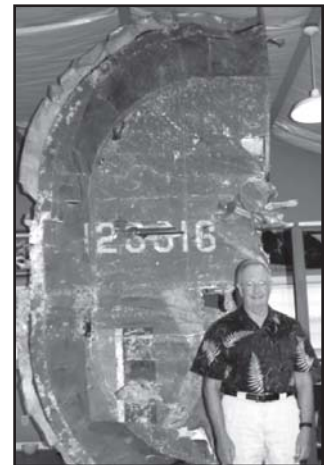
Bombardier George Guilford

After the war George worked for United Machine Shop and then went to the oil fields where he worked until he retired and settled in Florida. George passed away on 28 May 2008 at the age of 89. He is survived by his son Mike and daughter Pat.

Engineer Ed Carlson

Ed graduated from McKeesport High School in 1941 where he played football and basketball. He enlisted on 14 December 1941 in the Army Air Forces. During his time as a POW he was on the camp baseball team and was known as "Cotton" Carlson. After the war he married his wife Betty Jean on 9 May 1946. They had three children a daughter Virginia "Ginny" and two sons Duane and Don. He worked in

shipping at Irvin Works of Carnegie Illinois Steel Corp and then for Bell Telephone Company working his way up to Test Center Foreman. He enjoyed coaching little league baseball. He passed away on 23 August 1964.

Assistant Engineer Wilson Riche

Wilson was born near the village of Penn Yan, NY on 10 July 1915. He graduated from Penn Yan Academy in 1934. On 28 January 1942 he married his wife Clarice. Before entering the service he was the manager of Baker-Stark Men's Clothing Store. On 22 December 1942 Wilson completed his course for Airplane Mechanics at Keesler Field. On 3 February 1943 he completed his B-24D familiarization course. In July 1943 he able to return home and see his wife Clarice and their son Keith who was born in March. Today he is survived by his son Keith.

Radio Operator Frank Bauman



Frank graduated from Jordan High School in Los Angeles County, CA in 1938. Before the war he worked for Firestone Tire and Rubber. He was one of seven brothers and sisters. Today he is survived by one sister in California who cherishes her memories of her brother. He was the one who always watched over her, taught her to drive, and was always there for her. She remembers going to a ceremony at March Field towards the end of the war where her parents were presented with Franks medals. He is buried in the Lorraine American Cemetery in France.

Waist Gunner Tony Damico



Tony was raised in Louisiana on a sugar cane farm. He was one of eleven children.

Today he is survived by two sisters.

Waist Gunner Robert Smith

Robert graduated in 1936 from the West Philadelphia Catholic High School for Boys. He made Master Sergeant at Barksdale Field on 1 July 1942. He had one brother William who was in a tank destroyer unit in Europe. Robert is buried in the American War Cemetery in Ardennes, Belgium. Today he is survived by one nephew Bill and two nieces Dottie and Kathy.

Tail Gunner Bob Reasoner

After Black Jack was hit by flak and started burning, the flames were racing through the fuselage and into the tail gunner's compartment. Bob crawled through those flames while the plane was going down until he reached the waist gunners position. There, he found Tony, Robert, and Wilson lying on the floor. Looking for signs of life he found that Tony was still alive and in spite of his own injuries he was able to pick him up to the waist window, pull the rip cord on his parachute and push him out before jumping from the plane himself. A German soldier found Bob where he landed in a small park, seeing his injuries he helped Bob by removing him from his parachute. Bob was taken to a German Luftwaffe hospital in the area for initial treatment. While in that hospital he was told by his doctor that Tony had died as a result of his injuries. Bob was moved to several different POW camps until being repatriated to the US in September 1944. He spent the next 2 1/2 years undergoing treatments for his burns. After being released from the hospital he attended the University of Florida, did landscaping for a while, and then went to work as an inspector for the US Department of Agriculture until he retired. Bob is now 94 and he and his wife Bernice live in South Carolina.

THE STANLEY OLSON CREW AT WIENER NEUSTADT

STAR SPANGLED HELL was one of eight planes lost on this mission on 1 October 1943. **Ronald Allen**, Navigator reported this story:

I jumped at 11:45 when our aircraft was at 16,500 feet - (we should been at 22,000 over the target. It was 12 noon when I reached the ground. I was hungry, tired and disgusted. I had an escape kit, but it was not intended to be used in this area. It had Francs in it, rather than money that was appropriate to this area. I had an apple that I had obtained the night before. That was all I had to eat for three days, except for berries that I could scrounge. On that third day, I was in a thinly-wooded area. As I was lying down, trying to figure out what to do to get across a road, I suddenly heard a stick pop behind me. When I turned to look, I saw an Austrian Army Doctor. I later learned that he was on leave from the Russian front.

The doctor was with his family visiting a farm. The doctor could speak English just as well as I could. He sat down and we visited a while. At one point, the doctor said, "Well, the war is going to be over in about 18 months." He then went back to rejoin the others. He didn't attempt to capture me. He told his wife about me, and they discussed what to do. He brought me something to eat. He then told me that they had decided, for their own protection, to turn me in. We went to the farm house, and they gave me some warm milk. Having been brought up on a dairy farm, warm milk did not appeal to me.

One of the farm girls said something, and the doctor broke out laughing. He slapped me on the shoulder and said, "Do you know what she said?" I replied, "I have no idea." The doctor then told me, "The girl thinks you are good looking". There I was,

unshaven and my clothes were filthy. What did she see?

The farmer sent a boy that was about 12 years old for the local constabulary. They put me in the local jail, and all the kids around that town hooted at me. I don't know whether they were making fun of me.

Steve Bugyie, Ball Turret Gunner reported this: When I came down, I landed in quite a large pine tree. In order to get down, I had to climb on the shroud lines and broke the top of the tree off. When I hit the ground, I am certain that I was unconscious for a short period of time. When I woke up I hid in some evergreens. It was fairly late in the afternoon when I heard the whistle of Germans who were out searching for me. I took off in the westerly direction, heading for Switzerland. It was then that I made the rule that I would only travel at night.

When I stopped, I found a haystack and went to sleep in it. I was startled awake when I heard a blast from an 88-mm anti-aircraft gun. There apparently was a German encampment near there. It was daylight, but I went back to sleep and slept most of the day. When I tried to look out of the stack, I couldn't see anything. It was mostly an open field in front of me.

As soon as the sun went down, I took off again. I was loose for three nights and four days. By walking and trotting from sun-down to sunup, I was able to make 190 kilometers (about 120 miles). The next to last night I was loose, I couldn't find any cover, so I slept in a small hay field behind a tavern. It was around noontime when I heard some rustling in the grass next to me. When I looked, I saw a water Spaniel smelling me. About fifty yards away was a German hunter, an old fellow with a shotgun. I just lay there and the hunter walked on. When night fell, I took off again.

**THE STANLEY OLSON CREW
AT WIENER NEUSTADT**

CONTINUED

I was weak from dysentery as well as the lack of food and water. It was on the fourth day when I approached some people. I was hoping that I could get some help. I spoke to them in German. After a brief conversation, they spoke to one of the people in Hungarian or some other language. I thought they were sending for food. Instead, they went to bring the Home Guard. The next thing I knew, I was surrounded. I was taken back to Wiener Neustadt.

On the following day, Lt. Matson, a pilot

from the 389th and I were transported to Dulag Luft.

In his book, Roll of Honor and Casualties, Will Lundy reported that Star Spangled Hell that approximately 125 to 150 enemy aircraft made vicious attacks on this formation in the target area at 1140 hours. It was hit individually by five Me 109s with nose and passing attacks. The aircraft dropped its bombs and peeled off to the right and was still pursued by five fighters.

The pilot, Stanley Olson, was KIA; all others became POW.

**JACK WIND, PILOT, 506 SQUADRON,
REMEMBERS HIS 1ST MISSION
FLYING IN THE CONSOLIDATED MESS**

The mission was to Brunswick, Germany. 8 April 1944, to Brunswick, Germany. It was a 'mess' when we barely made it back to the base. We took 6 20mm hits from a fighter in the left wing. It knocked out our #2 engine; then we were caught in a flak barrage over Hanover, and they said we had almost 70 flak holes. We ran out of oil on 2 engines as we reached the base. We had holes in the oil tanks. We finished up with a 'ground loop', from a flat left tire.

The group put up 24 planes that day, and 12 of us got home. This was our intro-

duction to combat. We were lucky, one of the few crews to finish a tour at that time.

According to Will Lundy, the destination for that mission was the Airdrome in Langenhagen, Germany. Will reported that April 8 was the worst single day for the 44th BG.

Planes lost: Shack Rabbit, Judy's Buggy, Pizz and Moan, Townsend's Terrible Ten, Rubber Check, Greenwich, Oh My Sufferin' Head, Galivantin' Gal, and 4 Unnamed Planes.

Losses: KIA-41; POW-74; WIA-2

FIRST GRADERS FINISHED THESE SENTENCES

IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST BEFORE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

DON'T BITE THE HAND THAT LOOKS DIRTY

YOU CAN'T TEACH A DOG NEW MATH

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE, THERE'S POLLUTION

S/SGT WARREN MCPHERSON (66TH SQD) REMEMBERS THE FLAK HOUSES

By the time we reached Mission #27 on November 30, 1944, every member of our crew was pretty near what was called 'Flak Happy'. We were tense and restless. Almost any kind of unexpected noise would make us jumpy in response. That mission to Neukirchen, Germany, was our proud day. Our crew was loaned from the 44th Bomb Group to lead the 392nd Bomb Group. We also had the honor of leading the entire Eighth Air Force on that day.

Shortly after that raid we were notified it was our turn to go to the "Flak Shack". There was no question we needed some rest and recuperation (R & R). The enlisted men in our group were "ordered" to spend December 7 through 13 at the Combat Crew Rest Home at South England, plus travel time there and back.

An army truck took us from Shipdham to Norwich, where we went by train west across England to Liverpool. The farther west the train took us, the more relaxed we felt. We knew we were getting farther and farther out of reach from a German air raid or the German buzz bombs. We changed trains a couple of times on the way. On the trains and in the stations, it was fun intermingling with the civilian English passengers.

From Liverpool we traveled north 20 miles to Southport, a lovely city that liked to compare itself to San Francisco. It had long

been a favorite resort city for the British, and some lovely facilities had been turned into 'Rest Homes' for military personnel.

Our 'rest home' was a large sprawling mansion-like facility overlooking the Irish Sea. The staff of the facility offered us any amenity we could think of. Our sleeping rooms were large, adequately furnished, and completely comfortable. A wide variety of activities were offered to us. We were given free run of the home.

We were also given a pass for the entire length of our visit to go anywhere we wished within 25 miles. The only restriction was that we were to be in the rest home by 1:00 AM, and not leave before 7:00 AM each day.

Even though it was December, I was fascinated by the beach between our hotel and the Irish Sea. We had a full view of the beach from our sleeping room. At low tides it was enormous. In spite of the cold weather, I roamed that beach, looking for mysterious treasures that might wash ashore. Alas, I found none; but even so, being there was wonderful.

When our week was up, we left in time to spend a night in Liverpool. Then we headed back to Shipdham, ready to face the Nazis, and anxious to get the rest of our bombing raids finished. And finish we did!

THESE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS?

CAN YOU REMEMBER METAL ICE CUBE TRAYS WITH LEVERS? MIMEOGRAPH PAPER? ROLLER SKATE KEYS? DRIVE INS? STUDEBAKERS? WASHTUB WRINGERS? THE FULLER BRUSH MAN?

IF SO, YOU MUST BE ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS YOUR EDITOR.

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS SINCE JOINING THE 44TH BG

How can I ever forget the trip to France, when Guy Cressant handed Lois Cianci her father's burnt dog tag? T/Sgt. Clair Shaeffer's plane went down in a wooded area, and the French had placed a monument to those that were lost. Many tears were shed when Guy surprised everyone with that unexpected gift.

Recently Pierre Berenguer and other great patriots in France, created a museum near that very site. It honors the brave members of the French Underground. Some of our members who escaped with the help of Underground members, have sent their stories to the library of that museum.

I can't forget the reunion in New Orleans when Charlie Hughes got up and danced with the performer. She danced with him for a short time, then sent him back to his seat. This reunion was arranged by Mike Yuspeh. It included a parade, and an opportunity to attend the evening party in costume. I went as a pirate. The most impressive dancer was Tom Parsons and wife.

I like to remember the River Walk in San Antonio.

I cannot forget the 1st Reunion in Savannah, in which Ploesti veterans were honored. John Harmonoski was very ill, but wanted to attend that reunion. He died two weeks later.

One of the most impressive speeches I cannot forget was when at the 60th Anniversary of the Ploesti mission in Salt Lake City. Bob Lehnhausen described the pre-mission remarks of Leon Johnson, who described the perils the crews would be facing. He said that if anyone wanted to

opt out, they have his permission. Not one person left the room. They placed total trust in their great leader.

The Reunion at Wright Paterson AFB was a great opportunity to climb back into a B-24. Who could pass that up? The guide was surprised to learn that Tom Parsons had seen and shot at a German Me-163. The rest of his crew did not want to report on the strange lightning fast aircraft they had seen. Tom did, and later others saw that same strange plane.

The Me-163 was really a rocket plane. It required so much fuel, it could stay in the air for a very short time. Our fighters learned its weakness. When it was ready to head back to base, they were able to bring it down.



SOME OF THE CREWS WHO WON THE WAR



STERLING DOBBS CREW, 68TH SQUADRON

Rear L-R: Sterling Dobbs, pilot; Wallace J. Balla, Co-Pilot; Daniel C. Valentli, Navigator; Robert C. Kimse, Bombardier

Front: Harold W. Hanson, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Robert E. Elstad, Waist Gunner; Reed B. Foutz, Tail Gunner; Vernon L. Torkelson, Radio Operator/Gunner; William J. Flood, Nose Gunner; James R. Trudeau, Waist Gunner.

This is a posed picture; the Dobbs crew (68th Squadron) never flew in Joplin Jalopy. That belonged to the 506th Squadron



REGINALD CARPENTER CREW

The Reginald Carpenter Crew, 67th Sq., not individually named: Reginald Carpenter, Pilot; Caroll Pratt, Co-Pilot; Charles Selasky, Navigator; Berthel Swenson, Bombardier; John Irwin, Radio Operator/Gunner; Frank Paliga, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Kelly Morrison, Right Wing Gunner; William Brady, Left Wing Gunner; Robert Strickell, Tail Gunner; Jack Shepherd, Rear Hatch Gunner.



CARL BOHNISCH CREW

Front Row L-R: William Leverich, Engineer/Gunner; Eugene Edgerton, Right Waist Gunner; Kenneth Hall, Turret Gunner; Joseph Morin, Tail Gunner; Bernard Uhler, Radio Operator/Gunner; Warren Klein, Left Waist Gunner.

Back Row L-R: Peter Ede, Navigator; Harold Win Spink, Bombardier; John Griffin, Co-Pilot; Carl Bohnisch, Pilot



**ROBERT JOHNSON CREW,
68TH SQUADRON**

Front Row: Laban Brown, Tail Gunner; George Berger, Navigator; Robert Johnson, Pilot; Estie Cunningham, Co-Pilot; Michael D'Angelo, Bombardier.

Back Row: Jack Christy, Right Wing Gunner; Raymond Lippert, Belly Gunner; James Alexander, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Walter Banks, Left Wing Gunner; Marvin Jehnson, Radio Operator.



**THE FRANK KIGGINS CREW,
68TH SQUADRON**

Front Row L-R: Frank Kiggins, Pilot; Paul Gretskey, Co-Pilot; Raymond Burglund, Navigator; Edgar Bell, Bombardier.

Back Row: Edmund Danzig, Radio Operator/Gunner; Emmett Mozee, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Robert Palmer, Ball Turret Gunner; Charles Vogel, Right Wing Gunner; William Kelsh, Jr., Left Wing Gunner; Harold Lee, Tail Gunner.



**THE WALTER (TOMMIE) HOLMES
CREW, 68TH SQUADRON**

Front Row L-R: Robert Stine, Navigator; Walter Holmes, Pilot; Donald Fribley, Co-Pilot; Howard Klekar, Bombardier.

Back Row: George Green, Tail Gunner; Edward Bowden, Waist Gunner; Michael Balazovich, Belly Gunner; Isaac Flesher, Radio Operator/Gunner; Sam DeBerry, Waist Gunner; Tauno Metsa, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner.



**VERYL (HANK) DUWE CREW,
67TH SQUADRON**

Front Row L-R: Dick Hill, Bombardier; Veryl Duwe, Pilot; Richard Carpenter, Co-Pilot; Frank Weiss, Navigator.

Back Row: Don Billings, Radio Operator/Gunner; Ray Lindsey, Waist Gunner; Ed (Mike) Healy, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; John Wesley, Tail Gunner; Don Henriksen, Waist Gunner; Joseph McNamara, Ball Turret Gunner.



**THE ARTHUR LEDFORD CREW,
66TH SQUADRON**

Front Row L-R: Frank Kiggins, Pilot; Paul Gretskey, Co-Pilot; Raymond Burglund, Navigator; Edgar Bell, Bombardier.

Back Row: Edmund Danzig, Radio Operator/Gunner; Emmett Mozee, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Robert Palmer, Ball Turret Gunner; Charles Vogel, Right Wing Gunner; William Kelsh, Jr., Left Wing Gunner; Harold Lee, Tail Gunner.



**THE ROBERT SEEVER CREW CREW,
68TH SQUADRON**

Front Row L-R: Albert Pschirer, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Charles Daughtry, Radio Operator/Gunner; Richard Coward, Nose Gunner; Charles Olewine, Waist Gunner; Harold Whittle, Waist Gunner; Lenham, Tail Gunner.

Back Row: Robert Seever, Pilot; Hugh Maxwell, Co-Pilot; Donald Jenkins, Navigator; William Zoellmer, Bombardier.



THE CLAYTON ROBERTS CREW, 68TH SQUADRON

Front Row L-R: Joseph Stewart, Bombardier; Clayton Roberts, Pilot; John Roberts, Gunner; William Lundquist, Co-Pilot; Arthur Aronoff, Navigator.

Back Row: Kenneth Amick, Flight Engineer/Gunner; John Cross, Gunner; Robert Dunlap, Gunner; Edgar Flowers, Gunner; John Boileau, Radio Operator, Gunner.



THE CHARLES HUGHES CREW, 66TH SQUADRON

Front Row L-R: George Miller, Tail Gunner; Nathan Sternberger, Navigator; Charles Hughes, Pilot; Sylvester Hunn, Co-Pilot; Maurice Hause, Bombardier.

Back Row: Angela Paluzzi, Right Wing Gunner; Thomas Chocklett, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; Stanley Langcaskey, Belly Gunner; Aulus Blitz, Left Wing Gunner.

PURSUIT IN THE PYRANEES

This is a great escape story, written by the late **Archie Barlow**. A survivor of the crash at Escalles Sur Buchy, a target to wipe out the V-1s - unmanned planes that were targeting London and other great cities in the UK. Flying in *Ram it Dammit*, Barlow was the single survivor of that plane crash. He was one of five men who were escapees from that mission, and managed to evade and return to Shipdham.

With help from the Underground, he arrived in Paris, and through a series of nerve-wracking encounters with German soldiers, he moved to various homes, traveled by trains to various destinations, slept in barns along the way, always evading the Nazis who were pursuing him.

When he finally reached the Pyranees Mountains, he got separated from fellow escapees, and with the Germans hot on his trail, he took off his coat and used it to slide down the mountain to freedom.

Pursuit in the Pyranees is available from his wife, Aline. The phone number is (706) 629-2396. The price is \$25.

In the previous two issues of the 8 Ball Tails, Richard Mayhew's escape story was also very compelling. He was flying in Queen Marlene on the same mission as Barlow, to Escalles Sur Buchy.

Mayhew met Lawrence Chandler, also an escapee from Escalles Sur Buchy. He was flying in Victory Ship.

A GREAT MOMENT FOR THE 44TH THE UNVEILING OF THE MONUMENT



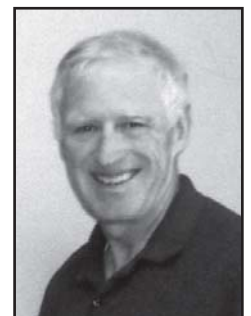
L-R: LTC Mark Viney, Lee Aston, Ruth Morse, Perry Morse, M/Gen Robert Williams

The granite and design for this beautiful monument was by Lee Aston, with suggestions from Robert Lehnhausen and Ruth Morse.

Permission for its placement came from the Secretary of the Army, after going through seven committees!

It was facilitated by Mike Perry, Executive Director of the Army Heritage Education Center.

M/Gen. Robert Williams conducted the ceremony, congratulating the 44th BG for its wartime service. (His father had piloted a B-17.) Our U.S. Representative, Todd Platts spoke, as did President George Washburn. It was a happy day for all.



Mike Perry

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

IF PEOPLE FROM POLAND ARE CALLED POLES, WHY AREN'T PEOPLE FROM HOLLAND CALLED HOLES?

IF 4 OUT OF 5 PEOPLE SUFFER FROM DIARRHEA...DOES THAT MEAN THE ONE ENJOYS IT?

IF FED EX AND UPS WERE TO MERGE, WOULD THEY CALL IF FED UP?

YOU NEVER REALLY LEARN TO SWEAR UNTIL YOU LEARN TO DRIVE.

EVER WONDER WHAT THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING WOULD BE IF IT DIDN'T ZIGZAG?

GREAT FRIENDS IN THE 44TH BOMB GROUP



Lowell & Jackie Roberts



Fritzi Silatsky



Irwin Stovroff



Lee Aston



Gerald Gross



Beverly Folsom



Dick & Betty Lynch

GREAT FRIENDS IN THE 44TH BOMB GROUP

CONTINUED



Richard Butler



Louis DeBlasio



Paul Kay



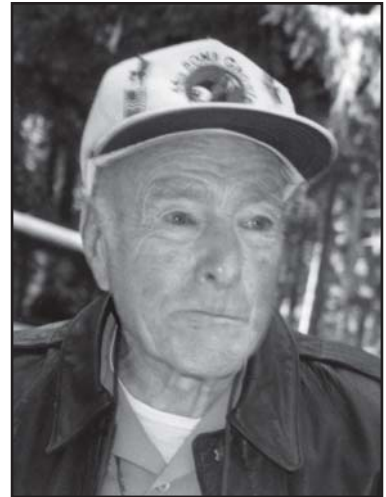
Charles Hughes



Lt. Col. Kent Furman



Robert Johnson



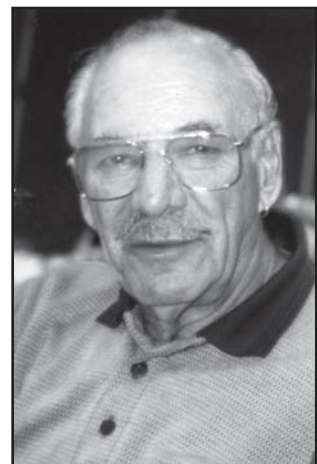
Frank Schaeffer



Charles Tilton



Clay Roberts



Milton Rosenblatt



Irene & Will Lundy



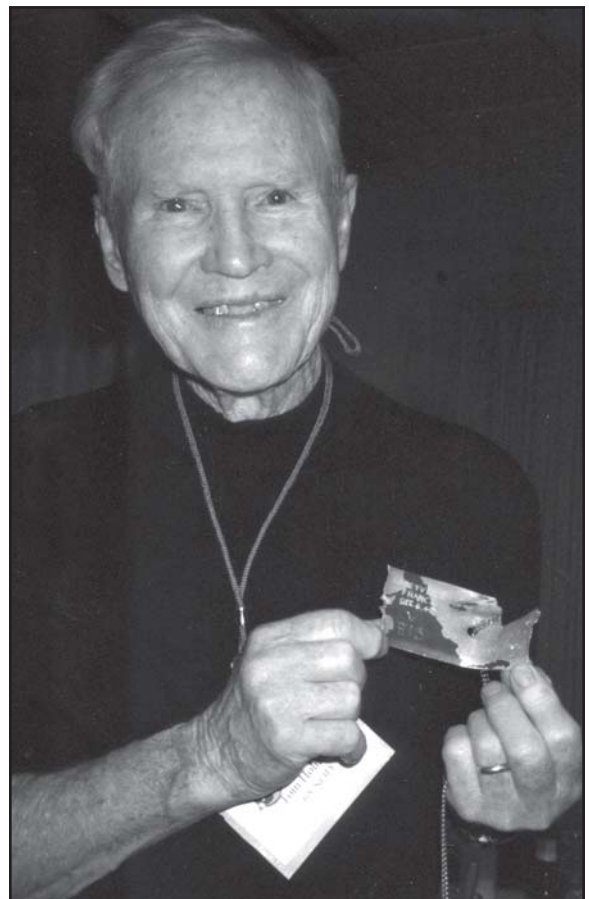
Don Williams & Richard Hruby



Beryl Apgar, Betty Lynch & Cynthia Harmonski



**Robert Vance, Perry Morse,
Jerry Folsom & Roy Owen
at Colorado Springs,
Dedication of B-24 monument**



**Tommie Shepherd and the piece of
flak that nearly killed him**

GREAT FRIENDS IN THE 44TH BOMB GROUP

CONTINUED



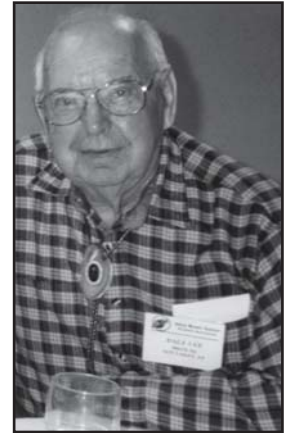
**Bob Lehnhausen, Mike Mikoloski,
Roy Owen & Ruth Morse**



Russell Gately



Pete Henry



Dale Lee



**George Washburn &
Cynthia Harmonoski**



**Jack Butler &
Bill Brandon**



Roy Owen



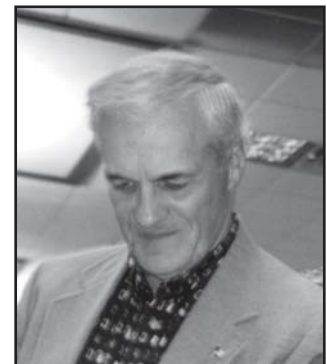
Mary Aston



**3 Presidents: Mike Mikoloski,
Roy Owen & Jerry Folsom**



**Lois Cianci &
Jackie Roberts**



Tony Cianci



President Robert Lehnhausen



**The Beiber Crew
Perry Morse, Nathan Woodruff & Jerry Folsom**



FOLDED WINGS

*All the pain and grief is over, every restless tossing passed.
I am now at peace forever, safely home in heaven at last.*

Unknown author

Aston, Robert Lee #19247 67th
Squadron 1 September 2013 Captain
Aston was a Navigator on the Christopher Spagnola crew. Their first of 35 missions was on 26 August 1944.

All missions of this crew were into Germany, except one into France. They were knocking out bridges, destroying oil and arms production complexes and bombing railroad centers, always moving ahead of the allied troops that were moving east toward Germany.

The planes they flew in were: *Old Iron Corset, Judy's Buggy, Phyllis, Limpin Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose, Sultry Sue* and *Mi Akin Ass*. Their last mission was 2 June 1945.

After the war, Aston remained in the Reserves. He became an Attorney-at-Law, and earned a degree as a Geologist. He became an Adjunct Professor at the University of Missouri. He earned three doctorate degrees, and was a candidate for LLD, Doctor of Law.

Aston was an active member of the Sons of the Revolution. He owned a piece of land full of granite, and placed monuments on a number of his Revolutionary War ancestors.

Aston will be remembered by the 44th Bomb Group, first for providing the granite, designing and producing the 44th's monument at the Army Heritage Education Center's courtyard. He also doggedly searched for belated awards for veterans of the 44th, also other groups, and arranged for presentations by important members of the Army and/or Air Force.

News of his passing came from his wife of 20 years, Mary. He had 4 children and one step child; also 5 grandchildren, and 2 great great grandchildren. Lee and Mary were residing in Elberton, Georgia at the time of his passing.

Byers, Eugene M., Jr. #22742 67th
Squadron 6 April 2006 Lt. Byers was a Navigator, flying with a number of crews. His first mission was 26 September 1943. He flew with several pilots, most with Robert Stamos; others with Harold Pinder, Robert McCormick, Raymond Lacombe, and Lawrence Brooks. He also flew with a number of Command Pilots: Walter Bunker, Sylvester Hunn, A. T. Culbertson, William Brandon and Robert Cardenas.

On his last mission to Frederichshafen, 18 March 1944, the plane went down and Captain Cardenas and the crew were interned in Switzerland. Capt. Cardenas escaped, but the rest of the crew were held until the war was over.

The planes he flew in were: *F for Freddie, Seed of Satan, Amblin Okie, H-Q-2, Avenger, Peep Sight, Raggedy Ann II, The Impatient Virgin, Lib-erty Belle/Lass* and *Chief & Sack Artists*.

After the war, Byers stayed in the Air Force, rising to the rank of Lt. Colonel. His assignment was flight control. He retired in 1958.

Byers is preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Edris Dunaway Myers. The couple had 2 twin girls, and one grandson.

He was living in Fort Wayne, Indiana at the time of his passing. Information



FOLDED WINGS

of his death came from his daughter Karen.

Clark, John E. #25825 67th Squadron
7 November 2012 Flight Officer Clark was a Co-pilot on the Raymond Zanoni crew. His first mission was 17 March 1945, targeting railroad yards at Munster, Germany.

Clark flew in multiple planes, including *Mi Akin Ass, Missouri Belle, Hit Parade, Old Iron Corset* and *Miss Marion*. He flew eleven missions, the last on 20 April 1945.

After the war, Clark attended Cornell University, earning a BS in Agriculture in 1949. He was in the Air Force Reserves until being discharged 15 December 1954. The majority of his career was as a County Supervisor with the Farmers Home Administration – USDA from 1956 to 1986. He retired while working in Juneau, Alaska where he enjoyed his passion for hunting, fishing and hiking.

He is survived by his wife Faye, three children, seven grandchildren and one great-great grandson. John and Faye were living in Belmont, New York at the time of his passing.

Curtin, Mike #24613 67th Squadron
20 February 2013 Master Sgt. Curtin was an Aircraft Maintenance Technician, serving from 10 October 1942 until the war was over as a Crew Chief.

Mike married Barbara Holbrook in 1941 in Vancouver, WA. During the war, she served as a Classification Clerk-Typist, assigned to the US Army 7th Infantry Finance Office. Upon his return home they started Curtin Jersey Farm/Heritage Farms, where they raised and showed Jersey cows. Mike was a member

of the American Jersey Cattle Club, and his Jersey bloodline was awarded and recognized nationwide. In 1980 they retired and sold their stock to two farms, one in Vancouver and the other in Ballingham, Washington. He was also very active in the civics and politics in Vancouver, serving on various community and agricultural boards.

The couple raised 5 children, 3 boys, 2 girls. They had 10 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. Mike was preceded in death by Barbara. Information of his passing came from his daughter, Colleen.

Gardner, Harrell Lee #20320 506 Squadron
29 April 2013 S/Sgt. Gardner was a Gunner on the **Charles Atkins** crew; their first mission was on 19 July 1944. At different times he served as a Wing Gunner, but mostly as a Tail Gunner. On one mission he flew on a mission piloted by **Hal Kimball**. The planes he flew in were *Down De Hatch, Sierra Blanca, Southern Comfort III, Clean Sweep/Dragon Nose, Sabrina III, Joplin Jalopy* and *Hairless Joe*.

After the war Gardner returned to his hometown of Hartsville, SC and started a successful farm supply business, in which he was involved until the last five years of his life. During that time he was active in county politics, serving as a County Councilman for 20 years.

He was predeceased by his wife, Winifred Parrott Gardner, a/k/a "Dot", a marriage that lasted 53 years. They raised three children who continue to live in this city.

Information about his passing came from his son, Lee Gardner.



FOLDED WINGS

Oshel, Loren L. #21569 66th Squadron 11 September 2012 Corporal Oshen was a member of the Ground Crew, first serving at Honnington Air Base, which was a sub depot base. There he worked on B-17s and B-24s that were having landing gear problems. Later he was moved to Shipdham, where he worked on repairing instruments after each mission. He adjusted compasses, calibrated air speed indicators and standardized instrument panels. Oshel stayed at Shipdham until the end of the war.

After the war he attended Kansas State University, earning a BS degree as Agricultural Engineer. He worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service for 30 years. He worked as a Field Officer Engineer in Clay City, Texas; a Planning Engineer on the Watershed Planning Staff at Salina Kansas, and Tucson & Phoenix Arizona.

Loren and his wife, Maxine, were married 66 years. They had 2 daughters and one son, all of whom were highly educated. The son became a photogrammetrist, working with the space program. One daughter is a pharmacist, the other, in working with prisoners not eligible for release.

Loren and Maxine were living in Sierra Vista, Arizona at the time of his passing. News of his death came by e-mail from Maxine.

Lopez, Vincent George # 23071 68th Squadron 21 May 2013 S/Sgt. Lopez was a gunner on three different crews: **Joseph Kessler, Baxter Weant, and Robert Rose**. His first of 30 missions was on 13 August 1943; his

last, on 13 May 1944. Lopez served as Right Wing Gunner at time; other times as a Ball Turret Gunner. He flew in *Heaven Can Wait II, Mary Harriet, Victory Ship, Margaret Ann, Flak Alley, Bing's Big Box, Full House, Pistol Packin' Mama, Flak Alley II, Flak Magnet, and Fearless Fosdick*.

After the war, Lopez was employed in the field of Electronics, serving in many capacities in six different states. He is was the father of two daughters, three sons, 15 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife and a son.

He was residing in Salt Lake City at the time of his death. News of his passing came from **Gerald Folsom**, from a newspaper clipping.

Wells, Donald #22511 67th Squadron 1 August 2013 Lt. Wells was a Co-Pilot on the Leslie Lee Crew. Their first of 31 missions was on 31 December 1943. The crew flew in many nameless planes, But also in *Fearless Fosdick, Three Kisses for Luck, Limpin Ole Sadie/San Antonio Rose, Mi Akin Ass, Old Iron Corset, Sultry Sue, Miss Marion, and Lady Fifi Nella*.

Their last mission was 25 April 1945 to Hallien, Austria. It was also the last mission the 44th flew in the war. On May 8th 1945 Germany surrendered. It was VE Day.

A member of the 44th BG Board of Directors, Richard Lynch, was a Tail Gunner on this crew.

West, Thomas J. #22525 68th Squadron 9 May 2013 Sgt. T/Sgt. West was an Engineer/Top Turret Gunner on the **William Solomon Crew**,



FOLDED WINGS

with whom he flew 17 missions. He flew his last five missions on the **R.C. Pitts** Crew, the last being to Hallien, Austria, which was the last mission of the war for the 44th Bomb Group.

In his 22 missions, he flew in the following planes:

Puritanical Witch/Puritanical Bitch; T. S. Tessie/Beck's Bad Boys; Hellza Droppin; Lady Geraldine and Jose Carioca.

After the War, West spent 38 years as a steel worker for the Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel Company.

West had two children. At the time of his passing, he was living in Tiltonsville, Ohio. Information of his death came from his son, Thomas, Jr.



**44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association**

2041 Village Circle E
York, PA 17404

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He was getting old and paunchy, and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he once fought in, and the planes in which he flew,
And the times he saw a buddy 'chuting down into the blue.
But we'll hear his tales no longer, for ol' Joe has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, cause an Airman died today.

He won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he had lived an ordinary, quiet sort of life.
But when his name shows up in **Folded Wings**, within the next edition,
His buddies will remember that they also flew that mission.
His local paper tells his life, we hope that they will say,
"Our Country is in Mourning, Cause an Airman Died Today"