

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

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Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

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Non Profit Veterans Organization

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Getting to know your Board Members



★ *Lt. Col. Robert J. Lehnhausen* ★

Lt. Col. **Robert J. Lehnhausen** hesitates to mention it, but before he flew on B-24's, he had been assigned to B-17's. In a world of 'Liberator-lovers' he rarely admits that he liked them. He volunteered for pilot training to avoid a dead-end assignment in the Coast Artillery. Drafted in Peoria, Illinois at age 21, Lehnhausen was working in the Regimental Post Office. His Adjutant, a West Pointer, took him aside one day and gave him a piece of advice, "If you want to get ahead in the service, go elsewhere."

Accepting this advice, he responded to an Aviation Cadet Recruiting Team. Since he was not a college graduate, he began a series of academic and physical tests at Ft. Bragg, N.C. He qualified, but began an uneasy wait for assignment. Pearl Harbor called the 40th Army Unit to be transferred from North Carolina to Camp MAAR on California's Mojave Desert. The would-be aviator's heart sank, believing that move would close the door on flight school.



NEWLY COMMISSIONED 2ND LT. ROBERT J. LEHNHAUSEN,
1942.

19



44

CAPT. ROBERT J. LEHNHAUSEN'S CREW ~ PLANE: FLAK ALLEY

STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT: CAPT. GEORGE E. HULPIAU, BOMBARDIER; LT. ROBERT C. PETERSON, NAVIGATOR;

LT. HOLLIS R. NICHOLS, CO-PILOT; CAPT. ROBERT J. LEHNHAUSEN, PILOT.

KNEELING LEFT TO RIGHT: S/Sgt. DOUGLAS R. RATLEDGE, ASST. ENGINEER; T/Sgt. WILLIAM G. MORTON, ENGINEER;

S/Sgt. MICHAEL J. BALAZOVICH, ASST. RADIO; T/Sgt. THOMAS A. LASKOWSKI, RADIO; S/Sgt. CHARLES W. ROSS, JR., TAIL TURRET.

To his surprise, after twelve days of desert duty, orders caught up with him, and his Air Corps odyssey began. He was assigned to a newly opened Aviation Cadet Reception Center at Williams Field, Chandler, Arizona. After a few weeks of ground school, foot drill and calisthenics, he began the three phase program of pilot training, completing the program in August, 1942. With pride and delight, he received his pilot status as a Second Lieutenant.

Of Lehnhausen's class at Roswell, most were sent for further training on four engine planes. Bob went to Geiger Field, WA (Spokane) to train on B-17's. After a few weeks of intense training, he was assigned a crew. Together they went to a new base in Casper, Wyoming. They were among the first troops in Casper, a cause for great excitement in the town. "They really rolled out the 'red carpet' for us," he remembered.

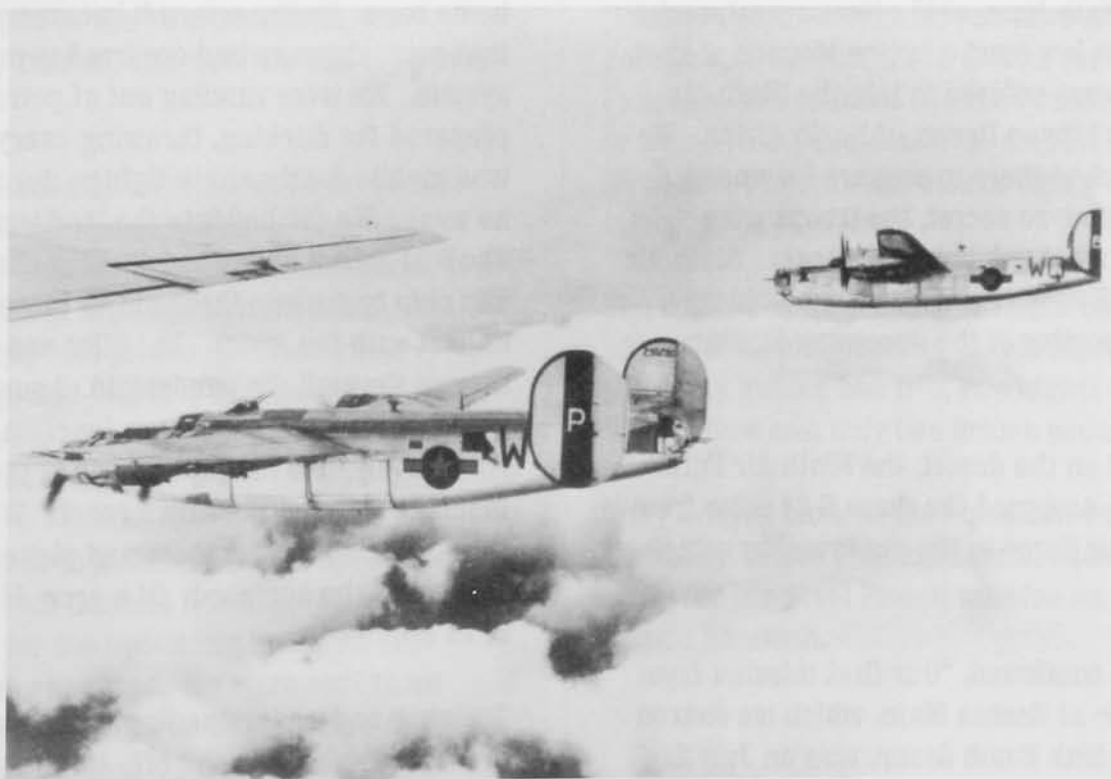
Crew training for eventual combat went very well, he recalled. Upon completion of this phase, they went to Salina, Kansas and were issued a

brand new B-17, outfitted with all gear needed for combat. Then they were ready for the trip to a combat unit.

"We went the southern route, down to South America, east to Ascension Island, then to Africa and finally to England," he remembered.

"Ascension Island was a fifteen square mile volcanic eruption in the south Atlantic. Peterson, our navigator, told us to hold the course, and we would find it. We missed it by only 1/4 mile.

"We went into orientation at Bovingdon, England with 34 other B-17 crews. Members of the RAF taught us how to deal with anti-aircraft and RAF radio procedures, also basic courtesies, so we could get along with the English people. Then General Longfellow sent the word that seven crews would have to go to B-24's. The Colonel pulled seven numbers from his hat, and I was one. I felt like I was being wrenched from the graceful 'Queen of the Sky,' but in time I learned to love the Liberator."



PLANE closest: 42-95260 P WQ Lil' MARLENE, 68th Squadron.
Upper Right: 44-40098 B WQ LONE RANGER - Lost August, 1944.



"At this time, March 1943, the Eighth Air Force had only five bomb groups. The two B-24 units active were the 44th and the 93rd. These seven crews being assigned were the first replacement



Lecce, Italy, a base in the heel of the Italian boot. Although the mission was relatively free of enemy opposition, it proved to be fateful for **Major Tom Cramer**, Squadron Commander. He had chosen

crews. Five of us went to the 44th, two to the 93rd. Of the five assigned to the 44th, two went to the 66th, one to the 67th, and two of us went to the 68th. We were greeted warmly by a very weary bunch of combat airmen.

"At that point our crews were broken up. This permitted two of the Squadrons' original co-pilots to become first pilots. Four of my crew joined **Wilmer Garrett**; the rest went with **Bill Hughes**. In late June, 1943 after several weeks of practice in low level over the Mounds of East Anglia, we were ordered to join the Ninth Air Force on the Libyan Desert of North Africa. We were dispatched there to prepare for and to fly a special mission, so secret, the troops were unaware of what would be the target. Ninth Air Force's two B-24 groups had been bombing targets supportive of the upcoming Sicilian invasion."

Upon arrival on the desert, the Ninth Air Force immediately assigned the three B-24 units from the Eighth Air Force to the pre-invasion attack effort.

Lehnhausen continued, "Our first mission from our new base at Benina Main, which we shared with Ninth's 98th Bomb Group, was on July 2, 1943. The target was a German-held airfield at

to fly as co-pilot with a new crew, and the plane went down.

I was co-pilot for Wilmer Gaffett in *Miss Virginia*. We did have an attack by enemy aircraft in the target area. Our gunners exchanged fire with the attackers, and we believed our ship was not badly damaged.

"We dropped our bombs on target and headed to home base. On the return it became apparent that some damage had occurred to our fuel system. We were running out of petrol. We prepared for ditching, throwing everything that was mobile overboard to lighten the aircraft—to no avail. We ditched into the Mediterranean. The B-24 did not have good ditching characteristics. The ship broke into three major pieces upon impact with the water. The pilot and I were both thrown through the windshield. I surfaced alongside the wing/fuselage junction. Fortunately, two dinghys stored in the upper fuselage were within arm's reach. We released them, scrambled into them and picked up all the survivors who surfaced. Of a crew of eleven, six of us survived.

Training and understanding emergency procedures always pays off. In this tragic combat action, our radio operator, **John Melvin**

Cole, did precisely what he had been trained to do in a ditching procedure. Upon being told to "Prepare for Ditching," he sent out the Morse Code SOS; and after several signals, screwed down his key to send a continuous signal. His action saved all who survived the crash.

"After several hours in the water, a vessel appeared on the horizon. We were so excited! A few minutes later we looked again. There was no vessel. In frustration, one of our crew ordered 'Let's paddle.' This brought a laugh. We had two small dinghys lashed together, four injured crewmen, two small paddles, an unconscious navigator; and we were at least one hundred miles off the desert coast. Paddle! To where?

"Sometime later the vessel reappeared. It came closer and closer, but its course was taking it about twenty degrees from us. The sea was calm, but the morning was very hazy. Finally I fired two flares, and the bow of the ship swung around as if I had it on a string. Then that vessel grew larger and larger. At that point our vocal crewman let out an expletive and shouted, 'we get dumped in the Mediterranean, we survive, they find us, and now the SOB runs over us!'

"We were rescued by a British mine layer who was on a special mission, transporting the British Army General Staff from Alexandria, Egypt to Malta in advance of the Sicilian invasion. They had picked up Cole's radio transmission, and began a square search for us - lucky for us, for there was no air/sea rescue unit in that area at that time.

"We were taken to Malta where we spent five days in a British General Hospital. Then, in preparation for the upcoming invasion, the hospital was evacuated. We were sent to an American Field Hospital in Tripoli. Five days later the radio operator, **John Cole**; our engineer,

Ed Waite and I were ambulatory, so we were sent back to our Squadron. The three who were more seriously injured were sent to an American General Hospital in Cairo.

"Back at base our new CO, **John Diehl**, told us he wanted us to go on leave, relax, enjoy. We caught a plane to Cairo. After seeing the local sights, we appealed to the Cairo based Red Cross lady for suggestions. She encouraged us to take the British Army's train from Cairo to Palestine (Tel Aviv) and see the Holy Land. It departed each evening at 5:30, traveled the desert in the cool of night and arrived in Jaffa at 6:00 A.M.

"I purchased the tickets for the three of us. We were comfortably seated in the Lawrence of Arabia narrow wooden train compartment. Some time after leaving Cairo, a British master sergeant who was the train conductor, entered our compartment to collect the tickets. He was aghast. Two Yank enlisted men in first class seats! We had a spirited conversation. He demanded that Cole and Waite go to Third Class where enlisted personnel ride.

"Finally I said, 'Sergeant, you have a problem. Your people sold me these tickets for First Class Passage. Either these two men remain with me or we all ride Third Class.' In disgust he yielded. He couldn't tolerate an officer riding Third Class."

The trip to the Holy Land proved to be educational, enlightening and inexpensive. A three-day guided bus trip, two nights lodging and all food cost only two British pounds. (\$8 U.S.)

They arrived back at the Squadron on the Thursday before Ploesti. Lehnhausen was asked to fly the low level Ploesti mission as co-pilot for **Eunice Shannon**.



"Ploesti was an awesome experience, an unbelievable panorama of planes, gunfire, explosions and destruction. We saw planes going down around us, flak buffeted us mercilessly; but by the grace of God, our aircraft was unscathed.

The next mission our group flew following Ploesti was to Wiener-Neustadt, August 13, 1943, our target, an aircraft manufacturing facility. The target was beyond our range, so to make the attack possible, we were briefed to land on bases in Tunis, rather than to attempt returning to Libya. It was my first mission as pilot. I was elated, but my crew was a new crew on their first mission, and their pilot had to move over to the co-pilot's seat. I wasn't a popular pilot on this mission, but fortunately, it was an easy one, little opposition—no fighters. However, our fuel transfer system fouled up, and we had to make a difficult landing on a bombed out fighter base in Sicily. Happily, we made it back safely to our base.

Days later we headed back to Shipdham for a mere three weeks, and then back to North Africa, joining the 99th Bomb Group (B-17's) in Tunisia. We flew only a few missions, as the rainy season had moved in. On October 1, 1943 they sent us back to Wiener-Neustadt. This time the Germans were ready for us. This was the worst nightmare of any mission I had ever experienced, and it was one of the group's most costly. On the return, I looked out to our left. **Dick Butler** was sitting out there all alone. Sometime later I asked why he was alone. His response was that all other ships in his formation had been shot down.

Shortly after this difficult mission we were again ordered back to England. By now **Wille Weant** my original co-pilot, **Dave Alexander** (a B-17 transfer) and I were the most senior pilots in the Squadron.



V-Mail Christmas Card.

We had a pause at that time. The weather was bad. We had sustained high losses, and new ideas were being formulated. Most helpful was the arrival of the P-51. Those daredevil flyers accompanied us on missions, going after the Luftwaffe with unbelievable zeal, strafing planes on the ground and shooting them in the air. They were truly our 'little friends.'

Late in December, **George Hulpiau**, my original bombardier; **Bob Peterson**, my original Navigator, and I got back together as a crew. We flew three missions together, all Group Leads. On Dec. 31, 1943, we had a Wing Lead, with **Col. Bill Cameron** as our Command Pilot, to an airfield in southwestern France, **St. Jean D'Angly**. Flying with men of such superior skills was exhilarating.

By this time I had completed my 35 missions. Shortly after the January 11, 1944 mission, I was transferred to operations in Group Headquarters as a Briefing Officer. The balance of my combat missions were flown as a Command Pilot, standing on the flight deck between the pilots.

Early April, **Col. Gibson** gave me the opportunity of a lifetime. He made me Commander of my old Squadron, the 68th. I held that position from April, 1944 until we came home in late May, 1945.

'Being C.O. was a great honor and a tremendous experience. Many of these moments were truly enjoyable; equally many were sad. We lost many, many **splendid** young patriots. Among them was my only brother **Edward** ('Doc'), who with his crew, joined our Squadron in mid July 1944. This was only after permission was granted by higher headquarters. 'Doc' was a good pilot. We had a clear understanding of how we must handle our relationship, and we carefully observed this. As it happened, a German anti-aircraft battery chose his plane to target; he and his entire crew were lost on October 18, 1944 on a mission to Leverkusen, Germany.

"Along with 35,000 **other** 8th and 15th Air Force members, I was sent to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I had 30 days home leave, and was awaiting reassignment to a B-29 training unit in preparation for the assault on Japan. And then the war ended.

"Sioux Falls became a Separation Center. I was given the task of presiding at final ceremonies. Twice a day we processed about 200 veterans, thanked them for their service, gave them their separation documents and saluted each, individually. To me, it was a great honor to thank and salute these young men who had expended their youth and vitality, serving until victory was won."

The population of the base continued to shrink. When Lehnhausen departed for his separation on December 22, 1945, only 125 military personnel remained on base.

He went back to Peoria and his sporting goods sales job. After several weeks, he joined his father in his retail drapery business. Before

long his leadership skills reached into the civic and political life of Peoria. Together, with other returning veterans and interested community leaders, they changed our local government, all for the better. Their war experience taught them that if they were old enough and smart enough to win a war, they were old and smart enough to govern their hometown.

Lehnhausen and his wife Elizabeth energized Peoria, intending that their seven children would be raised in a desirable, secure environment. He served as a member of the Peoria City Council for fourteen years, the last four as mayor (1965-69). Later he was honored to serve in the Cabinet of the Governor of Illinois. This 39 months was an enlightening governmental stint. From there he was invited into the banking world. He retired in 1985 having served as Vice President/Treasurer of First Federal Savings of Peoria for 12-1/2 years. He has been a member of the present Board of the 44th BGVA since its reorganization, six years ago.

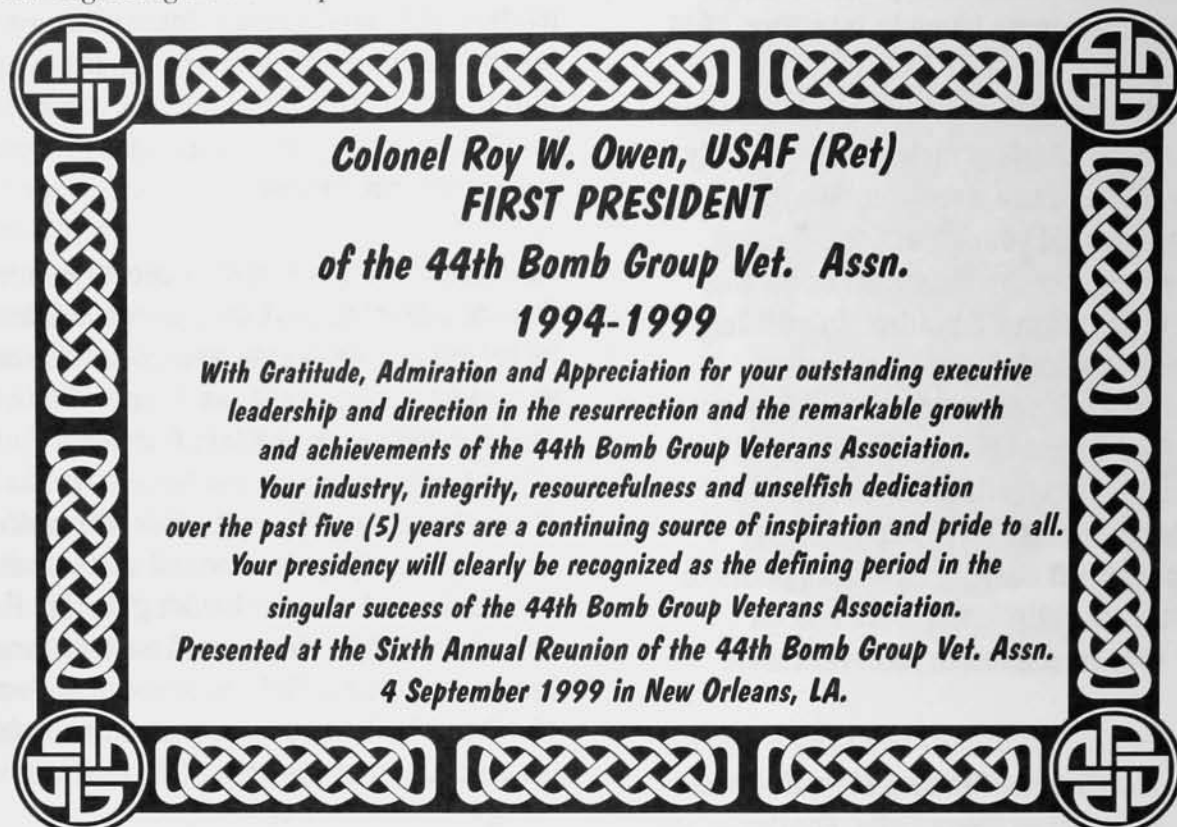


Bob and Liz Lehnhausen.



This Message Delivered in Absentia:

Roy, in behalf of the 44th BGVA, The Board of Directors and the entire membership... we thank you... and... we salute you. As a symbol of our appreciation, affection and admiration, we present to you this Global Clock and Plaque. The engraving on the Plaque reads:



Now we know that behind every 'great guy' is a 'great lady', and that great lady, of course, is your own 'Lolly'. Her love, loyalty and support to Roy reaped many benefits, not only to Roy, but also to all members of this Association.

Lolly, we thank you. We send you our love and our compassion. And, as a token of our appreciation, love and admiration, present you this portable World Clock and Electronic Calculator. The silver inscription reads:



Jerry and Bev Folsom were charged with the task of delivering these gifts to Roy & Lolly. President Mike called on the audience to give a standing ovation to the absent and sorely missed two honorees; and in English style, called for three 'Hip, Hip, Hoorays.'

Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, President Mike concluded the ceremony with "...never in the history of the 44th BGVA have so few given so much to so many for so long."

BEV AND JERRY FOLSOM



November 4, 1999

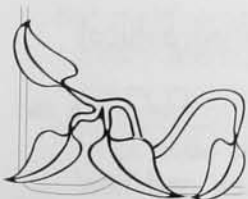
Dear Members of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association,

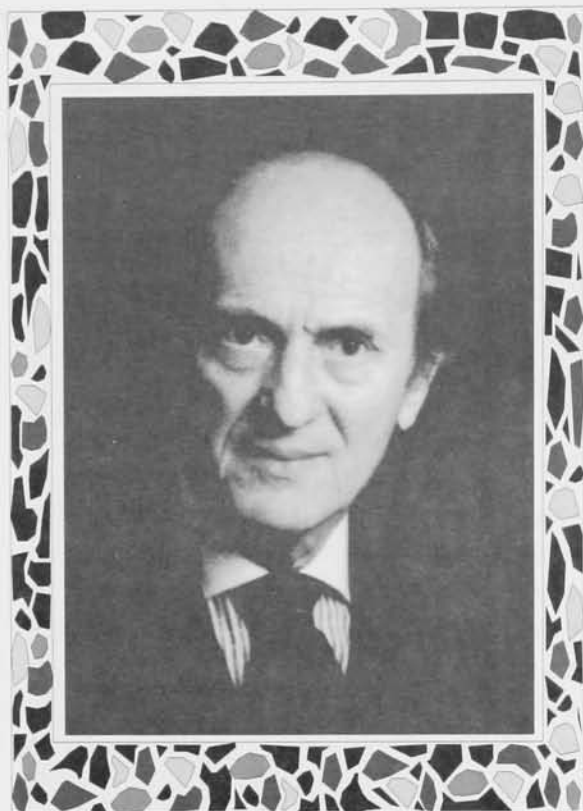
Were it possible, Lolly and I would prefer that we could see each and every one of you, first to express our profound thanks for giving us the great honor of serving as your President and First Lady over the past five years. Next, to thank you all for honoring us with the beautiful World Time Clock and fantastic electronic calculator so stunningly mounted in rare wood. Both with our beloved Flying Eight Ball logo inscribed with your thank you message.

Those wonderful gifts and their message will serve to remind us of the great years we served with you all to see our Bomb Group Association rise from the ashes of the Heritage Memorial Group to new heights. Then to take it's rightful place as the lead Group in all of Second Air Division and arguably of Eighth Air Force. You are the greatest of what Tom Brokaw has called "The Greatest Generation." Serving with you and for you has truly been a labor of love. Lolly and I thank you for the opportunity and we salute you with pride and love.

Sincerely,

Roy





From the Desk of our President

The 6th Annual Reunion of the 44th BGVA is now history, but it will long be remembered as one of, if not the best, Reunion ever. From beginning to end (and what an ending!) it was first class elegance with a program, agenda, food, music, show and amenities that elicited rave notices from all. Mike Yuspeh, Martin Richard, their wives, Rose Fay and Delores, put on a superbly conceived, efficiently conducted and greatly enjoyed Reunion. Our compliments and thanks to them for a 'job well done.' We missed several of our 'regulars', but sincerely hope they will return with us again in San Diego, August 31 through September 3, 2000 for another of Mike's elegant 'extravaganzas.' Roy Owen and Mike have concluded arrangements with an elegant five star hotel from the Westin Hotel chain where the amenities are equally elegant as those we enjoyed at the Hilton in New Orleans. Do not miss this one in San Diego. We have a program planned that will please our most discriminating members.

On the 'business' side, we approved a budget for the year 2000 in the amount of \$30,000, with expenses totalling \$27,320, reflecting an operating surplus of \$2,680. In sum, we continue to operate in the black. I am pleased to report also, that the Association has paid all outstanding bills, including the balance of

\$5,887 to Computer Generated Data Inc. With our Treasurer, Jerry Folsom, I am instituting certain cost control measures and procedures to insure compliance with our constitution and by-laws, to keep a lid on our expenditures.

Your Board and I will introduce, subject to your approval, changes in the structure of the Board of Directors, to reduce the number from the present eleven to nine. These steps will enable us to operate with greater efficiency and economy. Of course, we have come a long way since our 'resurrection' six years ago in Colorado Springs; but we still have a long way to go. This is the way we have chosen to go:

COURSE #1. Complete the 44th BGVA Military History Program.

(This is a program divided into three phases)

Phase I. Input Archival/Historical Data. (Virtually completed.)

8500 Sorties and the 44th "Roll of Honor" included.

Phase II. Input Personal Biographical Data. (Now in Process.)

All members are encouraged to complete and submit their personal 'bios' as soon as possible, along with their 'then' and 'now'

photographs. Crew photos are also solicited. This is the segment that actually provides the 'personalization' and 'real life' to our data. This is not so much for our benefit, but more for benefit of our children and their children, historians, researchers, teachers, students from all over the world, who will be able to access this vital information via their personal computers and/or the Internet. One of the greatest challenges of this phase will be the research, contacts, compilation and submission of data on these members of the 44th BG who made the supreme sacrifice during the great conflict, as well as those who have left us after surviving WWII. We will need the assistance and cooperation of all to accomplish this just and final mission. Today the 44th BGVA is the first B-24 to computerize its history and archival data into an electronic database and is today also computerizing the personal biographies of its living and deceased members.

Phase III. Enhancement, Expansion, Embellishment. (Under Active Consideration.)

This phase includes the vast amount of personal and historical data in the possession of Will Lundy, Art Hand, Norm Kieffer, Tom Shepherd, Steve Adams and others. It includes letters, diaries, reports, orders, photos, news articles, etc. from our 44th BG personnel, as well as from people on the continent who witnessed our raids, crashes, survivals, rescues and escapes. We are in the process of determining the costs that will be involved and deciding how much of these records will be included in the data bank.

COURSE #2. Increase 44th BGVA Membership.

As our ranks get progressively thinner, it is imperative that we seek to increase our membership through innovative ways. As a starter, I propose we seek a 10% increase in our membership through the following ways:

- Every Member Get A Member.
- Every member enrolling one of their children/grandchildren as members.

- The Board of Directors continue efforts to enroll members from the 44th Strategic Missile Wing, the 3rd Strategic Air Depot Group and/or other attached assignee units to the 44th BG.

COURSE #3. Complete Ongoing Projects.

- The Ploesti Diorama at the "Mighty 8th Air Force Museum" in Savannah - Install hand rails and voice-over. Today, according to the Museum's curator, this diorama is the #1 attraction at the Museum.
- Barksdale B-24 - Replace missing nacelle covers and repaint in 44th Bomb Group Markings.
- Cianci Story - refine script and seek out interested film/TV producers/directors to whom the 44th BGVA would sell/lease the rights for production.

COURSE #4. Increase 44th BGVA Financial Resources.

As most of you probably know, a major portion of our income is generated from our Annual and Life Memberships, and this income barely covers our annual operating expenses. Therefore, to fund the Master Data Plan, (Phases II and III) alone, plus the ongoing projects will require that new and innovative measures be conceived and developed. When the Board and I determine these financial goals, we will select and come to you with these revenue enhancing ideas among which are the following:

- Endowments • Appeals • Bequests
- Donations • Fund Drives • Institutional Solicitation

You will be kept informed about development in this critical area.

FINAL THOUGHT:

"Do not let impossibilities intimidate you; do let possibilities motivate you."



Miscellanea:

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From the Editor

Did you ever think that someday someone would declare that the gas chambers of Auswich and Dachau were fictional?

Did you ever think that the day would come when some American scholars would criticize our leaders for dropping the A-Bomb? (Don't forget—it saved a million lives.)

Did you ever think that the Paris Museum would hide the fact that the city was liberated by American troops? Charles DeGaulle showed us his ingratitude by that gesture, and his followers permitted it. Fortunately, many, many Frenchmen know the truth.

Did you ever think that Axis Sally and a member of the German SS would draw sympathy? Apparently there are those in Europe who are promoting such thoughts! A writer from Belgium, Luc Dewez, answered that E-mail misinformation. He remembered that his parents fought in the Belgium Resistance. He remembered how the people in conquered nations were treated by the Germans, and he answered the claims to a wide audience via the Internet. Apparently all over the world, people are trying to re-write history. Our thanks to those who are working to set the record straight.

All of this is happening. Unless those who served in the war document their stories, WWII will be rewritten untruthfully. **Do your personal Database.** You owe it to yourself and those who are buried in Cambridge, Ardennes, Normandy and elsewhere, to record the truth and make it indisputable.

Please direct questions on membership, address changes, payments, donations, deaths, etc. to:
44th BGVA • P.O. Box 712287
Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287

AN AMERICAN MUSEUM IN TURKEY

From Bill Cameron came the news that Turkey has an American Museum in Istanbul, and parts of a *Liberator* are on display. *HADLEY'S HAREM* crashed in the Mediterranean Sea following the *Ploesti* Raid. According to Cameron, museum curators have restored the nose section, and are planning on raising the rest of the wreckage and restoring it.

Ploesti is forever in our memories, and continues to make news. In absentia, the pilot of *HADLEY'S HAREM*, 1st Lt. Gilbert B. Hadley was recently awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and WWII 50th Anniversary Victory Commemorative Medal. His brother Bill of Bartlesville, Oklahoma accepted the medal from the U.S. Army, fifty-four years after the plane went down.

Bill Cameron describes the *RAHMI M. KOC* as a first class museum, which any Istanbul taxi driver can find. Bill has a special interest in that memento of the war. He was on that same raid!



According to Jerry Folsom who snapped the photograph, the identity of the person climbing out of the pond at the 44th Bomb Group's 200th Mission Party was none other than General Johnson. The scene was at the dingy pond at the 506 Squadron.

Think about this:

Lt. Col. **Robert Dubowsky**, (Ret.) 66th Sq., has an interesting idea: Preserve the songs that were sung during those dark and dashing days of the War. He needs lyrics to the tunes that everybody sang, such as "I bombed Cologne," to the tune of "I'll Walk Alone." He'll put them on tape, and make them available to anyone on request. They were a part of the reality of war. Put on your thinking caps, fellows, and drop Dubowsky a line: 650 Grant Court, Satellite Beach, FL 32937. Tel. (407) 773-6604, E-Mail: RDVB@aol.com.

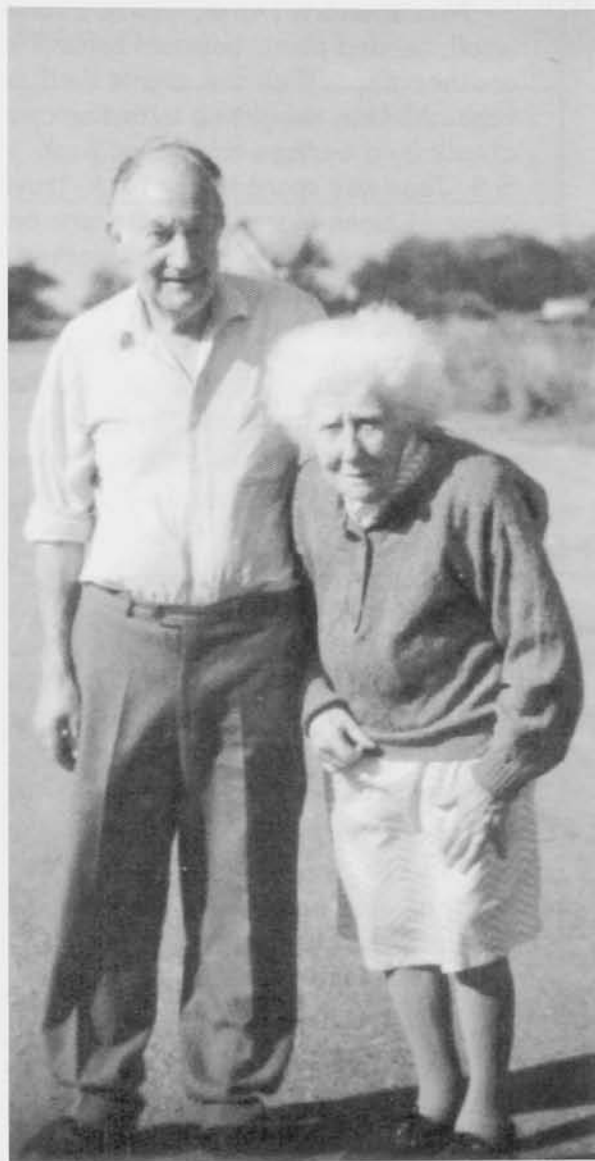
Word from England:

The Eastern Daily Press reported that the first major building work started in August in Norwich for the library, multi-media auditorium, business and teaming center, tourist & visitor site, as well as cafes, restaurants and below-ground parking. This will house the 2nd Air Division's American Room. **Will and Irene Lundy** visited the site several months ago, and predict that a splendid edifice will arise in the coming year.

Nigel Wright, who ran the Arrow Air Services and the Arrow Air Center at Shipdham Airfield died on May 12. Wright and his wife had dedicated a museum to the 44th BG. His death spelled the end of that era. Memorabilia was preserved by our U. K. Representative, **Steve Adams**.

In Hingham, a few miles southeast of the airfield, the city celebrated the "The American Connection," the departure of one of their citizens to the New World. Samuel Lincoln changed the course of history, when he set forth. His great, great, great, great, grandson was The Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln.

Brian Peel from Norfolk continues to extend good wishes to the Americans he remembers from his childhood during the war years. He recently wrote, "Your boys did a lot for us during the war; and as I have grown up, I can see we would not be here today if it were not for the Americans." He enclosed a picture of himself and his 90 year old mother, who did the laundry for many of the crews at Shipdham.



Coming Attractions:

*The rise of **Edward K. Mikolaski** to the Presidency of the 44th BGVA.*

*The life and times of **Harry Reasoner**.*

***Charles Simpson** and the Missileers.*



QUEEN MARY REVISITED

Nick Garza of the 506 Ordinance boarded the Queen Mary at the Southampton docks on October 10, 1945 and was assigned to sleep on the Promenade deck. He was in awe of the size of the Queen, a floating city. The five day trip was joyous—the war was over. There was music, live shows and good food. He was discharged October 16 from Ft. Bliss, Texas and surprised his parents at 4:00 A.M. when he arrived in San Antonio. Nick left his British wife, Sarah Ann Sears, behind. They were separated for a long six months, but when Sarah came to America, it was via the Queen Mary. Their marriage blessed them with four girls, one boy, five granddaughters and a grandson.

Nick's return trip was quite a variation from going over on the S.S. Jean. That boat was small, needed paint, bounced around in the high winds and waves; and nearly collided with another ship. Then the engine died, and the S.S. Jean had to separate from the convoy for repairs. They caught up with the convoy in three hours, but soon found themselves under attack by a German submarine pack. More than 30 ships went down around them, but the S.S. Jean was spared. For Nick, traveling to war was a fearsome experience. Fortunately, aboard Queen Mary, life was more peaceful and luxurious.

The Queen Mary has transported the rich and famous, financiers of the world, barons of industry, dukes and duchesses; but no group more important than the victorious American GI's.

QUEEN MARY...

'Buck' Burton sent me a copy of an Associated Press report of the Queen Mary arriving with 14,526 GI's aboard, June 21, 1945. On board were general hospital units and bombardment groups, including his late father, Robert E. Burton.

Buck remembers his father's description of his delight of getting a drink of milk. He had not had any in the three years he was in England.



Sgt. George Apgar (left), Dover, and Cpl. Harold Gondrez, Newark, shake hands through portholes as ship docks.

More Miscellanea

60th Anniversary Celebration for the Liberator will be held in San Diego, December 9-12, 1999, hosted by the B-24 Groups Memorial. On December 29, 1939 the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation's staged the maiden flight of the XB24, and nine months later the Army signed the contract for its construction in five different cities.

Registration is \$125 per person. Payment is to Dick Baynes, 71 Nighthawk, Irvine, CA 92604-3683. Tel. (949) 552-3890. Hotel reservations are at the Town and Country Hotel, 500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108. Tel. (800) 772-8527 or (619) 291-7131.

Please direct questions on membership, address changes, payments, donations, deaths, etc. to:
44th BGVA, P.O. Box 712287, Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287.



From Jerry Folsom, Treasurer:

- Look for your renewal notices. They have been mailed.
- Please let Jerry know of address changes; the post office is no longer forwarding mail.
- Lithographs of the Shipdham Control Tower are still available for \$32⁵⁰.
- The 1999 Membership Roster has been completed. The price is \$7⁵⁰, which includes postage.
- Caps and shirts are no longer available. We had a sell-out in New Orleans.



CONGRATULATIONS are in order to Mike Yupseh and his volunteers who put together our recent 44th BGVA reunion in New Orleans. Just a FANTASTIC reunion with a great hotel, food, hospitality room, various tours of New Orleans, and great Squadron and Group dinners. Mike saved the best for last — a fabulous Mardi-Gras masquerade party on Sunday evening. He went all out to provide us with some of the best music (40's style) we have heard in some time. How nice of the "Andrew Sisters" to sing for us. If it wasn't them, then they were the next best thing. Let's not forget the very nice gifts to each of us attending, including some really great T-shirts and Tote Bags (stuffed with New Orleans mementos) both emblazoned with the 8 Ball Emblem.

For those of you unable to attend this function, you missed the premier reunion of the past six years. I don't know how Mike will be able to top this next year in San Diego, but we will be there for sure to find out. I know I speak for all the membership who partook of this great reunion, in thanking Mike for all his hard work throughout this past year.



Now it's on to San Diego in 2000.

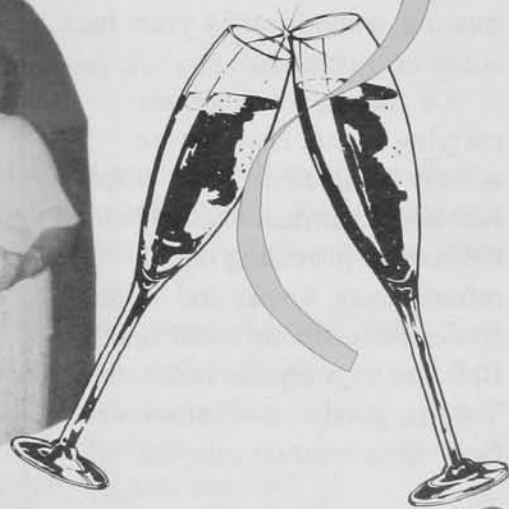
Larry & Georgia Ann Herpel, 44th BGVA



Mardi



GRAS!



NEW ORLEANS AT ITS BEST



The band played and the 44th Bomb Group dipped and swirled, delighted to be hearing the songs

that they sang a half century ago. The ball was a romping, stamping good time for all, inspiring President Mike Mikoloski to proclaim that nobody, but nobody, could party like the 44th BGVA.

Mike Yuspeh gave General John Gibson the keys to the



city, with extra keys for President Mike and Historian Will Lundy. The candlelight ceremony was awesome—a serious moment to remember those who were missing, some from 54 years back, some very recently.

Of course, when serious partying began, chores were already completed. Mike Yuspeh, Reunion Chairman hustled behind the scenes, providing liquid refreshments, snacks and working space so registrants could find 8-Ball tote bags replete with treats, T-shirts, goodies and information. Golf shirts went on sale, and it

was a sell-out. Treasurer Jerry Folsom stood by, collecting dues; and a band of organized helpers managed a busy scene.



Back in the corner of the hospitality room, small groups gathered around Arlo Bartsch's computer. From the

Database he could pull up crews, planes, individuals and missions, displaying it on the screen, and giving everyone a chance to find out what happened to this plane or that buddy. Those who had completed their personal bios could find their youthful picture and a recent one in full color. On a wide screen, it was impressive.

Working his way through a hefty agenda, President Mikoloski updated the group on the financial stability of the BG, while proceeding with a very expensive undertaking the Database. Funding for that was a



transfer from Will Lundy's tower project. Mikoloski reminded the members that only here in this program can the full account of

the group's history be preserved centuries into the future.

Memberships became a universal assignment. "Enroll kids and grand kids," the President entreated. "Time is running out. Already the BG has attracted some members from the Strategic Missile Wing, and they are so

welcome." Wiley Noble from the 3rd Strategic Air Depot Association was present, and his group was officially invited into the 44th. "There is no doubt, twenty years from now the 44th BGVA will have new faces, but the legend will be preserved," President Mike reminded everyone.

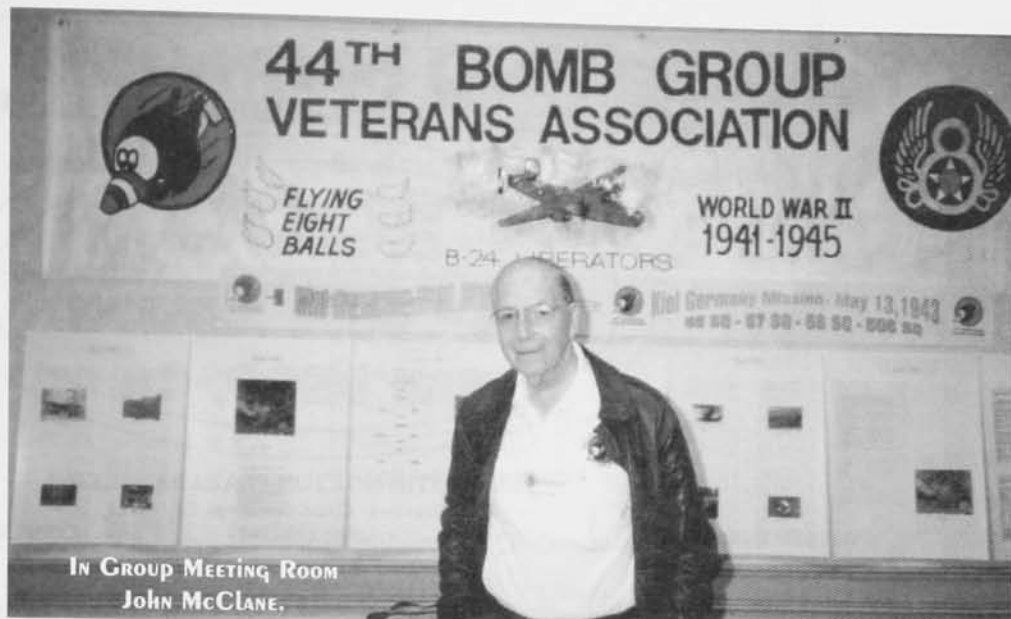
Mikoloski named one of the BG's most popular and admired gentleman, General Gibson, President Emeritus of the BG. With his usual enthusiasm and vigor, 'Jack' and his wife Ruth came to the Reunion to share the joy of reminiscing with old buddies.

The Masquerade Ball was like a trip to the Mardi Gras, without the inconvenience of crowds. Feathered masks, a female impersonator, headless man, beggar, pirate, southern belle, jester; even a bag lady showed up to dance to the music of the students from Tulane University.



Veterans and spouses bobbed to tunes like *I've Got You Under My Skin* and *Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine*. Many times the three song-stresses sounded like the Andrew Sisters. If anyone's joints were arthritic, they certainly loosened up on the dance floor. Glenn Miller's *In The Mood* brought out the jitterbugs, and the *Pennsylvania Polka* could still inspire dedicated foot stamping.

It was a bewitching night.



MEN'S LUNCHEON: L TO R: JOHN McCLANE, Dick BUTLER, Will LUNDY, JOE MILLINER.



MEN'S LUNCHEON: CHARLES HUGHES, Bill CAMERON, BOB LEHNHAUSEN, IVO DIPIERO



PHOTO LEFT:
MARY AND LEE
ASTON.



PHOTO RIGHT:
BANQUET-SARA AND TOM
PARSONS, JOHN AND
DORIS McCLANE.

Mike Yuspeh summed it up correctly when he said, "Only in New Orleans can we hold this kind of party."

Crash Survivors Recognized

Seven members of the Passion Pit Bomber showed up in New Orleans and made headlines in the Times-Picayune. Martin Richard, Engineering Gunner; Darrel Larsen, Gunner; Kenneth Beckwith, Radio Operator; Jack Bertoli, Navigator; John Milliken, Pilot; Morris Larkin, Tail Gunner; and Irwin Stovroff, Bombardier came together for the first time since their plane went down near Cherbourg.

The awesome adventure of a mission that was meant to be a 'milk run' was recaptured in a front page article that gathered information from the seven crewmen who survived the crash, only to become POWs.

Thanks to all the members who sent me pictures of the Reunion.
My faithful camera died, and a host of volunteer photographers stepped forward.



2000

44TH BGVA REUNION SAN DIEGO, CA

THE WESTIN HORTON PLAZA SAN DIEGO

910 Broadway Circle, San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 239-2200

DATE OF FAX: _____

CONFIRMATION # _____

HOTEL FAX RESERVATION FORM
FAX NUMBER (619) 239-1730

GROUP NAME: **44th Bomb Group-National Reunion**

MEETING NAME: **44th Bomb Group-National Reunion**

MEETING DATES: **August 31, 2000 - September 4, 2000** Requests Must Be Received By: **August 1, 2000**

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Additional Person In Room: Yes: _____ No: _____

Name of Additional Person: _____

(One Form per room, PLEASE)

CHECK IN TIME: 4:00PM CHECK OUT TIME: 12NOON

Accommodations may not be available if arrival time is prior to 4:00 pm. For revisions or cancellations please call: (800) 6WESTIN.

RATES

Single(s)	1 person	\$95.00
Double(s)	2 persons - 1 bed	\$95.00
Double(s)	2 persons - 2 beds	\$95.00

____ REQUEST NON-SMOKING ROOM

____ REQUEST ACCESSIBLE ROOM

____ REQUEST ROLLAWAY _____ CRIB _____

____ REQUEST WRITTEN CONFIRMATION SENT TO ABOVE ADDRESS

Reservation forms received beyond the cutoff date listed above are subject to space and rate availability. If the room type requested is not available, the next available room type will be assigned. If your group has a range of rates and the rate category requested has been filled, then the next available rate will apply. San Diego's transient occupancy tax will apply to the above room rate. Currently the rate is 10.5%. Departure dates are confirmed at check-in. Departures prior to this date will result in a \$50.00 departure fee.

Reservations must be guaranteed by the first night's room deposit or an accepted credit card number and signature.
Please guarantee my reservation with (check one):

____ First night's deposit (REC'D WITHIN 4 DAYS)

____ Credit card (American Express, Diner's Club, En Route, JCB, Visa, Mastercard or Discover) - Circle One.

Credit Card Number _____

Name on Card _____

Expiration Date _____

Checks should be sent to (along with a copy of this form):
The Westin Horton Plaza San Diego
910 Broadway Circle
San Diego, CA 92101

I will be charged one night's room and tax which will be deducted from my deposit or billed through my credit card in the event I cancel within 48 hours of my arrival. I may cancel my reservations without penalty prior to 48 hours of my arrival.

Signature

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e-mail: s.p.adams@btinternet.com

ASSOCIATION MAILING ADDRESS:
44th BGVA
P.O. Box 712287
Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287





WILL SEZ

I have just finished compiling the *Folded Wings* data for this issue. I have had a very difficult time putting it together. It has too many men involved and is very difficult to locate enough and correct data about our fine men. Too, I have overheard several comments at the reunion concerning who wrote it, who should be contacted to correct or add to these accounts. I do make mistakes.

So I would like to advise everyone that the culprit is me – I have been writing it for several years, perhaps more. I get the source data from all

sources, from Jerry, from Ruth, from Mike, and many times from the next of kin or in response to letters that I have written to members. Too, Art Hand often comes up with the names of deceased in his valuable work to locate our long “lost” members.

When deadline approaches for the next *8 Ball Tails*, I attempt to get to

work on them, do my best to try to find as much appropriate data about each of these members as I can. To do this, it often requires considerable searching into as many sources as I have accumulated over these many years. All too often, I come up empty or find too little to do justice to the memory of that member, so it is quite frustrating. Roy Owen, our past Prez, often reminded me that we must do as much as possible to do justice to the memory of our members.

One thing that we have done lately is to adopt Arlo Bartsch's computer program and have entered nearly all of our 8500 individual sortie reports. Here is an excellent source of missions flown, wounded,

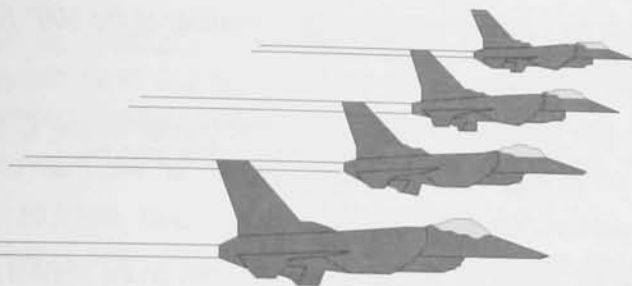
POW for our combat personnel that I have used in the past two issues. However, my CD at this time has not been updated to add over 200 sorties for the December 1944 period. Consequently, I could not come up with exact total of missions flown for the men who flew missions during this period. Arlo has finished entering these sorties so my disk will be updated as soon as possible; and it will be more accurate in the future.

If you fine people out there will take the time necessary to complete YOUR OWN BIO form and/or forms for your crew buddies, we could build up our computer data on BOTH our combat personnel and ALL OTHERS. Our ground echelon people, as well as our support organizations, must give me, us more data about YOU. We or I have but very little data in the official records that I've collected for the past 25 years. I have nothing on the 464th Sub-depot personnel, 806 Chemical, 18th Weather, Quartermaster, 2033 Engineering, etc. except what you have sent to me via your letters! YOUR personal bios can be an excellent source for our permanent records that will go into our computer disk and be available to everyone well into the next millennium. This old man will be gratefully happy for all the help you can give me! HEAR?

Will Lundy

Folded Wings

Compiled by
Will Lundy



ANDREOTTA, JOSEPH A. 8/5/99 67th Sq. 12093071 Radio Operator on Raymond Bethel's crew. He was born on 07/09/18 and Internment was in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, Florida. The Bethel crew flew 15 missions with the 489th BG, 844th BS prior to transfer to the 44th BG on 18 November 1944. Then Joseph flew his remaining tour of missions from 21 November 1944 to 4 March, 1945.

BENNETT, GEORGE F. DATE ? Retired former Commander of Strategic Missile Wing. No other data is available at this time.

BRISENDINE, NED H. Date ? 506 Sqdn. Ground Personnel

BURTON, ROBERT E. 3/4/90 68th & 506th 13042716 Robert was a member of the original compliment of the 68th Sq. that went to England on the HMS QUEEN MARY in Sept. 1942. He was an Aircraft Mechanic. During this period in England he serviced ten airplanes including MARGARET ANN of the 68th and ARIES or RAM IT – DAM IT and TINKER BELLE of the 506th. During the period that the 44th BG was in Africa (summer, 1943) Robert was temporarily assigned to the 479th Anti-submarine Sq. at Newquay and St. Eval in Cornwall. In the Spring of 1944, he was transferred from the 68th to the 506th Sq. He returned to the States on the same HMS QUEEN MARY in June of 1945. "Bob" lived his entire life in the Washington, D.C. area where, with his wife Mildred, he raised a family of seven children and worked in the landscape business. Eventually he ran his own company.

CANTWELL, LAWRENCE Date ? 66th Sq. 16069865. He served as the Radio Operator on the original Shelby L. Irby crew that picked up HELEN B. HAPPY in early Spring and flew it alone over to England. His first mission with the Irby crew was on 6 March 1943 though he was an original member of the H.A. LASCO crew, flew his first mission with them on 29 May 1943 and several more in early July. Amoebic Dysentery prevented him from flying with them on the Ploesti mission of 1 August 1943 when that crew was lost; so he then had to fly with several other crews until his tour of duty, 30 missions, was completed.

CARLBERG, BERTIL 11 Sept. 1999 67th Sq. 0- "Bert" was the original Navigator on the L.J. Crandell crew; flew with them on their first mission on 1 January 1945, and several others up until 18 March when he was with the E.P. Reynolds crew. On 1 March the Crandell's crew were forced to bail out over France when their aircraft ran out of fuel. Then Crandell's crew was lost on 24 March (Bert was not with them), so he completed his remaining missions with the Reynold's crew. He was the only member of the original Crandell to survive.

CARPENTER, DALE H. 25 December 1985. Dale served with the 464th Sub-depot on the base at Shipdham. His wife, BETTYE, stated that he died from cancer.

CARSON, HERBERT D. Jr. 12/3/98 67th Sq. 34258795 Herbert was an original member of the L.C. Smith crew that arrived in north Africa shortly before the Ploesti mission. His pilot, L.C. SMITH was lost on the 16 August 43 mission while flying with another crew, so Herbert was forced to fly mostly as a spare after that, the SMITH crew having been broken up. He was with the D. Brown, Griffith and Thames crews, completing his tour of duty on 24 February 1944. Though he was a qualified Engineer, his last one was flown as a waist gunner.



CAULFIELD, JAMES B. 2/3/98 506th Sq. James was an original member of the 506th Sq, arrived in England in March, 1943. He served as a ground personnel.

CHAGARIS, GEORGE J. Feb. 1987 67th Sq. George was a right waist gunner on the C. C. Spagnola crew that trained in Casper, Wy. Their first mission was on 26 August 1944 and George went on with them completing his tour of 35 missions on 6 February 1945.

DOBBS, STERLING L. June, 1999 68th Sq. 0-391085 Sterling was the co-pilot on the Richard Donald crew which joined the Squadron on 2 June 1944. First mission was flown on 7 June, promoted to 1st Pilot in August. He eventually completed 35 missions with his last three being flown as a Command Pilot. On 26 May, 1945 he piloted aircraft #44-42189 homeward bound on the first leg of that journey to the U.S.

DURRETT, PAUL J. 1972 506th Sq. 0-697405 Paul completed his pilot training and his crew started at Lincoln, NE., picked up a new B-24, flew it to northern Ireland. They flew their first mission on 6 August 1944, eventually completing their tour of duty with a total of 35 on 31 December 1944.

ELLIS, LEONARD "Len" W. 2 September 1999 67th Sq. 13046270 "Len" was a member of the Ground echelon that went to England on the HMS QUEEN MARY, departing New York Harbor on Sept. 5th, 1942, arriving in Scotland on 11 Sept. He was an Aircraft Mechanic, became a member of the R.D. Davis crew in the Engineering Section. Later, he transferred from that crew, but records do not show his activities afterwards.

FIELDS, LEE H. 8 Oct. 1987 66th Sq. 19080515 Lee was a Belly Gunner on the H. E. Etheridge crew, flew his first mission on 30 January 1944 and three more to 20 February 1944. On 24 February, the Etheridge crew was lost but he did not fly it. On 27 March 1944, Lee filled in as a gunner on R. E. Harleman's crew, only to be shot down on his first mission with them. Lee was wounded, taken prisoner and later repatriated. He lived exactly 40 years after his discharge. He is buried in Morris Hill Cemetery, Field of Honor, Boise, Idaho.

FRAZIER, JOHN S. June, 1999 66th Sq. 0-927690 John was a Bombardier on the W. Roger's crew that had a very short time with the 44th BG. On 4 December 1944, second mission for the pilot and 1st for the other members, they were shot down, seven survived to become POWs. John flew this mission as a Right Waist Gunner as the mission did not require a bombardier, with the waist gunner not flying. John was knocked unconscious upon contact with the ground, was captured before regaining consciousness. Was a POW at Stalag Luft 1 at Barth. Their story is in AMERICAN DIARIES OF WW #2, pages 381 plus.

GUSTAFSON, ROBERT E. Date ? 66th Sq. Robert served as a gunner on the R. R. Van Valer crew that arrived at Shipdham on 5 March 1945. They flew three missions – 21 March, 16 April and 18 April, 1945 prior to the end of hostilities in this Theatre. Their aircraft was BULL OF THE WOODS.

GILBERT, LLOYD W. Date ? 68th Sq. 34708051 He served as a Waist Gunner on the R. I. Keller crew. This crew joined the 68th Sq. on 2 June 1944, flew their first mission on the 12th of June, with three more in quick succession. On 20 June, their fourth, they were badly damaged, landed in Sweden to be interned. Nine of the crew returned to base on 6 November 1944, including Lloyd.

KILL, JOSEPH F. 20 May 1999 66th Sq. 0-735397 Joseph was a co-pilot on the H. A. LASCO crew that arrived in England in May, 1943 after flying the southern route. They crashed in Casablanca, with a month's delay for repairs. Then crashed again at an R.A.F. field in a fog. Their first mission was on 5 July, out of Africa, and Joseph flew five missions prior to 1 Aug 1943. They were shot down on this Ploesti mission, badly injured and Joseph became a POW, along with his pilot and others from their crew. He was buried at Arlington Cemetery with full Military Honors.

KREBS, ANDREW J. 10 June 1999 68th Sq. 0-699738 Andrew was a co-pilot on the W. H. Barry crew which joined this Squadron on 15 March 1944. Eight days later they crashed on take-off, no serious injuries. For most of the crew, 8 April was their first mission. Lt. Krebs and seven of his crew mates became POWs.



LaPORTE, CLARENCE B. Date ? 66th Sq. Clarence was a Nose Turret gunner/Toggler on the R. R. Van Valer crew. This crew arrived in Shipdham on 5 March 1945 and quickly flew their first mission on 21 March. They managed to fly three more in April before the secession of hostilities on 8 May 1945. Both Clarence and Robert Gustafson (above) were crew mates. Clarence was discharged at Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, MS.

LEVINSON, SAM E. 1986 67th Sq. 0-795273 Sam flew his first mission as a Navigator on the W. A. Roach crew on 4 May, 1943, then second one on 17 May with the W. Brandon crew. Later that month he joined the W. Weaver crew, flew another mission out of England and then accompanied them to north Africa, where he flew seven more in July. On 17 July he temporarily replaced Lt. Sorenson as Navigator on the C. S. Griffin crew which was shot down near Naples, Italy. Sam was captured, became a POW.

LINDSEY, ROBERT D. or O. 23 March 1992 34613746. Webb Todd's 68th Sq. History book reported that Robert was transferred to the 66th Squadron on 6 August 1944. Have been unable to located any data about him in the 66th Squadron records.

MacCAMMOND, JAMES A. 11/1998 11040993 James joined the 68th Squadron on August 3, 1942, travelled to England via the HMS QUEEN MARY September 5 to 11 with the 44th BG ground echelon. In early 1943, he volunteered for combat duties, flew his first mission as a gunner on the T. R. Cramer crew. On 14 May 1943, he was a gunner on the M.C. Howell crew that was shot down, was one of the eight crew members that became POWs.

McCULLOUGH, HAL 14 February 1999 506th Sq. Hal was a co-pilot on the Erland J. Jacobson crew that arrived in Shipdham on 1 February, 1945. He completed 14 missions, the first on 25 Feb. 45 and the last one on 25 April.

MANLEY, ROBERT H. 1998 68th Sq. Aircraft Mechanic. Returned to U.S. on HMS QUEEN MARY in June, 1945.

MASSARO, ANGELO S. 2/1959 67th Sq. S/Sgt. Angelo was a gunner on the M. D. Berger crew that was assigned to the 67th Sq. on 4 February 1945. He flew 14 missions with them, first one being on 8 March and the last one was 25 April 1945. In this period he was a ball turret gunner, nose turret gunner and waist guns.

MINDER, WILLIAM H. Date ? 66th Sq. 0-727367 Lt. Minder, a Bombardier, was an original member of the R. J. Abernethy crew which flew to England in the September/October period of 1942. William's first official mission was 12 December 1942 with Abernethy. During his tour of 25 missions, he also flew with several 66th Sq. pilots including William Brandon and Robert Kolliner. He completed his tour of duty on 13 July 1943.

OBUS, LOUIS J. 1988 67th Sq. 0-701244 Lt. Obus was a Bombardier for the E. N. Starkey crew that was assigned to the 67th Sq. on 3 May 1944. Their first mission was 23 May and they quickly completed 31 missions on 3 August 1944. No crew member was wounded during their tour. Louis remained in service, was a career officer.

PUCKET, HAROLD E. Date? 68th Sq. 36294272 Harold was gunner on the R. I. Keller crew that joined the 68th Squadron on 2 June, 1944. Their first mission was dated 12 June, with three more occurring rapidly. On June 20, their last, their aircraft suffered severe mechanical difficulties and they were forced to make an emergency landing in Sweden, were interned for several months.

ROUGHAN, FRED 1997 506th Sq. No records can be located.

RUSSELL, John F. 1997 67th Sq. 36377085 John was a gunner on the J. E. Hill crew that was assigned to the 67th Sq. shortly before the air echelon departed for north Africa in June, 1943. Their first mission was on 2 July with five additional ones completed in that month. On 1 August, Ploesti, their plane barely returned to base. The same was true with the 1 October 43 mission to Austria. John completed his tour of duty with 25 missions, the last being 15 March 1944 while with the K. Cookus crew. His position normally was a waist gunner.

SALVATORE, MICHAEL R. 8/96 506/66th Sqdns. T-125554 (0-?????) Michael was a Bombardier for the J. N. Williams crew that was transferred to the 66th Sq. from the 506th Sq. on 13 August, 1944. Michael's first of 30(?) missions occurred on 1 August 1944, with the 30th being on 30 December 1944. The last several missions were flown as a PFF crew and leads for several other bomber groups. Michael was promoted to a 1st Lt. (Some Dec. 1944 mission records were not available.)

SCOTT, ROBERT Date? Mail returned. Records cannot be found that will identify Robert in any Squadron. He flew no missions??

SHANLEY, TYRUS J. 11/25/98 Incorrectly reported in Spring, 1999 as Stanley. To correct: 68th Sq. 17110585 Tyrus was an original member on Lt. H. Morrison's crew. They were assigned first to the 66th Sq. on 28 February, 1944; transferred to the 68th Sq. on 20 April. His crew flew the first D-Day mission in PATSY ANN II as Deputy Lead of the 1st Sq. led by Capt. C. Armstrong. At 0553 hour the squadron dropped their bombs on St. Laurent sur Mer, Omaha Beach. His last mission with Lt. Morrison was 25 June 1944, then he finished out his last five missions with various pilots. He completed a total of 31 missions.



SHANNON, EUNICE M. 20 June 99 68th Sq. 0-665349 Lt. Shannon, a 1st pilot, and crew joined the 68th Sq. on 17 June, 1943 shortly before the crews departed for north Africa and the Ploesti attack. He flew his first of 10 missions on 6 July. He and his crew were awarded the DFC medal for their attack on the Ploesti Oil Fields, made it safely back to Benina base in NATCHEZ BELLE. On 16 Aug 1943, his plane was shot down after attacking Foggia, Italy, with Eunice and six of his crew becoming POWs.

THOMPSON, CLARENCE W. 20 January 1999 68th Sq. 0-1297615 Lt. Thompson, a Navigator, was a member of the R. G. Erikson crew that joined the 68th Sq. on 25 October 1944. They flew their first mission on 5 November, 1944. Clarence had a total of 31(?) missions to his credit after they completed the last mission of the war on 25 April, 1945. They flew Louisiana Belle, 42-50806 E home on 26 May, 1945.

TRAGESER, WILLIAM J. Jr. 18 June 1999 68th Sq. 0-718459 William was a Navigator on the R. M. Boggs' crew that joined the 68th Sq. on 3 August 1944. This crew flew their first mission on 26 August 1944. After many missions, the crew spent a week in a Rest Home over Christmas. William completed 28 (?) missions, but flew his last mission with the J. W. Vaughn crew. The crew returned to the U.S. on 28 May, 1945 in aircraft #42-52643 JOSE CARIOCA.

TRUSLOW, WALLACE B. Jr. 17 June 1999 506th Sq. 19082103 "Wally" was a gunner on the E. J. Burn's crew. He had been a college student when he enlisted on 1 April 1942 in Los Angeles, CA. The Burns crew flew their first mission on 26 August 1944, with Wally completing his tour of duty of 30 (?) official missions on 20 April, 1945. On his mission to Cologne, Germany on 28 March 1945, he was wounded by a .30 caliber bullet, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart medal by Col. McAtee. Wally was discharged on 27 July 1945 at Camp Beale, CA.

WILLEMS, FRANK "Bud" J. 5/25/99 68th Sq. 16050809 Bud was an original gunner on the Lt. Morrison crew that was first assigned to the 66th Squadron on 28 February 1944; then later (20 April 44) transferred to the 68th Sq. He and his crew flew the first mission on D-Day, 6 June 44. Their aircraft was PATSY ANN II (42-100170 G), was Deputy Lead of the Squadron, bombed at 0553 hour on Target E, St. Laurent-sur-Mer. Bud was credited for 33 missions but was wounded when his crew (J.A. Wilson, pilot, who replaced Morrison) was shot down in PATSY ANN II on 7 July 1944 when he attempted to evade capture.

WOLF, JOSEPH R. April, 1999 68th Sq. 19049753 Joseph was an Aircraft Mechanic that was part of the ground echelon that went over to England via the HMS QUEEN MARY in Sept. 1942. He worked out on the "line" for over 2 ½ years. On 21 May, 1945 he was a passenger on A/C # 44-50755, 68th Sq., piloted by F. A. Kiggins that returned to the U.S.



WOMACK, HUBERT J. 1997 67TH Sq. 38219623 Hubert was a Tail Turret gunner on the J. E. Hill crew that arrived in north Africa shortly before July, 1943. Their assigned aircraft was CALABAN and in which they flew many very dangerous missions, badly damaged. Herbert's 1st mission was 2 July 1943. This crew returned from the Ploesti mission of 1 August 1943 with a wing nearly severed by a barrage balloon cable that forced them to make an emergency landing on the island of Malta. His 25th and last mission was 25 February 1944.

The 8-Ball Tails ©

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

1999 ~ 2000 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

**Your Prez Mike says:
"EVERY MEMBER GET A MEMBER"**

Contact your crew mate, roommate, friend, co-worker, associate and/or any former member of the 44th Bomb Group and urge him/her to join now to enjoy the many benefits offered by the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association.

As you have read about the Master Data Plan elsewhere in this issue, you know how we are working as fast and as hard as possible to preserve our heritage. You owe it to your children and your children's children to be included in the innovative Master Data Plan.

"Because our ranks (the original members of the 44th Bomb Group) are diminishing with each passing year, many of our members are enrolling members of their family including grandchildren, all in the interest of insuring the perpetual and preservation of the illustrious history of the 44th Bomb Group and the remarkable contributions of the men and women who served our nation and the free world in the 44th Bomb Group. I, for instance, have taken out life memberships for my two sons, one daughter and one grandson."

**GO MEMBERS! GO! GO MEMBERS! GO!
EVERY MEMBER GET A MEMBER! GO MEMBERS! GO!**

For your convenience, we have enclosed a membership envelope. Enclose the \$20 membership fee, fill out the other needed information, stamp and toss it in the mail. Let those you love know more about you.

*All generations are interested in the stories of
"The Greatest Generation."*

WATCH FOR UPCOMING DETAILS!



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE HISTORICAL RESEARCH AGENCY
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

8 October 1999

AFHRA/RSA
600 Chennault Circle
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424

Col. Richard D. Butler, USAF Retired
Vice President 44th Bomb Group
16494 Wagon Wheel Drive
Riverside, CA 92506-5550

Dear Col. Butler

Today, your son, Col. Butler delivered and demonstrated the CD ROM to me. It is a very impressive piece of work. I would like to compliment you and other members of the 2nd Air Division Association for producing and compiling this valuable source of information. Last year, Mr. Arlo Bartsch donated a CD copy of similar information on the 379th Bomb Group. We will include the additional data on the 44th Bomb Group to the collection and make it available to researchers as soon as possible.

Once the Commander of the Agency returns from leave, I will draft a letter for his signature endorsing this valuable and timely effort to continue the gathering and compiling of information on the other World War II 8th Air Force units. I will also contact Mr. C. Will Lundy about donating the source material used in the production of the CD to the Agency.

Thanks for thinking of us and we appreciate you and your son, and the 2nd Air Division Association efforts and interest in the preservation of the heritage of the United States Air Force and its predecessors.

Sincerely

JOSEPH D. CAVER
Archivist
AFHRA/RSA

Cc: Col. Richard E. Butler, AFROTC

I Remember...

By: Donald Potter on Lee's Crew, 67th Squadron

Submitted by: Don Wells



Engines rumble- airships roar,
From England to the fertile Ruhr.
Ships carrying bombs and guns, and men
Scurry high o'er clouds and then,
Anxious faces scan cloudy skies
With ever moving watchful eyes,
Fingers fondle and flex each gun-
A check to see that all is done.
A formation steadies and draws in tight,
ready for the coming flight.

There's the target, approaching clear
Sighted by the Bombardier,
Course is killed
drift set right.
Now the Flak guns shoot on sight.
A burst ahead,
A burst below,
A shattering impact,
A heavy blow.
Still up-
Still on they fly,
Ships and men to do or die.
Bombs away!

With a lifting surge of lightened load,
the destructive eggs of war were sowed.
Down, down, down, they arced,
Shrieking thinly toward their mark.
A flash, a flame, a spouting haze-
amidst a twisting patterned maze,
High- High in the wintry sky,
silver glinting specks were seen,
like the figment of a drunken dream.
Men who braved the frigid blue,
looked back - and knew.
That the job was done,
one aid less to the weary Hun.
The ships have landed at their base.
Some are sober and some men smile,
as they leave their place.

A chance to change, a chance to eat,
a chance to make the rest complete.
Evening tucks her shadows tight -
drawing close the cloak of night.
Birds - dogs - men - ships all sleep.
I pray the Lord, their souls He'll keep.
And - Please -----
Grant them heavy, restful ---- sleep.





J.T. Elias sent me his book, *War and Women*, a WWII novel based on his experience as a Tail Gunner, and his friend who was in the Paratroops. His protagonist, Leo Khouri, an Arab American suffers his way through contemptuous officers and finally opts for gunnery school. His

religious and patriotic convictions are constantly challenged by his friend, Bernard, who criticized the military and political leaders unstintingly.

Jack Daylin, Leo's best friend, is a paratrooper who chutes into Sicily, Salerno, Normandy and Bastogne. The misfortune of injuries briefly brings the two friends together in London, but war separates them again.

War and Women is an account of life in America starting during the Depression days, continuing into the loss of innocence of America's youth in WWII. Any member of the 44th BG can identify with the emotional upheavals in dealing with the battle scenes and female interactions, as seen through the eyes of a young flier in England.

Alongside the personal trials of Leo and Jack is a documentation of the status of the war at the same time that these two young men are facing their personal crises. Elias researched the opinions of the generals on particular operations, and the decisions that sometimes led to disastrous outcomes. He provides an occasional glimpse at the German side, and the tears shed over there when war hit one of theirs.

Elias records happy experiences with some Brits, unfortunate moments with others. He brings the two lead characters together again in a London hospital. Leo returns home, unchanged in his moral convictions. Jack and his comrades part, pondering the value of the outcome compared to the price. They probably mirror the attitude of the average GI on VJ Day.

Elias was a member of the 392nd Bomb Group, 14th Combat Wing. His 447 page book can be obtained by writing to: Flying Eightball Productions, 7 E. Union Street, Nanticoke, PA 18634. The price is \$24.95.

Warren F. McPherson sent me his book of reminiscences, *The Wild Blue Yonder*, a careful tabulation of his experiences as a Waist Gunner. The excitement of aviation enthralled him as much as his unwillingness to kowtow to a sarcastic draft officer. He enlisted and ultimately found himself with the James N. Williams crew in the 44th Group, 66th Squadron.

McPherson's 8 1/2 x 11 soft cover book details each of his thirty missions—what went wrong and what went right, never seeming to lose his determination to meet his obligations squarely. His account is a constant reminder of the mysteries, the dangers, the disappointments in the wild blue yonder. McPherson later lived out a lifetime goal—to become a minister.

Among his treasured memories was 'his shortest sermon.' After the stress of many missions, seeing planes go down around him, with frazzled nerves, he answered a bunkmate's question with some strong profanity. Hours later a crew member unexpectedly landed a powerful punch in the face, telling him never again to use those words. He never did.

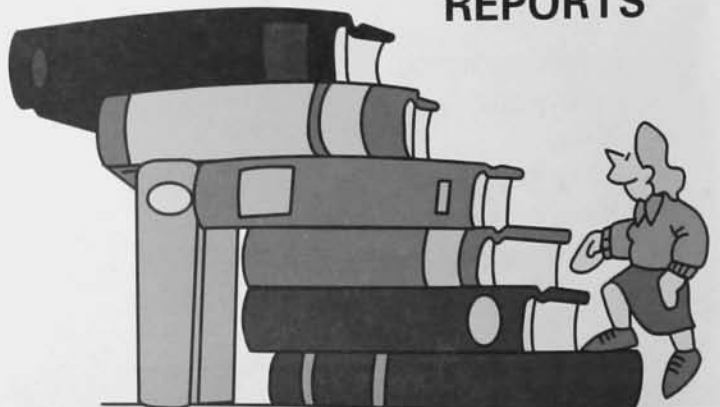
Art Hand's research eventually led to McPherson locating his crew. Five men and their wives went to their latest crew reunion in Dayton. It has become an annual event.

The Wild Blue Yonder is available at cost for \$4.60 each. Write Warren F. McPherson, 1016 E. Rockwood Street, Springfield, MO 65807-5092.

Ruth's

BOOK REPORTS

A new book, *Liberator Album*, has just been released by SPECIALTY PRESS, 11481 Kost Dam Road, North Branch, MN 55056. A hardbound, 192 page, 8 1/2 x 11 format features 538 b&w and 29 full color pictures of wartime photographs, compiled by two men, **Mike Bailey and Tony North**, who as youngsters watched the B-24's form and depart for their targets. The price is \$39.95. Contact publisher at (800) 895-4585 or (612) 583-3239.



FROM THE NEXT GENERATION

Written By: Ellen Jaeger

As I grew up, I was aware that my Dad, Perry Morse, was a tail gunner in a bomber plane while stationed in England in World War II. He was part of the war and he served his country—that was the most that I knew about my Dad's army-air corps experience. Last year, I had the opportunity to take a ride in a B-24, courtesy of the Collings Foundation. It was that experience that opened up a whole new appreciation of my Dad's character and his loyalty to his country.

The B-24 was noisy and once I was strapped in for takeoff, I realized that I really did not want to unstrap myself. While sitting there, I could view the ground directly below me through the opening between the gun turret and the rest of the plane. I finally found the courage to unstrap myself and walk around. I held on and while walking through, never let my hands off objects on the sides of the plane to help keep my balance. I visited the tail gunner position and walked on the cat walk in between the bomb bay doors. The entire flight lasted about 30 minutes and it was as exciting as it was stressful. To think that my Dad flew 35 missions in that aircraft is something that I cannot even imagine.

The flight was just the beginning. I became so interested in Dad's war experiences that I rented the movie, *Memphis Belle*, and watched with special interest how a team of soldiers fought and survived the war. And it did not stop there. I rented the movie, *Twelve O'clock High*, as part of a leadership course I was taking. In a period of a few months, I learned of my Dad's war experience and could finally know and appreciate his contribution not only to his country, but to his flight crew and to his family that he would later establish. I could not totally know; only those that were there and lived through the experiences would be able to feel what that part of their life meant.

After the flight, my Dad talked about his experiences and answered the many questions I had. He shared stories about his flight crew, the missions, the 50 caliber machine guns, the teamwork, the sorrows, the friendships he established, and the recent activities of the 44th Bomb Group. I'm not sure what his telling of these stories meant for him, but I do know that it was an opportunity for me to visit a part of my Dad's life that had been distant to me.

I am a direct benefactor of my Dad's army and National Guard experiences. I am the good that resulted from the war and the country's defense activities. I thank you, Dad, for who you are, what you accomplished, what you stand for, and what you gave me.

ANOTHER REASON TO DO YOUR DATABASE

The 44th BGVA's database will now be accepted by the Air Force Historical Research Agency. Do your Bio! Researchers and historians will study WWII events for centuries. Let your story be a part of these pages.

Letter to the Editor,

Military Heritage Data Base

Larry Herpel writes to inform us that he has enlisted the aid of two members of the 44th BGVA to assist him in loading the personal biographies of those who served in the 44th Bomb Group, into the 8th AF Military Heritage Data Base. These two volunteers are Mrs. Ruth Dobbs, who's husband LTC Sterling L. Dobbs, served with the 68th Bomb Squadron at Shipdham and Jeffrey Deitering who's grandfather also served with the 44th BG and the 66th Bomb Squadron. We appreciate their volunteering after the call went out for help from President Mike Mikoloski at our recent reunion in New Orleans.

We encourage all those veterans that are still holding their Bio forms and have not sent them to Jerry Folsom, to please do so, as soon as possible. Please include a recent photo, a war time photo and a picture of your crew, if possible. If a war time photo is not available, it is possible to enlarge and scan your picture from your crew photo. We would prefer however, to have a separate picture. Your pictures will be returned to you.

Our data base is growing with personal biographies, but we are still a LONG way from gathering information on all our veterans. If you have not received a form, and wish one, please call Larry Herpel at 512-376-7780.

"WE NEED YOUR PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS AND MILITARY HISTORY WITH THE 44th FOR FUTURE POSTERITY."

Larry Herpel, Master Database Team Chief



Happy Holidays!

*Flying
Eight Ballers
into the new
Millennium*



**44th Bomb Group
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

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