

THE PRESIDENTS



CORNER

Welcome to Volume One, Number 1 of 8 Ball Tails, which will be the official journal of the NEW 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association (44TH BGVA). But this is getting a little ahead of our story. If you will pause now and read the boldly titled letter on the cover page, you will have a feel for the events that have led to this new organization.

To many of you that letter is familiar since you were on the 1100 plus name mailing list of those who have been on the 44th Heritage Memorial Group as active members for the past 3 years. To those seeing the letter for the first time, you represent a large majority of that membership which, for one reason or other, the HMG has lost touch. From the standpoint of the 44TH BGVA we would like to reestablish contact with every one of you. We feel that most of you share the feeling that there is a lot of life left in the 44th and rather than just quitting we want not only to continue enjoying our reunions and comradeship, we want also to continue our heritage by bringing in our younger generations and pass on to them the proud history of what their Pops and Grandpops contributed to the freedom we enjoy.

Now about the Association. We are off to a great start! From that first mailing we have over 500 members and growing as membership forms keep arriving. Of those 500 + we have over 100 Life Members (\$100.) This issue of 8 Ball Tails will go out to the entire 3000 + names we have. Hopefully we will again have great response. Our Incorporation as a Tax Exempt Veterans Organization in the State of Illinois is complete. The same status with the Internal Revenue Service is underway along with a bulk mailing permit from the Post Office. Plans are well under way for our first reunion in San Antonio, Texas in mid-October 1995. We want you to JOIN UP AND JOIN US IN SAN ANTONIO!

Our new Constitution and By Laws were

ratified at Colorado Springs and the slate of officers listed herein were elected. The main distinction between the HMG and the 44th BGVA is that you will now have an ELECTED Board of Officers who will manage your organization according to democratic principles. Further, it is my vow that each member will have a front row view of what is going on within the 44th BGVA during my term as your president (meaning, for instance, you will, via your vote, take part in the major decisions affecting your association and you will get financial reports).

I'll close by saying please fill out the membership application herein and send along your check for \$15.00 for '95 dues. I would like to personally shake your hands and welcome each of you to your new organization at San Antonio in '95.

Roy W. Owen, President



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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FOLDED WINGS

PLOESTI VETERANS

Clement L. Boulanger 1978
John R. Huddle 1962
Robert H. Becker 1989
Albert L. Shaffer 1980
Lewis M. Petrie unk

ALL OTHERS

Charles Cash	unk	506th
Norman A. Ross	Sept 92	66th
Edmond R. Ingram	1972	67th
Wade F. Bond	Oct 92	67th
Robert J. Bauman	Nov 92	506th
Earnest J. Chautier	May 90	506th
Charles P Norris	1960's	66th
Raymond E. Scott	unk	67th
John H. Haracz	Jul 91	66th
Theo. F. Zimmerman	Mar 92	506th
Murray Wolfson	Nov 87	506th
Paul Weiss	1970	
506th		
John F. Zettel	Jan 89	67th
Donald E. Slocker	1992	67th
Harold A. Tripp	Unk	66th
Marion Williams	Jan 93	506th
Thomas Gurry	1983	68th
Earl Hoppie	Mar 75	66th
Louis J Obus	Oct 88	67th
Raymond A. Collier	Unk	
506th		
William F. Carnell	Unk	67/68
William J. Williams	Unk	68th
Leo L. McCreery	Jan 92	67th
Peter Deisch	1986	66th
Thomas Gatling	Unk	67th
John Skutt	Unk	
Selby L. Smith	Unk	
Earle P Wickle	1978	67th
Theodore D. Willism	Unk	
506th		
John H. Hess	Feb 93	67th
Maurice L. Dyer	Oct. 94	506/66
Charles A. Bottom	Jan 94	464

This is a partial list of our deceased 44th comrades that Art Hand has been able to trace just recently with the capability of his CD phone directory. This also explains some of the long past dates of the passing of these men. We will continue to catch up on the list with each issue as well as list new Folded Wings.

MISCELLANEA

REUNION HELP

We are going to try a new idea for our first reunion in San Antonio (see adjacent column ->). Each year, on a rotating basis, one squadron will be responsible for organizing and putting on the entertainment on the evening of the Reunion Banquet. The 1995 program is the responsibility of the 506th Bomb Squadron. Dick Pederson and Mel Trager, the committee Co-Chairs, are busy getting plans together as we speak. Dick is putting out a call to all 506th members for some financial help "so the 50th can put on a program that will set the standard for all reunions to come!" If you can give the boys some help on the entertainment expenses please send a check made out to: 506th B.S. Entertainment Fund and mail to: Richard Pederson, 751 10th St. East, Lot 32, Palmetto, FL 34221. Dick & Mel say **Thank Y'all.**

NORWAY MONUMENT

A bronze plaque will soon replace the wooden memorial plaque at Kjeller Air Base, Norway which commemorated the November 18, 1943 raid on the German held airfield by elements of the 44th, 93rd, 389th and 393rd Bomb Groups. The wood memorial plaque was dedicated to the six B-24 crews lost on the raid, four of the six were 44th crews. Its bronze replacement was dedicated this month on the 50th anniversary of the raid. To fund the bronze plaque, Ed Dobson, Jr., is seeking non-deductible donations totaling \$700. as soon as possible. \$25. + donors will receive and 8x10 print and information about the dedication. After the bronze is paid for, any remaining funds will be used to locate and notify next of kin of those KIA on that mission of the memorial and plaque. Please make your check to: Edward M. Dobson, Jr. and send it to him at 118 So. 15th Ave. #1, Bozeman, MT 59715-4130.

Editor note: You may have noticed that Ed is our Treasurer. He is an attorney and the son of Lt. Edward M. Dobson, 67th Bomb Sqdn. Lt. Dobson and crew were lost on the Kjeller raid.

REUNION NEWS

Our Vice President, Jim Clements is Reunion Chairman for our October 19 - 22, 1995 Reunion in San Antonio. His only mandate from the Executive Board was give the members best reunion value possible at the most reasonable cost you can negotiate. From his early progress reports it looks like we've got the right man on the job! While he cautions that the schedule at this point is necessarily subject to change, it looks like this:

- Oct. 19, Thur.: Registration; 8 Ball Pub opens (drinks on the house for the duration), evening Reception with hors d'oeuvres and cash bar, dinner on your own (if you've got room).
- Oct. 20, Fri.: Tour: Ft. Sam Houston, Alamo, Missions, Lunch at Ft. Sam Officers Club. Evening, Buffet Dinner & 44th BGVA business meeting.
- Oct. 21, Sat.: Shuttle Busses for a day on the

River Walk, Evening: Squadron Dinners.

- Oct 22, Sun.: Tour: Institute of Texas Culture, Mexican Market, La Villita, Sunken Gardens, Evening: Reunion Banquet with cash bar and Entertainment to follow.
- Oct. 23 Mon.: Farewell Buffet Breakfast (your treasury picks up the tab) 7:30-9:30 a.m. and it's CHECK OUT & MOVE OUT.
- Jim says he can do all this for \$100. a head, give or take a couple of bucks, and a hotel room rate of \$65. Now I ask you, is our good ole' VP doing a great job OR WHAT

You could really help Jim and his planning if you could call or drop a note or post card if we can expect you to attend the '95 Reunion!, and and how many family yuu will bring along. His address and phone # are in the Executive Board listing

THE STARS AND STRIPES

At our first meeting back in Colorado Springs (you know, where Will Lundy used all those proxy votes to ensure he wasn't elected president) we had some discussion about obtaining a new flag and all the campaign and award colors won by the 44th. Mel

Trager is looking into the presentation protocols while Tony Mastrodone is doing the research at the Air Force Office of Heraldry

on our award and campaign colors..

On the flag, Mike Yuspeh has rung the bell! He contacted Senator J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana in our behalf, and soon the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association will be in possession of a U.S. Flag that has flown atop our Capitol. We thank Senator Johnston and we tip our hat to you Mike. WELL Done!



WILL SEZ

To echo the President, welcome to the first issue of our 8 Ball Tails. I want to talk about this journal a bit since to my mind this periodical is the real glue that will hold our organization together. Our national and regional reunions are a bunch of fun and they give us an opportunity for face to face visits, but this is a lot of eating, drinking and B S'ing; historical and a lot to do with our 44th heritage yes, but little, if anything on paper for the record. So where do we get the really good stuff? Research of official records and archives is, of course, the meat and potatoes of the military historian, but the GRAVY, the stuff that brings history to life, that brings smiles to your face and tears to your cheeks are the personal recollections of those who were there and took part when history happened. Whether you realize it or not every 44th'er has an obligation to "tell it like was," to help make the gravy that will make our honorable history a living, lasting, interesting thing for our descendants.

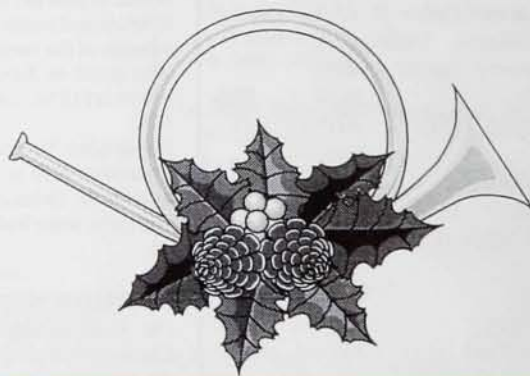
So how do we fulfill this obligation? Well before CRS really sets in we sit down and really think about everything we can remember about every aspect of every mission or movement that you participated in during your time with the 44th. I'm talking loading bombs, crew chiefting, navigating, packing parachutes, briefing the mission, or sewing up wounded airmen back from a mission, your recollections belong in the gravy! So how does this work for me, the Group Historian (and acting Treasurer, dammit doesn't anybody want to be Treasurer?). LETTERS FOLKS, YOU'VE GOT TO WRITE LETTERS. Here's what happens, I get your letter telling your "war story," funny, sad, embellished a bit, whatever. I check the archival-historical data I have on the event to paste up any gaps from your recollection and records, glean anything I can from your story which will fill any gaps I have and the gravy gets thicker, so to speak. Of course your letter goes on to the 8 Ball Tails for all to share.

It has been fascinating this 50th anniversary year of D-Day how much interest in WW II has surfaced. Our kids, the Baby Boomers, are all of a sudden asking questions like "tell me again, Dad what was that airplane you flew in the war?" and "Dad, were you ever on a ship like the Jeremiah O'Brien?" It really plucks on your heartstrings! What was really heartwarming was the number of sons and daughters that accompanied their parents to the Colorado Springs Reunion. They are hungry to know our history, and we owe it to them.

About the archives I have; there is a room full of statistics, photos, diaries, etc. covering the 31 months of our operations, 1942-45. There are about 90% of all formation sketches of combat missions flown; most of the Missing Air Crew Reports; a smattering of the post-mission Air Crew Interrogation Reports; a record of each plane and crew lost in combat, what happened to each man and a complete listing of all airplanes that flew combat missions with the 44th. I have also compiled a crew listing for nearly all crews that flew with the 44th, segregated by squadrons and embellished with much information gleaned from my records. All of this data is here in my home available for any research by 44th'ers. All of these records will one day be transferred to our museum, wherever it is finally located. In regards to our records, We all owe a big THANK YOU to TONY and KATHY MASTRADONE for all of their research through the 44 boxes of our group operational records in the National Archives at Suitland, MD. They were instrumental in forcing the Archives Staff to make a search for missing data which resulted in the "discovery" of two more boxes covering the 1942 and early '43 operations!

We must also thank our Membership Director, ART HAND. He has recently found over 200 "lost" members. and with his new Compact Disk phone directory, he is really picking up speed. Art has been doing most of this out of his pocket since the HMG was only budgeting a fraction of his expenses. That's all going to change; if we can't support the bread & butter of our organization, "What's it all about, Alfie?"

Please note, we kept this issue slim because we are making this mailing to the entire 3000+ mailing list so we can stimulate our 44th'ers to get back in the tent. Don't worry, I've got lots of "gravy" for the next issue!
Will Lundy



44th Bomb Group Veterans Association



Address correction requested

Stamp

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 1 - Issue #4

Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Winter 1995
EIN #68-0351397

"WELCOME SIGHT"

A Limited Edition signed by two distinguished WWII Bomber Pilots
General Leon Johnson & Major General Ramsay Potts



"WELCOME SIGHT"

1000 signed & numbered, 27 1/2" x 20 1/2"

By Robert Taylor

B-24 Liberators of the 44th Bomb Group pass over Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire, after a mission to occupied Europe. Ely Cathedral, towering above the East Anglian flatlands, was a welcome landmark for the returning US 8th Air Force crews.

This classic work by Robert Taylor pays tribute to the men of the 8th Air Force and in particular the gallant crews of the B-24 Liberator, and the contribution they made to the Allies' success in World War II. Returning from a mission, flying over the beautiful Cambridgeshire landscape with Ely Cathedral in the background, the B-24's make an imposing subject. This magnificent 900 year-old Cathedral in fact played more than an

aesthetic role in the story of the US Air Force's war effort in England. The men of the 8th Air Force still fondly recall those stirring moments returning from a mission, when they spotted that beautiful old monument rising from the flatlands of the Fen country, providing an easily recognizable landmark, and thus a bearing on their home base. The Cathedral has ever since been regarded by the gallant crews of the B-17's and B-24's as 'their' Cathedral.

The aircraft centered in the Robert Taylor painting is the 68th Bomb Squadron's B-24 HE-101 (Corky), which is the featured Liberator of this issue.

Corky



The Corky Ground Crew Left to Right: Joe Crisman, Chuck Wagner, Crew Chief Barton Cramer, 66th Sqdn. Operations Officer Frank Davido (whose infant boy "Corky" the plane was namesake), and Robert Krueger.

Over the past 2-1/2 years, many members of the 68th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group who served in England during 1944, to early '45 have received calls from a Canadian physician with a Scottish accent searching for information regarding a B-24 of the 44th Bomb Group by the name of Corky. I have told the story of my involvement with this plane and picture so many times, that perhaps it's best that I start from the beginning, so that the 8 ballers, if they are called again, have an understanding of the information I seek.

My family comes from the small town of Larnark, 30 miles south of Glasgow, Scotland. My mother was in the Women's Royal Air Force and in 1944-45 was a flight controller dealing with B-24 Liberators with the Royal Air Force Coastal Command.

My father was in the British Army, Scots Guards, Armored Division and later the connection with this plane will become more apparent.

I was brought up in the late 50's and early 60's when the personal involvement of many people in the events between 1939 and 1945 were common, with the exploits of the famous pilots were in magazines, having been brought up on the exploits of pilots such as Douglas Bader, Johnny Johnson and their German counterparts of Adolf Galland and Werner Molders. We all knew about the famous raid to Ploesti and the daylight raids from magazines and from the movies, including 12 O'Clock High, The War Lover, etc. The exploits of Glasgow's own Squadron, 602 City of Glasgow, Auxiliary Air Force (equivalent of the National Guard). They were the early heroes of the war having downed the first

German aircraft in mid-October, 1939.

One of my mother's school friends won the Victoria Cross, the youngest member of the Royal Air Force to do so in 1940, when the remainder of his crew bailed out, he helped his pilot bring their crippled bomber home from Antwerp. Such were the stories that were told in the evening to a little boy, who, as most are at that age, was interested in war planes.

In later years, having moved to Canada in 1978, I learned to fly and in 1980 when I returned home for a year, spent many weekends flying out of Prestwick, up and down the west coast of Scotland and over to Ireland. One of the sights that I will never forget is the crash site of a B-24 on the Island of Arran, west of Prestwick. The wreckage is still visible even today when one travels to Glasgow on transatlantic flights.

In 1987 the picture, Welcome Sight, by the English artist Robert Taylor was published as a limited edition print, which had been signed by General Leon Johnson and Ramsay Potts. I must admit, at the time I really didn't like the print. At that time, I really wasn't a fan of B-24's, being more interested in the Lancaster and B-17. Two years later, however, the original picture was at the National Aerospace Museum in Washington at an exhibit of Robert Taylor's works. Having been to Washington on a visit, I viewed the collection. The original Welcome Sight was much more impressive. In early November, 1989 I decided to buy it.

Knowing Robert, I knew this would represent a real aircraft, but, at that point, the pleasure was of having the picture. I didn't have any further interest in finding out

about it until three years later. At an air show I was speaking to a local collector and he indicated that one of the crew had come from Rochester and had been killed when the plane was shot down over Dortmund, Germany January 28, 1945. This was the first information I had.

A year later one of my patient's husbands saw the picture in a book about Robert Taylor's paintings and had realized that I was the owner of the original. He told me some more details about the squadron and subsequently, Harry Goldbrecht from the 8th Air Force Association in San Clemente, California, was kind enough to give me the address of Pete Henry in New Jersey. Shortly afterwards, in October of 1993, I was put in touch with Will Lundy, who you all know as the Bomb Group historian.

Through Will, I was able to contact George Washburn and Sam Armour, who were the co-pilot and navigator from Elmer Kohler's crew who flew Corky 23 times out of 65 missions. Elmer Kohler, the pilot, had not been seen since 1947, but eventually, with the help of Art Hand and his trusty PC and CD telephone directory we tracked Elmer down to just outside Los Angeles. Lester (Jim) Dietz the radio operator, lived in northern California; quite close to Roy Owen and Oliver Cardinal. Their engineer was just across the border in Michigan. Over the past two years, the following story has been put together of their remembrances, from the National Archives in Washington, from Will Lundy's records, also those from Bill Beitling in Kansas City, and from many families who's relatives had passed away in the meantime.

One of the difficulties is that 50 years later, many of the people involved are no longer alive, especially those involved in the last flight of the plane. However, Marylin O'Brien, who's brother Burt Steinmiller was one of the gunners from Corky, has been valuable in providing guidance of my search, as she remembered many individuals and their home addresses.

The families of Vern Kirkey and Glen Macé, who also did not return from that fatal mission, have been helpful in providing information including letters and photographs. Burt Steinmiller and Vern Kirkey's mothers are alive at the ages of 95 and 96 respectively.

The relatives of Patrick Colosimo, the radio operator, and Maurice Corwine, the pilot, (both of them survived the crash) have both provided valuable information in documenting the story.

The German Embassy in Ottawa, through Lt. Colonel Ibrom, were helpful in forwarding my correspondence to Germany, though the official records didn't provide any information. The local newspaper in Dortmund where the plane crashed, provided a wealth of information from a local aviation expert who just recently, in late October, provided the statements from two young boys who actually saw the plane crash.

The story is incomplete as many of the individuals from many of the crews are not available for interview having passed away. Also many individuals have promised information which hasn't yet come available. Many remember in explicit detail; others have only sketchy memories. The official records, I've realized, are never accurate and one frequently gets conflicting information. If anyone is left out, it isn't that I wished to do so, but that in many cases the information just wasn't available. If anyone has any information that they wish to give, it will be gratefully received.

This then is the story of Welcome Sight, Corky, E-101.

B-24 H-21 BT42-51101 was one of the last planes produced in a block of 149 H model B-24 Liberator Bombers contracted at the end of August, 1943 and produced by Douglas Aircraft Corporation at it's Tulsa, Oklahoma plant from a kit of parts produced by Ford Motor Company at Willowrun, Michigan. The plane came off the assembly line around the end of April, 1944, the exact date is not clear from the records, but it was accepted by the USAAF on the 15th of May, 1944. The plane did not have ball turret and was one of the first to have K-6 waist gun mounts. These were the features of the plane that can be determined from what is available. She was rather unusual in also having heavier armor plate around the engine nacelles, though I haven't been able to confirm this. Comments have been made that the plane was heavier than other H's and this may in fact be the reason.

How she got from Tulsa, Oklahoma to Britain, whether by the Northern route or Southern route is not available from the available records at this time.

She shows as having been assigned 68th bomb squadron, 44th bomb group shortly after the beginning of June, 1944.

She was assigned to crew chief, Barton Cramer and his ground crew of Robert Krueger, Joe Crisman, and Chuck Wagner. The first mission was flown to Angers, France on the 8th of June with subsequent missions listed as the 10th of June, 17th of June, all three missions with Reuben Rickett's crew. Webb Todd's 68th Squadron history doesn't show a mission on the 10th of June, so this may be a typographical error, for the 12th of June to Illiers L'Eveque, France.

No damage was sustained, but on the 20th of June with Arnold Larson's crew, she had 12 flak hits over Politz. On the 21st of June, with Bonnet's crew, no damage was sustained, and on the 22nd (Larson's crew) she sustained one flak hit. On the 25th, with Ford's crew, there was no flak damage. However, Arnold Larson and crew, on their last mission, 29th of June, sustained numerous hits over Magdeburg. Apparently, the flak on this mission was one of the worst that the 68th had encountered. So severe, that the 506 squadron lost two



aircraft, with the 68th having 12 damaged.

Robert Knaplein crews flew to Beaumont LeRoger, France. On the 6th of July she with Donald's crew, but the mission is not listed as to target. 7th of July, Reuben Ricketts again flew her to Darenburg. This was one of the worst missions that the 68th had to fly; 3 aircraft and crews were lost and 5 aircrafts received category A/C damage, with 3 category A. Out of 12 aircraft, only 2 had no damage. On the 11th of July, she flew to Munich with Ford's crew and on the 12th, Knaplein's crew returned again to Munich. Reuben Ricketts crew flew her to Saarbrücken on the 13th of July. No damage was sustained as the flak was minimal and inaccurate.

On the 18th of July she was flown to Thorne, France by Lt. Elmer Kohler. This was the third mission for Elmer Kohler, but the first for his crew, he having flown in the usual fashion as co-pilot in his first two missions. Kohler flew Corky 23 missions subsequent to this date in his tour and his crew is recognized as being the one to which this aircraft is associated.

Earlier to this date, E-101 was christened Corky after the infant son of Frank Davido, the 68th squadron operations officer. The distinctive nose art with the little boy sitting on a bomb with a map of Berlin was painted on the nose by Bob Krueger, the 68th squadron resident artist.

The information on Corky's missions from this point between 18 July and the end of November, 1944 come from Kohler's crew. The July 18th mission was particularly rough, Corky sustaining 6 flak holes, one through the Plexiglas in the Bombardier's window which knocked Sam Armour's helmet off. The only other causality was Richard Calgoro's (tail gunner) chocolate bar, which was hit by a piece of flak. On the 19th, the 68th was off to Coblenz, again with EK (Elmer Kohler) Once again the flak was heavy, with 4 holes in the plane and the pilot's side window being hit again! To paraphrase EK', "Had the left window (less than a foot from my head) blown out, very noisy, very cold, very scary." On the 20th of July, she went to Erfurt with Benjamin Ford's crew and on the 21st, Harrock's crew flew her to over Oberpappinhoffen. This was a long mission and 44th bomb group aircraft, including 2 from the 68th, were lost. Apparently, on this mission Corky had to return because of mechanical problems. Kohler's crew on this mission flying W-224 had their usual attraction to flak, with the pilot's window being blown again with the wires to EK's throat microphone being cut. On the 24th of July, flew to St. Lo with Robert Knaplein and Frank Davido as command pilot.

On the 25th the 68th went to St. Lo again with Elmer Kohler and again the magnetic attraction for flak occurred. Five flak holes, number 3 engine out, and the pilot's window blown out while bombing at 13,000 feet.

On the 29th of July, EK and crew went to Bremen. They had lost their magnetic attraction and E 101 returned with no flak damage (a record for them). On the 31st of July, Tommy Kay's crew flew her to Ludwigshafen without significant damage.

In August, she was flown on the 1st, 3rd and 4th by EK and crew with the targets being Corbie with medium flak and no damage. On the 3rd, to Mery-Sur-Oise, the weather was bad and the target could not be hit and an alternate was hit with excellent results. Again, there was no flak damage.

However, on the 4th of August it was a different matter. On this date, the 44th went to Kiel. On this occasion the group formation was being led by Bill Cameron as the group lead.

Bill was kind to give me a commentary of this mission. He was command pilot and flew in I for ITEM take off at 0955 hours. Apparently there was difficulty forming up the full group of 36 aircraft. There was significant congestion in the formation area, however by 12 noon the wing formation was formed, the 68th being in the low position. The Frisian Islands were crossed at 1302 with the 68th closing up with the green group, with the blue group being far behind. Shortly after this, a B-24 crashed into the sea. The cause was not known. The formation was joined up with P-38's at approximately 1325 at 23500 feet, the formation having flown around Heligoland without any evidence of flak. By 1444, the 44th had left the target area, the weather was good but there was an effective smoke screen. Cameron, apparently, was in the bomb bay when the doors were opened, and being without oxygen almost blacked out. The flak was also bursting underneath, but not close. The formation then let down to 18000 feet for the trip home. Several aircraft were in distress and the blue squadron caught the brunt of the flak. P-38 fighters were in close escort and flying past north of Wilhelmshaven, the 44th saw a squadron of B-17's obliterate an airfield. The trip home for the group was uneventful.

However, it was very eventful for EK and crew. As usual, the magnetic personality of Kohler's crew became evident, Corky sustaining 23 holes from flak and the hydraulics being shot out (again). Coming home she was steadily losing altitude, partly with EK flying her on the step to try and conserve fuel, but also because of one engine being feathered. Also a P-38 with a propeller feathered came along side and the question is who was giving who moral support? At one point while crossing the Frisian Island there was some concern as to whether or not they would make it home and Lester "Jim" Dietz, the radio operator, transmitted with the trailing wire aerial to give a position report. However, it became evident that the altitude loss was less severe than they'd thought and the English Coast came up and an uneventful

landing was made at Shipdham, apart from a second engine cutting out on approach. On the 8th of August, having been repaired, 101 was off to La Perth in France with Ray Mondloh's crew. On the 9th of August, EK and crew flew her to Sindelfingen again; 21 holes flak damage with bad weather obscuring the primary target on Saarbrücken the secondary target. Apparently the formation hadn't turned sufficiently to avoid a heavy flak concentration.

On the 12th of August, Kay's crew flew to Juvincourt with meager flak and no damage. On the 14th Mondloh's crew flew her to Lyon again with no flak damage. On the 15th and 16th of August, with EK's flew her to Ardorf and Kothen with no damage.

On the 18th of August, the 44th flew to Nancy. On this mission Elmer Kohler's crew landed at St. Lo due to rudder cables having part and landing at a forward fighter's base near St. Lo. This was the first landing of a heavy bomber at an Allied fighter base following the invasion.

The mystery here is that the formation map as briefed shows Kohler's crew flying Orange 381, however, opinion is split as to whether or not they were actually flying E-101 that was listed as a reserve aircraft that day. I haven't been able to resolve this as memories are equally split on this point. Elmer Kohler indicated that he felt it was Corky. When the control cables parted, there were severe vibrations in the plane and on landing at St. Lo, they rolled up the steel runway because of the weight and didn't endear themselves to the combat engineers. A piece of flak had cut a rudder cable. The fighter group ground crew took a day or two to repair the damage and later EK buzzed the field, which in retrospect perhaps wasn't such a good idea, the damage having just been repaired.

On the 24th of August, EK again attracted significant damage from very stiff flak, category A/C. On the 25th, having been patched up yet again, they flew to Schwerin airfield, an 8 hour mission. On this mission, George Washburn the co-pilot, was in the bomb bay when the bomb bay doors were open and had a rather interesting few minutes (being in a rather awkward position). On the 26th they flew to Salzbergen with minimal flak and no damage. Sam Armour, the navigator, had the flu and his ears were plugged and had difficulty hearing. Following this mission they were sent on leave to Scotland to the small village of Aberfoyle north of Glasgow. They stayed at the Baillie Nichol Jarvie Inn, which is a rather famous and well-known 18/19th coaching inn in a small village just south of the Trossachs which is a very scenic area in the hills north of Glasgow.

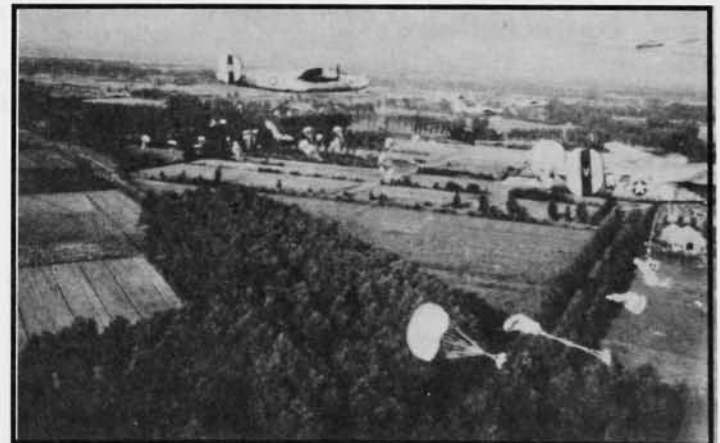
During the week there, they met a fighter pilot who was seldom without a drink from a grateful crew. During this time, they partook of the local entertainment, which

at that time could be very meager or plentiful, depending on your situation. Lester Dietz, the radio operator, headed south to Glasgow for more lively entertainment. (In the summer of 1994, while on holiday at home, I spent an afternoon up at Aberfoyle. The Baillie Nichol Jarvie is now derelict, being turned into apartments, but at the local tourist office, the lady there who was 12 years old at the time in 1944, remembered her sister going to dances in the local hall with some American flight crew.) Who knows, maybe it was the same crew, we'll never know.

This area of Scotland was an area I frequented when in medical school on weekends, kayaking. Young men in their early 20's or late teens have the same interest whether in 1944 or in 1974. I won't elaborate any more!

This was the first connection that I found to myself and Corky.

On the 27th of August, while EK and crew were enjoying a well earned rest, Barnhart's crew flew her to Basdorf uneventfully. On September the 5th she was flown to Karlsruhe by Julian Dayball's crew, suffering minimal flak damage. On the 8th she returned to the same target with Pellow's crew and on the 10th of September, flew to Ulm with Bill Kelly's crew and then to Hanover with Ritter's crew on the 11th. On the 13th of September, EK and crew again sustained category A damage from flak! Shortly after this, George Washburn, the co-pilot, was checked out by Frank Davido and pronounced to be suitable as first pilot (he took over Thurston VanDyke's crew, who'd been injured) and flew his first mission as pilot in command on the 18th of September to Best, Holland. This mission was flown at under 300 feet and the well-known photographs of Corky that are on display at the U.S. Air Force Museum and in Martin Bowmans book "Four Miles High", were taken from Julian Dayball's plane.



Sept. 18, 1944, Corky over Nijmegen, Holland, the low-level supply drop to the 82nd Airborne Division.

The light flak on this mission was particularly heavy and there were 15 holes in the aircraft with damage to the gas tanks and hydraulics.

When the formation returned to Shipdham, Elmer Kohler was at the hard stand to watch Washburn and crew return. George, who looked much younger than his 21 years, was heard to exclaim, "Elmer, someone was trying to kill me," while they were inspecting the damage to the plane.

This mission was rather interesting as they were dropping supplies to the 82nd airborne at Neimegen. Jim Colosimo, the brother of Pat Colosimo, was in fact with the 82nd airborne in this area and saw the formation going over.

My father's tank unit was also not very far from this area, while fighting their way up to the Rhine bridges.

My former consultant, while I was a medical student, was the regimental surgeon with the British Parachute Brigade that had dropped at Arnhem. On the 25th of September, the 68th went to Koblenz, with Leibrich's crew. On the 30th,

Kohler's crew flew her to Hamm, with no damage, and on the 30th to Hamm again, the second time sustaining category A damage. Bill Kelly's crew took her to Lippstadt on the 5th of October and on the 6th, Kohler's crew went to Hamburg. On this trip, their usual attraction to flak occurred yet again, with them limping across the north sea on their own with a P-47 as escort. On the 12th of October, Julian Dayball's crew flew her to Achmer without damage. On the 14th, 15th, 19th and 25th of October, EK and crew flew her again, the 14th, 15th and 19th being milk runs with no damage.

On the 15th of October, for some reason, Corky's call letter was changed from E to H and I haven't been able to get any evidence as to why this was done.

On the 25th of October, EK and crew went to Gelsenkirchen, with their reliable, but magnetic aircraft.

This was their worst raid up to this point. The flak was intense and accurate and just before the bombing point, they were hit in the number 3 engine by an 88mm. shell. This started a fire. The co-pilot was flying his first mission and on being told that number 3 was on fire, EK bent down to select the fire extinguisher,

while the co-pilot was trying to maintain altitude.

They came down from 23,000 feet to approximately 12,000 feet prior to getting the fire out and then turned for home having dropped their bombs. Once again they were on their own with only one engine pulling full power and two others on reduced power, heading for home.

In the meantime, George Washburn flying just behind, had prior to this been hit severely, spun out of formation with control only being regained by use of the auto pilot. Washburn and crew returned to Shipdham with one wheel damaged before Corky and thus promptly closed the main runway landing. Kohler aborted his approach to Shipdham and went down to Woodbridge, an RAF emergency station with a long runway. Oliver Cardinal, the engineer, manually wound down the flap and they landed without brakes. They were holding off

the nose prior to landing to slow up their approach speed, however, the co-pilot pulled back heavily and the nose rose during flare just before the stall and the old war-horse landed with considerable noise, but with little forward velocity!!

Sam Armour's map table was badly holed and he still has a piece of shrapnel from this raid. They say that one is safe until a bullet with your name on it reaches you. EK had a piece of flak land on his leg. The fragment, when examined later, had the initials EK engraved on it. The damage was so bad that it took 3 weeks to



The Maurice Corwine crew at Pueblo, CO, 2 Oct. 1944, during training. L to R, back row: Lt. Corwine, Lt. Wayne Scott - Nav., Lt. Robert Lough - CP, unidentified; L to R, middle row: Patrick Colosimo - Radio, Joseph Walker - Flt. Engr., Wilbert Steinmiller - LW Gunner; L to R front row: Edward Weinman - Tail Gunner, Vernon Kirkey - Nose Gunner, Glenn Mace, Jr. - RW Gunner.

repair Corky, including a complete overhaul of hydraulic and braking system, replacement of Number 3 engine and repairs to two others. On the 5th of November, Kohler's crew, in the absence of their now regular aircraft, flew to Karlsruhe with moderate flak. Minimal damage was done to the aircraft. The aircraft was 711.

Missions assigned on the 18th and 20th of November were canceled, either before take off or during assembly and it was not until the 26th of November that Dolan's crew flew to Bielefeld with no damage sustained. On the 27th the raid to Offenburg, John Vaughn's crew flew her without damage.

Elmer Kohler's crew flew their final mission in Corky on the 29th of November to Altenreken. There was

complete cloud cover and radar bombing results were unobserved. There was no flak. On the following day on the 30th of November, 1944, Kohler's crew flying 711 completed their final mission of their tour. Sam Armour volunteered to stay on and didn't leave the 68th until early April, 1945 working in operations. Elmer Kohler, Lester Dietz and Oliver Cardinal flew with a transport squadron for a short period during Ardennes offensive. Richard Calgaro, Steven Gilsenen and Frank Tilton, the nose gunner, were transferred, with William Vafiades apparently going to a weather observation unit, the others returning to the U.S.

On the 4th, 10th and 12th of December, the aircraft was crewed by William Solomon's crew. On the 4th they flew with the 491st bomb group and I'm not sure of the reason for this. On the 10th they flew to Bingen. Apparently on this raid there was a problem and a repeat pass over the target was required before the bombs were away.

On the 12th, the mission was to Aschaffenburg. There was no flak. On the 18th of December, to Kyllburg with Russell Ericson's crew. The raid was canceled just 8 minutes from target because of bad weather, sortie credit was allowed. There were no flights over Christmas by Corky and on the 28th of December, Peter's crew flew her to Kaiserslautern with no damage. However, it was a bad day for the 68th with 582 D missing in action. Another aircraft had to land on the continent with damage, but with the crew being safe; and Corky's stand partner, Lili Marlene 260P, had to abort due to engine problem in Number 2, missed the approach and apparently lost another engine while turning back to the runway spun out and crashed. There were no survivors from the Second Lt. Jessie Bledsoe's crew. She's listed as having flown on the 29th of December with Garbades crew, but there's no notification as to the mission. On the 30th of December, William Solomon's crew again took her to Ahrweiler. This was a radar attack due to complete overcast. The year ended with Ned Anderson's crew going to Neuwied.

The New Year started on the 1st of January with a raid to Koblenz, a railroad bridge over the Moselle. On this raid the aircraft was piloted by Maurice Corwine and his crew.

Glen Mace, one of Corwine's gunners, provides a commentary from his diary. The bomb load was 3-2,000 pound general purpose bombs, the mission time was 7 hours and the bombs were dropped visually and on target. The bridge was destroyed and there was moderate flak, but not too accurate. Bud Steinmiller, the top gunner, had one small piece of flak through the Martin turret. The following day, the 68th squadron returned to Koblenz. Again there was no damage when William Solomon's crew flew the mission. On the 7th of January,

VanDyke's crew flew her, also on the 14th; However, the 14th's mission was aborted due to technical problems. On the 7th the mission was to Landau. On the 21st of January, Ned Anderson's crew flew her again to Heilbronn.

No missions were flown between the 22nd and 28th of January because of bad weather. On the 28th, the mission was to attack a coking plant outside of Dortmund.

The official version of the raid indicated that Corky was hit by flak with a direct hit in the bomb bay shortly before 12:00 just prior to bombs away, she pulled out of formation, losing altitude and exploded several thousand feet below. Maurice Corwine, the pilot, and Patrick Colosimo, the radio operator, were the only two survivors. Three parachutes had been reported from the plane.

These were the official facts in Webb Todd's book and much of the official paper work that I've seen.

The crews families were notified in the middle of February that the aircraft was missing, but little else was heard till Patrick Colosimo returned to the U.S., with Maurice Corwine following shortly after in May and June in 1945. The details of what happened have been pieced together from Maurice Corwine's wife Delores, from Burt Steinmiller's sister and mother, who's still alive at 96, Vernon Kirkey's mother and sister (his mother's 95) and the family of Glen Mace, the family of Bob Lough the co-pilot, also supplied some details; but the remainder of the crews relatives have not been traced to this date.

Trying to track down relatives 50 years after an event is difficult, however, I had with some luck in knowing that one of the crew had come from Rochester. Once the MACR was reviewed and I realized that Burt Steinmiller came from Rochester, I found a relative who put me in touch with Burt's sister in Florida. Marilyn provided many of the essential details of the crew, particularly Maurice Corwine, Patrick Colosimo and Robert Lough's family and also of the Kirkey's and the Mace's.

Unfortunately, Patrick died in 1979; but his story was published in several newspapers. Glen Mace's nephew, Michael Broshart, provided some newspaper clippings containing Patrick's story, also the same story was provided from the local newspaper from Plymouth, Massachusetts, Vern Kirkey's hometown.

While on the bomb run, Patrick Colosimo had gone down off the flight deck to open the bomb doors, as there apparently had been some technical problems with one of the doors which was partly stuck open. Glen Mace had also come forward from his mid ships position and was assisting him in opening the door. The gears were apparently stripped and the door on one side was only open about a foot. Corwine had told them to leave it and they were going to salvo the bombs later. Glen Mace was returning to his waist position and Colosimo turned to go back up to the flight deck. At that point, the

ship shuddered and there was severe heat on his back and flames all around him. His clothes caught on fire, as he was disconnected from the intercom. He didn't know what was said following this and piecing together from several sources, apparently he was pushed out by someone else through the bomb bay. He was not aware of what happened for a period till he came around, his parachute deployed, with no signs of any other parachutes, but a large fire on the ground. Patrick indicated that he had been picked up by Germans and thrown into a village prison where the news of his crew was variable and was told that 6 were dead and then later that they were all alive. He was moved to several different prison camps following this, and on the 5th of May his prison camp was liberated coincidentally by the 82nd airborne to which his brother was attached. Being injured, he was shipped out by ambulance to a hospital. His brother Jim, only missing him by 20 minutes. He returned to the U.S. in late May where he contacted the relatives of his crew. Maurice Corwine returned home shortly after and his story was basically similar, having been blown clear of the plane in the explosion and having been taken prisoner.

In early 1995, I was able to get some copies of captured German documents, which were the official Luftwaffe communications regarding the crash from a Captain Maas who was the engineer in charge of the salvage crew, indicating that there had been 4 identified bodies; Scott, Steinmiller, Lough and Mace, with 4 unidentifiable bodies at the crash scene. At this point, there seemed little else in the National Archives from the German point of view and on playing a hunch, I contacted the Germany Embassy in Ottawa and spoke to Lt. Colonel Christen Ibrom, the military attaché, who was extremely helpful in forwarding my request to the German Archives, which did not bring up any definite specific evidence for me. He did suggest that I contact the local newspaper in Dortmund and they might be able to give additional help. This was done in early October and only 2 weeks later I received a letter containing the information about the crash.

Unfortunately, because of the closeness to the promised date of completion some of the details are not available, but to summarize the findings, it will show the difference in perspective, though the story is remarkably similar to those of Pat Colosimo.

I have to thank Stephen Klemp of the local newspaper for providing this information and Horst Munter the local aviation enthusiast in Dortmund, who collected the information. His information came from two sources; Herman Luer and Willy Pietrzak, who were young boys at the time who witnessed the crash.

The story is that just before noon on a clear and cold wintry day the American bombers flew over Dortmund.

The anti-aircraft batteries hit a silver plane; the right wing which went on fire, broke off, and the plane spun down. The witnesses only saw one parachute, though later information indicated that there were two survivors. The east wind blew the parachute towards Dortmund, suburb of Mengde, and the remains of the plane came down in Dortmund-Derne. Colosimo landed on a street called Am Ammerbaum. At this point, there was a flak unit 88mm. crewed by members of the Arbeitsdienst (young men too young for military service) and 105 mm battery of the Luftwaffe. There was some argument as to who should take him prisoner and in the meantime two police officers arrived and lifted him up and carried him approximately 1 1/2 km. to the local police station. He was wounded and bleeding from the head and his right leg was broken. On the way, they passed a number of civilians who were standing on the street, screaming "murderer" and who spat and kicked him. One of them kicked his broken leg and Patrick screamed. At this point, the police officers did not take any action and the witness said that the journey was like (running the gauntlet). One of the little boys grabbed a heated glove that he was carrying. When they reached the police station, he was left on the steps and the police officers went inside. The two young boys came up to Patrick and saw that he was covered in sweat and that there were tears running down his face. At that point the local Ortsgruppen Leiter (local Nazi party official) Franz Land arrived on his bicycle, ran up the stairs towards the prisoner. Patrick must have gotten a shock when he saw this real Nazi in his brown uniform coming towards him after what had happened on his journey from the street. However, Land entered the police station and there was a loud argument, the basis of which was that the policemen had not carried out their duty to protect the prisoner who had been abused. The police officers defended themselves saying that Dr. Goerbels had said (no mercy for the terror flyers). Patrick was then carried inside and put in a detention cell in the basement and the two boys saw him through a window. He was moaning, "Help me, help me." One of the police officers left the police station and fetched Dr. Hallermann, the local doctor, who came and gave him medical treatment.

The police had informed the local Luftwaffe at Brackel air base, but it was several days before he was picked up. Two soldiers had gone for the prisoner and helped him to the front door; however, Patrick dropped the crutches, pushed the soldiers aside and limped down the steps. When the back of the truck was opened, he found there were several other American air crew in the truck. His spirits rose and he pulled himself onto the truck.

I spoke to Horst Munter by phone and he, though his English is limited, and my German is non-existent, we

managed to piece together similar details of the story. Corky exploded in mid air and the wreckage was spread over a considerable area. The German records indicated that it was 95% percent demolished. The wreckage was cleared by the members of the Luftwaffe, commanded by Captain Maas and also by an officer called Zebrowski.

Four of the dead were identified at the scene by their dog tags; Glen Mace, Wayne Scott, Burt Steinmiller and Robert Lough. The other crew members, Earl Howser, Joseph Walker, Vern Kirkey, and Edward Weiman were not identified till much later. They were buried in the main cemetery in Dortmund on the 9th of January. However, it was not until much later in the year, around December, that the graves were actually investigated and in March of 1946 they were transferred to the Ardennes National Cemetery, close to Liege in Belgium.

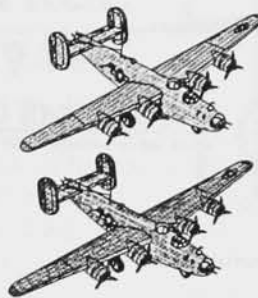
Horst Munter also indicated that, and I may have gotten the translation slightly wrong, but apparently a number of years ago a portion of a propeller and an engine were found from the crash area, Horst indicated that he will keep in contact with me to get some more details of what happened.

The official U.S. Air Force records indicate that there were 3 parachutes, but many of the witnesses from the 68th bomb group are no longer alive. However, Tom West the engineer from Solomon's crew saw Corky hit and his friend, Ray Zgoda who has also died, left a diary with the details in it.

Now 50 years later, memories fade and the number of individuals associated are few, but Robert Taylor's painting, Welcome Sight, and the prints that were taken off the original will hopefully provide a lasting memory of a fine craft that brought its crew safely home 64 times, with fate intervening on the 65th and last mission.

Recognition should also be given to the ground crew of Barton Cramer, Joe Crisman, Chuck Wagner and Bob Krueger for keeping their plane, and it really was their plane, flying despite the cold, the wet and mud of an English airfield, getting up in the early morning to prepare her for her missions and then waiting the long wait till she returned. Then having to repair the damage sustained, in addition to the routine servicing, but managing to get her ready for the next mission which often meant working through the night in extremely severe conditions.

The picture, Welcome Sight, provides a lasting memory to these men, those who returned and those who didn't and their aircraft.



DATE: 28 January
TARGET: Dortmund, Germany

The Coking Plant at Dortmund was attacked but results of the bombing were poor, due to several circumstances. One 66th Squadron aircraft crash landed on the continent, but with no injuries. One 68th Squadron aircraft did not return.

68th Squadron A/C #42-51101 H or E CORKY
Missing Air Crew Report #12007

68th Squadron Crew:

CORWINE, MAURICE D. ASN 0-771320 Sedalia, Missouri	Pilot Evadee?/Returned	1st Lt.
LOUGH, ROBERT L. ASN T-126827 West Virginia	Co-Pilot KIA	Flt Of.
SCOTT, WAYNE S. ASN 0-206605 West Palm Beach, Florida	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.
HOWSER, EARL P. ASN 0-864127 Kansas City, Missouri	Radar - Nav. KIA	1st Lt.
WALKER, JOSEPH H. ASN 14135751 Sycamore, Alabama	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.
COLOSIMO, PATRICK N. ASN 13061725 Branchton, Pennsylvania	Radio Oper. Evadee?/Returned	T/Sgt.
KIRKEY, VERNON O. ASN 31166867 Plymouth, Massachusetts	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt.
MACE, GLENN E. Jr. ASN 17151925 Washington, Iowa	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.
STEINMILLER, WILBERT R. ASN 12239759 Rochester, New York	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.
WEINMAN, EDWARD I. ASN 32828525 Long Island, New York	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

6304 Meadowridge Drive • Santa Rosa, CA 95409 • 707-538-4726 • Fax 707-538-1212

October 14, 1995

Mr. John Page
6 Meadow Way
Porringland, Norwich
NR14 7LZ
United Kingdom

Dear John:

Please accept this copy of The Second Air Division History as a token of the great respect and gratitude held for you by the members of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association.

Your long, loyal and dedicated friendship with the 44th over the years has been displayed in many ways. Most significantly, with your annual Memorial Day travel to the American Cemetery at Maddingley to provide and place a beautiful wreath in the name of the 44th Bomb Group to the memory of our fallen comrades buried there.

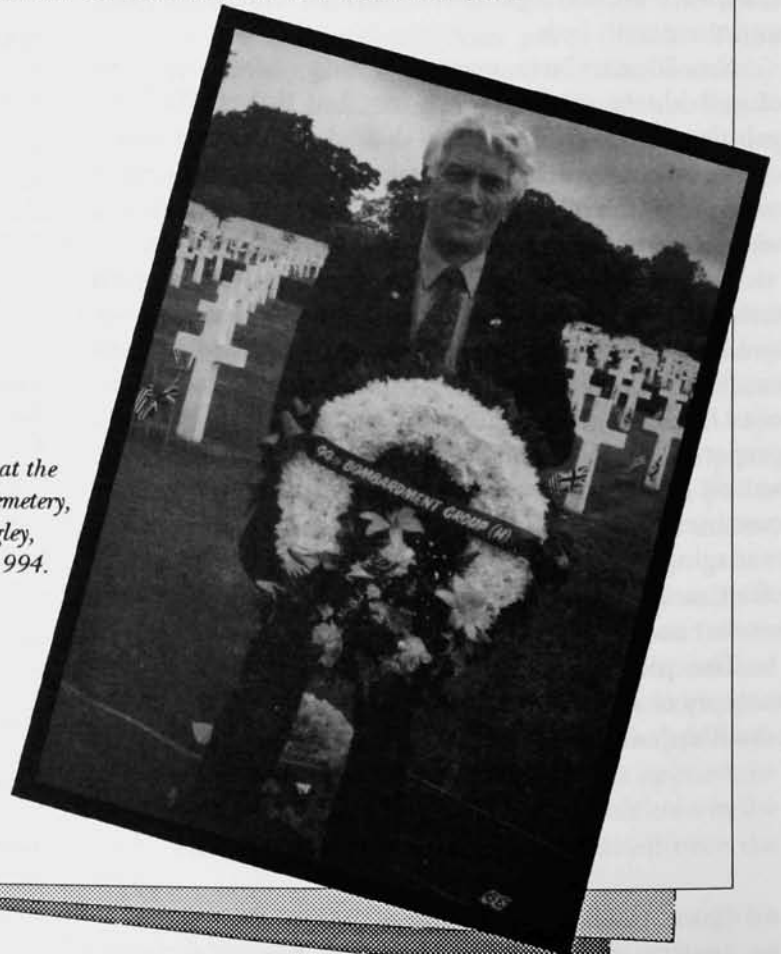
Additionally, the personal contact and guidance you so untiringly provide to any of our group and their families when visiting the Norwich-Shipdham area has deeply endeared you to the hearts of our 44th family, of which you are a part.

While we can never expect to fully express our gratitude for all your help and loyalty, we hope this history will give you pleasure and be a reminder of how much we treasure your friendship.

Sincerely,

Roy W. Owen
Roy W. Owen,
President

*John Page at the
American Cemetery,
Maddingley,
May 30, 1994.*



FLYING CONTROL

December, 1944

Here is some more great text about another of our support units. The only problem here is that I don't know who submitted this report. Can anyone fill us in on who was the Senior Flying Control Officer?

At the outset it should be made clear that the name Flying Control is a misnomer. This Section has as its basic function the safety of the aircraft and crew from time of take-off until it is safely on the ground again, whether at this aerodrome or some other.

Probably a brief resume of the history of Flying Control and how it came into existence in our Air Force is in order. After the first year of war, Great Britain found that her losses in aircraft were far greater on non-operational flights and on the ground than they were because of actual combat. A study of the causes of this situation resulted in the establishment of the Flying Control Organization within the R.A.F. under the Director of Aircraft Safety, Air Ministry.

Shortly after the entry of the United States into the war, liaison between our two Air Forces indicated the need for such a system within our forces. This was especially true because of the expectation that large numbers of our aircraft would be flying from bases in the U.K. where they would have to comply with R.A.F. rules and regulations.

To that end, early in July, 1942, ten officers were sent from the U.S. to England and placed on detached service with the R.A.F. for training in Flying Control. The Senior Flying Control Officer of this station was one of that original group. Since that time, hundreds of USAAF officers have received this training in the R.A.F.

Flying Control is analogous to Base Operations back in the States, but the similarity divides sharply once we leave its fundamental purpose. In the U.S. flying is conducted almost wholly according to peace time and civilian airline requirements. Here, we have only military flying as dictated by the needs of training in new techniques and the demands of the strategic and tactical situation. Thousands of aircraft flying day and night into, out of, and within a country no larger than one of our medium sized states back home. Our job is to provide every humanly possible facility to these aircraft.

Broken down into its major headings, Flying Control is responsible for: supervision of Aerodrome maintenance, taxiing, take-off and landing instructions for aircraft, local air traffic control, the provision of certain navigational aids and facilities, instituting air sea rescue, locating and homing facilities for aircraft that are lost or in distress, various night landing light navigational aid facilities, instituting air sea rescue action through proper channels, routing of non-operational flights, recognition and identification procedure, air raid broadcasts.

Early in the Group's operational history, our Flying Control Section realized that inadequate research and thought had been given to the problems of bad weather daytime landings. The R.A.F. system of Aerodrome night lights were excellent for just what they were intended for, but were useless for aircraft flying in daytime and returning to land under the worst possible conditions of visibility and ceiling. The non-existence of what we considered proper (0865)

equipment, together with the shortage of supply of any equipment and our inability to procure suitable substitutes presented rather tough obstacles. However, even under these circumstances, we did manage to devise a system of runway lights and lights out in the country to act as pylons for the planes to make their turns on, which are still second to none in this country. This is evidenced by the fact that invariably during really bad visibility, all of our planes will land here, plus one or more aircraft from other Groups, who saw our lights. To date, our system of bad weather Aerodrome landing lights has been in operational for more than one and a half years and the number of aircraft saved by it is large. The British Air Ministry has twice sent an aircraft down to make dummy raids on it for the purpose of checking up on its adoption. The Senior Flying Control Officer of First Bomb Division has inspected it with the idea of adopting it so far as practicable in First Division. Various stations in Second Air Division are using features of it and one station is building it in its entirety. On one occasion, under similar weather conditions, 22 of our own aircraft, plus five from other Second Division stations and thirty-two B-17's from First Division were landed during very poor visibility and a heavy snow storm in less time than other stations took to get their own aircraft on the ground.

Any suggestions from flying personnel as to how we can improve our service to them is welcomed and if practical, put into effect. An Alert Crew is always on duty to meet, park and service visiting aircraft. Since this section has a considerable number of activities associated with R.A.F. night flying, it is necessary that there always be a complete staff on duty. Alert crew, crash crew, flarepath crew, Sandra lights crew, Pundit crew, Airfield Controller, Airman of the Watch, Radio-telephone operator, clerks and a duty Flying Control Officer, all maintain a system of watches throughout the 24 hours of the day.

Realizing that the Aerodrome is the front door to the Base for most flying personnel and large numbers of passengers, particular stress has always been placed on neatness, cleanliness and attractiveness of the Control Tower and its grounds. At considerable personal expense, a beautiful flower garden was created around the Control Tower this past year and it is expected that this year an even prettier and larger one will be developed.

The December Monthly Flying Control Report of this station which goes on to higher Commands, indicates 19 heavy bombers, from other aerodromes, in difficulty or distress, were given sufficient assistance by this Section to enable them to make safe landings here. Of this number and because of the efficiency of the Section and the aids and facilities provided, six of these aircraft were possibly saved from crashing. This is a fairly typical month and it is worth noting that the figure of 19 is exclusive of our own aircraft! (0866)

In conclusion, regardless of whose responsibility a duty may be, this Section has never hesitated to either do or see that the job is done. Other Units and Sections on this base have been extremely helpful and co-operative with us in the performance of our duties and our thanks are due them for such excellent teamwork. (Finis) (0867)

DOING OUR JOB

Editor: Better have the Kleenex nearby for this great story! After reading three issues of this journal, you must have discerned that communication amongst the 44th family is our primary purpose. Assisting one member to find another, finding a family member or crew member since deceased, or helping a crew get together after all these years is the high point of doing this job. You, by now, probably have guessed that occasionally your Editor is sitting at this computer trying to type through the tears, emotional guy that I am. This is one of those days. This story will, no doubt, be the benchmark in rewards for doing our job, and one you won't soon forget.

We'll start with an article authored by staff writer Dawn Drago for the Reading (PA) Eagle/Times on Sunday, May 7, 1995. The article concerns Mrs. Lois (Shaeffer) Cianci of Sinking Springs, PA. She responded to an Eagle/Times Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of VE Day plea for copies of letters of love to and from those separated in the war years. Her Letters of Love were from her father Technical Sergeant Clair P. Shaeffer, 68th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group (H) Shipdham, England.

Sergeant Shaeffer, Flight Engineer on the B-24 Liberator "Nice 'n Naughty" was killed in action 21 January 1944 on a mission targeted against a German V-1 Missile complex in the Pas Des Calais Area, France. The 68th Bomb Squadron put up seven aircraft against this target, only three returned.



ABOVE: Lois Cianci sorts through her father's wartime letters, including the three above right. RIGHT: Clair P. Shaeffer holds his daughter, Lois, in a photo from 1943.

"I kept thinking maybe he lost a leg and he didn't want to come home that way, that maybe he stayed (in France). I always thought that one day the doorbell would ring and I would open the door and he would be there."

Lois Cianci

on the loss of her father
in World War II

Letters of Love from a war 50 years ago



Lois Cianci holds dear the love notes she received as a tot from a dashing airman, her father.

By Dawn Drago
Eagle/Times

Lois Cianci, 56, of Lower Heidelberg Township was a little girl during World War II, but she got love letters, photos and trinkets from a dashing airman.

After he was shot down over France in 1944, those precious few things were all she had left of her daddy.

And her Daddy was all she had.

In Reading in 1942, Clair P. Shaeffer was a route salesman for Maier's Bakery, a divorced man raising his 3-year-old daughter alone in an era long before day care centers.

When he had nowhere to leave his little girl during his work hours, he took her with him on the truck. Sometimes, she spent the days at her uncle's gas station in Shillington.

Somehow, father and daughter managed.

But, then, Shaeffer was called into the Army Air Force, where he would later be trained as a flight engineer and turret gunner on a B-24 Liberator bomber and earn the rank of technical sergeant.

He had no alternative other than to leave his young daughter with a succession of friends as he went off to war.

The friends were good to little Lois, but still her father fretted from afar, worrying when she got whooping cough, sending home his pay to cover her room and board, saving up to buy her a set of sturdy bedroom furniture, which she still has.

His letters to her are tender, filled with affection and a stream of pet names - "Dear Snooks," "Dear Princess," even "Dear Crybaby."

He sent her photos of himself and his bunkmates, and he wrote her often.

Once, he sent a large portrait of himself in uniform.

The friends framed it, and Lois kept it on her dresser.

They saved his letters, too, so she would have them when she got older.

She was five on Jan. 21, 1944, when her father's plane was shot

down over France and he was reported missing in action.

Several months later, the wreckage was found and he was officially declared dead.

Lois went to live with her father's half-sister, who was married with two children of her own.

Except for the photos, letters, his uniform cap, his Bible, his flight wings and his posthumously-awarded Purple Heart, Lois has only dim memories to remind her of her father. And, as with most childhood memories, it's difficult to sort out what she really remembered and what she was told later.

She does, however, remember the years of her childhood after her father was killed.

"I was often angry at him for leaving me," she acknowledged. "I kept that picture of him on my dresser and one time I got so mad, I knocked it on the floor and broke the glass."

"And yet I knew that he would have come back to me if he had survived."

For years, she clung with a child's faith to the hope that her father wasn't really dead.

"I kept thinking maybe he lost a leg and he didn't want to come home that way, that maybe he stayed (in France)," she said. "I always thought that one day the doorbell would ring and I would open the door and he would be there."

She read stories about heroic nurses who cared for injured fliers and decided that she would become a flight nurse so she could help injured G.I.'s like her father.

"Ever since I was little, I wanted to be a nurse - a flight nurse," she said.

She did go on to become a registered nurse and to work for many years at Reading Hospital. Along the way, she married Anthony Cianci, and they had two children.

A few years ago, she decided to give up nursing to help care for infants in the Childhood Education Center at the hospital.

Both of her own children are grown now, and she has begun to try to track down the exact location of her father's grave in Belgium.

"I'm told the cemeteries there are beautiful," she said.

Her husband, who works at Carpenter Technology, has an acquaintance who lives in Belgium, and Cianci said he has promised to try to locate the grave.

"I'd like to go there someday, or at least see a picture of it," she said, sitting in her living room looking over her father's belongings.

"But I have lots of things to remember him by, which I'm sure lots of kids don't have."

☐

Sept. 9, 1942

Darling Lois,

Daddy is sending a few pictures of himself and his bunkmates and a girl by the name of Mary. I am very glad to hear your whooping cough is getting so much better, keep that chin up, be a good girl and we'll lick that easily.

This is one of the uniforms Daddy has and the longer he stays in the Army, the prouder he is to wear it.

Down here, the rainy season has just commenced and very

nearly every day we have a short sprinkle. I fully expect to be shipped within the following three days so do not write until you receive my new address. I hope it will be Denver, Colorado. Keep your fingers crossed for me sweetheart.

I am getting along very well down here and really like it tremendously because now I have been introduced to quite a few very interesting people.

Many, many times in the course of the day, the memory of my sweetheart back home comes into my mind, and I never tire of showing the boys your picture and telling them about you. They all say you must be a grand girl.

I wish I could see you and hear you talk. Daddy is terribly proud of you. I am looking forward to your birthday. Imagine, you'll be 4 years old. A real big young lady.

The lights are going off in about 10 minutes so until Daddy comes home, his love will make the stars shine for his little darling Lois.

Daddy

From Army Air Force Tech. Sgt. Clair Shaeffer to his 3-year-old daughter Lois in Reading.

Lois Cianci of Wernersville shared this photograph of her father's air crew. He is standing at the far right.



We pick the story up with a letter written by Bob Maiden to our own Pete Henry after being approached by Lois at the Reading, PA Air show commemorating the 50th Anniversary of WWII.



June 19, 1995

Mr. H.C. Henry
1648 Portland Lane
Jamesburg, NJ 08831

Dear Mr. Henry:

I'm writing this letter on behalf of Lois (Shaeffer) Cianci whom I met at the 50th anniversary WWII air show in Reading, PA. She approached me because I was wearing an 8AFHS cap. After hearing her story, I offered to contact someone through the Second Air Div. Assn. to see if anyone can reach out to her.

Her father, T/Sgt. Clair P. Shaeffer, was shot down over France 1/21/44; she was 5 at the time. Her only remembrances are photos (copy enclosed), and letters he wrote to her as his only child.

The particulars are: T/Sgt. Clair P. Shaeffer, 8AF, 44th BG, 68th BS, stationed at Shipdham, England. His plane was "Nice 'n Naughty." On the photo he is standing at the extreme right. Unfortunately, the others are not identified.

In letters some of his crew were referred to as Tommy, Coss, Stinky, Shock and Sammy. Presumably they perished with him. But there might be some out there who knew this crew and can provide bits and pieces of info. Mrs. Cianci would be grateful.

Her address is:

Mrs. Lois Cianci
871 North Church Road
Sinking Spring, PA 19608

Thanks for any help you can offer.

Cordially,
Bob Maiden
7408 Henry Avenue
Phila., PA 19128-1402
(389th BG, 567th BS, Hethel)

Pete Henry, our Group Vice President to 2nd Air Division, then wrote to Will Lundy, our Historian. Will responded directly to Lois Cianci by sending her excerpts from The Webb Todd 68th Bomb Sqdn. History concerning the Lt. Frank W. Sobotka crew on which T/Sgt. Shaeffer served. He also identified all of the Sobotka crew members in the photo and provided her with the current addresses of the surviving crew, along with the Missing Air Crew Report from the 44th Roll of Honor which he compiled and published.



68th Squadron Crew:

SOBOTKA, FRANK W. Jr. ASN 0-799486	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Flushing, New York
ROSENBLATT, MILTON L. ASN 0-676018	Co-Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Miami Beach, Florida
TEITEL, ABRAHAM ASN 0-678456	Bombardier Evadee/Returned	1st Lt.	Pasadena, Texas
SHAEFFER, CLAIR P. ASN 33187932	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Wernersville, Pennsylvania
CAPIZZI, THOMAS F. ASN 32533914	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Bronx, New York
SMANIETTO, AUGUST F. ASN 19062047	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Santa Barbara, California
ROSS, ANDREW J. ASN 35663111	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Cold Springs, Kentucky
SHOCKLEY, CHARLES W. ASN 15332970	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Milan, Indiana
REEVES, CLARENCE D. ASN 13046428	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Millvale, New Jersey

The MACR had very little information, "At 1524 hours aircraft #42-7501 was hit by enemy aircraft and the bombs were dropped immediately. It was observed to circle off to the left and to begin burning, apparently under control. Enemy aircraft attacks became so intense at this time there was no further chance to observe.

Lt. Milton L. Rosenblatt, co-pilot, added these comments:

"We were attacked by Me 109's while circling to find our target. Both engines on the left side were shot out, putting us in a steep left turn and rolling our plane over on its back. With both Frank (Sobotka) and me on the controls, we managed to right the plane, but couldn't pull it out of the flat spin it went into. The rudder controls were gone and the instrument panel was shot out. Frank immediately hit the alarm bell switch alerting the crew to bail out.

After a few seconds, I spotted only four chutes descending. The mess in our cabin, due to the rolling over, was unbelievable. Our chest chutes, usually stowed behind our seats, had ended up in the radio compartment. I retrieved the chutes, putting Frank's in his lap and buckling mine on. Sgt. Clair Shaeffer was strapped in the top turret, obviously dead, and our radio operator, Sgt. Tom Capizzi was putting his chute on as well. Frank was yelling at us to jump.

Capizzi and I stood at the end of the bomb bay, so I jumped and apparently Capizzi froze up. He and Frank rode the plane down. I have no idea what had happened in the waist or nose sections of the plane, but I know I was the last one out. We were so low at the time I jumped that my chute only oscillated once before I hit the ground.

I came into contact with the Underground about three days after landing. The only information they could give me about my crew was that Abe Teitel was alive and Frank Sobotka's dog tags were found in the wreckage of the plane. I have never heard from any of my crew since then, although on my return to the States, I talked to most of their families and gave them as much information as I could."

On July 25, 1995 Lois responded to both Pete Henry and Will Lundy gratefully acknowledging the help they provided in filling the void left in the life of this little five year old girl when the gallant Daddy she knew from the love he poured into those letters was lost to her in the terrible finality of a war incomprehensible to a child of five.



July 25, 1995

Mr. Will Lundy
P.O. Box 315
Bridgeport, Ca. 93517

Dear Mr. Lundy,

This will acknowledge your letter of July 19, 1995 along with the additional information from the crew log and the briefing check form. All of this has been very helpful in tying together the events of that fateful mission. I have now talked to three of the living survivors on the phone, and I am eternally grateful for your help in locating them.

I am enclosing a copy of a newspaper article from our local newspaper from May of this year which was celebrating the 50th anniversary of WWII. The reporters were looking for love letters from the war and I felt mine were certainly letters of love.

I hope you enjoy reading the article as I am happy to share it with you. This will help you understand why I was so interested in collecting facts about my father even after all these years.

Thanks again for your interest and help.

Sincerely,
Lois M. Cianci

P.S. Would it be possible to send me a copy of your book. "44th Bomb Group - Roll of Honor and Casualties?"

Thank you for your consideration.



July 25, 1995

Dear Pete,

Received your card requesting information on my father:

Clair P. Shaeffer Ser. F#33187932
68th Bomb Squad (H) Shipdham, England
Aerial Engineer Turret Gunner on Liberator B-24
Reported missing 1/24/44 confirmed 10/44.
Remains never recovered.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a news article printed in May celebrating the 50th anniversary of WWII in our local paper.

The reporters were looking for people who had love letters from WWII. I felt I truly had letters of love. This will explain my need to find some missing answers to questions I have had for many years.

Since I last contacted you, I have spoken to another crew member, Charles Shockley from Knoxville, Tn. by phone and also learned that Andrew Ross from Ky. passed away Feb., 1995. We spoke to his wife. We are trying to locate Abraham Teitel, who returned, last address Brooklyn, NY. Then all the crew will be accounted for. This certainly has been very exciting and quite emotional. I do hope some day I will be able to travel to Nuepre, Belgium to the Ardennes American cemetery and visit the WWII Tablets of the Missing.

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,
Lois M. Cianci

A closing word for Lois. We of the 44th Bomb Group, comrades of your Father, will always memorialize him as a member of our family. As you have witnessed, we welcome the opportunity to search the extensive archives maintained to perpetuate the honor and heritage of our Bomb Group and our comrades alive and deceased. Keep in mind that you, also, are a member of our family, please keep in touch. If you need further research assistance, you have only to ask. Lois, you are a beautiful person and you have our sincere thanks for sharing this beautiful story with us.



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I see Will Lundy has done a fine job describing our San Antonio reunion, in the "Will Sez" column, so with that, along with the photos of the reunion we are printing, there are just a few comments on our first 44th BGVA reunion that I wish to add. Incidentally, after asking you folks to send along your reunion photographs, I have so many, obviously space won't permit publishing them all in this issue, so in the Spring Issue we will pick up where we left off and publish more of the reunion pix to share the fun with those who missed the fun first-hand. Thanks for your response, it's so darn hard to get around and snap pictures when there is so much good stuff going on!

While we're in the THANK YOU department, on behalf of all the attendees, we wish, again, to thank our Vice President and Reunion Chairman, Jim Clements, along with his beautiful support system, his wife Nettie and daughter Judy Garrett for the overall organization and management of that great affair. You more than deserve the big Texas tip 'o the ten gallon hat we're giving you with our thanks.

In every event like this, in addition to the obvious heroes of the affair, there is a "behind the scenes" person that without whom the operation could easily spring some serious leaks. This is the local guy or gal who knows who to see, where to go and how to take care of or get the myriad of little things you've overlooked or that pop up in the middle of all the activity. Usually most of the attendees don't see or are not aware of this "masked rider that just rode through," in our case, our unsung hero, Nick Garza, did surface to give us the beautiful "blessing and welcome to Santonio" invocation at the Sunday Banquet. He was otherwise occupied as the reunion committee "gofer," running errands, re-supplying the Hospitality Room, etc., etc. You too, Nick, have our thanks and are included in the big tip 'o the hat!

Now to the business. At the meeting of the Executive Board the following important pieces of business were passed, then presented to the general membership for vote (does that have a different ring to it?).

1. The proposal to the Tower Restoration Project contributors to abandon the project, pay the outstanding obligations and offer the balance of funds of the 44th BGVA treasury was approved.
2. The proposal for the BGVA to accept the offer for the transfer of the balance of the Restoration funds to the 44th BGVA was passed.
3. The proposal for the 44th BGVA to offer to enter into a cost sharing agreement with the Arrow Air Service, Inc. to construct a pilots lounge and memorabilia room connected to the Arrow Air operations center. This addition would incorporate the wall art transferred from the old 14th CBW Headquarters. This proposal was passed by the membership.

4. A proposal by the President to Amend the Constitution to make the Historian a full voting member of the Executive Board is pending subject to appropriate notice to the membership required by the Constitution.

5. The third quarter financial statement presented by the Treasurer and the 1996 budget presented by the President were accepted by the Board for presentation to the membership. Subsequently accepted.

6. The nomination of a return to England for the 1997 Reunion was unanimously accepted by the Board. Reunion committee to be appointed.

The Election Ballots were counted by Vice President Clements, verified by President Owen with the results:

Incumbent MEL TRAGER, elected to represent the Support Units.

Candidate Robert I. "Bob" Brown to represent the 67th Bomb Squadron.

Candidate Sherman "Bud" Dowett to represent the 506th Bomb Squadron.

I will close for this issue with a few of the comments, both verbal and in the post-reunion letters we have received: "the friendliest," "the warmest and most congenial," "don't remember ever seeing so many first-timers for a 44th reunion, it was great seeing buddies from 50 years back!" "everything was great!" and on and on. We had a few tight spots, but they were quickly resolved.

I think the message here is: When you get the registration details on St. Louis in the Spring Issue of the 8 Ball Tails, jump on it and get your registration and hotel reservations early...I predict we are going to have a blow-out reunion in St. Louis when the word gets out on San Antonio. There will be a cut off date for registration for the upcoming convention. The date has not been determined at this time, but we'll let you know as soon as it has been set.



Roy Owen, President

44th BGVA BUDGET FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1996

Projected Income:

145 Life Members (allocated @ 12.5%)	\$1,545
720 Regular Members @ \$15	10,800
Reunion Income (net)	2,000
Contributions (estimated, raffle, etc.)	1,000
Investment Income (estimated)*	<u>2,400</u>
Total:	\$17,715

*We have invested \$1,050 in rosters & \$773 in Caps

Projected Expenditures:

3 Issues of 8-Ball Tails @ \$2,250 each	\$6,750
Historian (8th AF Data Base project plus research)	1,600
Unit Historians 4 @ \$50	200
Archive Research (Mastradone)	200
Membership Search (Hand)	600
Roster (Shepherd)	200
Treasurer*	500
Directors 9 @ \$600 (Travel)	5,400
President (Administrative & Travel)	1,000
Secretary	200
Arrow Air Project Manger	300
Equipment purchases (2 fax machines)	550
Insurance	<u>115</u>
Total:	\$17,615

\$17,715
17,615
\$100

*Treasurer invested \$125 member dues billing envelopes for printing.

We need 35 new members (\$525) to do the MacDill Plaque.



Ho! Ho! Ho!



Merry Christmas!

44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BALANCE SHEET as of September 30, 1995

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Tower Fund	\$35.80
First Security Checking	973.19
Convention Cash Advance	1,500.00
Investors Service Money Mkt	<u>13,756.63</u>
Total Current Assets	\$16,265.62
Other Assets	
Roster Books Inventory	\$1,050.00
Second Air Div. History Books	168.50
44th Bomb Group Cap Deposit	200.00
Bulk Mail Deposit	<u>335.01</u>
Total Other Assets	<u>1,753.51</u>
Total Asset	\$18,019.13

LIABILITIES & NET WORTH

Liabilities	
Life Memberships	\$14,250.00
Memberships Amortized	<u>-1,743.75</u>
	\$12,506.25
Bill Strong Memorial Fund	<u>75.00</u>
Total Liabilities	\$12,581.25
Net Worth	
Surplus 1/1/95	7,370.50
Adjustment as of 9/30/95	<u>(1,932.62)</u>
Surplus as of 9/30	<u>5,437.88</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Worth	18,019.13

Convention Funds are Separate Account

SAN ANTONIO '95 -- THE FIRST FOR THE 44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION!



Nettie Clements and daughter Judy Garrett, helper first class on the reception crew.



Mr. 506th at the head of the Mexican Buffet chow line!



The Candle Lighting Ceremony



The first ever 44th General Membership meeting to get a real Treasurer's report and financial statement.



Charlie Hughes daughter Sandy Symanovich brought her beautiful American Airlines smile to delight our reunion.



The Prez with the Bill Strong kids, Becky and Bill, Jr.



Dick and Ardith Butler, Nick and Nancy Garza, Arlene and Loy Neeper



"Mike" Mikoloski, his son Vincent and grandson Evan being palsy-walsy with Bill Cameron.



Our Treasurer Jerry Folsom and his guest Bev Winger doing some great boogie moves.



Nettie Clements, Irene Lundy and Ardith Butler doing a great job at the Registration table.



Our Reunion Chairman about to imbibe in the HR.



Bob Gjestrum and Tom Shepherd doing a great bartending job in the hospitality room.



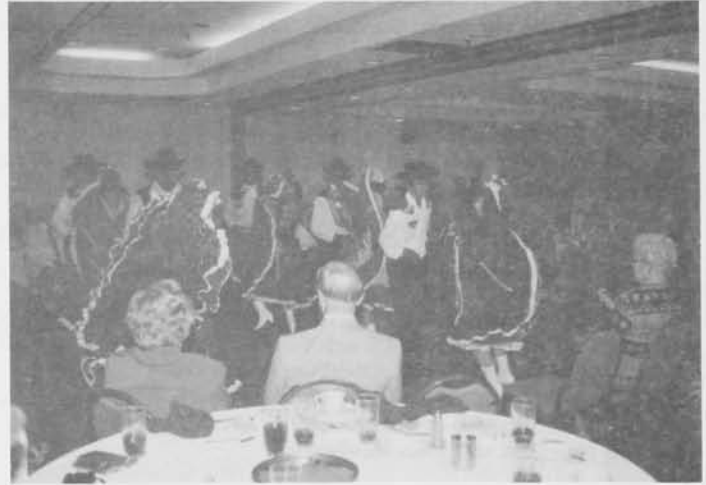
Richard and Caroline Bottomley swinging at the Saturday night dance.



George and Beryl Apgar, a copy of Glenn Miller swingers.



Norm Kiefer and Joe Milliner sorting out the details of the Ploesti Raid in the "Benghazi Debriefing."



The Mexican dancer's floor show following the Sunday Banquet.



The newly elected 67th Sqdn. member of the Executive Board, Robert I. Brown and our Historian, Will Lundy.



Mr. 506th himself, Dick Pederson.



BEATING THE BUSHES

by Art Hand & Will Lundy

Background.

Several years ago, I initiated a column in the old Logbook with the name of "Beating The Bushes." At that time, I was doing much of the searching for our people, often on my own, but usually aided by Art Hand, Pete Henry and Webb Todd. We had only minimum success for all of the effort expended. This all has changed since Art Hand went ultra modern, purchased new, high tech phone disks and is doing most of his searching through the use of this system. He is having a high degree of success, locating many new members and unfortunately, learning that many are now deceased.

Currently, Art is searching and locating our former members, then sending their addresses to me so that I can send them information about their records in the 44th. I try to furnish them with this data, then requesting them to furnish us with as much data about themselves as possible. The 44th BGVA is growing every month, if not in the organization itself, at least in data about those who served along side of us.

Art is systematically searching one squadron at a time - has now completed most of the 66th Squadron and much of the 67th. It is his intention to continue on through the other two squadrons, as well as to work with any member who wants to search for a friend or buddy from the war years. Contact Art Hand at the address shown elsewhere in this issue.

ALBERT J. FLYEN: 1321 East 6th Street, Superior, Wisconsin 54880 (715) 398-5694. Albert was the radio operator on 1st Lt. George Haag's crew. They transferred in from the 492nd BG in August, 1944. 67th Sq.

THOMAS A. GRAVEN: Rt. #3, Box 5054, Galena, Missouri 65656 (417) 538-2332. 1st Lt. Graven was co-pilot for Lt. Haag's crew. 67th Sq.

ALBERT GREYHOSKY: 334 South Vaughn Way, Aurora, Colorado 80012-2441 (303) 366-7170. Albert was co-pilot for C. Henderson's crew, 67th Sq. This crew as lost on 01 October 1943 mission to Weiner Neustadt, with only three surviving to become POW's - He, William Newbold and John Newberry.

LEWIS S. ENNIS: 101 Willow Drive, Elkton, Maryland 21921. 67th Sq. Lewis was a gunner, also on George Haag's crew. Haag's crew flew about six more missions with the 44th to complete their tour.

ROBERT L. VANNESTE: 36 South Ugstad Road, Proctor, Minnesota 55810-2435. Robert was a gunner on Howard L. Hinman's crew. 67th Sq. On 16 January 1945 he broke his foot after bailing out over France.

BERNARD LIPKIN: 500 Iron Forge Court, Royal Palm Beach, Florida 33411. He was the Navigator/Bombardier, normally assigned to Lt. Hinman's crew, but was not on the 16 January 45 mission.

JAMES REGAS: #2 Concord Street, Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania 15065. He was Radio Operator on Lt. Hildebrand's crew. First mission February 1945. 67th Sq.

JACK G. SVANE: 1010 10th Court, Jupiter, Florida 35477. He was co-pilot for Roger S. Markle. This crew was assigned to the 67th Sq. on 7 February 1945, flew Mi Akin Ass home at war's end.

ANTHONY C. YASEVAC: 45 Marshall Road, Branford, Connecticut 06405. He, too, was a member of Lt. Markle's crew, Radio Operator.

LEONARD H. LOUIK: Box 1243, Spokane, Washington 99210-1243. Leonard was a first pilot in the 67th Sq.; was assigned on 20 December 1944. They completed 28 missions, flew home on 21 May 1945.

ROLANDA NELSON: 8 Cedar Street, Presque Isle, Maine 04769. He was a gunner for Lt. W. T. Zerman's crew; transferred to 323 BG on 27 September 1944. Was a 67th Sq. crew.

ALBERT F. NEVIN: 21823 NE 137th Street, Woodinville, Washington 98072-5801. Albert was in the 1287 MP platoon.

CHARLES ALBA: P.O. Box 1323, Dania, Florida 33004. Charles was a 66th Squadron crew chief.

PHILLIP J. QUIRK: 4211 West First Street #1, Santa Ana, California 92703. He was co-pilot for Max Mendenhall in the 506th Sq.

WENDELL C. SWARTZ: 6365 SE Mariner Sands Drive, Stuart, Florida 34997. He was a gunner on Thomas McKenna crew in the 506th Sq.

RAYMONDA KLEMMER: 4429 LaJune Drive, Columbus, Georgia 31907. He was co-pilot on Thames crew in the 67th Sq.

WILLIAM E. MILICH: 17159 Fulton Road, Marshallville, Ohio 44645-9712. William served as Bombardier on Lt. Steele's crew in the 67th Sq.

B. C. FYNBO: 800 South 4th Avenue, Albert Lea, Minnesota 56007. He was Radio Operator, also on Jack Steele's crew. 67th Sq.

GORMAN HERMINGHAUS: 445 26th Avenue, San Mateo, California 94403. Gorman also served on Jack Steele's crew, a gunner. 67th Sq.

CALVINA HINER: P.O. Box 67, Superior, Nebraska 68978. Calvin, too, was a gunner on Jack Steele's crew. 67th Sq.

HERBERT W. TERKHORN: 728 Ash Street, Seymour, Indiana 47274-2561. He was the Radio Operator for O'Brien's crew in the 67th Sq.

DALTON P. BERRIER: 10610 Sagewillow Lane, Houston, Texas 77089-30216. Dalton was Engineer for Robert Schmidt's crew in the 67th Sq.

KYLE E. JONES: P.O. Box 1143, Pinehurst, North Carolina 28374.

CHARLES A. OVERSTREET: Box 621, Route 2, Keota, Oklahoma 74941. Charles was a lead pilot, often flew lead for the 491st BG. Was assigned to the 67th Sq. & 66th Sq.

JOHN A. TORODE: 213 South Cherry Street, Starke, Florida 32091. John served as co-pilot for Charles Overstreet in the 67th Sq. & 66th Sq.

In addition to the men listed above as living and located, Art also found several others that were deceased:

FRED SCHEIDEGGER: RR #1, Box 228, Blanchardville, Wisconsin 53516. Fred folded his wings on 7/26/95. 68th Sq. Crew Chief.

GEORGE B. HAAG: Ambler, Pennsylvania. Date of Death unknown. 67th Sq. and also served with the 492nd BG.

BENJAMIN D. FORD: 15 Shore Point Road, North Little Rock, Arkansas 72116. Widow: Mildred. Ben was 68th Sq. 1st Pilot.

May 8, 1995

Dear Will:

Thank you for your letter of 20 April last. The documents enclosed were very interesting and very valuable. Indeed, I'll be able to use the informations. I certainly wish I had this type of info on all crew members buried here. I want you to know that I appreciate your initiative, very much. I find that actually I never know enough. It's great to have the answer.

You can be sure that the material you gave me will be kept in the 44th BG files, to be available to all who are interested. I feel fortunate to get your cooperation and I think all my colleagues should feel the same way.

If I can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Roland B. Prieur

This letter arrived in response to a mailing to next of kin telling them that the French people in Illfurth, France were planning a memorial service during D-Day celebrations and a memorial plaque at the crash site. Roland B. Prieur, Epinal Cemetery letter attached, being near the crash site and where some of the crew were buried, I sent him the pages from my ROH book covering all the 44thers buried there. If I had time I'd do the same thing for all 11 cemeteries where our men are buried except Madingley, as I donated my complete book to them. Bill Rendall and I have been working with Prieur for data about this crew. ROH pages 154 and 155.



EPINAL AMERICAN CEMETERY

RN100 Dinord, France Tél. 29 82 04 75 Télécopie 29 82 25 78
AinEmbassy Paris (ABMC), PSC 116, APO AE 09777 Phone +(33) 29 82 04 75 FAX 29 82 25 78

Established by Congress
March, 1921

7 November 1995

Mr. H. Henry
44th Bomb Group Association
164B Portland Lane
JAMESBURG N.J. 08831

Dear Sir,

I have just learned that a monument will be erected and inaugurated, on 29 January 1996, in Illfurth, France, to honor the 7 victims of George W. Haynard's crew, whose B-24 (41-29157) crashed on 29 January 1944.

It will add to the plaque that had been inaugurated on 6 June 1994. This plaque is located in the Hall of the County House in Illfurth, while the monument will be erected near the crash site.

The monument is being funded by the town of Illfurth, as has been the plaque. Wouldn't it be great if Veterans of the 44th Bomb Group could attend the ceremony. The people of Illfurth would certainly be happy and honored. If no one can come, I'll be in attendance, and I'll do my best to represent you - what an honor.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Roland B. Prieur
Superintendent

If any of the members would like to volunteer to attend, please contact your President, Roy Owen.



VOYAGE ON THE S.S. CHANTILLY TO ENGLAND

By Ray I. Marner, Jr.

The following is a piece Ray I. Marner, Jr. wrote. He states, most of the stories we have about our group are those of the air war over Europe, as they should be. This story is of the ground echelon of the 506th Bomb Squadron and their problems of just trying to get there.

The ground echelon of the 506th Bomb Sq., 44th Bomb Group, consisting of 14 officers and 270 enlisted men, and under the command of Capt. Green Benton, Jr., boarded the S.S. Chantilly in New York on February 27, 1943.

The S.S. Chantilly was an old French ship that was taken over by the British in 1940. She was not in very good repair, and a lot of work was done on her in New York prior to our boarding, but she needed much more. The ship's crew was composed of some British and the rest were Hindu from Calcutta, India. There were approximately 1,000 troops on board including American sailors, marines and infantry men. The Chantilly, carrying the only troops in the convoy, joined the approximately 74 ships of the convoy in New York harbor and sailed on February 28, 1943 for the United Kingdom.

In Ursell P. Harvell's book "Jaws over Europe" it was stated that the S.S. Chantilly was placed in the middle of the convoy to give the personnel carrier some protection in case of a U-boat attack. This statement was not correct as the Chantilly was centered at the rear of the convoy, with only three ships behind us. There is also a statement in major Harvell's book as follows: "The shipment of skilled Air Force personnel, sorely needed in the 8th Air Force aboard the S.S. Chantilly, a condemned old English ship, the orders taking seventeen days to cross the Atlantic, was given by someone definitely irresponsible and came close to the disaster for the 8th Air Force." Any aboard the S.S. Chantilly would probably agree with this statement. It was truly a miracle that the ground troops of the 506th Bomb Squadron ever got to the Shipdham Aerodrome.

The first 11 days of our voyage were fairly uneventful, aside from very poor sleeping arrangements, seasickness, and probably the worst food any of us had ever eaten. However, on Ash Wednesday, March 10, 1943, this changed dramatically. Around 6:30 pm we heard an explosion and the muster bell rang. We headed up the gangway to the deck in time to see an oil tanker sink and two other ships were damaged. Any ship that sustained damage indicated this by lighting a red light that would be visible to any support craft. We later learned that our Captain saw the first torpedo coming toward us and he laid the Chantilly on her side and the torpedo went along our starboard hull and hit the ship ahead of us on our port side.

The Captain then began to change course every few minutes by rocking the ship from one side to the other and continued this for the rest of the night. He was rocking the ship as much as 43 degrees, which made it very difficult to stay on deck.

Around midnight we were attacked again and the red lights



seem to come on all around the convoy. It was too dark to really see how much damage was being done, but we knew it was bad.

Around 3 am we heard another explosion and either a munitions ship or a tanker with high octane gas was hit and the flames grew larger and larger, lighting the entire area. The light endangered the whole convoy, so a British Corvette shelled the ship and a terrific explosion followed with the flames shooting hundreds of feet in the air. The ship then quickly sunk.

In our position at the rear of the convoy, there were three ships behind us and three ships to our front. At dawn on March 11, 1943, we found that we were alone well behind the rest of the ships. All six ships were either sunk or some may have changed position. We felt that we were like sitting ducks in this vulnerable position. We spent the next day trying to catch up with the rest of the convoy. Obviously, we were probably the slowest ship on the seas. Luckily no more attacks were forthcoming.

In a letter to Major Ursell P. Harvell, in reply to his request, the Dept. of Navy gave the following information: During the attack by U-boats on March 10, 11, 1943, the following ships were torpedoed and sunk:

1. British Cargo TUCURINCA; 2. British Cargo JAMAICA PRODUCER; 3. Norwegian BRUMM COUNTY (or BRANT COUNTY); 4. U.S. Cargo LAWTON B. EVANS; 5. U.S. Cargo ANDREA F. LUCKENBACH. There were other ships in the convoy that were damaged by torpedoes, but did not sink. HMS HARVESTER was damaged when she rammed a U-boat. She took

on board prisoners from the U-boat, and afterward she sank. It was reported by German prisoners that there were 12 U-boats in the vicinity of the convoy. HMS ACONITE sank U-boats No. 432 and No. 442. There were many stragglers in this convoy, scattered because of the high seas and fog, and many left the convoy and proceeded to their destination.

The S.S. Chantilly remained at the rear of the main convoy and sailed up the Firth of Clyde, near Glasgow on March 15, 1943, going ashore on March 16, 1943.

After a long train ride from Scotland, we finally arrived at Shipdham Aerodrome on March 17, 1943.

A few days after our arrival at the Air Base, I was walking from our living site to the flight line, when a staff car stopped and offered me a ride. Being a kid of only 20 years and not very military I piled in the back seat to find then Colonel Leon B. Johnson. I guess the General wasn't very military either. He couldn't have been nicer to me. He wanted to know all about our trip over the Atlantic and all the details of the submarine attack. I will always remember how reassured I felt with this man as my commanding officer.

Top Photo: Lifeboat drill on the S.S. Chantilly.

Bottom Photo: S.S. Chantilly - This "Luxury Liner" looks like something out of an old Humphrey Bogart-Peter Lorry movie! The word among the 506th troops is that the S.S.

stood for Sad Skow.



WILL SEZ

What a great reunion! Weeks later these memories firmly remain: Our guests from England, Janice and Steve Adams, and Paul Wilson and how wonderful to see them here in the U.S. for their first trip ever. This was a golden opportunity for so many of us 44thers who he has corresponded with over the years to meet him, and for Steve to get more information for his upcoming book covering the 66th Sq. history. Paul brought 25 of his beautiful hand painted Flying 8 Ball leather patches, suitably adorned with the individual squadron colors - even donated five of them to us to help with our dwindling finances. Paul and Steve, along with David Morgan, were responsible for setting up the mini museum at Arrow Air on a corner of the old Shipdham base.

First time attendees, many I have never met before but have shared information and letters. One of them was MG William H. Brandon, an original combat man, honored us for the first time. He flew "Avenger" over to England as part of the 66th Sq. air echelon. Too, though not for the first time, BG John H. Gibson joined with us as well. Most welcome, Generals!! 66th Squadron C.O. and pilot on Ploesti, Dexter Hodge was exciting to meet, as were so many others. Capt. Armstrong and Harold Morrison and I had a mini meeting to discuss our latest facts located concerning D-Day. These two men DID lead the 44th and 14th CBW, were the FIRST to bomb the coast that day.

Happily, I was able to sit in on two meetings organized by Ed Dobson in his effort to learn more specifics about the famous Ploesti mission as well as the second Wiener Neustadt. Because the official records for the 44th BG covering these attacks are meager at best, or entirely missing, Ed asked for those men who participated in these missions to meet, re-establish as many facts as possible. Norm Kiefer acted as MC, while Pete Frizzell captured the discussions on video. Pete, for those who don't know him, has worked long and hard on the entire Ploesti mission - all five groups - to record the facts. He has videoed as many personal interviews of these airmen as he can get. In fact, while Irene and I were in the lobby Monday afternoon waiting for a ride to the airport, Pete and Ed Dobson came dashing through, carrying equipment to interview General Brandon! As you probably know, General Brandon was the 44th BG's lead pilot on Ploesti, General Johnson acting as his co-pilot and Commander aboard Suzy-Q. Trust that they were most successful.

The "show & tell" memorabilia room was very interesting to those of us that found it - it was a bit hidden. David Webster and his buddy who are American military

aviation collectors, displayed a fine collection of uniforms, equipment, books, photos, etc. and were on hand morning to evening to answer questions, talk with us all, and provide security for the many other items which our members provided. Thank you gentlemen! Jim Auman, 44th & 466th BG, brought color to the hotel and this display room with his many large decorative hand painted wall posters. At the end, he generously gave them to anyone who wanted one. Jim also provided me with his own account of a 492nd BG crash near the base where two of our fire fighters were killed by exploding frag bombs. Now, to military proof of death and these two men will be added to our official Roll of Honor.

Obviously, this old 44th historian would remember other features of the reunion not generally observed by many others. But for me, I was thrilled because Charles Hughes not only attended, but brought along much of his supply of 66th Sq. ORIGINAL records. He not only brought them, he gave them to me for my archival files, but some I still have not reviewed as there were other historians who wanted to borrow them immediately. Steve Adams will get many copies for his book. Between Charles Hughes' papers and photos, Dexter Hodge's priceless Ploesti photos, our ambitious younger lads (Steve Adams, Pete Frizzell and Ed Dobson) got little sleep. At midnight they took a taxi to get photos copied (yes they located a shop) and worked until 3 a.m. Then, when Joe Goedday arrived, bringing more photos along with his detailed knowledge of the group's processing of mission photos, Steve and Pete failed to get to bed at all. Those Ploesti photos were examined most thoroughly, turning up many clues about which planes were in the photos, which plane took them, targets, where the film was processed and when, etc. Oh, for the energy of youth, and their priceless interest in our history!

Yes, there were several problems which arose, most of them due to the fact that the reunion itself was so successful - a sold-out hotel, with limited space - so eating was a problem at times, etc. But the hotel management did their utmost to solve problems when they arose, with genuine concern and positive actions. They were kind enough to make several copies of papers for me immediately. Busiest man there, night and day it seemed, was our Reunion Chairman, Jim Clements. To you Jim, and your lovely wife Nettie, we all thank you most sincerely... Thanks to all of you that attended, who made this such a memorable event... On to St. Louis, and then ENGLAND!

Will Lundy





FOLDED WINGS

Willis D. Abrams	'93	Unk
Ned Anderson	Unk	68th
Irving A. Barber	5/84	68th
Wade F. Bond	Unk	67th
Ray Ciesielski	'80	Unk
William Dolan	Unk	68th
Ivan L. Gildersleeve	'79	Unk
Rev. Leroy Holmberg	'95	506th
Peter P. Karipin	7/95	66th
K.L. Keese	'72	Unk
John F. King	12/94	68th
Carl K. Miller	9/95	506th
John D. Money	'94	506th
Joel Peek	10/95	67th
Robert E. Rose	Unk	68th
Andrew J. Ross	2/95	68th
Edward Rumsey	Unk	67th
Fred Scheidegger	7/95	68th
John Skutt	Unk	Unk
Jack Tinney	'94	67th
Maurice Welsh	10/95	68th
John Wolbarst	'87	Unk

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



MISCELLANEA

Heaven is where

*the police are British,
the cooks are Italian,
the mechanics are German,
the lovers are French,
and it is all organized
by the Swiss.*



Hell is where

*the chefs are British,
the mechanics are French,
the lovers are Swiss,
the police are German,
and it is all organized
by the Italians.*



SECOND AIR DIVISION REUNIONS

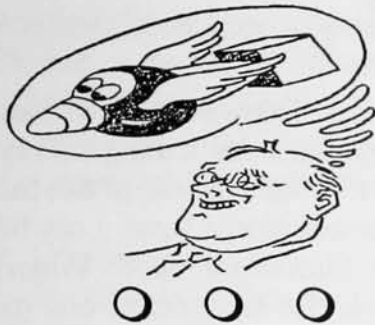
There will be a Second Air Division Regional Reunion to be held in Orlando, Florida at the Clarion Plaza Hotel on February 3, 1996. The hotel will offer special rates for three nights preceding and three nights following the reunion for those who may want to make a Disney World vacation of it. Contact:

Lawrence Gilbert, Chairman
1482 Granville Drive
Winter Park, Florida 32789
Phone: (407) 647-2623

The Second Air Division Assn. 49th Annual Convention will be held on June 13 - 16, 1996 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Convention Reservation form and schedule will be included in the Winter Issue of the Journal.

The Second Air Division of Southern California will hold their fifteenth annual regional reunion dinner at the Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro Officers' Club, Saturday, Feb. 24, 1996. For further information, contact either: Dick Baynes (714) 552-3889 or Jay Jeffries (714) 846-1653.





FLYING EIGHT BALL PATCHES

Paul Wilson of Norwich, England, who many of you met at the reunion, has donated five of his beautiful hand-painted, 5 inch diameter leather 8-Ball patches (any of the squadron colors). The cost to you is \$12 post paid with all profit going to the 44th BGVA general treasury. A terrific bargain to put on a new A-2 jacket! Order from:

Will Lundy
3295 North H Street
San Bernardino, CA 92405-2809
Phone: (909) 882-2441



CALLING ALL PILOTS!

The Aviation Cadet Alumni Association is compiling a listing of former cadets by class. More than 31,000 names are on file, and printouts by Class are available to participants who include \$2 to cover costs. Please send your Flight Class, Primary, Basic and Advance Schools to:

Robert C. White
54 Seton Trail
Ormond Beach, Florida 32176

Due to the amount of contact and detail involved, Mr. White prefers written requests rather than phone calls.



PLOESTI BOOK AND VIDEO

The Ploesti book entitled Black Sunday is available for \$35, \$10 under list price, by calling 1-800-898-2124.

The Ploesti video, short title Utah Man, is available for \$29 by calling: 1-800-869-6379.



44TH BOMB GROUP HISTORY

In case you have not submitted your biography and order for the forthcoming 44th Bomb Group History, the deadline has been extended to January 4, 1996. If you did not receive the form, call Eric Parrent of Turner Publishing Co. (502) 443-0121. This will be a beautiful history, be sure you are included.



ANOTHER AUTHOR AMONG US

Just prior to departure for the reunion, I received a copy of a book entitled Black Hole of Wauwilermoos authored by 66th Bomb Sqdn. member Dan Culler. He was unable to attend the reunion to display his book, but asked me to do so in his behalf. Many of you saw it and some orders were placed at the reunion. I have just completed reading this remarkable account of the USAAF career of Tech/Sgt. Culler from enlistment through training and into combat with the 44th Bomb Group and shoot-down on the Friedrichsafen mission March 18, 1944. The last chapters recount his internment in Switzerland and his change in status from internee to civil prisoner after a failed escape attempt. The accounts of his captivity in Wauwilermoos are brutal I must warn you. It was a facet of the war that escaped the notoriety it deserved. To order the book, make a copy of the order blank herein and by having 44th written in the lower left corner, Culler will send a dollar of each sale to our Treasury.

Reorder form, "Black Hole of Wauwilermoos," book.

For your personal autograph book, please send check with your name and address to Dan Culler, 750 S. LaBrisa, Green Valley, AZ 85614-2232.

Please print your

Name _____

Address or _____

P.O. Box _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Name of person book(s) is to be personalized to _____

Price per book \$16.50 Plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling

Number of books ordered _____ @ \$16.50 per book--Total _____

Postage @ \$3.50 per book _____ Total _____

total for books plus postage _____ Total _____

Thank you Dan Culler

44th

GOOD NEIGHBORS

By Roy Owen

There's been a lot said and read lately about Anglo-American relations. I'm a real Anglophile so I've been loving it. This story is one of the reasons I love England and its people; I'm sure it will bring some smiles and warm remembrances to some 506th guys.

We'll start out at the 44th Reunion of 1992 in Norwich and, of course Shipdham. On the Shipdham Airfield visitation day, a bunch of the local folks got together with the Arrow Air Service staff and, from the 44th memorabilia they possess, they found an original copy of the Thanksgiving Dinner menu for 1944. Lo and behold those precious people prepared and served that meal in the remaining big hangar to the whole reunion! It was beautiful.

During the meal, I fell into a conversation with a 506th guy across the table from me (can't remember now who it was) and I asked him if he remembered the farm family that lived immediately over the fence from our Squadron site (see the accompanying Site 2 photo) and how the wife did our laundry, baked bread, sold us eggs, had us to tea and the small family of three, in general, looked out for us. He replied that not only did he remember, but the wife, Linda Davies (now Weston) was at the reunion, and, was in fact at the luncheon. Thereupon he stood up, looked around

and pointed her out. There she was, 81 years young, slender and grey, but head tossing with laughter. I couldn't believe it! After a minute or two to allow me to fight back the emotional tears, Lolly told me to approach her and introduce myself. When I did and we went through the recognition and getting re-

acquainted period, the emotion really rose and we had a jolly reunion. Linda was accompanied by her daughter Beryl and her husband Ron, with their children Rebecca 12 and Christopher 9. Linda's husband Bill had passed away sometime after the war.

That Fall and Winter of '44-'45 when the Bill Smith crew took up residence at Site 2 turned out to be the coldest in 30 years. We took up residence in the quonset huts, suffered the indignities of double bunks, segmented

mattresses called "bisquits," separate no-heat bathroom buildings called "ablutions," little round coke burning cast iron stoves aptly named Slow But Sure and assigned one to a hut along with about two small wheel barrow loads of coke per week, cold always cold, never enough blankets, and plenty of "C" Ration Stew

in the Mess. Oh yes, and the variations of the supply system. Sometimes our little PX would be out of cigarettes for three days, but we had lighter fluid, lots of lighter fluid and only 10 or 15 cents a bottle. This



Mr. & Mrs. William Davies (Bill & Linda) and daughter Beryl Circa, 1944.



Linda Weston and daughter Beryl visiting with Roy Owen at Shipdham Airbase during 1992 44th HMG Reunion.

turned out to be a blessing because one crumpled-up Stars & Stripes, a shovel full of coke, a bottle of lighter fluid and an accurate tossed lighted match through the open Slow But Sure stove lid and you had a rather explosive but pretty sure start of a fire in the stove.

Like all of the rookie crews, we lived and learned, then discovered that little "home away from home"

just across the fence. Also about that time, we began to also learn the advantages of a convoluted supply system when it came to food supplies. For

instance, fresh meat was scarce, Spam (the mystery meat) was plentiful, powdered eggs must have come in 500 lb. sacks, but here is the surprise; butter, yes, real butter in 2 lb. bricks, we had PLENTY, along with peanut butter and jam in those big cans.

Linda (age 34), her husband Bill (probably about age 40) and daughter Beyrl (age 13) in spite of civilian shortages were doing all they could to "take care of her boys" until the ration coupons were used up. It was then that between the "care" packages from home and the "long on supply" items that could be "negotiated for" at the mess, we could see the wonderful world of barter at work. Linda baked

bread and supplied us with the Kings fresh eggs and we would occasionally form a small group with the Davies and make a foray into a Local Shipdham pub for a beer and darts party. For a bunch of young Yanks a long way from America, homesick, sold and hungry, this relationship with the Davies family was, in large part, what got us through that bitter winter and helped keep a smile on our faces while we were

engaged in the most deadly and final game any of us had ever before experienced.

This was not an isolated thing. It went on all over

the country. They had so little to share, but share it willingly they did. Was I impressed? Your damn right I was impressed, and I'll always love those English ancestors for making me feel like one of the family when I was a long way from home.

Linda is now 84. After Bill died, she remarried and a few years ago she was widowed again. She now lives in a suburb of Portsmouth. Beryl and her family reside nearby. She spends each Sunday with them. We have corresponded regularly since the '92 reunion and she tells me she is staying healthy so she can attend another Shipdham reunion. She signs her letters "Mum," and being one of her "boys." I love it!



*Shipdham Airbase Site 2, home of the 506th Bomb Sqdn.
The Davies farmhouse on the near side of the fenceline.*

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION

Saint Louis '96

October 3 - 7



**MORE DETAILS & REGISTRATION FORMS IN THE
SPRING '96 8-BALL TAILS!**

PLAN EARLY!

MAIL CALL



This comes from:

Ron Chantry

9 Wrestwood Avenue, Eastborne, East Sussex BN22 OHA

Tele: 01323 500421

5/13/95

Dear Mr. Watson:

Congratulations and thanks for a well researched history of Ruth-Less and moving account of her last flight. How sad that the ten young men perished in such a violent way.

Your article is a timely reminder of the debt we owe to them and the thousands like them who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Yours sincerely,



This letter comes from new member Al Greyhosky, 67th (see "Beating the Bushes" elsewhere in this issue:

Al Greyhosky

334 South Vaughn Way, Aurora, CO 80012

(303) 366-7170

5/29/95

Dear Will & Irene:

I was surprised and pleased to hear from you. Let me try clarifying some items in your letter.

1) You probably got my story from Navigator Wm. Newbold. We were fellow POW's in Stalag Luft III. Nothing much happened in POW camp except when we were marched away on a very cold January night because the Russians were coming. A paperback book and various accounts of that march have been written by others. These accounts are accurate because I checked them against my diary of the move to Mooseburg, Stalag VIIA (near Munich). Gen. Patton's army freed us on 29 April 1945.

2) I was never contacted by the 44th Bomb Group alumni, nor did I know it existed until Art Hand contacted me in April of this year.

3) I came to England as a co-pilot on a replacement on Hagers crew. When we got to Shipdham - the 44th was already in Africa. We flew to Africa and joined the 44th just before the Ploesti raid. As a rookie crew with a new B-24 - they "grounded" us by taking our plane. We didn't go on the Ploesti raid.

Our crew was scheduled for the Foggia mission. As we were awaiting take-off, Pimentel(?) ran over to our plane and informed us that the commander didn't want an "all green" crew flying this mission. That's how I joined Henderson's crew. Pimentel was killed in what was my seat. (I met my pilot

later in POW camp and he told me about it. The exact details have escaped my mind over the years.)

We lost an engine in route to Foggia and had to abort. On the way back, we dropped our bombs in Bari Harbor. Soon afterwards, we returned to England and I remained as Henderson's co-pilot.

4) I flew a total of five missions with Henderson. We got along fine. He was the epitome of what a dedicated pilot should be. If he hadn't been, I wouldn't be alive today.

5) The 44th returned to Africa in September, ostensibly to aid the Salerno landing in Italy. The Salerno crisis was over by the time we arrived. The mission to bomb the Folke-Wulf aircraft factories in Wiener Neustadt was the only one scheduled before our return to England.

6) Here's a couple of anecdotes for your information:

a) The following happened after the Foggia mission. Henderson, myself and flight engineer Cooper were ordered to transfer a B-24 from another squadron to the 44th. (Jack Benny was going to perform that night at our base.) It was twilight before we took off to return to our base. We were about 100 feet high when I smelled smoke in the cockpit. Not wanting to needlessly alarm anyone, I turned and asked Cooper if he smelled any smoke. Just then, smoke filled the cockpit.

The landing gear was already up. I didn't know whether Henderson was going for altitude or to crash land. I put on my chute preparing to take the wheel if we were going to climb, in hopes of jumping out.

Henderson decided to crash land. We dove downward and just before we hit, he pulled back on the wheel and pancaked in. I remember the nose wheel coming up through the cockpit after we hit. Cooper was knocked unconscious; I crawled out the window and onto the fuselage. Henderson got to Cooper and handed him to me through the top hatch.

Cooper returned to duty the next day after spending the night in the hospital. Neither Henderson or I were injured. Remember how high a B-24's fuselage is? I stood next to the plane and I could see over it. It was compressed over half its original size. We had crashed in a muddy salt flat that was our salvation. It also put out the fire. We missed Benny's act.

b) Our plane's name was "Count Bruga," although it wasn't painted on at the time of our last mission. My leather jacket had the name Count Bruga imprinted above the pocket.

At my first preliminary interrogation by the Germans, they looked at my jacket, and coupled with my name, asked, "When did you leave Poland?"

At POW camp my fellow inmates asked me (after several days) if I was a Polish "count." I should have lied; it would have made a better story. This odd name came from a novel of the



same name by Ben Hecht (novelist and Hollywood screenwriter).

Again, I wish to thank you for sending the crew list. Memories... "When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

Sincerely,

P.S. After I returned to the States, I visited Henderson's parents and his younger brother in Dallas, Texas. His wife was teaching school in New Mexico and she wasn't present. I told them of the last mission and that I was alive because of his actions. He was somebody.



This comes from:

James Regas

No. 2 Concord Street, Natrona Heights, PA 15065

7/29/95

Dear Will:

Thanks a million for your recent letter. It was a welcomed surprise. Sorry it took so long for me to reply, but I was in the hospital for the common old folks ailments. I never thought I'd grow old, but seems like I went to bed one night and woke up old the very next morning.

Thanks for the addresses of my crew members. I wonder if my pilot Fred P. Hildebrand is still around? I will never forget a mission we flew over Wilhelmshaven on March 30. As soon as we dropped bombs, Fred stated, "watch out grandma." During the flight (after bombs were dropped), I found out his grandmother still lived at Wilhelmshaven. I never forgot that and it really stuck with me after all these years. War is not only hell, but just plain stupid.

Enclosed you'll find a list of missions that we flew. I really don't know how accurate it is, but I searched my old briefcase and came up with this list. Thanks again for your letter.

Sincerely,

EDITOR: Great letter, James. The "watch out grandma" really got to me. One of the cruel twists that came with the hell of war.



This comes from:

James & Elaine Swaile

6164 Capshore, Toledo, OH 43611-1211

(419) 729-0914

8/2/95

Dear Mr. Lundy:

I am the niece-in-law of Clarence Swaile. I am the family historian and we were most honored to hear about Uncle

"Bob" Clarence. His military career in Europe was not known other than he was a tail gunner, shot down and was a prisoner.

It was very interesting to read your information to Aunt Millie Hohn. I am sorry it has taken so long to reply.

Uncle Clarence didn't speak of his war years. He died 4 Nov 1989 in Pitcaun, PA. He is survived by his sister Millie Hohn, 5 nieces and nephews, 14 great nieces and nephews and 14 great great nieces and nephews.

My husband James and I were going to contact Army personnel in St. Louis as we had just found his service number.

The information that your friends and Organization can supply would be a most valuable asset to our family history. It just amazes us that this information would come from such close friends of his in the service.

We would be very interested in all the information you could give us about Uncle Clarence and his service years.

Eagerly looking forward to your reply.

Sincerely yours,



This comes from:

Bill A. Rosser

8121 Countrywood Rd N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109

(505) 821-5485

8/21/95

Dear Will:

Fortunately, I just rediscovered the first issue of 8 Ball Tails. I haven't any juicy "gray" to contribute because most of my memories are of simple, funny little incidents. My memory banks seem more adapted to those rather than some of the sheer terror type things. Guess I'm lucky that way.

As latecomers, we arrived at 44th Bomb Group on the day of the 200 mission party, so we had a rather distorted vision of how a war was fought--beer kegs on every corner with tin cups attached by strings, no one wearing rank insignia, just one big party!! Then we woke up in the real world - - somewhat confused, but we made it.

Of my crew, I now have contact only with Al Weaver, tail gunner. One of those funny memories occurred late on a return from a deep mission. We were somewhere above the Rhine, beginning to wind down a bit, when Al shook us up when he cut loose with his 50's. He had spotted some barges on the Rhine, so he was "strafing" them from 15,000 feet!!

Leo Austin (wings folded), our bombardier, was riding in the nose turret one mission when someone above cleared their guns and the casings broke the plexiglass on the turret. In getting out, Leo nicked his shoulder on a sharp edge. We were kidding him about his "wound" and the Major debriefing us offered Leo a Purple Heart! I doubt that he really put it where Leo told him, because it would have been painful to his majorship!!

On one of our later missions, an ME 262 (?) jet, the first we had seen, was mashing along beside our group after our fighters

had left. Armorer/gunner "Kirk" Kirksey (folded wings) decided to "wake him up" by lobbing a few tracers at him. Boy, could that thing move! We'd never seen anything like that.

One rather scary incident happened when we were flying squadron lead to Magdeburg (02/03/45). We had damage to #1 engine on the bomb run, and soon after release I called my Deputy to take over as I slid out (Alley) and to the left. The call was confirmed by the co-pilot, but the pilot was flying. However, he was on intercom and did not hear the message, so when I pulled out, he stayed on my wing and much of the squadron tried to follow. We were a very lucky squadron that day, because it took some excellent flying by several people to avoid an incident that could have brought down several planes.

On the low level resupply mission to Best, Holland (09/18/44), we transferred our marker beacon antenna from below the catwalk to a Dutch haystack. We were low. I will never forget the flooded fields and the starving animals trapped on the dikes, and the young girl tending cattle in one of the few unflooded fields who saw us coming and waved her white apron at us. I've always hoped that she was cheering us on rather than asking us not to hurt her. That must have been an awesome sight for her.

We always had a reputation of which we were very proud. We were considered a "lucky" crew, meaning that we seldom had problems. Since we always had one non-crew member aboard, we were proud that the guys making up a mission wanted to fly with our "lucky" crew.

My wife, Lee and I plan to go to the San Antonio Reunion and hope to see you and so many others there.

Sincerely yours,



This comes from:

Ken Adrian
2297 Chantalla Avenue, Pueblo, CO 81006
9/12/95

Dear Will:

I got your most welcome letter recently -- thanks for the "Down De Hatch" photo. I had one, but it was small. We flew roughly 20 to 25 missions in that plane.

Bob Iverson of Ledger, Montana, the crew chief, kept the old beaters going and had over 100 missions without an abort, at one time. He was a remarkable crew chief and is one of the reasons we completed our tour.

I'm glad to get the true figures on our group's KIA (860) -- we still have roughly 100 more than the "Bloody 100th". Now I wonder how many POW's we had (528 and 179 Internees).

Don't feel obligated to answer right away -- I know you are busy. I just enjoy writing letters to good people.

Sincerely,



This comes from:

Bill A. Rosser
8121 Country Wood Road N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87109-5262
(505) 821-5485
10/2/95

Dear Will:

Thanks so very much for your letter and list of our missions. During one of Lee's and my many moves, a box containing most of our memorabilia was lost, including the official log of my missions. For some unknown reason, my flight school log book in which I had noted our missions was not in that box. Your list and mine are quite similar, and only the Oct. 3 mission to Offenbergl is really different. I had made a very few comments, which are included.

My first mission was as co-pilot (John J.) on Ryan's crew on August 24, 1944. I was shipped out immediately after my 35th, and was not allowed to go with my guys on their 35th. I think they may have arrived back in the U.S. before I did, though, because at Stone (?), I was assigned to a very large group for a large ship. However, that ship was needed for a hospital shipment, so we had to wait until another large ship was available. As I recall through 50 years of haze, it was about one month before such a ship was free. We were not allowed to challenge the "logic" that our group could not be broken up into smaller shipments!

I cannot recall why or just when we were moved from the 506th to the 66th. I think we were lucky that it happened, though, because we were billeted with Joe Testa's crew, and they were a wonderful bunch of men who were more experienced, and we learned much from them.

I mentioned in my recent letter that we were a "lucky" crew. There were two occasions in which we might not have been able to make it all the way home. One was Oct. 18, when the fuel transfer pump was sprinkled by the engineer who was relieving himself on Hitler when we hit some prop wash and he missed the bombs. We usually did not transfer fuel from the outboard tanks until needed because an empty tank full of fumes was much more likely to explode from hot shrapnel than a full tank. When we landed at a newly liberated field at Brussels where the only fuel was in Jerry cans, we were not particularly welcome, especially when they learned that we had 450 gallons of gas in our outer tanks. We were able to transfer after the pump thawed, so that relieved the problem to some degree.

We landed at Orly, as you indicated, on Jan. 16. Had fields on the continent not been available, it is doubtful that the mission could have been completed as flown because a great many planes were low on fuel. I don't remember how many landed at Orly, but there were a lot of them. Someone ran off the taxi strip into deep mud and stranded several planes. Since there was no equipment available to free him, we were "stuck" in Paris for three days. I told you we were lucky!

We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio. Best regards.



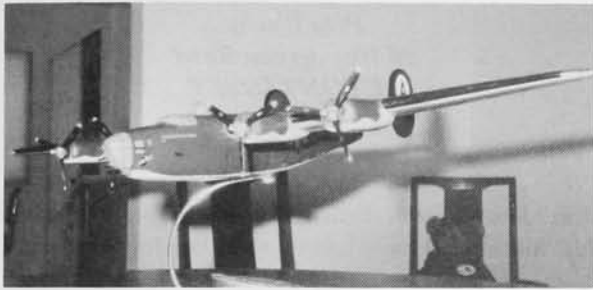


This comes from:

Ralph Golubeck
Pilot, 506th Sq.
13133 Royal Pines Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146-2280
10/3/95

Dear Will:

I would like to congratulate you and all of the others who have done such a great job of re-organizing the 44th BGVA. It was very difficult for me, sitting out here on the prairie to understand fully what was going on. I gather that there has been a rather bitter split in the organization and that you and your colleagues have formed this new group to keep the spirit of the 44th alive. For that, and your great newsletter, I congratulate you all for a job well done.



I have enclosed some pictures of a model of a B-24 "Princess" Tail Number 42-63963, call Letter "W," and would like to tell you the story of the Princess as far as I know it.

I flew the Princess on many missions as a pilot in the 506th B.S. I always enjoyed flying her because, without a nose or belly turret, she was a good deal faster than the "J" or "M" models that the rest of the group were flying. With that lower weight and speed advantage, I always returned from a mission with plenty of fuel. As the length of our missions kept increasing, fuel became a critical factor. On fuel situation, I returned with almost 800 gallons of fuel in the tanks. This wasn't necessarily the result of my fuel management skills but because the Princess just used less fuel.

During one of our missions critiques, Colonel Gibson congratulated me for excellent fuel management. I thanked him, but did not tell him that I was flying a "D" model.

On what was to have been my 30th and last mission, I was forced to seek refuge in Sweden after bombing the oil plant at Politz on 29 May 1944. We made an emergency landing in Sweden after sustaining serious battle damage from a twin engine German fighter (Me-410?). The number one engine was knocked out and could not be feathered, and fuel tanks in the port wing were holed, resulting in loss of a large amount of fuel. My engineer, T/Sgt. Walter Dunlop attempted to transfer fuel, but was unable to do so. With #1 windmilling, and creating a lot of drag and loss of much fuel, it was determined that we would be unable to return to England. We had no other choice but to head for Sweden.

We made a successful landing on a grass field and were interned for about six months. My tail gunner, Sgt. Stephen (Zeke) Jones had bailed out shortly after we had been hit, and was taken prisoner by the Germans. He was later returned safely to the United States.

Normally, that would have been the end of my story, but there is more...much more. After returning to the States in November, 1944, I was assigned to Leatt Air Base in Belleville, IL, flying C-47's. I had the duty of airdrom officer, and one day one of my duties was to inspect the control tower. While in the tower, I heard a pilot call in for landing instructions, but was using a very familiar tail number. My ears perked up! Was this the Princess? I requested that he repeat the call sign and type of aircraft. You guessed it! It was the Princess!!

I immediately left the tower, jumped into a jeep, and drove over to where the B-24 had just parked. I could not believe my eyes - it really was the Princess! It had been repaired, flown back to England and then to the U.S. and now was on her way to Arizona to be melted down. How sad!

I remembered that I had left my Zippo lighter in the plane when we landed in Sweden and wondered if it was still there. After a complete search of the flight deck, I am sorry to report that it was not there.

The next morning I went down to the flight line very early. I was hoping to be able to fly the Princess just one more time. All I wanted to do was to shoot one more landing. But even as early as I was, the B-24 pilot was earlier. He had just left for Arizona.

This should have been the end of my story, but again, it wasn't. Hold on - more to come: Fifty years later I was a volunteer at a flight museum in Dallas Texas at Love Field. One day, in late May of 1994, I was walking through a window display of about 20 warbird models when I spotted a B-24. Somehow I instantly knew that it was the Princess, even though I had not seen the nose art or the tail numbers. I literally ran into the shop and asked to see that model.

I was speechless at first, but finally managed to convey to Irene that I had been the pilot of the original airplane. About this time, the owner of the shop appeared and wanted to know what was going on. When I told him, I could tell that he really did not believe my story. How could I convince him that my story was true?

It was then that I remembered an old picture of the Princess that I carried in my wallet. Will, I believe that you sent it to me years ago. When I displayed the picture, they immediately believed my story and insisted that I sign an autograph book which contained autographs of many pilots. I was honored to sign, and of course, I bought the model and proudly display it in my den.

I have always been curious about this airplane and interested in clearing all of its history. *Why was it the only "D" model in the 506th Squadron?* (All others had been lost, last of the

"D's.") ("D's" were vulnerable to nose and belly attacks, so all replacement models were J or H models.) *Was it on the Ploesti Raid?* (No, did not arrive until the end of September, 1943.) *Who flew it to the 44th BG?* (Unknown, but R.A. Johnson was the first to fly her in combat - 2 October, 1943.)

However, I do have a few facts which might help trace the Princess. There were several names on the airplane at the various crew positions. The only one I remember was Carlton Horne. He had transferred from the RAF. I flew a couple of missions with him and remember him very well. When I returned from Sweden, I saw him in the officers club playing bridge with Major McAtee and two others. Perhaps if he reads this letter (or others), he could help me.

I think the Princess might have been one of the Ploesti Raiders. In Steve Birdsall's book, "Log of the Liberator," on page 28, he writes, "Behind him, Princess and all the rest pinpointed their bombs." (Reference could have been to Princess Charlotte, though this plane did not fly Ploesti either).

I always thought that only the original 44th BG planes had the logo. Maybe some of this will jog some old memories and I can at last know the history of my "Princess." (No, the Flying Eightball was painted on the pilot's side for a considerable time after the original "D's" were gone (other than Lemon Drop).

My wife and I are thrilled that the 44th will assemble in my home town of St. Louis in '96. I have never before attended a reunion, but am certainly looking forward to attending this one.

On a sadder note, my old friend, John Money, folded his wings last year. We were good friends. He was a 506th Squadron pilot.

Keep 'em flying...

EDITOR: *Thanks for this amazing story of what seems to be your destiny with "The Princess" even in the form of a beautiful model! We don't have anything in the roster on Carlton Horne. You might try Jim McAtee, RRI, Box 134E, Viola, IL 61486. Also, you might wish to get your own copy of the 44th BGVA Roster to help in your research. See the note on Roster purchase elsewhere in this Issue.*



This comes from:

*James & Edna Auman
352 Church Street
Saint Marys, Pennsylvania 15857-1012
10/30/95*

Dear Roy:

We want to thank you and all the others who put together the wonderful San Antonio Convention, the hotel arrangements, the tours, the Mexican band and dancers and most of all, those good old 44th Bomb Group people. We came home with dozens of new friends and a million sweet memories.

You have our total support and warmest regards in all our 44th veterans ventures.



This comes from:

*Pete Worby
26 Woodgreen Road
LUTON LU28BT
England*

Dear Pete:

You don't know me yet. I am a 37 year-old English "Friends of the 8th" member. I have been a member for 20 years.

It is remembrance day here as I write this letter to you and I am sad today as I remember those that fell and thankful that I have never had to experience the horror of war.

I do appreciate what you guys did to help us free and no one will ever be able to find the words to thank you all enough. I hope some of us keep all your memories alive, I intend to.

Please tell me about yourself, Pete and tell me how much to send you for a copy of a war time photo of you, as I am most interested.

The greatest thing that I wish I could have is to shake the hand of every USAAF veteran because we consider all of you as honorary English.

I saw your page in 2nd AD news about "Petra" (p 11 Summer 95). Petra is an old temple set into a cliffside. It appears in the closing shots of the film "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" as the exterior of the temple.

Please can you also tell me how much to send for an old copy of 44th Newsletter and if any 44th want to write to me, I would love to hear from them.

If there is ever anything I can do for you or any 44thers, please let me know, as I am most honored to know you all.

Yours.

EDITOR: *He'll have a copy of this issue soon!*



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THE NEW 44TH ROSTER

Have you ever wished that you had a 44th BGVA Roster of your own to keep track of your crew and other buddies? Well, it's here! The Board authorized publishing the Membership Roster and we introduced it at the San Antonio Reunion. It was a RUSH! This first issue Active listing is complete as of June 1, and the deceased list as of June 5. Your order will be accompanied by an addendum sheet of changes since those dates.

The Roster will be completely updated and reprinted biennially on June 30, with an update addendum June 30 of the between year. The cost is \$5 plus \$2 1st class postage. Place your order with:

Art Hand
517 Elm Street
Paris, IL 61994



Make checks payable to:
44th BGVA
(In the lower left corner of your check, note Roster.)



SEARCH - ROSTER - MAIL LIST

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

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

If you move or change any aspect of your address or phone number, wife's name, want to stop receiving the 8 Ball Tails or whatever, please notify:

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

Going Home-the job is done



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

44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

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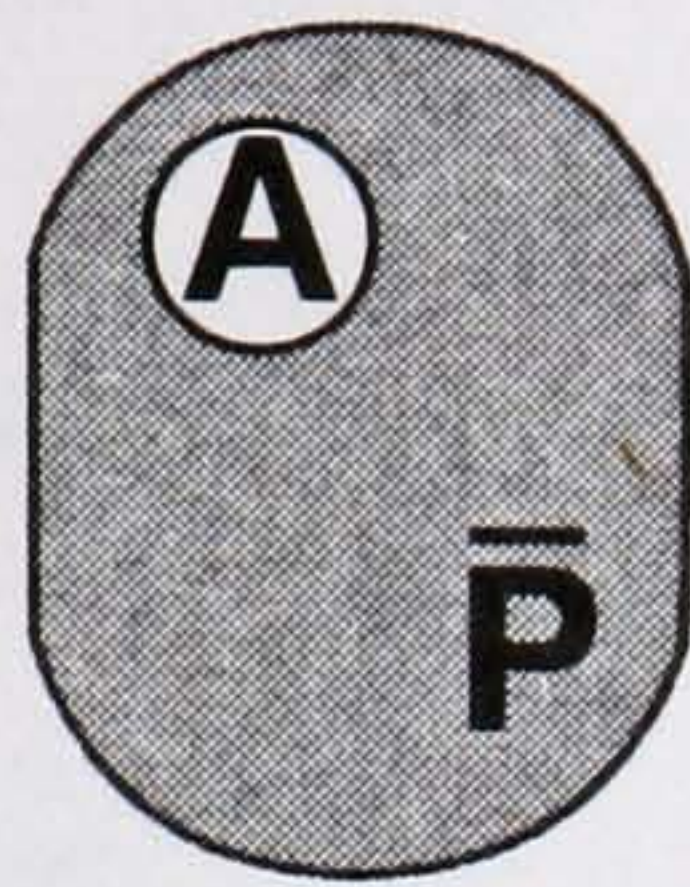
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Reunion '96 October 3-7



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



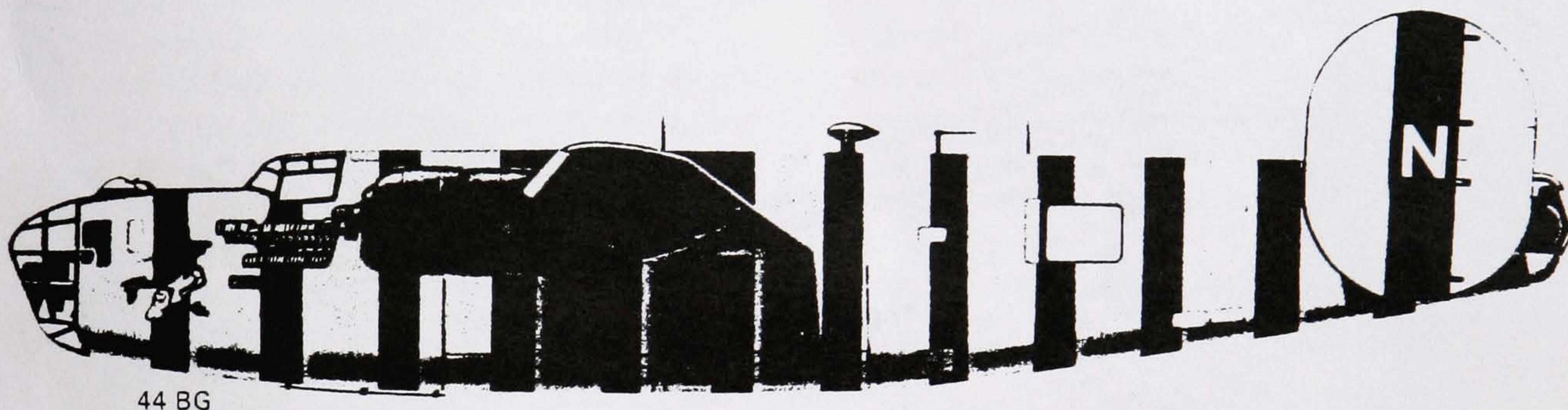
8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 1 – Issue #2

Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Spring 1995



The planes of the 44TH

After the inaugural issue in which we introduced the notion of our masthead displaying the variations of our tail markings and a play on words in the title using Tails in place of Tales, we got such good response we've decided to go another step in our approach to gathering the tales which Will Lundy so appropriately calls "the gravy" that brings life to our history and heritage. What this means is a departure from being editorially **reactive**, that is asking and encouraging, then waiting for submission of your stories, to a **pro-active** theme which will stimulate your memories and desire to add to the fragments of history we present here in the 8 Ball Tails.

How will we do this? Henceforth, as you see above, with each issue we will feature one (or more) of THE PLANES OF THE 44TH. This issue, of course, the featured Liberator known to us all; Aircraft #41-23699, B-24D, Call Letter Bar-P, (Changed to N Oct. 1943),

"LEMON DROP"

She, being the only aircraft of the original complement of B-24D models assigned to the 44th that survived the entire war and stood proudly operational on VE Day. Her combat mission record stands at 45 and we know there are many, many stories within those missions that the 68th Squadron History does not reflect. Herein we present a couple of those stories and some pictures both of "Lemon Drop" in her combat prime and later in her gaudy paint job as our Assembly Lead Aircraft. You'll learn how she got her name and more. We hope that by featuring our aircraft, flown by various crews we will bring forth more of these stories and experiences that we can share in The Tails. We hope you enjoy this theme. The next issue will feature Aircraft #2100411, Call Letter E-Bar, 68th Squadron.



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

6304 Meadowridge Drive • Santa Rosa, CA 95409 • 707-538-4726 • Fax 707-538-1212

Mrs. Trae Arter, Americanism Chairperson
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Cantigny Post #367
817 Fisk
Joliet, IL 60435

January 3, 1995

Dear Mrs. Arter,

I have just been informed by Mr. Mel Trager, our Programs Co-Chair and member of your proud organization, of the donation by your Post of the United States National and POW-MIA Flags with flag staffs to our Association.

Please allow me, on the part of our membership, to express the profound gratitude we feel that your membership should honor our Association with the gift of the colors that symbolize the nation we love, have served and eternally pledge our allegiance.

Your gift has filled a great need which came about in 1994 when our predecessor organization ceased to operate. To a majority of the membership this occurrence was simply unacceptable. The 44th Bombardment Group, the Ploesti Raiders, after all, had written one of the most glorious chapters in the Air War Chronicles of World War II. It was not simply to be laid to rest. Once again the loyal members answered the call and, like the Phoenix, enabled the 44th to rise from the ashes in the new name of The 44th Bombardment Group Veterans Association. I felt this brief background would help explain why your presentation is so significant to us. We were left with nothing but determination to see our proud organization survive. Those colors will serve to remind us of the hand of friendship and help that was extended by an equally proud and determined organization pledged to always serve them.

Sincerely,

Roy W. Owen
Roy W. Owen, President

cc: Mel Trager

NAMING OF "LEMON DROP"

By Hylan "Hy" Simmons

After the Reg Phillips crew took over the new plane just prior to leaving for England, we were having a bit of trouble with it. The plane was having trouble flying to altitude—among other worrisome things. Then, en route to England, we had a bad landing at Newfoundland, smashing the belly of the ship.

They worked on it there to get it in good enough shape that we could fly it back to the States for repairs at the Air depot in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. After about three weeks of structural repairs, we again left headed for England. We stopped in New Hampshire that first night to gas up. The next morning when we opened the Bomb Bay doors on preflight, there was gasoline pouring out of the wing into the Bomb Bay. Lt. Phillips decided it would be best to return to Harrisburg again for repairs. We flew back to the Air Depot with the Bomb Bay doors wide open and gas dripping out. At Harrisburg they went back to work on her again and found that someone had sabotaged the wing tanks! Lucky that we didn't blow up in flight! Finally, repaired again, we took off for England and made it, uneventfully to Newfoundland where we were once again delayed by weather. Finally, by way of Iceland we made it to Shipdham. By the time we arrived, we were several weeks behind the others from our squadron.

It was at that time that the name "Lemon Drop" was born. Strange that with such a poor start she survived to be not only the last of the original aircraft, but she survived the entire war! I flew my first five missions in "Lemon Drop."

First mission? Lt. Phillips on 20 December 1942.

Pilots flying her included Phillips, O'Brien, Garrett, and Houston who, on 14 May 1943 took her to Kiel—and brought her back. In June, 1943 she travelled to North Africa and flew several missions in July, then flew on and returned from the 1 August '43 Ploesti raid. So she helped us win both of our Presidential Unit Citations. She also made the second trip to North Africa in September '43; completed three more missions while there including future 68th C.O. Robert Lehnhausen taking her to Weiner-Neustadt and bringing her back once again. This mission too was a demanding raid on which the 44th suffered heavy losses.

Upon return to England in early October, old Lemon Drop seemed to lose her popularity, with snide remarks about her "toothpick props," her aging condition, her many patches and repairs, so the missions came

less frequently. Pilots Gildart, Stahler, Slaughter and Marcouillier took turns flying her, with Stahler's mission to Oslo, Norway on 18 November being yet another tough raid on which the Lemon Drop brought her crew back safely. Then several of the 66th pilots decided to get in the act and flew a few raids in her: Miller, Ugarte, Comey, Insley and Irby taking their turns in December '43. Lt. Jewell was scheduled to fly her on 30 December, but Lt. Irby took her instead. After a long rest, Capt. Jansen, with Major Killinor used Lemon Drop to lead the entire 44th Group on 8 February '44 to Watten, France for her final operational mission.

Having earned her retirement, she "volunteered" to show the new, younger replacement aircraft how it was done as she acquired a gaudy new yellow paint job with vertical encircling black stripes and was put to work as the Assembly Lead Ship. Launching in advance of the mission aircraft she would climb to assembly altitude at our Buncher Beacon and start a racetrack pattern firing green-green flares until the group was formed and ready to turn on course for the Division Assembly Line and on to the bomber stream. Lemon Drop would then call it a day and return to base, as usual, her assigned mission completed.

Lemon Drop recorded 45 operational missions, some extremely tough, but she managed always to return from each. Scattered among her raids were those early diversions for she was credited with four ducks painted on her side along side the fifteen Swastikas indicating victories over German fighters. For all of this, the 68th Bomb Squadron, and particularly her Crew Chief, MASTER SERGEANT CHARLES PIGG are justly proud.



"The Lemon Drop" with Sgts. Huff, Ingram, Banta, Hayes and Gavin in the back and 2nd Lt. Haworth, Capt. Phillips, 2nd Lt. Scarlett and 1st Lt. LaFleur in front. (Photo courtesy of R. H. Phillips)

A MISSION WITH A VETERAN

By Sgt. George Lemley, Radio Operator on Lt. Paul Ugarte's crew.

26 November 1943—Target: Bremen, Germany. “The B-24 we flew on that day was called “Lemon Drop”. The name couldn't have been more appropriate. No demand-type oxygen system, just the constant supply type with the bladder that filled up with saliva and froze at altitude. Well, we were each presented with at least three of these each. I can still see the Bombardier with that load over his shoulders. And froze they did! Also, that old plane had those lousy “toothpick” props, which made her a slow climber.

We had not been over enemy territory very long until we encountered short periods of flak and fighters. However, on nearing the target, the flak became heavier and the fighters more numerous. Well, about all the gunners could do was to point their guns in the direction of the fighters and hope the tracers would keep them at a distance.

During this period of the war it was rumored Hitler had a secret weapon which he was sure to use against us. Well we did see some strange articles hurtling in space which looked like ash cans which might have been empty gas tanks dropped from German fighters; and we did snicker at some stupid fireworks which looked like pin wheels trailing smoke behind them. Shortly after turning for home our Bombardier and Navigator announced that a German had dropped cable on us. It wrapped around the grid work of the “green house” and broke some of the plexiglass which then cut both men up front. We could see the cable flapping but fortunately not close to the windshield or the propellers.

Just then some sort of projectile struck our ship, wounding one of the waist gunners and I saw some sort of object flaming from both ends on the catwalk in the bomb bay. The pilot surmised that it was a 20mm slug, probably of the tracer variety. It soon burned itself out.

The pilot suggested that I go down to the Bombardier's compartment to see if I could be of some help there, so with a walk-around bottle, I struggled through that narrow opening. But the two of them motioned for me to go back. There did not seem to be any immediate danger and both were doing fine.

Beside having no front turret, this old clunker had no ball turret, and worst of all it has a caliber .30 machine gun mounted beneath the flight deck near the APU — “putt-putt.” I was told, in addition to my duties of Radio Operator and photographer, I was to operate this flexible gun. But I had no intention to take up this position as I returned from the nose. No Way! After we dropped our bombs I was to leave the bomb bay doors slightly open to try to photograph the bomb strikes, but I left without being told. When I announced to the pilot that I had left the position, I was told that I should have left there long before.

Just as we were preparing to land the pilot instructed me to start up the “putt-putt.” When I tried, the top of the cylinder came off. Later we saw that we did have a fairly good hit just beneath the bomb bay and were damaged. Glad I had the initiative to leave that area when I did.

And so “Lemon Drop” survived yet another mission—and many more to come. She finally was converted to a “formation” ship gaudily decorated with those stripes so that our 44th planes could readily identify her and form up quickly and efficiently.



Roy Owen, President

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

There's lots to talk about this time, some bragging, some newsy things, and some head stuff (things to think about). Let's get the bragging out of the way which is going to all be about the way the memberships just keep rolling in. At last count we are up to 941 total members with 140 of those being Life members. It is so encouraging to see there are so many who refused to lay down and let our 44th fade away. We thank you for the wonderful sup-

(continued next page)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER *(continued)*

portive letters that are pouring in with all the good words about appreciating our first little 8 Ball Tails and all the work the "Survival Committee" did to keep us alive. I've said before, it was labor of love for us all, but it sure is nice to get a pat on the back from you all.

Back to memberships, first for you early supporters who sent in your \$5.00 for the last part of '94 dues, don't forget to get your \$15.00 in for '95. We're sending this issue of The Tails to all of the '94 members, but we'll be trimming the mailing list to those paid-up members for the next issue. Also, for those of you that are not members of The Second Air Division Association, I encourage you to join them. Our Constitution pledges affiliation with, and support of the 2nd ADA and it should be our aim that, once again, the 44th take its rightful place along side our contemporary Groups who served under the 2nd Air Division Command. It follows that we can more easily accomplish our goals of perpetuating the heritage of the 44th and honoring our fallen comrades with the support of 2nd ADA than we can without them.

The last thing I want to discuss about memberships has its basis in the research I've been doing on our IRS Tax Exempt Veterans Organization status. Our constitutional membership eligibility which extends membership to "Spouses, Widow(er)s and direct descendents of 44th Veterans" is in perfect accord with the IRS requirements for tax exempt status. Our Constitution also states "each member attending an official meeting will be considered a delegate to that meeting." What this translates to is that by having your wife hold her own membership when you both attend our reunions, and you itemize deductions, you may deduct both of your travel expenses to an official meeting as delegates. Most importantly she will be enfranchised with a vote. Let's face it, they all raise their hands when there is a vote called anyway. We might just as well make it official! I just sent \$15.00 in for Lolly after she informed me that if I expected her to stick stamps and address labels on these 8 Ball Tails, she was demanding woman's suffrage!

About the time (hopefully) you are reading this your Executive Board will be having its first meeting in Saint Louis, MO., the top of our agenda will be to look at that fair city as the site for our 1996 reunion.

Also, I have notified the Board of my intention to appoint a Treasurer to replace Will Lundy, our Historian/Acting Treasurer under the authority of Article VI, Section 3 of our Constitution which provides for such appointment. Your new Treasurer will be Gerald W. Folsom (506th) of Salt Lake City. Gerry has been a career accountant and is presently the treasurer for the Salt Lake County Fish & Game Association, a nonprofit organization. He has a professional computer accounting system which he will integrate our finances into. We should be able to turn Will Lundy back to his Historian duties full time by the end of April. Again, we owe Will a big THANK YOU for seeing us through this resurrection period

by accepting the Acting Treasurer job and handling the donations of seed money then the receipt of membership dues, paying the bills and all the attendant banking, all the while answering your letters and my questions, and passing on material to me for the 8 Ball Tails and the membership information to Art Hand and Tom Shephard. Will is living proof of the old saw "if you want something done right, give it to the busiest person you can find." What amazes me is when Lolly and I visited with Will and Irene and he showed me all of his archives and historical material I couldn't believe how neatly this man does all this. You know—a place for everything and everything in its place. Hard to believe for a guy like me who operates like I am the author of "How to Survive and Function in a Messy Office!"

Speaking of surviving, your ole' Prez needs some help; I'm finding that the total of the job of president, editor, publisher has become so near full-time that there's hardly time to spell retirement, let alone do it! Before you read "bitchin'" into this, let me say if it wasn't a labor of love, I wouldn't be doing it. I proudly accepted the job, knowing it was a lot of work, because, frankly, I wanted to see our new organization get underway and going strong to my satisfaction. Not my ego satisfaction, just to see us functioning as a democratic organization should. Now the problem is that while I own a computer (thanks to Lolly), I am really far from being computer literate. I manage to peck things out in Microsoft WORD, and with the help of my local Kinko's printer, I've struggled (almost) through my second edition of The Tails, but I do it very inefficiently. What I need is an 8 Ball'er who is really in charge of a computer and is into desktop publishing, like Pagemaker or similar, to handle the publishing side of the editor-publisher function. This would serve another purpose besides relieving me of the design and layout of the publication. I've found that the cost of printing in the San Francisco region is about 30% above the norm for the rest of the country. Lolly and I have been doing all of the typing to save the cost of the printer doing the typesetting, but still the printing is costly. If we could print in the vicinity of our publishing function we could cut costs considerably. Some of you "computer heads" step forward with some ideas and offers to assist me in giving our membership a journal we can be proud of.

See you in San Antonio.

—Roy

IF YOU HAVE A RED SPOT ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL, WE DON'T HAVE YOUR '95 DUES OR LIFE MEMBERSHIP AS OF 3/23/95. YOUR MEMBERSHIP BECAME INACTIVE APRIL 1, 1995, THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST ISSUE OF THE 8 BALL TAILS. PLEASE RENEW BY JUNE 1—WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU!

WILL SEZ

Many of you have written questioning the status of the restoration of the control tower at Shipdham, so let me bring you up to date. As most of you are aware, nothing much has been done with the tower due mostly to the pressing and urgent need to concentrate on the saving the organization itself. Now that we have stabilized our new 44th BGVA, the subject of further restoration of that building will be a major topic at the 44th BGVA Executive Board meeting at St. Louis, MO on the 7th and 8th of May.

Work on the old tower was never approved by the 44th HMG Board, so I felt under those circumstances, I should take on this project personally. At that time nearly 400 of you agreed that something positive should be done. Now that we have a new and dedicated leadership, I am relinquishing my left field position and will abide by the concluding decisions of our Executive Board.

Irene and I along with Richard and Ardith Butler will be attending the 2nd ADA VE Day Commemoration party in Norwich the first week in May, and, of course, visit the old Base with our other 44thers. At the St. Louis meeting the Executive Board will confirm the appointment of Col. Butler and myself as a committee to investigate the viability of the Shipdham Tower restoration project while we are there. In that regard, I have requested and have received an invitation to meet with the owner's agent to discuss options available concerning the tower itself so there should not be any misstatements or misunderstanding of the facts. The results of this meeting and our discussions with Mr. Doug Genge, our benefactor in the past, will be presented to our Board for review and a logical decision will be announced as soon as practical.

Please remember that all of you can contribute to the "gravy" of our heritage by continuing to send in your stories about your time in the 44th, be it during WW II or up to the present time. The 44th was active for 53 years, so just think of the many experiences our people must have had. We'd love to have any of your experiences that you have the nerve to tell and share with the rest of us. Those who took over in 1945 surely must have many accounts that would be of interest to all. Every 44th'er of every era is invited and encouraged to share their stories with us. See you in San Antonio,

—Will



Our traveling Historian and our new Group Vice President to 2nd ADA along with their supporting cast Irene and Ardith smiling over our success at Colorado Springs.

FOLDED WINGS

PLOESTI VETERANS

Vincent Huenerberg	67th	3/93
Tom Laskowski	68th	12/94
James R. Perry, Jr	67th	11/94

ALL OTHERS

Willis J.W. Cato	67th	10/66
Walter Cohn	68th	9/92
Conrad Menzel	506th	'93
Carlisle Crutcher	66th	'92
John V. Patton	68th	5/93
Fred E. Fayard, Jr.	ukn	ukn
Sam F. Junrin	506th	2/66
Wayne M. Rickert	68th	4/93
William F. Zoller	68th	7/93
Frank J. Namiotka	67th	1/89
Robert E Felber	66th	6/93
Robert W. Ryan	67th	1/93
Frederick A. DuBose	506th	12/93
Walter Nealon	68th	ukn
George Bryant	68th	ukn
Kenneth Moore	68th	ukn
John E. Kirby	67th	'93
Harris J. Slutz	ukn	12/90
Everette Cassells	ukn	11/79
Edward J. Kamholz	ukn	ukn
Donald E. Hefner	ukn	'81
John Bass	ukn	'87
Cortland Woodruff	66th	5 /81
Wilbert Bupp	'87	ukn
Marvin G. Jenson	ukn	1/91
Leslie B. Chisholm	ukn	ukn
Kenneth D. Kagley	ukn	'83
Dennis F. Murphy	ukn	2 /93
Albert Leghorn	66th	ukn
Sampson L. Dietz	66th	ukn
Ross Carrow	506th	'93
Charles Huntz	506th	'93
Ralph Jorgenson	506th	'93
Lyle Murphy	506th	ukn
Robert Petkoff	506th	ukn
Irwin Rada	506th	unk
Herman Smith	506th	ukn

Harry Steele	506th	1/93
Robert "Foots" Lee	68th	ukn
Bert Johnson	ukn	7/94
Theodore B. Hoffiz	66th	4 /92
Joseph H. Bonneau	67th	3 /93
Morrie Meunitz	ukn	ukn
Frank P. Pacylowsky	ukn	'75
Joseph Arcangeli	66th	2/95
Harold F. Bergmann	67th	1/95

This is a partial list of our deceased 44th comrades that Art Hand has been able to trace just recently with the capability of his CD phone directory.

This also explains some of the long past dates of the passing of these men. We will continue to catch up on the list with each issue as well as list new Folded Wings.



MISCELLANEA

A NEW GROUP VP TO 2ND AIR DIV

Our long and faithful Group Vice President to Second Air Division, Pete Henry has been experiencing about a years worth of health problems that the doctors have been having difficulty defining, but he describes as "getting too tired too soon during the day." At any rate, the medics think it best he cut back on some of his activities and conserve his strength while they get a handle on his lack of energy. As far as the 44th is concerned, besides Pete's health, is that he is vacating the Group Vice President to 2nd AD. A position he has served so well since most of us can remember.

To fill this important liaison job, I have nominated Richard Butler for the job; he has accepted, and will be confirmed at the Executive Board meeting in St. Louis May 7 in time to assume his duties at the 2nd ADIV meeting in Lexington, KY July 3-4-5, 1995.

We owe Pete and Mary both our enduring thanks for shrugging off the problems involved in maintaining the lines of communication between the two organizations notwithstanding a lack of any support by the HMG and tirelessly carrying on with the job. We trust your full recovery will be soon forthcoming, Pete.

A REPORT ON THE NORWAY MEMORIAL

Dear Mr. Owen:

I am taking this opportunity to thank you and the 44th Veterans Association for the fine support you gave us, the survivors of the Norway Memorial Mission, in raising the necessary funds and seeing the completion of the Norway Memorial that will be officially presented to the Royal Norwegian Air Force on May 8, 1995, the anniversary of VE Day in Norway.

Without the support of members of the 44th BG this project of three years could not have been successful. We raised over \$800 for the bronze memorial that I had shipped to Norway on 18 Feb. 1995. It will arrive in time for the liberation of Europe ceremonies in Oslo on May 8, 1995. The RCAF, King Harald and the Norwegian Government have pledged their support to care for this memorial. It honors 72 airmen, many from the 44th BG who were lost on the Norway missions and whose bodies were found. It is one of the great stories of sacrifice made in WW II.

I wish to personally thank C.W. LUNDY, COL. WILLIAM CAMERON, COL. RICHARD BUTLER, MAJ. R.C. GRIFFITH, BOB WEATHERWAX, EDWARD M. DOBSON, JR. and many others of the 44th for their donations and support over the past three years. A special thanks goes to those I have not named due to space limitations. BRIG. GEN. JOHN GIBSON deserves a special thanks for his interest and support of this most important project.

The accounting of the \$800 fund was \$743 allocated for the bronze memorial and \$55 for shipping and insurance charges for a total of \$798. I have sent individual thanks to each contributor and to the 2nd Air Div. Assn., the 8th AF Historical Society and to Mrs. DOROTHY TINSELY, widow of SGT. JOSEPH GILBERT, one of the 44th men killed in action on the Norway mission. The 44th can truly now state with this memorial in Norway that its heroic achievements in the air war of WW II extend from the deserts of North Africa to the oil fields of Romania, from Berlin to Benghazi, Norwich to Norway and more. The 44th has left the world a rich and varied legacy that will remain eternal in the hearts of all men and women who cherish freedom.

—FORREST S. CLARK, 44th BG, 67th SQDN

EDITOR: You've made us proud with this project, Forrest. Thank you. Glad we were able to help. I understand that some more thanks are in order for BRIG. GEN. GIBSON who is travelling to Oslo at his expense to represent the 44th on May 8.

•••••

VE DAY COMMEMORATION IN ENGLAND

As a part of the VE Day Commemoration in England, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth has proclaimed Monday, May 8 as Bonfire Day in the "Villages." That evening every town and village in the land will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II with a community celebration around a bonfire. I suspect there will be a bit of brown ale a'flowing as well! God bless 'em, it was the end of a tough, hard war for the English and we must never forget that what little they had, they shared with us. We should all wish to be there to join in the celebration with our steadfast friends, they are such wonderful folks!

.....

66TH SQUADRON MEMBERS ALERT

You've got a great English friend, Steve Adams, writing your WW II history. He has asked that we again remind you that he is in need of more material about the squadron for the history. Whether you were from the 66th or not, and have any remembrances of incidents that involved the 66th or its personnel that would be of interest, please write it, copy it, or whatever needs to be done, and send it along to Steve. As this will be the last of our squadron histories, Steve wants it to be the best. Submit what you have to: Steve Adams, 28 Bassingham Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 2QT U.K.

.....

ANOTHER ALERT

Word comes to us that the 2nd ADA Memorial Library copy of our Ursal P. Harvell, HISTORY OF THE 44TH BOMB GROUP "FLYING EIGHT BALLS" LIBERATORS OVER EUROPE was destroyed in the Norwich Library fire. Can someone among us come up with another copy to donate? Perhaps in the memorabilia of one of our deceased 8 Ballers there might be a copy the family might donate to the library in the name of their loved one to be on display rather than gathering dust in the attic. If you can part with a copy of the history, please call Will Lundy and coordinate shipping it to him at:

3295 North H St., San Bernardino, CA 92405-2809
Phone (909) 882-2441 Will can deliver the history personally if it reaches him PRIOR to April 30 when he and Irene will be packing to leave for England.
Many Thanks.



A NEW 44TH BGVA P.O. BOX

Now that we have new Treasurer, we have also acquired a new Post Office Box. This address will be used for payment of dues, Life memberships, donations, etc., and any direct communication with the Treasurer in connection with those payments. PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR REUNION RESERVATION PAYMENT TO THIS BOX. IT GOES TO THE ADDRESS ON THE RESERVATION FORM.

For *payment of dues, etc.*, make the check out to **44TH BGVA** and send to:

**44th BGVA
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, UT 84118-2367**

50 YEARS LATER , WARBIRDS WILL FLY AGAIN

From The Air Force Times

Washington— As many as 300 World War II -era bomber, fighter and transport planes will participate in a two-week journey across the United States to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the war.

The aerial armada—called Freedom Flight America—is expected to be the largest such group of planes assembled since the war. The group will depart from Long Beach from Long Beach, Calif., on July 31 and stop at about a dozen cities.

Among the airplanes expected to participate are B-17 Flying Fortress bombers, P-51 Mustang and P-47 Thunderbolt fighters, and C-47 Skytrain cargo planes as well as vintage Navy, Marine Corps and Allied aircraft.

The trip is the brainchild of Morey Darznieks, 51, a Latvian immigrant and owner of Lance Aircraft Supply, Inc. of Dallas, a vintage-aircraft parts company. Darznieks is the founder of the Freedom Flight America Foundation, also based in Dallas, which is managing the effort.

"During World War II, he and his family were bombed out of their home in Riga, Latvia, and after the war they were sponsored to come to the United States," said Darznieks' son John. "He has lived the American dream and the country has been really good to him. This trip is his way of saying thank you to the veterans that have made freedom possible."

Darznieks is bankrolling the flight's organizational expense.

To help pay for fuel, maintenance and lodging costs for participating planes and crews, the foundation is selling \$50 certificates signed by Army Air Force veterans, including retired fighter ace Col. Francis S. Gabreski and retired Col. Robert K. Morgan, pilot of the "Memphis Belle," the first B-17 to complete 25 bombing missions over Germany and France.

Depending on the size of the aircraft, fuel and maintenance costs can range from \$500 to \$7,000 per flying hour.

For information, call the Freedom Flight Foundation at (214) 247-1214. Here are some of the cities the planes will visit:

Long Beach, CA, July 28-31
Phoenix, AZ, , July 31-Aug. 1
El Paso, TX, Aug. 1 - 2
Dallas, TX, Aug. 2 - 3
Kansas City, MO, Aug. 3 - 4
Aurora, IL, Aug. 4 - 7
Washington, D.C., Aug. 9 - 11
New York City, Aug. 11 - 14

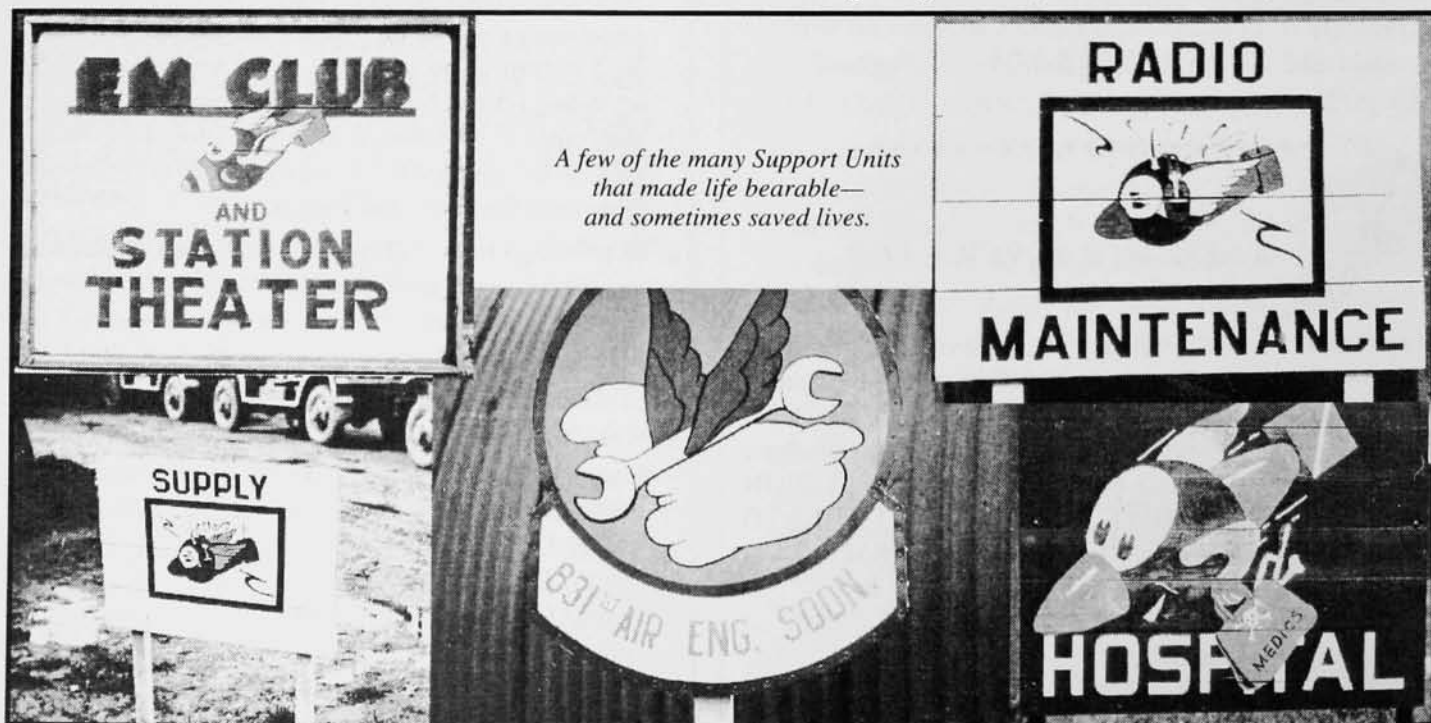
THE SUPPORT UNITS

When I read this citation I thought about all of the guys in all of the support units, the medics, the MPs, the cooks & bakers, supply, personal equipment, engineers, communications, finance, all of the men and women who were not directly in touch with the air and ground crews and aircraft, EXCEPT WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, and that was a lot of times when we weren't aware of what they, individually, had contributed to the climax of our (the aircrew's) job on mission days, getting off, bombing the target, and bringing the aircraft home if we could. Then I lamented, did I ever really thank these people? Yeah, we took them on those "Trolley Missions" right after VE Day to let them see what we'd been up to on those horrible waiting days when they stayed behind worrying about us and anxiously counting the returning aircraft. Specifically, as relates to this citation, I tried to remember those days when we came down final firing those flairs indicating battle damage but managed to land safely with those Crash Rescue Units and Ambulances following down the runway then standing by until we were out safely. Did I get out of that aircraft and go directly to those guys and thank them for just being there when and if we needed them. I hope I did, but I'm not sure. Now I wish I had said thanks to the whole wonderful support bunch. There were some among their ranks that, as with the aircrews, made the supreme sacrifice.

The Posthumous Award of the Soldiers Medal to Sgt. MONROE A. ATCHLEY, 35579833, and PVT. TED R. BUNALSKI reads: Sgt Atchley and Pvt. Bunalski were off duty, eating supper on the night of June 4, 1944 when they heard men yelling a plane had crashed. They left their meals, ran out to the road and jumped on the first truck going to the fire. Upon arrival at the crashed airplane they immediately began extinguishing the flames engulfing the aircraft in disregard of the burning gasoline and the warning that there were bombs aboard. Sgt. Atchley and Pvt. Bunalski lost their lives attempting to save the aircrew when a bomb exploded in near proximity to these courageous Crash-Rescue men.

The award of THE BRONZE STAR to S/SGT CHARLES PROVENZANO, 32295536, SGT. ANTONIO M. SULPRIZIO, 31300102, PFC ANTON BAUC, 36658870, PFC MICHAEL LAZAREWICZ, 32651944 and T/5 JOHN J. SCHRACK, 33717052 reads: On the night of June 4, 1944, these members of a Crash Rescue unit disregarding the danger of exploding 20 lb. fragmentation bombs aboard a crashed and burning B-24, which had killed two of their crash crew, courageously continued to extinguish the fire and rescue aircrew members until they were ordered to move back from the fire by the Officer-in-Charge.

All were members of the 2033rd Engineer Aviation Firefighting Platoon, AAF Station 115, APO 558





Left to Right: Norm Chown, Brice Williams, Jim Dietz, Al Martin, Roy Owen, Frank Castelli

HOW ABOUT A SONOMA COUNTY (CA) CHAPTER OF EIGHT BALLERS!

Right after my return home from Colorado Springs and being, for the first time, in possession of the complete 8 Ball Roster as one of the presidential perquisites, I was surfing through the roster and came across two 44th'ers besides AL MARTIN and myself living in Santa Rosa. I immediately called my 506th buddy, Al, and told him about my find. Al and I have lunch together every 2 or 3 months and I suggested we make contact with FRANK CASTELLI and NORMAN CHOWN also both 506th guys. Al volunteered to make contact and call back, which he did, and we set a date for lunch at my golf clubhouse last November. What a day of surprises we had! First, Frank Castelli, a retired California Highway Patrolman, and Norm Chown, a retired attorney from the Sonoma County Public Defenders Office immediately recognized the other from a long professional relationship (adversaries, I might add) in our courts. Neither had ever discussed wartime service nor realized, even remotely, that they were not only 44th veterans, but were both 506th members and served their tours at exactly the same time! Frank as Nose Gunner on the ED JARVIS crew and Norm as Waist Gunner, first on the LOU CONFER crew, and when Confer finished his tour, he joined the MEL PARRISH crew until VE Day. The next surprise was when I found Frank was with the Jarvis crew and we realized that we had been on sister crews (I was Co-Pilot on the Bill Smith crew) throughout OTU training at Mountain Home, Idaho,

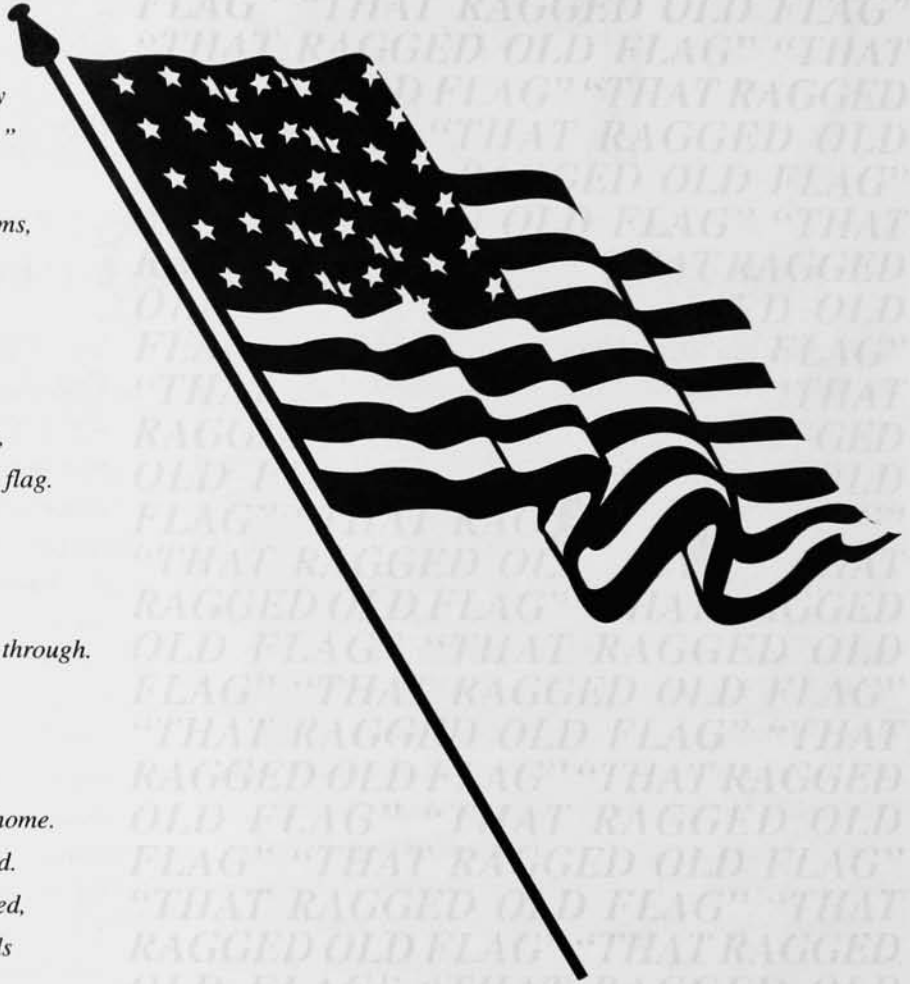
had shipped over to England on the Ile de France, assigned to the 44th/506th from Stone, and both crews flew a B-24 home after VE day.

Not long after our initial luncheon, I received a letter from MEL TRAGER concerning the flags he has obtained for us through his VFW Post. In his letter he mentioned BRICE WILLIAMS, a 44th buddy that also resides in Santa Rosa. I proceeded to contact Brice (he was in the Finance Office at Shipdham, a very vital part of our Anglo-American relations efforts with the distaff side of our English hosts) and he cheerfully accepted the invitation to join us at our next luncheon on Feb. 22. About that time I got a call from JIM DIETZ, a 68th comrade who resides in Ukiah (about 60 miles north of Santa Rosa). He was inquiring if I had heard from a Canadian, Dr. Reid, who had purchased an original oil painting of the 68th aircraft "Corky" at the Smithsonian and was attempting to contact the crew to develop the war record of the aircraft (Jim was the Radio Operator). In the course of the conversation, I told Jim about our 44th luncheons and our Sonoma Chapter once again grew and we all met on schedule again at the clubhouse appropriately on George Washington's birthday. Lolly graciously served as our photographer to record that really enjoyable get-together. There were war stories and fellowship aplenty!

“THAT RAGGED OLD FLAG”

*I walked through a county court house square
And on a park bench, an old man was sittin' there
I said, "Your old court house has kind of run down."
He said, "No, it will do for our little town."
I said, "Your flag pole has leaned a little bit,
and that's a ragged old flag you've got hanging on it."
He said, "Have a seat," and I sat down.
"Is this the first time you've come to our little town?"
I said, "I think it is." He said, "I don't to brag,
but we are kind of proud of that ragged old flag.
You see, we got a little hole in that flag there
when Washington took it across the Delaware,
and it got a powder burn when Francis Scott Key
sat up watchin' it, writing "Oh Say Can You See."
And it got a little rip in New Orleans
with Packingham and Jackson tuggin' at the seams,
and it almost fell at the Alamo run,
beside the Texas flag, but she waved on.
It got cut with a sword at Chancellorsville,
got cut again at Shiloh Hill.
There was Robert E. Lee, Beauregard and Bragg,
and the South wind blew hard on that ragged old flag.
On Flanders Field in World War One,
She got a bad hole form a Bertha gun,
She turned blood red in World War Two,
She hung limp and tired by the time that one was through.
She was in Korea and Vietnam,
She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam.
She waved from our ships upon the briny foam,
and now we've about quit waving her here back home.
And in her own good land here, she's been abused.
She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused,
and now the very government for which she stands
is scandalized throughout the land.
and she's getting threadbare and she's wearing kind of thin,
but she's in good shape for the shape she's in.
Because she's been through the fire before,
and you can be sure she can take a whole lot more.
So we raise her every morning, and we bring her down slow every night.
We don't let her touch the ground and we fold her up just right.
On second thought, I do like to brag,
Because I'm mighty proud of that ragged old flag."
"So am I,"*

Author Unknown



MAIL CALL

Just a few words about your letters , we'll do our best to see that they are all answered and, space permitting, published. Yes, the good, the bad and the ugly! Because of space limitations, we will exercise some editorial license in trimming some of the "how is the weather" and "my arthritis is kicking up again" stuff, and you are liable to see some paraphrasing of your original letter here and there for clarity and brevity. But rest assured the color, and that "gravy" Will wants will come through. Bear with us, it's a right all editors reserve along with editorial comment.



44TH'ERS ARE TOUGH!

January 1995

Dear Will,

Thanks to all of you, our new President and new Board. It's great to know that the 44th will be preserved. I thought it was a shame to give up on one of Americas greatest Bomb Groups. I have really missed the last 3 reunions, I have been under the weather for the past 2 years and I get inspired by guys like DAN VALENTI and BOB KRUEGER who have beaten the Big C.

I was the Tail Gunner on KAY'S crew, seven of us are still alive. We had 6 show up at the last Rapid City Reunion and I hope 7 will show up at San Antonio. I know I'll see you guys there and particularly BOB LEHNHAUSEN; it's good to see him active in the new old group. Very Truly,

KENNY SMITH

3500 Division St. Apt. 153
Metairie, LA 70002

EDITOR: I'm looking forward to shaking the hand of a tough ole' 8 Baller in San Antone'!



REMEMBER THE DRYING ROOM?

This comes from Lt. EARL J. GUY, 66th Sq.
1419 Sand Creek Rd., Boggstown, IN 46110

I was the Group Personal Equipment & Air Sea Rescue Officer, with Equipment meaning flying supplies; suits, parachutes, Mae Wests, Emergency Radio X-mitters, Very Pistols, etc.

As I remember parachutes had to be repacked every 30 days. Flying suits were in very short supply. That's how I began flying on combat missions; to show the crews that the British heated suits also worked.

At one time, earlier in the war, we used a grounded Bombardier to travel to all the local depots to try to con them out of equipment. He was good too, could talk most anyone out of anything! Between scrounging and washing and rewashing we kept 'em flying, but the Flyboys were not very respectful of their equipment.

I flew a total of 5 missions until the Captain grounded me. He said he didn't want to explain to HQ how he lost a paddlefoot over Germany! Also, Capt. HARROCKS, with whom I flew most, wrote to my wife to tell her to get me to stop.

We also arranged trips for several crews to accompany us to Great Yarmouth to go out in the North Sea to pick up crews forced to ditch en route back to base. The British had a marvelous craft, I don't remember the name, which was larger, but as fast as our PT boats. Anything that could float was out there to help rescue those crews.

I had two permanent room mates, Lt. MORTON R. TAYLOR, who died about age 45, and JOHN SALADIAC after he had tours with the RAF, RCAF and then was shot down on Ploesti. Other room mates with whom I have lost contact were MESSERSCHMIDT and PETER KARAPIN.

Ours was the only room in the barracks with running water. I took some valves, lines, connections, etc. from a junk B-24 and we installed it overnight. Of course the Captain made us believe he was furious, but he never made us tear it out. PETE HENRY did photo work in the Bomb shelter, but I did mine in the room. I invited him down, but he never took me up on the offer. My enlarger was built from a bomb bay strut, and a lens given to me by GEN. JOHNSON.

Our "home town" was Dereham, not Shipdham. That's because "Sal" married a girl whose father ran the hotel in Dereham.

EDITOR: Thanks Earl, I've long wondered what they did with worn out Bombardiers. Also I have to explain that in the eyes of a B-24 Pilot there has never been a "junk" Liberator.

Salvage maybe, but never junk! Also, I heartily agree with the "home town" title for Dereham. We seem to give most of our reverence to Shipdham, but we got a lot of love from, tossed a lot of darts with, and married into many of the

wonderful families of Dereham. We've got to let 'em know the 44th still loves them! I'd like to hear from our Dereham Wives to help me with ideas to let the folks of Dereham know that we still feel we owe a debt of gratitude for the hospitality and care they extended to the brash young Yanks so far from home. One last observation; I'm sure the word scrounge has never appeared in any supply manual, but guys like our grounded Bombardier certainly brought it into the lexicon of the military. It occurs to me, we might still be fighting WW II if nobody ever scrounged anything! Also Earl, try PETER KARAPIN at 2780 Durham Rd., York, PA 17402-3808, Ph. 717-755-0501. We have no MESSERSCHMIDT in our roster or on our tail at present, but we'll keep a lookout. Give Art Hand a first name and MI if you can, he'll get on his trail like he owes Art money!

The next letter was passed on from Pete Henry to Will Lundy to me. I am saddened to pass on to you the news from DOROTHY SALADIAK that your roomie "Sal" has passed away.

November 25, 1994

Dear Mr. Henry,

Sadly, I must tell you that my beloved husband, JOHN SALADIAK, died at home on September 15, 1994 after three years of illness. He suffered courageously and never complained.

We were married on November 25, 1944 in East Dereham Parish Church while John was stationed at Shipdham in Norfolk. I am enclosing a copy of the biography we sent for the Second Air Division History. I would like to continue receiving the 2nd Air Division Journal and will continue paying the dues.

All the best, Sincerely,

Dorothy Saladiak 258 Amity Rd., Glenshaw, PA 15116

John Saladiak, born in Pittsburg, December 10, 1917, earned his wings in the Canadian Air Force in 1941. He served as a navigator with the RCAF, RAF, and USAAF.

He was with the 44th Bomb Group and was navigator on the August 1, 1993 raid on the Ploesti Oil Fields. On this raid he flew with EDWARD

MITCHELL (pilot), DONALD DECKER (copilot), JULIO CASTELLOTTI (waist gunner), HENRY FLISTER (tail gunner), JAMES KIPPLE (bombardier), DAVID COLLIE (waist gunner), ROBERT McADAMS (flight engineer). John and all the crew were interned in Turkey. John was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for the Ploesti mission.

In England he was stationed at Shipdham. He was married to Dorothy Nelson in East Dereham Parish Church on Nov. 25, 1944. After returning to the U.S. in 1945 he stayed in the Air Force until 1948 when he was honorably discharged as a First Lieutenant. Injuries which plagued him for many years eventually led to the amputation of his right leg.

He graduated from Duquesne University with a B.S. and worked for about 20 years for the Internal Revenue Service. He retired in 1984. He enjoyed travelling in Europe, reading and listening to classical music.

EDITOR; Dorothy, I trust the inclusions here convey to you that "Sal" was remembered with love by his comrades even before his passing. Also, we would be honored if you would consider remaining within the 44th family. You are one of us, and would be a tremendous asset in our efforts in expressing our love and thanks to the folks of your home town. I would appreciate hearing from you.
ROY



A QUICKIE

Dear Will,

Sending you holiday greetings and many wishes for the New year. Also I wanted to tell you I didn't like the way they terminated our old group. I wish this new endeavor great success. It looks good to me.

PHIL TERABERY, (67th), 9212 Clay St., Denver, CO 80221-5209

EDITOR: Your support looks good to us as well, Phil. Thanks



THINGS ARE COMING TOGETHER IN SANTA ROSA!

Dec. 9, 1995

Dear Will,

I am very glad the 44th Bomb Group is going to continue as an organization for its members. I really enjoyed reading the Logbooks. I had only joined the

44th HMG in December 1992, so I was disappointed when it was disbanded. I am glad you are going to be with the new organization. I received a couple of letters from you when I first joined the Heritage Group.

I noticed a familiar name in this first issue of 8 Ball Tails; MEL TRAGER and I were friends at Shipdham. As I remember, he was from Chicago. Also, I see ROY OWEN lives here in Santa Rosa. I'll have to call him one of these days.

All the best to you and the new organization.

BRICE R. WILLIAMS,
2623 Canterbury Dr., Santa Rosa, CA 95405

EDITOR; Brice and I have made contact. See the "Sonoma County Branch of the 44th BGVA" elsewhere in this issue.



ON A NOSTALGIC NOTE

To 44th Vets Association News (AKA 8 Ball Tails)

We are nearing the final flight, the last mission in 1995. This is written as a final nostalgic retrospective of the years 1942-45 and a final tribute to the men of the 44th.

I write this on a warm Florida day, temp. 82 degrees, a few hours before the dawn of the year 1995. We have done all we can to remember those who have passed before us and we are ready to close the mission log.

However, before this, I want to say a word or two of gratitude for the memories left by the following 44th men, Major R. C. GRIFFITH, my pilot; Lt. ROBERT T. WEATHERWAX, my Navigator, and Lt. BILL TINSMAN, my copilot. Also to Gen. LEON JOHNSON, Col. BILL CAMERON and those who touched my life in the 44th; JACK HARMON, JOHN GIBBONEY, EARL PARRISH, and for great memories, KEN JEWELL, HAROLD PINDER, ABE SOFFERMAN, and DAVID EDMONDS.

I want to say my greatest farewell to the men and crews who died and are memorialized for the 18 November 1943 raid on Kjellar Airfield, Norway, among them Lt. EDWARD DOBSON and others. I wish to salute Col. RICHARD BUTLER and the men who were on the ill-fated Emmy Lou II crash and for their devotion to duty over the years to the 44th Bomb Group.

The memories cannot die as men do, but live on eternally in all of us.

FORREST CLARK

703 Duffer Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34759

EDITOR; Thanks, Forrest, for this letter. I'm both touched and perplexed; touched by the nostalgic note yet perplexed by the tone of finality in your words. I would doubt that any of the membership of the 44th BGVA are "ready to close the mission log." We are just embarking on the latest chapter of 44th history and heritage, and unless you have a message that hasn't reached me yet, I think we all are looking forward to business as usual. When we lose a comrade, as we often will, we will honor his or her memory, close ranks and carry on. From your address I would surmise that you, like me, are a golfer Forrest. Let's just keep on swinging!



GET ON THE 44TH HAM RADIO NET
(This came to us via Pete Henry)

Dec. 5, 1994

Evanston, IL

Dear Pete,

I thought this little story might be of interest of you and the gang. Early last summer, I was told by a friend who flies from Palwaukee, that a B-24 was parked on the grass at the edge of the field near the restaurant. I drove out one day and walked around it and took several pictures. It was closed up so I made up no attempt to touch it. Along about late October, my friend said the plane was now over by a hangar and he had seen it with the engines running and he had heard it was headed for a museum in South Florida.

I still keep in touch with a number of old 44th'ers via Ham radio every Tuesday morning at 8:00 a.m. CST on 7227 kc, then moving to 21460 or 14278 kc to keep in touch with our friend BILL HOLMES in Norwich. He is a friend of the 8th AF and has been very helpful to fellows who have gone over to England, arranging transportation, Hotels, etc. Among the 44th'ers on our radio net are: FRED BROWNING (67th), WAYNE HARVEY (66th), BUD LAWERENCE (506th), ART HAND (66th), CARL HVAMBSAL (506th), HAL KRAMER (464 Sub-Depot), WALT EICHENSEHR (506th), and myself, also

several fighter people and one B-17 pilot. I almost forgot the Ringleader of our net, ED SCHWARM (506th). He acts as net control and keeps order in the ranks! I had sent Ed pictures of the B-24 at Palwaukee. If you want some , I can make some prints for you. I am also going to send a clipping from the paper.

A little story for you—not fit for publishing! When I first joined the 44th at Will Rogers Field, as a green private, I was put on KP with Ward Bond (now gone) in Sgt Hundley’s Mess Hall. He was a stickler and we worked hard ‘till Bond decided to walk around with his Bobbitt hanging out of his coveralls. When taken to task by Sgt. Hundley, he said that if he was going to be worked like a horse, he was going to look like one!

All for now, Best Regards,

GEORGE HILL

2116 Ewing Ave., Evanston, IL 60201-2004

EDITOR: I wish you had sent along some of your pictures of the B-24. Has anyone got a clue on the Florida destination of the Lib? As for that “little story,” I refer you back to the editorial disclaimer at the beginning of this section. Besides, if Bond was equipped as your story suggests, Man, that was a “BIG” story, and you left us *hanging*,. Did Sgt. Hundley punish Bond for “*horsing*” around? Don’t keep us in suspense, please carry on with the story!



BRING ON THEM JOHNNY REBS

This comes to us from NORM LINVILLE via Pete Henry.

Hello Pete, Thought I would drop you a few lines to let you know where JAMES L. LIVINGSTON (506th) is. I told him you would get in touch with him and let him know how to join the 2nd ADIV Ass’n: James L. Livingston, 860 Ziegler Rd., Bloomingdale, GA 31302.

We went to gunnery school and overseas together. We met last week—first time in 50 years.

I don’t know about this new 44th Bomb Group they are getting up, as they sure don’t have anyone from the South on the Board of Governors. The next 2nd AD reunion at Lexington is near my old stomping grounds, I’ll look you up there. NORMAN B.

LINVILLE, 107 E. Morgan St., Brandon, FL 33510
EDITOR: CLEMENTS, take down that Confederate Flag or get an apology from Norm. Besides

being a Rebel state, you’ve been telling me that one Texan on the board was worth two from any other state. For your info, Norm, our Constitution requires that we balance our Board membership by unit rather than geography except, since we are incorporated in Illinois, their laws require that at least one member of the Board be from Illinois. Also, while it is not chiseled in stone, we attempt to balance the board geographically. Frankly when we were fighting to stay alive we grabbed the fighters willing to serve without looking too closely at what part of the country they lived. In fact we had two old southern war horses on our team: REG CARPENTER (NC) ‘till his arteries got clogged up and he had to have some by-pass surgery, and BILL STRONG (TX) until the surgery on his poor old head was becoming so frequent his travel was hampered. Now that we are up and running, I expect we’ll get the board composition smoothed out. For the short term, keep your cool, send in your \$15.00 check for ‘95 dues, and talk with me at Lexington. I’d be happy to hear your ideas. In case you don’t know who to look for, the title Editor is AKA President (look in The Presidents Corner of this issue).



December 12, 1994

Dear Will,

I have today received Vol. 1, Issue 1 of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Ass’n. Journal (8 Ball Tails, please). It was a joy to receive it and to know that we are still not a “Stand Down” group, but were still “Alert.” I am sure the membership at large owe you and the other members of the Executive Board a great deal of THANKS for all that you have done to bring us back to life. I also think the name 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association is perfect. It is simple and tells anyone exactly who we are.

Regarding the reunion next October in San Antonio, I will try to get HERBY HASTINGS, SWEDE CARLBERG, ALLEN NOBLE and HAL PENDLETON to join me there. These are the remaining members of our crew of fifty years ago. It is a little early to say if we can be there, but we have it on the list for sure. Thanks again for your work on our behalf.

Sincerely, Jim

JAMES W. FORREST,

104 Kenwood Place, Lynchburg, VA 24502-2120

EDITOR: Maybe another crew reunion at our re-union—Man we're on a roll!



Dec. 12, 1994

Dear Will,

I'm getting up there (age), but I'm heading for San Antonio '95. Best to all of you 44th Leaders for keeping us alive. Within this day I will get a letter off to Ed Dobson.

All the best, JACK GIBSON, (B. Gen. John H.)
7008 Gateridge, Dallas, TX 75240



Dec. 10, 1995

Dear Will,

Thanks to you and ROY OWEN and all the others for keeping the 44th Veterans active. I think you guys are great.

For your information our old comrade, TOM LASKOWSKI (66th, ERWIN'S crew) passed away last week. He was a Ploesti survivor and lived in Binghamton, NY. I'm sure you remember his wife WANDA. Tom and her came to many of our 2nd AD reunions.

Warmest Regards, JIM AUMAN,
352 Church St., St. Marys, PA 15857-1012

EDITOR: Thanks for the kind words, Jim. That's what makes the days and days of sitting at this computer all worthwhile! I'll see that Wanda gets this issue of The Tails and ask her if she would like to stay in the 44th Family.



ANOTHER WELCOME LETTER FROM
AN 8 BALL SON!

Dec. 14, 1994

Dear Will,

This is my application for membership in your newly formed 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association. I am not a veteran of the Group, however my father was a member. He was in England for three years; at Shipdham nearly all the time. I hope that the new 44th BGVA is not limited to the real thing, and has room for some of its progeny. My check is enclosed.

As a result of corresponding with you several years ago, I signed on with the 2nd Air Division Assn. and the now defunct 44th HMG. I have enjoyed reading (cover to

cover) the publications produced by both organizations. I look forward to reading publications produced by the 44th BGVA, and hope that it will contain memories of events and conditions both in the air and on the ground.

I wish total success to you and the other members of the Executive Board.

Sincerely, Karl G. Grube,
1110 Aspen Court, Kohler, WI 53044

EDITOR: Karl, not only are you welcome, you and your contemporaries, our progeny, are what this is all about. The history and heritage of the 44th belongs to you. I'm sure I speak for all the 44th when I say the 8 Ball Tails and its predecessors purpose is not to glorify the deeds of its veterans. We wish to bring the experiences we lived, and died doing, beyond the pure statistical and factual aspects of our 44th service to tell you, our sons, daughters and grandkids the personal color and human aspects of the bittersweet war we fought. Bitter, obviously, because of the finality involved when the contest is real; yet sweet when the shared experience bonds men and women together in a manner of comradeship almost undefinable among human relationships. Your comment on enjoying reading the publications cover to cover hits our purpose square on the head. The content is really meant for you.

Come join us in San Antonio, I want you to meet our Secretary Ed Dobson, Jr. and some of the other sons and daughters that are more and more frequently attending our reunions.

I'm in frequent contact with Col. Bill Cameron, Commander of the 67th Bomb Squadron; your Dad, Karl T. was his Executive Officer and "Right Hand Man." Any commander will tell you that without a good "Exec" to tend to all the details he can't find the time to do, and to be his confidant and advisor in personnel matters, you've got a commander who's in trouble. Bill tells me your Dad was "the best."



WE JUST CAME UP WITH THIS ONE
FROM WM. BARRETT TAYLOR

24 JANUARY 1992

Dear Will,

Thanks for your letter of Jan. 16. To clarify a point, the 14th CBW was formed the summer of

1943 just before Col. Johnson and the Air Echelon of the 44th departed for North Africa. I remained behind to be Deputy Base Commander under Lt. Col. Jenkins and to organize and staff the 14th CBW so it would be ready to function upon Col. Johnson's return.

As most people know, the 14th CBW was located on the WAAF - Decontamination site (which was and still is part of Mr. Rix's farm). We had an outstanding artist in Wing HQ who painted all of the murals. When I suggested he paint one showing all of us after the war, he asked that I get someone to do a sketch and he would copy it. So I wrote to Wingert, who was one of the two top Stars & Stripes artists, asking that he furnish us with a sketch. He did and the result is still on Mr. Rix's wall. I have the original sketch in my den in Arlington. The reason those buildings are still standing is that Mr. Rix said any fool could tear down good buildings, remove the foundations and get back the land. But he profited by using them to raise pigs in. (Note—Mr. Rix is now deceased, his son is now in charge).



Do you remember the time when, on one low overcast day, a JU-88 dropped Butterfly antipersonnel bombs on the airfield? (Summer '43). Griff (Goodman Griffin) and I informed Mr. Brown, the clerk (clock) of the works, not to allow anyone from his office to go on the field until all bombs had been located and removed. We were informed that it was

their airfield and they would do as they pleased. So he sent an assistant out to inspect the field and the assistant ran his little Morris Van over a bomb. It exploded and blew his foot off. After he recovered, he stopped to see Griff and I to say he wished Mr. Brown had followed our advice.

I am certain that each of us has at least 20 stories to relate (some for publication, and some not) but why not ask each of us to send you their five best stories? Even if you don't print them, collectively they would be important to future historians. We had better send them in soon, as time is getting short. Warm Regards, BARRETT TAYLOR, 3209 N. Columbus St., Arlington, VA 22207-2878

EDITOR: Good background, Barrett. I've heard all kinds of stories on who did the murals, now we've heard it from "the MAN." Re: the bombing, Will Lundy has come up (maybe you sent them) with a couple of pictures taken after the attack. They speak for themselves.

I'll be waiting for your five, no, only four stories now. Thanks.



.....
 WHEN ONE FEELS
 HE REALLY HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE

AUGUST 8, 1994
 517 Elm St., Paris, IL 61994

Dear Mrs. Huenerberg:

I am very sorry to hear Vincent has passed away. I do wish we could have located him as I know he would have enjoyed the reunions and meeting with his old friends. We have been having reunions since 1981 and usually have in the neighborhood of 500

in attendance. Last year was in Dayton OH. This year we will be in Colorado Springs, CO from October 6 - 9. Your husband was in the 67th Bomb Squadron and, as you said, did fly with Reginald Carpenter. A history was done of the 67th by Will Lundy, our Group Historian. Will has also published a 44th Roll of Honor listing all of the casualties suffered in WW II. It is now out of print, but he has plans for a revision if he has time. Enclosed are a couple of pages from it that I'm sure will interest you. They are about what happened to the Carpenter crew on the famous mission to the Ploesti oil complex. Also enclosed are several pages about that mission from Will's 67th history.

We now have information or addresses on 3315 former members of the 44th Bomb Group. Below are the ones we have on the Carpenter crew. If I can help or give you any more information please let me know.

Sincerely, ART HAND

Reginald L. Carpenter, 48 Beaumont Dr.,
Hendersonville, NC 28739 (704) 697-6041 (Pilot)

E. L. Rumsey, 501 N. Meadows Ave. Manhattan
Beach, CA 90266 (213) 374-3183 (Co-Pilot)

.....

January 6, 1995

Dear Art,

This letter is long overdue. Please forgive me. I want to thank you for the letter you sent me in reference to my husband, Vincent E. Huenerberg who was in the 67th Squadron, 44th Bomb Group.

My family and I appreciated your thoughtfulness for sending me the history of the 67th Sqdn. I will cherish this letter as long as I live. I read and reread your letter. Thank you again so very much.

If Will Lundy ever publishes a revised edition called 44th Roll of Honor and Casualties, I certainly would appreciate it if you would notify me.

Art, I want to thank you again for your thoughtfulness. It was deeply appreciated.

Sincerely, Pearl R. Huenerberg,
31 Center St., Watertown, CT 06795

EDITOR: Dear Pearl, I will see that you get a copy of this 8 Ball Tails if we have to hand address it! You might notice in this section we made reference to Reg Carpenter having some bypass surgery last fall. I talked to him on the phone after he got home. He was doing fine and was moaning about missing our Colorado Springs reunion. Keep in touch Pearl, you are one

of the 44th family. ART SAID TO ME "A LETTER LIKE THIS ONCE IN AWHILE REALLY MAKES IT ALL WORTH THE EFFORT."

.....

PINGS AWAY

27 Dec. 1994

Dear Will,

Just received your Letter. Sorry I didn't get that Christmas "candle making" story to you in time for the season. When I dug out the stuff for my "Army Life" tale that my son had requested, memories of several happenings and events came flooding back to mind. Wish some of the rest of my crew and yours would do the same and get their stories down on paper. When we're gone, so are the stories UNLESS someone takes the time to write them down. Sure, probably only one of a hundred experiences might be worth retelling, but that one might strike a chord in someone who wants to know what WW II was like, other than those hyped-up Hollywood versions. Which, by the way, reminds me of a story!

On our base at Shipdham we had a modest little PX housed in a Quonset Hut. On the few shelves they had, when "in stock" were displayed cigarettes, candy bars, pipe tobacco, razor blades and chewing gum as the item most in demand. Trouble was, they seldom had these popular items in stock when I entered the store.

Word would go out to the flight crews that a large consignment of cartons had arrived at the PX. Cartons bearing such logos as Baby Ruth, Hershey, Nestle, Lucky Strike, Camel, Chesterfield, Wrigley, etc., etc., were seen being carted through the PX doorway, immediately followed by the posting of a sign that read "CLOSED FOR INVENTORY" on the front door. That sign seemed to stay posted until just moments after the last plane had taken off for the day's mission. As the noise of the aircraft faded into the distance and there seemed little chance of a Recall, another sign would appear on the PX door which read "Open."

When, and if, we were lucky enough to return, we would try to hurry through post-mission interrogation so as to rush for the PX before it closed to pick up our share of the goodies. On the few times I managed to beat the "Closed" sign, I

found the Cigarette stock reduced to a few sacks of Bill Durham or Dukes Mixture and, perhaps, a few packs of HIMYAR and WINGS cigarettes. The chewing gum space would be completely empty and the space that once held Clark Bars and Baby Ruths now held a carton or two of "PING" bars. That was it! Anyone who bought a Ping bar would seldom (if in his right mind) buy another one. I'll attempt to describe a PING.

Take an oblong rectangle of semi-fossilized white stuff that the perpetrators boldly called marshmallow, coat it with a dark chocolate colored glaze that chewed like paraffin and tasted like the dipstick from a model A Ford that had been run too long and too hot without an oil change, and you have an accurate description of a PING.

After about my fourth or fifth unsuccessful excursion to the PX, I broke down one day and bought the entire stock (two 24 bar cartons) of Pings at the going price of a nickel a bar. I salted them away in my blue barracks bag until the next days mission was announced. After pre-mission breakfast, between my briefcase and flying suit, I managed to store the entire 48 Pings. Just after takeoff when the bomb bay doors rolled shut, I tossed the whole lot into the bomb bay where they would freeze to cast iron hardness. In the target area as we turned at our I.P. and those doors rolled open, down went our PX's entire stock of those (expletive deleted) Ping bars cascading down upon an unsuspecting enemy below!

Someone on another crew, hearing about my dropping candy bars into Germany, said I might be accused of giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Obviously he had never been reduced to trying to eat a Ping bar. I think the irony of my "Ping Drop" caught on; mysteriously Ping bars came into short supply in our little PX.

Will, You and your family have a Very Happy New Year. Meanwhile, I'll look forward to a continuation of the Eightballers organization into the coming years.

Sincerely,

Rob Fisk, 66th

562 Buckingham Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210-3318

Editor: Thanks at least 2 cartons for your great "Pings Away" story!

THE PING BOMBER'S "CANDLE STORY"

11 December 1994

Hi Will,

Recently, I wrote a note to Pete Henry wherein I lamented the loss of the Logbook and its always welcome stories and news items. Then a letter arrived the next day announcing the formation of the new organization, the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association. From the list of names on the Executive Board, it sounds like you're off and running, apparently without missing a step. Wonderful!

In the letter to Pete, I told of an incident that occurred just before Christmas in 1944. Since our family through several generations, always had lighted candles as part of our Christmas decorations, I thought it would be appropriate to have some lighted candles in our barracks on Christmas Eve. I began gathering all the empty 'K' Rations heavily waxed outer cartons I could find. Using my ever handy G.I. mess kit knife, I scraped enough wax off the cartons to make three candles. Using an unraveled shoe lace for a wick, I warmed and kneaded out the wax until it was thin and pliable enough to roll up into a cylinder with the wick inside. Ended up with three sort of grungy looking candles about an inch in diameter and four or five inches long.

Stretching my luck, I paid a late night visit to the mess hall where one of the cooks with some Christmas spirit gave me a couple tins of evaporated milk, a couple of one pound tins of bacon, and cartons of powdered eggs.

When the gang from my barracks drifted in that Christmas Eve, we got our Sibley stove fired up with some "borrowed coke" from the "off limits" coke pile in the 66th area and whomped up some mean omelets made with carefully blended powdered eggs, bacon, butter and canned milk. Others in the barracks broke out carefully cached chocolate for cocoa, and another found a bottle of liberated wine for a one round toast.

When those candles were lighted and placed in the window, we figured the German Air Force would be too busy with their own Yule Eve to interfere with ours. Within minutes of the lighting, the barracks lapsed into almost complete silence as, one by one, each of us travelled back in time to other Christmas Eves spent in happier times and places.

That's about all the story that I told Pete, I'm not sure if he will use it, but if you wish to add it to the 8 Ball Tails check with Pete.

Very Sincerely,

Rob Fisk, 66th, Nav. on Howard Hinshaw's crew
562 Buckingham Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210

EDITOR: I didn't see a trace of this story in the 2 ADA Journal and decided it belonged with the "Pings Away" story, so you'll just have to come up with another story for Pete! Boy, do I ever remember that Christmas Eve! You'll recall all of Europe and the British Isles had been socked in with dense fog for days and days and the Battle of Bulge raged on while we sat grounded by weather and helpless to support our troops. Then December 24 the weather broke, the skies were clear and 8th Air Force took to the skies to make the largest mass bomber attack in the history of the world attacking every possible supply route to Von Runstedt's forces. The Bomber Assembly that bright morning over England was the most awesome sight I have ever witnessed. There were B-24s and B-17s as far as the eye could see. The 44th Target was a railway bridge and tunnel just outside the city of Eiler, Germany. Get this; the IP code for the Primary was "Merry Christmas," Secondary "SEC. Merry Christmas," and Last Resort was "Santa Claus." That Christmas Eve we were all too tired to do much celebrating, but I remember thinking that our mission that day surely sent a Christmas message to our troops fighting and freezing in Bastogne that help was on the way.



THE BIG "FRIDGE" IN THE SKY

This comes from Dr. Jim Kahl
578 W. King St., Winona, Mn 55987-2975

This has been in the files for awhile, but after reading it through it seemed too good not to share.

Dear Will,

I have gone through my files and have found very little of which I feel has any historical value. However, I will let you decide and am therefore enclosing any of my personnel orders which mention other members of the 66th. I have also included a copy of the broadcast my crew made from England.—This is an interesting side tale—John Daly, the broadcaster, invited me to visit him in London whenever I was on leave. So one evening, Capt. Reed and I did and who was keeping Mr. Daly company was this beautiful young blonde who happened to be Judge Earl Warren's daughter.

After the war, Daly and his wife separated and divorced and John married the Warren girl. They made their home in the Napa Valley and lived just a short way from my sister and her husband who has a vineyard there. Needless to say they met and my sister reminded him of the broadcast.

Two other anecdotes:

The Beer Story—While on one of the trips to Africa, we received a shipment of canned American beer, Bud, I think. Well there it was 115 in the shade if you could find any; what were we to do? Well, the 66th always led the way, so into the back of old #779 went the beer on a "Test Hop" up to 18,000 ft. where the beer got cold enough, quick enough to remain icy cold through decent landing and to the shade of the wing. Man did that beer taste GOOD! Shortly, we received a call from one of the other squadron Operations Officers and within minutes several more planes were being "flight tested" at 18,000 ft!

The Wine Story—Shortly after the 7th Army landed in Sicily and was making some headway inland, one of the 66th planes piloted by JOE FLAHERTY made a forced landing on one of the captured airstrips. During their stay, the crew made friends with a Sicilian farmer who had all of his Sicilian Red Wine underground to prevent the Germans from taking it. When FLAHERTY returned, he brought with him a full keg of the aged stuff. What a party we had!

After I left the 44th, I was an air controller at 2nd Air Division. From there I was sent to the U.S. and went to Westover Field where I was Supervisor of Flying. While there I decided the Regular Air force was not my career. I was discharged as a Lt. Col. and went into the field of Veterinary Medicine, receiving my degree in 1951.

If I think of anything more I will Let you know.

Truly, Jim Kahl

EDITOR: Cold Beer—WHY NOT? Good stories, Jim. Sorry I have not included the Daly broadcast; I was typing away at it, and at about half way through I decided it was just gobbling up too much space. I have it saved and am trying to reduce it somehow. We'll see if we can get it in the next "Tails."

.....
THE "RUTHLESS" FELLOWSHIP

*We sit and view the Sussex Downs,
At grazing sheep, as seagulls cry,
Yet some of us hear other sounds,
For brave young men, destined to fly
They came to fight beside the Few,
To ease the burden of our pain,
They were our cousins, staunch and true.
And each day we see them again.
We knew the trouble which they shared,
The engines coughed amid the cloud,
We hoped their lives would all be spared,
And ardent prayers were said aloud
But "Ruthless" could not make the height,
and through the mist she came to rest
Upon a hill, within our sight,
And God's hand rose on those he blessed.
They died upon a foreign field,
Defending freedom to the last,
For what the daylight then revealed,
were friends together, hands held fast.
Their youthful spirits walk there still,
Past flowers blooming in the sun,
They smile down from Willingdon Hill,
aware of duty proudly done*

Douglas Thomas, 1995
6 Willow Walk, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN22 OSD

A D-DAY THANK YOU (UPDATED)

As the 50th anniversary of VE-Day is upon us, I wish to write a special note of thanks, and gratitude to all the men and women, deceased and living, who fought and died in World War II.

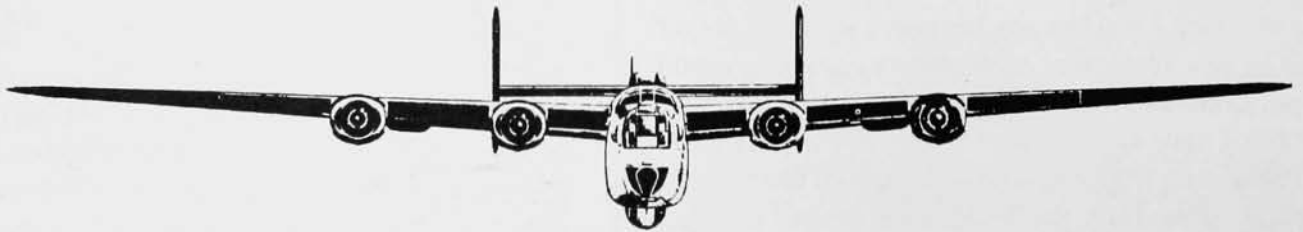
It gives me special pride to have people remember those who were in the Army Air Corps during the war. They also fought to keep our country safe and free. They flew above the ground, looking down on all the destruction and horror below—fellow comrades, fighting, suffering and dying, all for the same cause.

I am especially filled with pride as I am the daughter of one of these brave men. My father, Charles W. Taylor, was a member of the 8th Air Force, 44th Bomber Group. An aerial gunner in a B-24 called "The Liberator." A young 18 year old man, full of fear, but also full of honor.

Fifty years later, this man, my father, is still that proud honorable man. He has taught me to believe in my country, to be proud that I am an American. So on the anniversary Monday, let us stand with pride and remember what these brave people fought for. Each time you stand and salute the flag, stand with pride, place your hand on your heart and feel the life within you. And say, thank you, to all who made this possible. We have not forgotten you.

Jeanne Taylor-Huss
Syracuse

Jeanne, I trust you will forgive my changing D-Day to VE-Day in your beautiful piece, it seemed so appropriate.



44TH BGVA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Roy W. Owen (506)
6304 Meadowridge Dr.
Santa Rosa, CA 95409
Ph (707) 538-4726 FAX (707)538-1212

Vice President: James H. Clements (506)
4124 Calculus Ave.
Dallas, TX 75244
Ph. (214) 243-4657

Secretary: Edward M. Dobson (67)
118 So. 15th Ave., #1
Bozeman, MT 59715-4130
Ph. (H) (800) 587-2492 (Code: 44)
Ph. (B) (800) 484-1044 Ext. 0536

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44th Group Vice Pres. to 2nd ADA:
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Sacramento, CA 95833
Ph. (916) 925-1700

Director: Albert F. Ruby (464)
1106 Rogers St.
Madera, CA 93638-2117
Ph. (508) 869-2592

SEARCH-ROSTER-MAIL LIST

We have split the Roster function in two. Where we had a duplication of effort with both Tom Shepherd and Art Hand both doing the same job, i.e., searching for lost members, keeping the Roster current, and providing a current mailing list and address labels, then exchanging data. From now on Art Hand will concentrate on the Search function. If you hear of a 44th'er that does not belong, or has passed away, please notify:

ART HAND
517 ELM ST.
PARIS, IL 61994
PHONE/FAX (217) 463-5905

If you move or change any aspect of your address or phone number, wife's name, want to stop receiving the 8 Ball Tails or whatever, please notify:

TOM SHEPHERD
10597 CAMBROOKE COVE
COLLIERVILLE, TN 38017
PHONE: (901) 854-6558

This will basically leave Art to his search for members and Tom to keeping the Roster current.

ART JUST RECENTLY RECEIVED NEW UPDATES TO HIS CD-ROM PHONE DISKS, SO IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A 44TH BUDDY OR CREW MEMBER CONTACT ART. WHEN HE LOCATES THE PERSON FOR YOU, IF THEY ARE NOT A MEMBER OF 44TH BGVA TELL 'EM TO COME ABOARD.



Roy Owen, Director Mike Mikoloski, Historian Will Lundy, Secretary Ed Dobson, and Member "Chick" Blakely right after the close of our inaugural meeting at Colorado Springs on October 9.

THE LAST RUN OF "RUTHLESS"

The 44th Bomb Group target for the 2 February 1944 mission looked, for all purposes, to be a "milk run" against a coastal Noball (V-1 "Buzz Bomb" launch site) at Watten in the Pas de Calais, France with short penetration and little time in enemy territory. 1st. Lt. James O. "Augie" Bolin of the 506th Bomb Squadron with a makeup crew was assigned to fly B-24D # 41-24282 "Ruthless" (named after a former pilot's wife) on this mission. The makeup crew consisted of just that; several crewmen flying a last remaining mission to complete their combat tour.

Unfortunately, the "milk run" mission soon seemed to be in difficulty; the assembly was difficult due to layered clouds then the target area weather made a GH (Radar) bomb run necessary. Timing at the IP went awry when Bolin and the lead group were forced to make a second run when the #2 Group turned inside the IP and were on a collision course with Bolin's Group over the target. The second run resulted in a target time twenty two minutes behind schedule. All of this in moderate, fairly accurate, predictor control flak. Many of the aircraft suffered minor flak damage and it was on the second bomb run that "Ruthless" was hit knocking out its number 3 inboard engine. Bolin feathered the propeller and continued the run successfully dropping his bombs on the Watton target. Coming off the bomb run, it became evident that the flak burst that had taken out #3 had also damaged #4 which was losing both oil and power. Bolin slowly fell behind the formation descending. Bolin reported to the lead aircraft that he had also lost most of his primary flight instruments and flying between cloud layers was going to attempt to make landfall near Beachy Head and make a landing at the emergency airfield at Friston, near Eastbourne. Bailout or ditching were ruled out because of the Channel water temperature. "Ruthless" reached Friston where, for some reason, Bolin was told he could he could not land at that moment. Apparently, by this time he had lost another engine and was attempting a go-around on two engines. Unable to hold altitude the aircraft crashed on the Downs (hills) on the outskirts of Eastbourne killing all aboard.

From the day of the crash on, the Eastbourne villagers seemed to feel the crash which took the lives of all ten airmen aboard "Ruthless" as a personal tragedy. They researched the history of the crew members and aircraft, corresponded with the families of those men, and each year on the anniversary of the crash the villagers walk to the hillside site of the crash and place floral memorials to the crew.

This homage by the wonderful people has manifested itself in the creation of a memorial being erected on the crash site and to be dedicated on May 13, 1995 in

connection with the nationwide commemoration of VE Day the week of May 8, 1995. The funding for this memorial to our comrades was spearheaded by Eastbourne residents Arthur King, Kevin Watson and George Dixon and supported by Eastbourne Mayor Ron Parsons. The Eastbourne efforts have been joined by the citizens of Fulton County, Pennsylvania, home of "Ruthless" Waist Gunner S/Sgt. Ralph E. Strait, when The Fulton County Commissioners set up a Memorial Fund created to maintain the memorial.

Colonel Richard Butler of the 506th Bomb Squadron and his wife Ardith, will attend the Memorial dedication ceremonies in Eastbourne on May 13, representing all of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans.

This letter from Mrs. P. Parsons of Eastbourne seems to say it all about the personal loss these people feel for our fallen comrades.

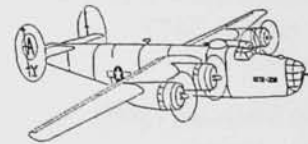
6A Maxfield Close
Eastbourne., E. Sussex, BN20 8PQ

Dear Friend,

I didn't know what to call you, but this would do.

I was one of the mothers pushing a baby carriage out of St. Elizabeth's that afternoon that the plane came over. I waved to the dear boys. Little did I think as I went down Victoria Drive to home, that they all lay dead, God rest their souls. But would you accept a little help for the memorial fund, I am sorry it's not more, but I do have a little remembrance of them though. One of my sons went up there, he was only about 12 or 13 years. He brought home a bit of Perspex (plexiglass) which my husband made into a cross which I still wear and have done for the last 50 years.

I now close, Yours Truly
Mrs. P. Parsons



In memory of the crew of a B-24D Liberator Bomber
N^o 41-24282 BAR Y "RUTH - LESS",
of
506 Squadron, 44th Bombardment Group, 8th U.S.A.A.F.
who all lost their lives, when,
badly damaged by enemy action and in very low cloud,
the aircraft crashed here on February 2nd 1944.

1 st Lt. J.O. BOLIN	Pine Bluff	ARKANSAS
1 st Lt. H.W. SCHWAB	Bronx	NEW YORK
1 st Lt. O.L. WULFF	De Smet	SOUTH DAKOTA
2 nd Lt. E.J. ACKERMAN	Brooklyn	NEW YORK
T / Sgt. J. H. BALES	Dayton	TENNESSEE
T / Sgt. C.W. YURICK	Needham	MASSACHUSETTS
S / Sgt. G.M. DEWALD	Norristown	PENNSYLVANIA
S / Sgt. A. J. MALOY	Hacoda	ALABAMA
S / Sgt. R. E. STRAIT	Saluvia	PENNSYLVANIA
S / Sgt. J. L. WILSON	Eastey	SOUTH CAROLINA

OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES
FAR FROM HOME

SAN ANTONIO '95

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION OCT. 19-22

THE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY OCT. 19 REGISTRATION ALL DAY

3:00 PM BALLROOM: RECEPTION AND BUSINESS MEETING. HORS D'OEUVRES,
CASH BAR

6:00 PM HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS, FREE BAR
DINNER ON YOUR OWN



FRIDAY OCT. 20

9:30 AM COACH TOUR # 1 * \$38.00 per person
3:00 PM HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS, FREE BAR
6:30 TO 8:30 BUFFET DINNER IN ATRIUM



SATURDAY OCT. 21

9:30 & 10:30 AM SHUTTLE BUSES LEAVE FOR RIVER WALK
2:30 & 3:30 PM SHUTTLE BUSES RETURN TO HOTEL
3:00 PM HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS, FREE BAR
6:30 PM SQUADRON DINNERS
8:30 PM GROUP DANCE- SPONSORED BY THE 506TH SQ.



SUNDAY OCT. 22

9:00 AM GOLF - FT. SAM HOUSTON
10:00 AM COACH TOUR #2 ** \$32.00 per person
3:00 PM HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS, FREE BAR
6:30 PM BANQUET: PROCEEDED BY COLOR GUARDS AND CANDLE
LIGHTING CEREMONY, PRESENTED BY 506TH SQ.
MEXICAN DANCERS FOLLOWING BANQUET
(JACKETS SUGGESTED FOR BANQUET)



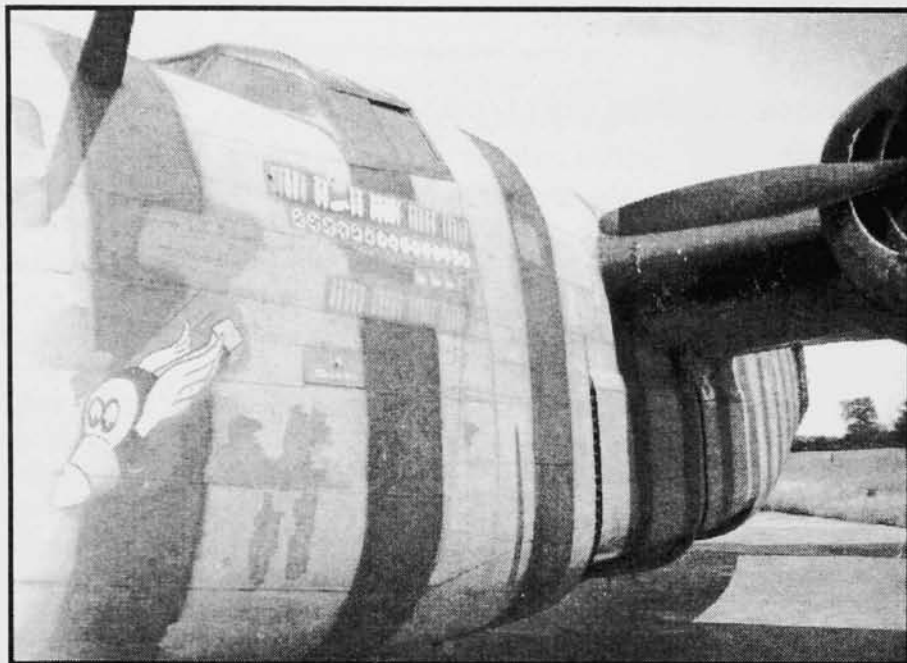
MONDAY OCT 23

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM FAREWELL BUFFET BREAKFAST & CHECKOUT

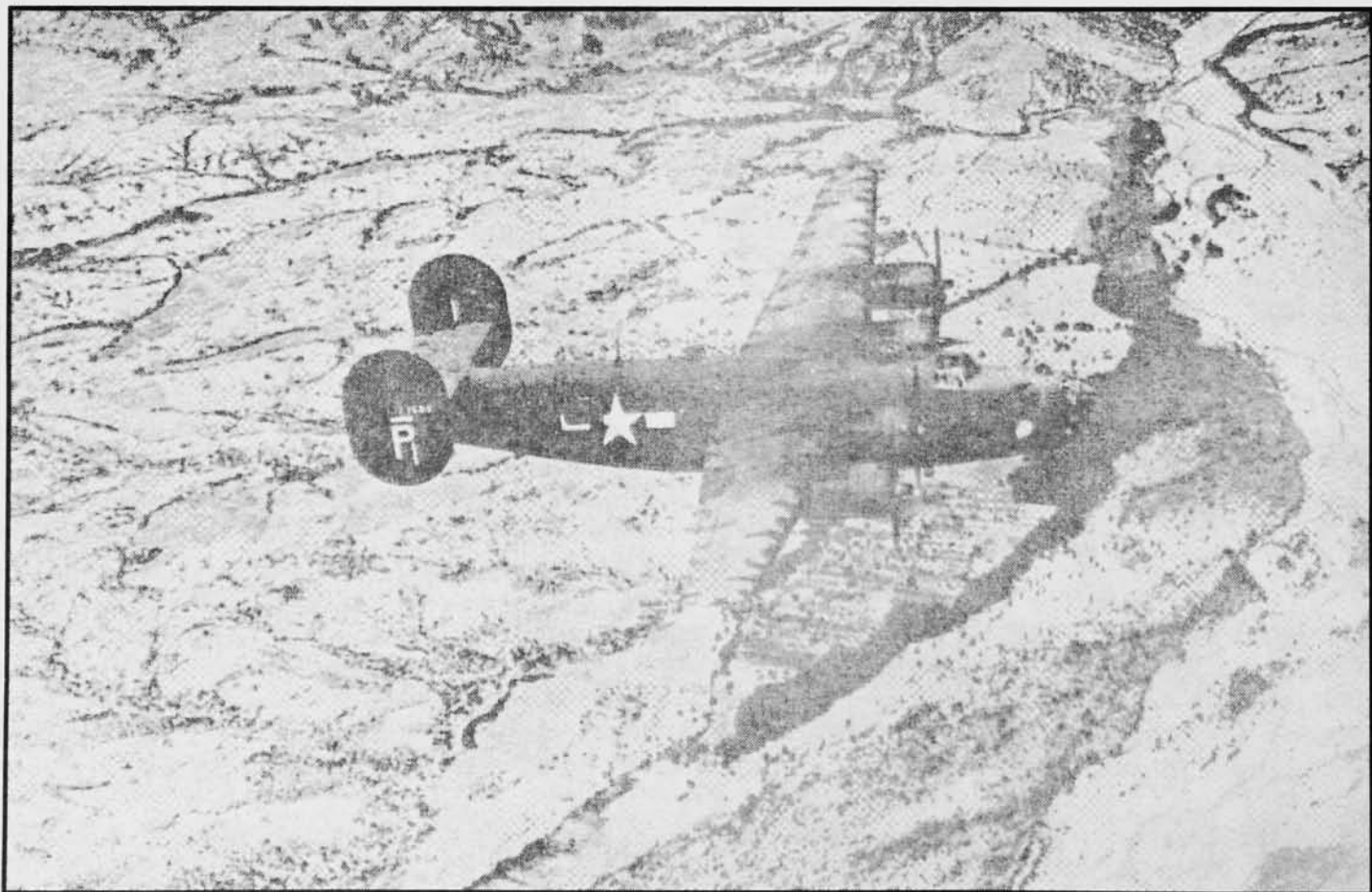
* TOUR #1 The coach tour includes the Historic Quadrangle, Fort Sam Houston and the Post Museum. After a break for lunch at Fort Sam Houston Officers Club, the tour continues on to the Alamo and Long Barracks also a tour of Mission San Jose "Queen of the Spanish Missions". The Lone Star Brewery is next with a stop at the Buckhorn Bar and the Hall of Horns. Return to hotel by 4:30 pm.

**TOUR #2 On this tour the San Antonio Botanical Gardens will be first then the Breckenridge Sunken Gardens and a stop at the Mexican Market. Lunch will be Dutch Treat. Next will be the King William Historical District and La Villita for shopping and history at the Institute of Texas Cultures. Returning by 4:00 pm.

At the time this was taken Lemon Drop had 45 combat missions, 4 diversion missions and 15 enemy aircraft kills to her credit. Note the narrow prop blade.



Crew Chief Master Sergeant Charles Pigg



Lemon Drop on her way to Naples. Note how the camouflage paint makes the near wing disappear into the landscape.

NOTICE———NOTICE———NOTICE———NOTICE

When we started reunion planning, our best heads estimated that for a first reunion we would do well to have 200 attend. Jim Clements padded that by 50 and made plans with the Holiday Inn accordingly. As the memberships and enthusiastic indications of attendance rolled in it seemed prudent to up the expected planning numbers. In the meantime the hotel had booked another banquet the night of our banquet, thus they can only accommodate 350 of our people. Rooms are not a problem but feeding over 350 is an absolute cap. We are too far along to change hotels so we must apologize for this planning error. On the other hand we are overwhelmed at the enthusiasm displayed by our members for coming to San Antonio. It will be first come, first serve for the first 350 people to reserve their attendance. Send your reservation as soon as you can! After 350 we will keep a standby list for any cancellations in order of receipt.

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT
TO SEND IN YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Upon receipt of registration, you will be mailed a Hotel Reservation Form for rooms. RETURN THEM DIRECTLY TO THE HOTEL. Hotel rates are \$65.00 per night per room.

44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1995 Reunion San Antonio , Texas
Reservation Form Total in your party_____

LAST NAME _____ FIRST NAME _____ SQUADRON _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

WIFE: (FIRST NAME) _____

GUEST: (LAST NAME) _____ FIRST NAME _____

REGISTRATION FOR FULL REUNION IS \$110.00 per person (NOT INCLUDING ROOM)

Full refund for cancellation until October 1, 1995 Choice for Banquet: Steak#___Chicken#___

REGISTRATION\$110.00 Would you like a round of golf at Ft. Sam Houston on Sunday?

TOUR #1 35.00 _____

TOUR #2 32.00 _____ How many players_____ Need transportation___yes___no

TOTAL\$ _____

Make checks payable to: 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association

Mail to: Jim Clements 4124 Calculus Ave. Dallas, TX 75244 (phone 214-243-4657)



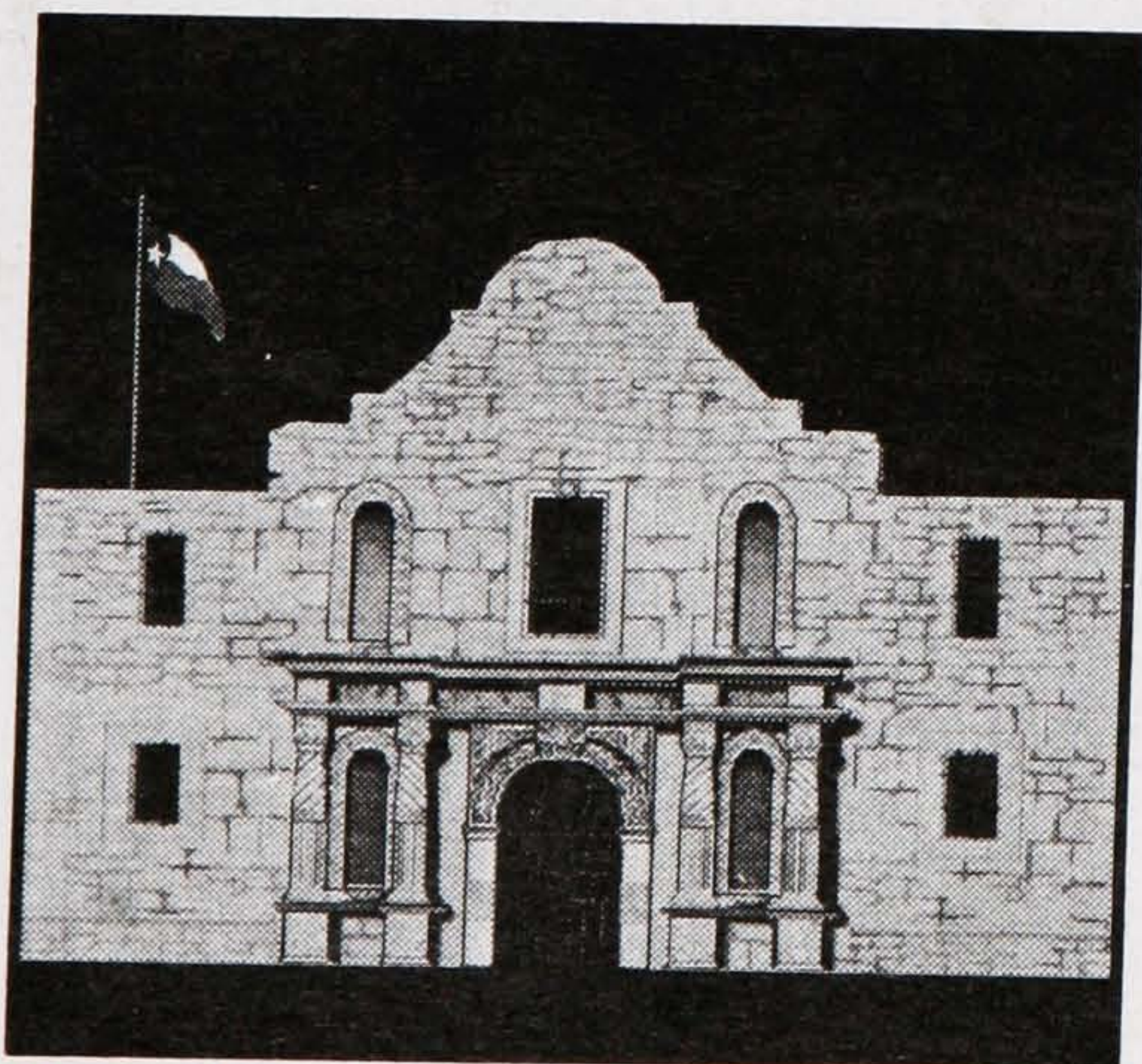
...and sometimes they busted our tails...

**44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association**
6304 Meadowridge Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Bulk Rate
U.S. POSTAGE
paid
Permit #470
Santa Rosa, CA



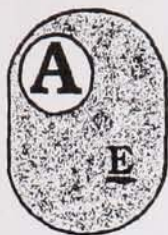
Address correction requested



Gerald W. Folsom
954 Lowell Ave.
Salt Lake City UT 84102-3620

Reunion '95 October 19-22

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 1 - Issue #3

Summer 1995

Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

EIN #68-0351397



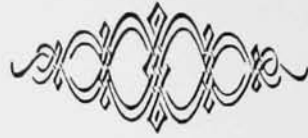
Bombs Away!

Pilot Thom, No Name 42-100411 E, Lost 21 June 1944

The Bombs Away! photo of our featured aircraft this issue is one of the best in our files of a B-24 Liberator "at work." The date 5 March 1944, the crew of Lt. George J. Thom, the target Berlin, the third combat mission for Aircraft #42-100411, Call Letter E-Bar.

E-Bar was never distinguished by a peculiar name or emblazoned with some nose art, but she accomplished an amazing combat record in the brief three and a half month span she flew for the 67th Squadron before going down on 21 June 1944, again on a Berlin strike. E-Bar came to the 44th the last of February and flew her first mission on 3 March 1944, Lt. Thom commanding. Her career ended on her 37th mission. In March alone, she flew 17 missions. Twice in that month she flew four missions back to back.

While E-Bar had Lt. Norman E. Howe at the controls when she went down, she flew with several different crews in combat. Those most frequently aboard were Lt. Thom and Lt. James M. Stephens and crew. We are making progress regaining contact with the surviving members of the Howe crew, as evidenced by the 506th Squadron Crew Losses Report, and have located most the of the Stephens crew. We are having some difficulty making contact with the Thom crew.



67 COMBAT CREWS



Lt. J. Stephens' Crew

Pilot, James H. Stephens, Deceased 10/6/91

Co-Pilot, Gunnard C. Ohlsson, 921 Green Star Drive #902, Colorado Springs, CO 80906-1820

Navigator, James H. Buchanan

Bombardier, Herbert J. Wilson, Box 249, New Town, ND 58763-0849

Engineer, Henry Meling, Deceased 11/9/53

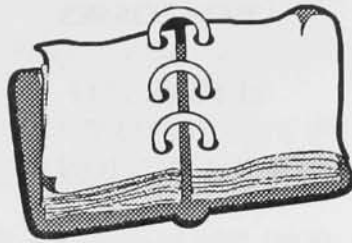
Radio Operator, Martin J. Ferrick, 21508 Santa Elena, Lago Vista, TX 78645

Waist Gunner, Kenneth P. Hummel

Waist Gunner, Richard P. Hein, 7870 Trenton, St. Louis, MO 63130

H Gunner, Tom J. Thomas, 2921 Telhurst Ct., Moraine, OH 45439-1418

Tail Gunner, Clyde B. Hisel, Deceased



BRIEF HISTORY

AIRCRAFT #42-100411 E

B-24J-100-CO Olive, Drab in Color.

Was assigned to the 67th Squadron prior to 3 March 1944.

The Letters NB were painted on both sides of the rear fuselage behind the waist windows.

Incomplete Listing of Missions Flown:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>PILOT</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>PILOT</u>
March	3	Thom	April	9	Jefferson
March	4	Schmidt	April	11	Stephens
March	5	Thom	April	12	Stephens
March	6	Thom	April	?	Mueller
March	8	McCormick	April	18	Stephens
March	9	Cookus	April	19	Stephens
March	12	McCormick	April	20	Stephens
March	15	Thom	April	22	Thames
March	16	Thom	April	27	Arnold
March	17	Thom	May	1	Thames
March	18	Thornton	May	7	Thames
March	21	Thom	May	8	?
March	23	Thom	May	10	Recalled
March	24	Thom	May	27	Thames
March	26	Thom (Spare)	May	28	Thames
March	27	Metts	May	30	Thames
March	31	Thom (Spare)	June	7	Carter
			June	19	Henry
			June	20	Henry
			June	21	Howe

Aircraft and Crew Lost

9 Prisoners of War

1 Killed in Action

506TH BOMB SQUADRON
CREW LOSSES

21 JUNE 1944

42-100411 E

DOWN ON 14TH MISSION FOR CREW

Pilot, Norman E. Howe, POW, Wife Marian, Box 553, Freeland, WA 98248

Co-Pilot, Gordon W. Henderson, KIA - shot while parachuting

Navigator, David Milton Harris, POW, Son Marc, 300 Mildren Avenue, Apt. 8, Weirton, WV 26062

Bombardier, Franklin W. Binkley, POW, Park Ridge, IL

Waist Gun Engineer, Robert E. Smith, POW, 702 Shuffleton, St. Sigourmey, IA 52591

Radio Operator, Henry D. Faller, POW, 1115 Kingston, Flint, MI 48507

Top Turret Waist Gunner, William L. McConnaughay, POW, 104 South Joseph, Sulpher, LA 70663

Waist Gunner, Frank Stoltz, POW, 2709 Pleasant St., Miles City, MT 59301

Tail Turret H Gunner, Francis E. Termin, POW, PO Box 13, Glen Hope, PA 16645

21 JUNE 1944

TARGET: BERLIN

GROW (DAVIDO)

A+ | 800

HUNDELT

H | 031

DAVIS

M+ | 783

DUWE

A | 087

GUNTON

L | 846

KNOWLES

O | 049

GILBERT

I | 193

HENRY

J | 189

HERMANN

T | 021

HONMYHR

K | 314

HERRING

P | 997

CARTER

S | 329

PERETTI

Z | 001

PRINCIPE

V | 112

MORRISON

G | 170

EDMONSON

C | 226

WEAVER

O | 057

SMITH

X | 329

DONALD

F | 367

BONNETT

E | 101

FORD

A | 049

ANDERSON

S | 643

CAYMAN

O | 082

RICKETTS

B | 098

MENDENHALL

T | 088

LANDAHL

K | 181

WESTCOTT

H | 829

HOWE

E | 411

MCKENNA

L | 177

LEONARD

Z | 016

DOCKTER

Q | 496

HRUBY

C | 616

TITER

A | 952

TUCKER

Y | 415

MENZEL

R | 034

MILLIKEN

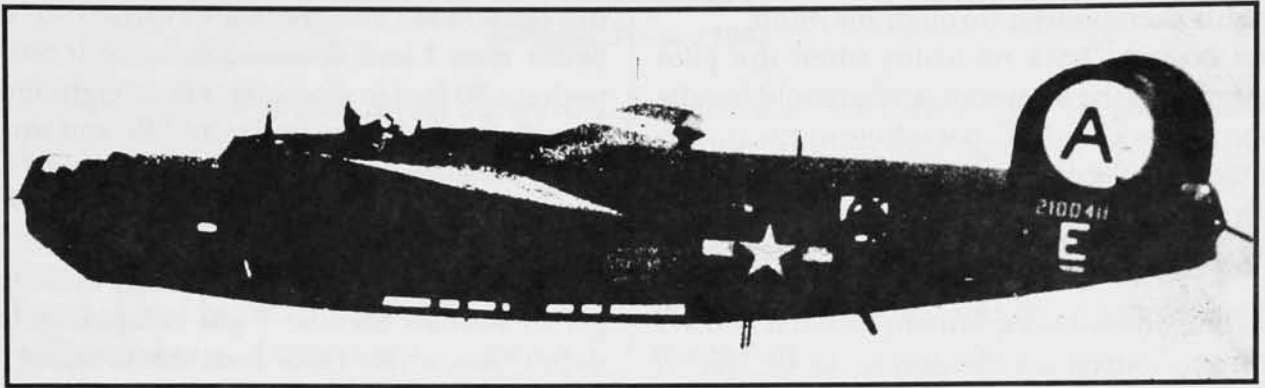
S | 030

66TH SQ. LEADS: McCormick F+ 788 & Craig, B+ - 785 to 392nd BG
Mustapa E+ 776 & Yoder L+ 769 to 466th; and
Englehardt C+ 772 to 467th BG

THE LAST FLIGHT OF E-BAR

By: S/Sgt. William McConnaughay

The following is a condensation covering his experiences relating to this day, 14 June 1944:



Our trip to Berlin, our 14th into Germany, was uneventful, due mostly to a good cloud cover, with only isolated pockets of inaccurate anti-aircraft fire. About forty to fifty miles out from Berlin, our cloud cover dissipated and we could see a light haze hanging over Berlin. Our flight plan routed us southeast to a point approximately twenty miles south of Berlin, and then due north across the city.

As we turned north and quickly approached our target, the whole damn sky, almost as far as the eye could see, was a blazing inferno created by the hundreds of anti-aircraft guns installed there. Off to each side, German spotter planes were flying at our exact altitude, relaying this information to the gun batteries below, increasing their efficiency for their devastating barrage on our bombers. Although we tried to ignore it, we could see bombers ahead of us falling out of formation, some blowing up, and an ever increasing number of parachutes floating down over the city.

Even at this time, I believe all of us thought we lived a charmed life and were going to make it. But seconds before we were to drop our bombs, a shell exploded in the vicinity of our left outboard (#1) engine. We dropped out of formation like a ton of bricks and continued to lose altitude until we could jettison our bomb load. With the bombs gone, we were able to stabilize our position and were soon over the out-skirts of Berlin. A quick check of the plane revealed our condition not critical, and our Navigator, Lt. Harris, estimated we could be in Sweden in approximately 35 minutes.

My job as a gunner on the crew was to operate the top turret located on top of the aircraft, directly over the flight deck. As I rotated my turret, I saw some ME 109's closing rapidly from the rear. These fighters had a 20mm cannon in the nose and three .30 caliber machine guns in each wing. As the first two fighters made their pass at us, their cannons made gaping holes in our left rear stabilizer and the left wing. When the third plane came in, I was nearly hypnotized when .30 caliber bullets started penetrating the fuselage on the top and rear of our bomber...and they came directly in a line for my turret. In what seemed an eternity, .30 bullets came crashing into my turret through the plastic bubble!

Although slightly dazed from this experience, I remembered something had hit me in the neck and I was convinced it was one of those bullets. I immediately had the sensation of blood running down my neck and a very sticky feeling in my flight suit. Instinctively, I followed the fourth fighter through his pass and about burned out my gun barrels trying to get revenge. He came right in on top of us, and just before he turned it over to go down and away, he raised his hand and waved! Although he was long gone, I remember waving back at him.

Surveying the damages from my vantage point, I could see that the entire left rear stabilizer was gone and approximately one-third of the left wing. It seemed like there were thousands of holes. Our plane at this time was completely out of control, and I'm sure that the pilots were far too busy to inform the rest of us what we could expect.

In the confusion that followed, I forgot I had a .30 caliber bullet through my neck and probably was bleeding to death. Then reality came back, positive that I was dying, I became hysterical. I remember hollering incoherently, but then, just as quickly, I became calm and at peace with the world. All sorts of thoughts then poured through my mind.

I was brought back to reality when the pilot announced over the intercom that he could handle the plane and we should all parachute out as quickly as possible. I immediately crawled out of my turret and desperately started looking for my parachute that I had so nonchalantly tossed on my flight deck earlier.

Crawling on my knees, I finally found it and as I stood up and started to unbutton my heated jacket to snap on my chute, I noticed several fragments of plastic about the size of a dime fall out onto the floor. As I continued to unbutton my jacket, I realized my flight suit was soaking wet - with sweat! It slowly dawned on me that I had found my .30 caliber bullet and the blood.

Crawling over to the bomb bay, I jumped out, following my plan to free fall as long as possible, but suddenly I was in a small, low-flying cloud and could not see the ground. I immediately tried to open my chute, but nothing happened. With my heart skipping beats, I looked down and there was my left hand desperately trying to keep my right hand from pulling the rip cord. Under control now, I pulled the cord for a short ride to earth with my chute blossoming above me.

With all of this activity, I had completely forgotten about the rest of the crew. Looking up, I quickly counted eight chutes - all of them crewmen. They were all in the same general area and still about a mile up. Breaking almost every rule, I headed on a dead run for a relatively small wooded area where I stopped, sat down and became violently ill at my stomach. I had not been there long when I heard the roar of airplane engines, followed by limbs being torn off trees, and then a shower of airplane parts and pieces of trees. Looking up, directly over my head and not thirty feet high, a four-engine bomber was crashing through the trees and finally came to rest less than a quarter of a mile in front of me!

Dazed for a bit by the fire, smoke, exploding ammunition, I was jarred back to reality by a large explosion - probably the gasoline. I jumped up and ran out of the woods, back into the potato field where I had landed, and then noticed a small green spot ahead and ran for it - anything was better than this open field. The green area turned out to be far better than I had dreamed because it was a hole perhaps 30 feet in diameter, about eight feet deep, a small pond of water in the middle and small trees and shrubs around the entire bank. Soon I was into the water up to my armpits, my head and shoulders well covered by a small tree...

I was captured 10 to 12 days later while trying to get to Sweden because I got completely lost and didn't know where I was. I was sent to Stalag Luft #1.

Sgt. Faller, Radioman, answered a few questions also, "As I recall, we did have a borrowed plane, but I don't remember why. We received a direct hit through #1 engine just before the bomb run and fell out of formation. After salvaging our bombs, we headed cross-country hoping to tap onto some formation, but were hit by about six ME 109's who took turns at us. When it became evident that we could no longer stay airborne (about 12,000 feet), we bailed out and all became POW's except our copilot, Henderson. He was killed by civilians when he landed."



DECISION MISSION 24
27 JUNE 1944
44TH BOMB GROUP 506TH B.S.

Submitted by Robert M. Foust
1725 Grauwylers #137
Irvingus, Texas 75061

Shipdham Air Base, 3:00 AM, 506th Squadron Quonset Hut, everyone was asleep, finally. YA HO, YA HO, YA HO rang out "Time to fly those Bloody Kites, wake up you fly boys. Docketor's Crew, Stone's Crew, breakfast in 15 minutes" the CQ hollered. I had been asleep maybe an hour when he shouted out. I'll probably remember that sound the rest of my life. Having slept in my flying coveralls, I slipped on my shoes, grabbed my leather jacket and hat and headed for the trucks to take us to the mess hall, along with the rest of the crew. Breakfast at 03:15, briefing at 04:00 came the voice over the PA system.

Breakfast was pancakes and bacon for me. Then on to briefing. Our mission was Creil, a marshalling yards north of Paris. We were to carry 12-500 pound GP bombs. The enlisted men were excused from briefing and went on to get on our flying gear and check our valuables. Then by the armory to pick up our guns and on to our aircraft.

The crew went about their task of pre-flight on "ShackRat," our aircraft. As a right waist gunner, the pilot assigned me to be in charge of the rear of the plane. My duties included starting the "Putt Putt," the auxiliary power generator. After installing my waist gun and starting the A.P.G., I plugged in my heated flying suit and my headphones, spread out a couple of flak suits on the ribbed deck and promptly went to sleep. I would doze while the engines were run up and usually during the long period till we joined the formation to head to our target.

We had some problems during assembly of our group, but word from the pilot to test fire our guns meant we were over the channel and headed to France. Before we reached the coast, I was

ordered to start throwing out chaff, anti-radar strips of tinfoil. Sitting down by the rear hatch I started dropping the bundles through the chute provided. I must have gone through 10 boxes of chaff before hearing on the intercom that we had reached our IP and were turning on the target.

On a previous mission, Bill Strange and I had seen a B-24 pull up beside us in the formation. You could see fuel streaming from the bomb bay. On board the crew could be seen going back and forth working on the problem. Painted on the nose was the name "Tuffey," which was a nickname we had given Bill. Fire erupted from the aircraft and it dove out of our formation and sailed under and off to the left of us. Bodies began jumping out on fire as the B-24 burst in two. Their chutes would open only to be consumed in flames. Bill looked at me and said "If we were ever hit in our fuel tanks, I'm going to get out before the fire begins."

"Bomb bay doors open," came the command and "Bombs away" as the B-24 lunged upward releasing the bombs. At that moment, flak bracketed our formation. We were hit. I felt the aircraft losing altitude rapidly and the rear of the plane was full of 100 octane gasoline. Feeling a tap on my shoulder, I turned around and Bill, the other waist gunner handed me my parachute. I stood up disconnecting my oxygen and intercom and hooked up my chest pack. Looking up, I saw Bill open the rear hatch and was going to bail out also, but we seemed to be flying okay, so I decided not to. I think the reason I didn't was lack of oxygen, having been disconnected from it for I don't know how long.

The intercom was buzzing by now, orders from the pilot was to turn off all electrical equipment and stand by. I reported that Bill had bailed out and we were soaking with fuel. Looking toward the rear I saw Morrie, the tail gunner, sitting in his turret looking sadly at me with gasoline splashing in his face. Meanwhile in the bomb bay, they were working to stop the flow of fuel from a pump that had been hit. Charlie, our flight engineer, tore a piece of wood from an ammo box and with his false teeth chewed a plug and stopped the leak. By this time things began to settle down after an engine was feathered and the pilot began to take damage reports. He called me in the waist and asked how bad Bill (right waist gunner) had been hit and did I need to help with him. During all the excitement, he had misunderstood that Bill had been wounded instead of having bailed out.

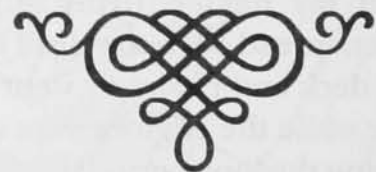
A few minutes later Fred Stone, our pilot, got on the intercom and told us we were flying all right and he was going to try to make it back to the Channel, but if any of the crew wanted to bail out it was okay. No one else wanted to and we all decided to ride it out with the "Skipper." Sam, the radio operator, remarked later that he would never fly another mission with any one else than Stone. He said if it hadn't been for him shouting out commands during the mission, we would have had it.

We had dropped our altitude low enough to get off oxygen and had picked up fighter support back towards England. As a 19 year old, I began to realize what had happened and the shock was setting in. On the intercom I could hear the pilots asking Charlie Brown how the fuel supply was. His answer every time was, "Don't worry, we have plenty of fuel. Keep going." Over the Channel the question was, "Do we have enough

fuel to make it back to the base?" The answer again, "Keep going." The pilot announced, "Anyone wishing to bail out over the Channel can, but I'm going back to Shipdham." We all decided to go with him. Coming in on an emergency approach, the pilot landed on the grass beside the runway to avoid any sparks. When the B-24 rolled to a stop, we jumped out of the rear of the plane and began kissing the ground. I think this mission added ten years to my life.

The Crew on this mission: Pilot Fred Stone, Co-Pilot Merritt Derr, Navigator Andrew Patrichick, Radio Operator Sam Ceverella, Nose Turret Bob Ryan, Upper Turret Charles Brown, Tail Turret Morrie Meunitz, Right Waist Bill Strange, Left Waist Bob Foust, Ball Turret Flegman. All finished their tour and returned to the States except for Bill Strange, who spent the rest of the war in a P.O.W. camp. As of this writing, April, 1995, only Derr, Foust and Strange are still alive.

EDITOR: Good story, Bob. As to Pilot Stone's performance, one could conclude that this is why the Air Force dropped the plain "Pilot" title and renamed that crew position "Aircraft Commander," one who has and maintains command of the aircraft and crew. It seems to me that Flight Engineer, Charlie Brown did a pretty outstanding feat with his choppers; then managing the fuel so precisely to enable you to make it back to Shipdham. You were fortunate to be on such a solid crew!



The following is taken from the Norfolk News and Weekly Press dated April 10, 1943:

LIFE ON THE BASE EARLY 1943

Life at the British station of the 44th Bombardment Group has been well described by Mr. Lee in the Norfolk News and Daily Press of 10 April 1943.

For some months past, the sight of officers and men of the United States Air Force has been a familiar feature of the scene in a great many Norfolk towns and villages. So familiar indeed, that it has long since ceased to be the matter of curiosity that it was at first. Now we accept them – almost, for we are still East Anglian – as part of our own community.

How is it that this has happened so quickly in a country that by tradition is supposed to be slow in taking to "foreigners?" Partly, I think, because we East Anglians have been quick to realize that these Americans are as much a part of Great Britain, to whose presence we have become used to since the war. Partly, I think, because an innate instinct to hospitality has been quickened by the thought that these Americans are in a way relations, however distantly removed. But mainly, I firmly believe, because so many of the "boys" themselves have shown themselves eager to fit in with our ways, and have so obviously been delighted when an Englishman has given one of them the slenderest of chances to show what really good "mixers" they are.

I found out how very good they are at that "mixing" when in my turn I became the "invader" – a visitor to an aerodrome in Norfolk that has been transformed into a bit of the United States in England. The boot was on the other leg. I was an Englishman among a large number of Americans. The physical surroundings were familiar. Over the other side of the hedge was a Norfolk farm laborer driving his American built tractor drilling barley. But this side of the hedge I was in the United States, talking to men from Kentucky, from Wisconsin, from Maine and the Carolinas, listening to a variety of dialects that made a hardened film fad realize that the accent of the Hollywood studio that I had learned to know so well must seem to Americans as affected and strange as "Oxford" does to the blunt

Yorkshireman in this country. But since neither "Tex" nor "Bud" Yank from Maine, or "Tarheel" from North Carolina took any noting of my straight turns of speech, I too, tried to take things in my stride. In any case, I was very quickly made to feel very much at home.

A SPARTAN LIFE

I had heard a good deal of talk about the lavish way the American troops in England live. People had told me "on the beat authority" – which so often is the very worst – stories of lavish living that made a long rationed Englishman's mouth water. Well, this is certainly one of those things that prove the soundness of the old advice to believe nothing that you hear. There was nothing of luxury in anything I saw. In fact, if there is anything in the American Army regulations that corresponds to the "hard living" allowance that the British Navy pays for certain services, both officers and "enlisted men" of this particular bomber squadron of the USAAF earn it. They work hard and they live as hard as they work.

As an old soldier of the 1914-18 war, one of the things that struck me most about this hard living of the USAAF was the narrowness of the distinction between the conditions of the officers and "enlisted men." They certainly live up to the democratic idea. An officer's servant is a thing unknown – except perhaps the one or two very senior officers, though I don't quite know about that. The officer's mess is a very spartan affair indeed. In fact, I was told from more than one source that the combat crew's mess – for the non-commissioned members of the crews of the giant Liberator bombers – fed more lavishly and in conditions of greater comfort than the officers, even including the pilots and the "bombardiers," who incidentally all have to hold commissioned rank. For the rest of the station, all the "enlisted men" of the ground staff, from "top" sergeant to the humblest "buck private," mess together and share the same living quarters.



EVERY MAN TO HIS JOB

And the United States Army Air Force doesn't carry any passengers. Every man has his job, and every job – outside the barest minimum of administrative, office and cooking staff – makes its direct contribution to the actual flying operations, which are the job of the squadron as a whole. I was particularly struck by the high standard of independence of the squadron organization. If a machine comes back from operations "all shot up," the station has workshops and craftsmen capable of tackling all types of repairs. One of the Liberators I saw on the dispersal line was just having a new engine fitted, it had lost one in a fight with a Jerry over Holland a day or two before, but on its fuselage were painted three of those little silhouettes of planes to show that on different sorties, it had accounted for three German fighters.

THEIR DEBT TO THE R.A.F.

One thing particularly pleased me in the course of my tour of the station. I saw one or two men in the R.A.F. uniform about and, knowing that the station had been taken over from our own Air Force, remarked about it to my guide. "Yes," he said, "but they'll soon be going. We've got to stand on our own bottom, you know. Those are the last of a grand bunch of fellows. They've taught us a lot. In fact, everything we know about air tactics over here and about operations, generally your boys of the R.A.F. have taught us."

Then later I learned -- from very uncomplimentary and blunt comments made by the same American on my own deplorable first "flight" in a Link trainer – that Americans like to say what they mean, and usually mean what they say. I took the compliment to the R.A.F. as completely sincere.

I came away from the USAAF station with a very wholesome regard for their efficiency. They may not bother much about "spit and polish." Their standards of military discipline may seem lax to British ideas. But that's just their way of disregarding what they regard as unessentials. It certainly doesn't apply to their keenness in the really big job of work they are doing as part of the Allied Air Offense over Europe.



FACTS ABOUT THE 44TH BOMB GROUP

A TRIBUTE TO BRIG. GENERAL ROBERT L. CARDENAS OF THE 44TH

Submitted by:

Forrest S. Clark of Kissimmee, Florida

Perhaps not sufficiently known to the younger generation is the role played by one of our own 44th Bomb Group officers in man's conquest of supersonic speed and space.

That officer is Brig. Gen. Robert L. Cardenas, USAF Ret, who flew B-24 Liberators with the 44th and was shot down 13 April 1944 over Germany, escaped into France.

After his distinguished record in World War II, he was to add to this record a career as a test pilot.

In October of 1947 he was in charge of the XS-1 supersonic project and pilot of the B-29 that dropped Capt. Chuck Yeager into the realm of supersonic flight for the first time in the history of mankind. He was also chief pilot on the eight engine Flying Wing YB-49.

During the Korean War, he was at Wright Field and Edwards AFB testing new jet fighters and bombers for combat duty. In the Gulf of Tonkin crisis, he was commander of the 18th Tactical Fighter Wing on Okinawa.

Gen. Cardenas has been recognized by the USAF Museum in Wright-Paterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio for his accomplishments and was one of the principles in the 1993-94 lecture series at the museum. He told of his part in the team that was assigned to break the sound barrier.

He maintained an active career in the Air Force and in industry and government in his post-career years supporting veterans benefits.

The 50th anniversary of the first supersonic flight is approaching and some fitting memorials and commemoration of that event are being considered. It is therefore proper at this time that the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association remember Brig. Gen. Cardenas for his distinguished service, not only to the 44th, but to all of the US Air Force and the nation.

He lives in San Diego, California and participates actively in veterans affairs. He is a member of the Swiss Internee Association of the United States.



THE NIGHT WE MIGHT HAVE BLOWN UP SHIPDHAM

By John Wolbarst (464th Sub Depot)

It was sometime in 1944 that I was told to report to the 44th B.G. Armament Officer, Major Robert L. Dean. I was the senior NCO in charge of bombsight and autopilot maintenance for the Group.

With Major Dean were S/Sgt. Max Goucher, armorer of the 68th and others I don't remember. They were handling an extraordinary piece of ordnance—a four-barrel flare gun. Four Very pistols had been cut down and mounted in a row on an aluminum plate about a foot square.

They were to be fired by a pair of modified bomb rack releases. These devices, cocked with a powerful spring, were released electrically; the actuating arms then flew around and hit the firing pins of the flare pistols.

The purpose of the gun was to signal to the rest of the Group when the first bomb was leaving the lead ship, so the other bombardiers could toggle off their loads in a compact pattern.

We were to mount it in the waist of a 68th ship that was to lead a mission the next morning. Goucher and I were to meet S/Sgt. Fred Piela and a sheet metal crew of the 464th Sub Depot on the line and get the thing installed.

As it was late when we got to the plane, we decided that we would go to evening chow and come back to do the job. On the way we warned the control tower that we would be firing flares.

Piela's men worked fast. First they cut a slot in the roof of the plane; then they riveted the top edge of the plate to a longitudinal stringer so the gun barrels just protruded through the roof. That was it. I thought the setup looked flimsy and told Piela so. He said: "I don't tell you how to fix bombsights. Don't you tell me how to fix sheet metal." They left and Goucher and I strung wire from the intervalometer in the nose back to the waist. We were finished about 9:30.

Goucher loaded and cocked the gun and then got out onto the hardstand. I went up to the nose to fire the thing. The plane had a full load of bombs, ammunition, and gas so I was very careful how I set and ran the intervalometer. There was a loud bang

and a horrendous crash of rending metal, followed by sounds as if someone was hammering on the ship, all mixed with blood curdling yells from Goucher.

I ran back. Smoke was pouring out of the waist windows, Goucher was jumping up and down. Through the waist window we could see a big hole in the roof. We climbed in the waist hatch. It was clear what had happened.

When the gun fired the recoil pushed the barrels below the roof. Most of the fireballs were trapped inside and flew around the waist. A piece of roof about 3 foot square was torn loose. The stringer was a ruin. Bits of fireballs were still smoldering in corners.

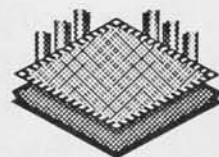
After putting out the sparks and checking that the ship was secure, we were about to leave when the fire truck arrived. The crew's remarks were not complimentary.

It was after 10:00 when I found Piela and told him to round up his crew again. They were not happy, but they got to work with a will.

About 11:30 it began to rain steadily. The men outside on the roof were getting soaked; they also began to get shocks from their electrical equipment. Anguished protests filled the night air.

By midnight the job was done. Goucher loaded the gun, it fired the flares high into the wet air and we went off to bed. As I was dropping off to sleep I had a sudden thought. What if some of those fireballs had landed in the ammunition containers? Wow!

That night the mission was scrubbed.



THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

By Lyndon C. Allen (44th BG)



None of us made that second mission without preliminary making that first. But I am sure each of us have particular memories of our first, and that's what this is all about – my specific memories of our first. The White Cliffs of Dover play a significant role in these memories.

My memory fails me as to the preliminary of this, our, what we thought to be, a "baptism of fire." I am sure we fairly well followed the sequence Louis W. Wust described in the March, 1980, issue of the Journal, Page 10. The awakening, usual truck ride or walk to the mess hall, those delicious powdered eggs, the truck ride to the flight line; all done thousands of times by thousands of other Second Air Division members. Of course, to us gunners, the briefing took on a different aspect from that to which it did to pilots and others to whom it was so pertinent. It was more of an occasion of seeing where we were going, what to expect along the way, etc. The obtaining of our flight cloths was very similar to that which Louis described. One thing he left out, though, was that we were always issued some form of nourishment to take along to help sustain us on our waiting to get back to the next meal. For the longer flights, I'm sure all remember those "C" rations we were issued; for the shorter ones we were usually given candy bars. (For us, "Ping Bars" were the predominant type. No one on our crew liked them except me, so I usually made some pretty good trades and really enjoyed more than my share of "Ping Bars." Wish I could have one now (even with my diabetic condition!) But this was to be a rather long one, so I presume we were issued the "C" rations this time.

Our pre-fighting, of course, was different, but once we were in the air I guess we were all pretty

much in the same situation. This "Number One" for us was to be the bombing of an airfield near Nancy-Essy, France. Incidentally, this took place on August 18, 1944. After assembling over England somewhere, we headed east. Our plane was one of the last in the formation and, as I was tail gunner, I had no other planes to see and give me moral support.

Leaving the English coast was the significant aspect, to me, of our first mission. Ever since I had geography back in Elementary School, I have heard of, and have seen pictures of the White Cliffs of Dover, and there they were, directly below me! How beautiful; how magnificent; just as they had been shown in pictures! At first I completely forgot the apprehension of this being our first mission. But as I watched, those white cliffs starting to become smaller and smaller, until finally they were gone! That apprehension suddenly came back. What were we getting into? What did we have to expect before us? Would I ever see those beautiful cliffs again? I'm not the only one who ever had that feeling, I know, but with no planes behind me and the cliff's gone, what next!

Well, it turned out to be a milk run; and no flak, no "Jerries," no nothing. The bombing was good. Our first mission had accomplished its purpose. It was not the "baptism of fire" we had anticipated; it was just a long eight hour and twenty minute flight.

Yes, coming back I did get to see those majestic cliffs again. I saw them several times later, by the way, but never with that apprehension that was there on the first mission; the apprehension that was so accentuated by the passing of those White Cliffs of Dover over the horizon as we went east on that first mission.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are fast approaching our reunion date and reservations are still coming in. We will more than likely reach a total of 300. This will leave some room for those who live around San Antonio to come to the Banquet and/or Squadron Dinner night selectively. Contact Jim (214) 243-4657 to make late reservations.

The really big news is that The 44th Veterans Association (our short title) is now officially affirmed as a Non-Profit Veterans Association by the IRS (EIN #68-0351397) and we are presently applying for a bulk mail permit in Salt Lake City where we have our business address. There are some other notable events: 2nd AD reunion, Executive Board meeting, Tower Restoration project that are covered elsewhere in this issue. There is one event, the membership of Col. Roscoe Moulthrop, although mentioned elsewhere, I want to make the theme of my comments in this issue.

In the announcement of Col. Moulthrop joining us, I quoted his willingness to cast himself in the role of rallying point for veterans of the missile era in 44th history to follow his example in remaining a member of the 44th family by joining us. In reality, what we are really talking about here is rejoicing in having the beginnings of contemporaries of our sons and daughters coming aboard to help carry on the heritage and history of the 44th.

While we have a sprinkling of members from the Bombardment Wing and Missile Wing eras, I am concerned that we don't have continually growing numbers from those times of service with the 44th. We must help Roscoe Moulthrop mark the turning point. What we must do now is not only seek out and make him welcome; we must look around us and actively identify those members among us who are of those eras and tell them how very happy we are to have them with us to carry on the 44th heritage. I have several pieces of correspondence which characterize both the former and present 44th organizations as a bunch of old Liberator lovers with little concern for those who brought us safely through the Cold War. That perception of the 44th BGVA isn't going to swell our ranks, so anyone would notice. While I denounce this characterization as an unjust generalization, I readily admit to some valid indications of its truth. First let me say, I think I have a better grasp than most on understanding how we may give this impression. Why? Because I helped in building it. That beloved old 44th Bomb Group B-24 carried me through the most perilous (and exciting) period of my life and is my frame of reference in defining love of my country. Thus when the existence of our Bomb Group Organization was threatened, I joined others in the battle to save it. Alas,

when we looked around among the membership for further help, we found the mainstream of strength existed within the old World War II warriors. Naturally, they became the target of our appeals for help. It wasn't that we didn't want the other eras to help, it was their small numbers and time didn't permit us spending a lot of our energy in building a lot of fight in the few. So in those appeals, I unabashedly admit I purposely plucked every patriotic heart string I could think of (and maybe a few I conjured up) to fire up the old war-horses to join the battle. When it came to publishing our journal, again we made the appeal to the membership in the same vein, entitling it *The 8 Ball Tails*. I can't tell you how many great responses we have had over the format, content and theme of the *Tails*. I love doing *The 8 Ball Tails* and I love hearing that you love reading it. So it would appear we pushed the right buttons and the 44th BGVA is safely on course.

It seems obvious to me now as we, hopefully, have reached a turning point with the joining of Roscoe Moulthrop noted above, that we must begin (softly) to widen our appeal to those who also served their nation under the proud colors of the 44th. I can start this with publishing any correspondence and stories submitted by the Bomb and Missile Wing people. I also would be delighted to change our masthead to include depictions of B-29, B-47, KC-135 and Minuteman II missile tail sections. You can start seeking out these members at the reunion and getting acquainted by inviting them to join you at the dining events. Let's let 'em know we're all family! Speaking of family, ours is steadily growing! The right up to publication numbers are 809 regular and 143 life members, for a total of 952. Can we get to 1,000 by reunion time?



Roy Owen, President

With every passing year, it becomes more important that all of us reflect back upon our military career with the 44th Bomb Group during World War II with the aim of getting our personal experiences down on paper, tapes or even video. In case you have noticed, none of us are getting any younger. So, while the old memory box is still functioning reasonably well, please do take the time necessary to record as much as you can remember. It could be priceless to our family, friends and to historians. Don't put it off any longer. If you have not done this, and if you have, take a bit more time to review it. Look for events or memories omitted. PLEASE!

In July, your President, Roy Owen and I attended two meetings, both of which were devoted to history of the 44th Bomb Group. First we met with Mr. Dave Turner of Turner Publishing concerning their desire to publish a history of the 44th Bomb Group; and secondly with Lt. Gen. E.G. Shuler, Jr. regarding the request of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center to cooperate with them by providing as complete a record as possible, covering each and every person who served with us, complete data about every one of our operational missions such as number and name of each plane, names, positions, rank of each man who flew in each plane, enemy aircraft shot down, damage to aircraft, wounded, formation sketch, bomb load, support personnel of all units, job descriptions, everything that can still be dug up, copied, borrowed, etc. to be computerized and retained at the new Heritage Center at Savannah, Georgia.

Yes, the scope is so large as to be frightening, but with the cooperation of each and every one of you, we can make sure that our 44th Bomb Group will have one of the most complete historical records of any bomber group. The National Archives in Maryland have many of the detailed records that will be needed, but if EACH ONE of us will take a personal interest in these TWO MAJOR PROJECTS, we can and will succeed.

Let me offer my assistance to each of you through the large supply of information which I have built up over the years. If you need certain information such as plane number, mission dates, targets, formation sketch, names of crew mates, etc.; I just might have it for you. If I fail to come up with the information, I will try to obtain it from other sources (Webb Todd or Norm Kiefer and even Steve Adams of Norwich, England, who is working on the 66th Squadron history). Let us all work together, share our information, make our 44th Bomb Group history and the records for the Savannah Heritage Center the best that can be assembled. Come on now, let's DO IT!! Send your material to me for assembly and safe keeping until it can be utilized in the best manner.

MORE COMMENT ON THE CONTROL TOWER FUND

In late 1991, I personally initiated a Tower Fund to save the old landmark building from decay. My reason for personally

taking on the responsibility was due to the action of the 44th HMG Board rejecting my proposal that the HMG donate \$3,500 estimated costs for a new roof. Thanks to the support by the 67th Squadron at their Squadron dinner, nearly \$5,000 was immediately pledged and \$4,000 of that by one person, R.I. Brown.

With sufficient funds to do this repair work, I notified Mr. Steven Adams to alert the roofing contractor to start the work. At this time, Mr. Doug Genge, businessman leasing the property next to the tower, intervened, suggesting that his company would like to restore the entire building, provided the building was still sufficiently strong enough to warrant that action. It was found okay. Mr. Genge hired a firm and had an excellent roof installed. He also purchased a painting of the tower, had 1,000 lithographs printed from it, and donated 750 of them to us to help with the actions to solicit donations from the 44thers.

One-half of the exterior and two full walls were restored, along with the new roof by July, 1992. Lee Aston donated a memorial plaque and had it installed before the 44thers arrived in October for a mini reunion. Almost no work has been completed since that time due to several factors, but basically due to the outright opposition by the Executive Trustee of the 44th HMG.

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, after a meeting by Richard Butler and myself in early May this year with Mr. Genge and the property agent, it appears prudent that we abandon any further efforts to make the building into a museum. It is still a possibility that the old control tower will be restored sufficiently to make it safe and available for visiting. This depends upon the cooperation of the owner, who has shown inclination to do so.

At this time, I am holding more than \$12,000 of the money donated by over 400 generous 44thers. The "sale" of the lithographs, along with other straight donations amounted to nearly \$26,000, with \$13,000 paid out for the restoration work (not including the portion paid by Mr. Genge). The cost of advertising mailers and postage, plus the cost of mailing out 390 lithographs totaled nearly \$1,100. \$565 of these funds were utilized in a mailing campaign to notify all 44thers that the HMG Board voted to disband the 44th completely. It was voted by the Board that \$500 would go to the Tower Fund so this expense was anticipated to be reimbursed - it wasn't.

At the San Antonio Reunion in October, the membership will be asked to vote if this remaining \$12,200 plus should be utilized for a mini museum to be expanded at Arrow Air Center. However, if any of you that have donated for the Tower Fund, I feel that you should have a right to withdraw the appropriate percentage of your donation. If anyone objects to his money being used for an expanded museum at Arrow Air Center, please contact me as soon as possible so that a refund can be negotiated. Am very sorry for this failure, but I did the best I could for your interest.

Thank you,

Will Lundy





FOLDED WINGS

PLOESTI RAIDERS

Robert Mundell, POW	506th	2/95
William Strong	506th	7/95

ALL OTHERS

Frank P. Pacylowsky	Unk	7/44
Charles E. Cary	68th	6/95
Robert Mundell	506th	7/95
Alfred W. Jalovitz	Unk	1/72
Dale E. Raucher	Unk	8/94
Joseph E. Flaherty	Hq	4/94
Spencer Fulp	Unk	3/95
George B. Haag	Unk	Unk
Benjamin D. Ford	68th	Unk
Morton R. Taylor	Unk	/70
Aldo P. LaValle	Unk	9/94
William J. Murphy	66th	10/93
Charles Cary	68th	6/95
Leo L. Sharpnack	Unk	Unk
Elbert L. Dukate	Unk	4/86
William Strong	506th	7/95
Robert E. Rose	68th	Unk
K. L. Keesee	Unk	12/72
Ivan L. Gildersleeve	Unk	3/79
Otis V. Rogers	68th	5/95
Willis D. Abrams	67th	4/93
Theodore B. Hoffiz	66th	4/92

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

We will sorely miss these two valiant Ploesti Raiders who have now folded wings. In their honor and memory, we must once again close ranks and carry on in the proud tradition of the 44th "Flying Eight-Balls."

The 506th Bomb Squadron recently lost two of its most beloved members:

On April 28 "Big" Bob Mundell suffered a massive heart attack while doing the work he loved, branding his Spring calves on his ranch in Walsh, Colorado. We saw Bob last October attending the Colorado Springs Reunion with his son David. Both hold 44th BGVA Life Memberships. The photo was taken at the reunion showing Bob and David on each side of a long time friend, Don Chase. Who could help but love this big cowboy with the smiling face that looked like a composite of all Western cattlemen. Bob is survived by his beloved wife Helen, sons Homer, David and Dan.



Robert Mundell, Don Chase and Dave Mundell

On July 10, Bill Strong finally lost his valiant five year struggle with cerebral cancer. Always cheerful, never doubtful he would win the struggle in spite of what seemed endless surgery that ravaged his head and handsome face. Bill passed away quietly with his family present on that Monday. He was interred in Wimberley, Texas on the following Wednesday. Attending were Lt. Col. (Ret) and Mrs. James Clements of Dallas, Texas who represented the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association in honoring Bill. He is survived by his lovely wife Gladys, her sons David and Paul and his own children Becky and Bill, Jr. from his previously deceased wife Rowena.



Bill Strong and Bill Strong, Jr.



BILL STRONG MEMORIAL FUND

Jim McAtee has made a generous donation to start a memorial fund in the name of Bill Strong. We heartily endorse this gesture for the continuing memory of Bill. At present, Jim has left the parameters of the fund to be established by the Board, which we will do at San Antonio. In the meantime, the Treasurer has set up a separate account in the general fund to handle donations to the Bill Strong Memorial. If you wish to donate, please make your check to The Bill Strong Memorial Fund, c/o 44th BGVA. Send your donation to: 44th BGVA, P.O. Box 2367, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367. These funds will remain on deposit until the Board determines a dispensation appropriate to Bill's memory.

MISCELLANEA

SOME GOOD FEEDBACK FROM THE "LEMON DROP" FEATURE

Bob Lehnhausen recently got a call from Charlie Pigg, Crew Chief on "Lemon Drop." He was not a current member of our 44th BGVA so was unaware of our article on his airplane. Bob sent him a copy of the Tails and Charlie is now on the membership roll. He went through Lexington during the 2nd Air Division reunion and left Pete Henry a message that he had called and missed him. Then, in Charlie Pigg fashion, he kept movin' along. I expect we will see Charlie in San Antonio. In the meantime, if anyone would like to make contact, he is located at Rte. 5, Box 440, Chandler, NC 28715.

MONS, BELGIUM REVISITED

After doing the "Lemon Drop" feature, I recalled that when the Germans were making rapid advances attempting to reach Amsterdam in the Battle of the Bulge, the 44th, among many other groups which had any kind of aircraft that was cargo capable, were tasked to fly into a former German fighter airfield at Mons, Belgium to assist in the emergency evacuation of a P-51 outfit that had moved into the airfield closely behind Pattons advance. The winds of war had suddenly shifted and it looked as though the Germans might recapture their airfield. The Bill Smith crew in, you guess it, "Lemon Drop" had the job. I'm pretty sure Charlie Pigg and his assistant went along as Load Master/Maintenance Support. It was pretty exciting. We landed on a PSP runway with (very) recently repaired bomb craters and several shot-up ME 109's that had been caught on the ground. We got parked and fueled up, but it seemed the ground maintenance equipment we were to haul would not be ready to load until morning. What do any good Air Force men do when they must RON (Remain Over Night)? Of course, they go to town, Von Rundstedt or no! Mons was a

pretty little town, and we were splendidly welcomed in the Town Square Bistro by the owner and his clientele. We got our cargo and returned to England the next day (you thought I was going to tell about the pretty Belgium women, right? Another time boys, we are a mixed organization now.)

The irony of this story is that the memories of Mons, Belgium had all but faded when, as a faculty member of Chico State University in Northern California, I was asked to escort a small tour group to the 40th Anniversary Celebration of D-Day (1984) at the Normandy Beaches. Our travels after the D-Day Celebration took us to Paris, then to Brussels, to Calais, back to London and Home. It was on the road from Paris to Brussels I was referring to a map when I saw we were nearing Mons, just a short way off the motorway. I told my group the P-51 evacuation story and they all insisted we detour over to see Mons. By the time we got to Mons, it seemed our Welsh bus driver had become swept up in this unexpected little adventure because he boldly drove into the narrow streets and tight corners to the Town Center I had visited 40 years before. It was amazing how little the Town Center had changed. We lunched at the same bistro, talked with some of the locals who, while they didn't remember our particular visit, vividly remembered the frightening prospects of recapture by the Germans and the evacuation of the American fighter outfit. When it came time to continue our journey, we loaded on the bus. The driver started to back up and attempt to turn around. After 20 minutes of frantic backing and forwarding, it became obvious we simply could not turn around to exit the way we so boldly came in. To exit in the other direction, it seems the streets were even more narrow. In fact, the only way we could squeeze the bus through the streets and corners was for the merchants to raise their awnings until we passed. Our exit from Mons was, I'm sure, the biggest comedy event there in years! During the turnaround attempt in the Town Square, I told my group it was beginning to look like I was going to have my second RON in Mons. It only took us about one and one-half hours and a very red faced bus driver to get out of town. What can you expect of a bunch of American tourists!

Roy Owen

BENGHAZI DEBRIEFING

Ploesti, Foggia and Weiner-Neustadt are missions most readily associated with the 44th Bomb Group (H) in North Africa. Unfortunately, these records are plagued with gaps in the official archives. First, the Ploesti mission file has been missing for several years from the 44th archival records stored at the National Archives. Second, many records from the 44th's second tour in North Africa were lost on the return to England. Third, all three missions resulted in heavy losses, either Killed In Action or Prisoners of War, and consequent inadequate debriefing.

All 44th Vets of this era are invited to attend a Benghazi debriefing on Saturday, October 21 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a lunch break, if necessary. Let's put our heads and our memorabilia together and begin to create a useful historical record. Along the way, we may settle some inconsistencies concerning formations and events.

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE CENTER

NEWS RELEASE
APRIL 13, 1995

Contact: Wayne Corbett

Mr. and Mrs. George Washburn of Montgomery, Massachusetts recently visited The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia and received a tour of the construction site and briefing about the Museum's progress from Lt. Gen. E.G. Shuler, Jr., USAF Ret., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. George Washburn is a member of the 44th Bomb Group.

-- 8AFHM --



Mr. & Mrs. George Washburn and Lt. Gen. E.G. Shuler, USAF Ret.

IT'S NOT A MESSERSCHMIDT ON OUR TAIL, IT APPEARS TO BE A KLEINSCHMIDT.

Recall the last issue letter from Lt. Earl Guy in which he had lost contact with a Shipdham roommate he recalled as being named Messerschmidt? We think this letter from Lt. Col. (Ret) T.J. "Joe" Feeney provides the answer for Earl. That's not bad; one letter and we are three for three in locating lost roomies!

This letter comes from:

*Lt. Col. (Ret) T.J. Feeney of 57 Devonshire Square,
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-6873*

Dear Will:

This is a belated thank you note for sending me that "Litho" of "Glory Bee" so promptly last month.

It arrived in plenty of time for me to pack it up and take it to Texas for my reunion with "Arnie" Kleinschmidt. Arnie and I had not seen each other or corresponded with each other since 1945!

I finally made contact as a result of information I got from Steve Adams in Norwich, England.

I was Kleinschmidt's tail gunner when we flew with the 66th Squadron in the 44th Bomb Group. Glory Bee wasn't the only ship we flew, but it's the one I remember best and so did Arnie.

He and his lovely wife, Margaret, more than welcomed me to their ranch in Lexington after meeting me in Austin. I can't believe I learned so much about the cattle business as I did in the three short days I spent with them. They had some 2,000 plus head of cattle.

They really appreciated getting the litho of Glory Bee flying over the tower and that prompted a great time of reminiscing. Also, the article in the last 8 Ball Tails that I read by Lt. Earl Guy makes me feel certain that the "Messerschmidt" he mentioned that he lost contact with is my pilot, Kleinschmidt. When we got together in Texas, he said that everyone used to call him "Messerschmidt" at Shipdham.

His address is:

*Arnold P. Kleinschmidt
P.O. Box 572*

Lexington, Texas 78947-0572

I believe that you have him in your files, as he said he planned to go to the reunion in San Antonio.

Again, thanks for your help and all the work that you do for the 44th.

Sincerely,

A WELCOME TO COL. ROSCOE E. MOULTHROP



It is indeed a pleasure to welcome to our membership Colonel Roscoe E. Moulthrop, the last Active Duty Commander of the 44th Strategic Missile Wing up to the July, 1994 retirement of our proud unit from the roll of active duty combat components of the United States Air Force. The deactivation of the 44th SMW under his command was the first deactivation of a Minuteman II weapon system in the Air Force and was accomplished ahead of schedule, under budget and without incident.

Colonel Moulthrop left his last assignment as Chief, Target Selection Branch, Plans and Policy Directorate, United States Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska to enter retirement in June of this year. The Moulthrop family, Roscoe, wife Julie (both natives of Missouri), and children Scott and Elizabeth are residing at 804 East Elm, Princeton, Missouri 64673.

He started a second career on July 1 with Premium Standard Farms. We wish him as great success in his civilian career as he reached in the service of his country where he shouldered the awesome Cold War responsibility for the National Command Authority directed launch of an unimaginable degree of destruction should we be pre-emptively attacked. It can be truly said, Col. Moulthrop, in large part, has helped preserve the peace his 44th predecessors had attained.

In my first phone conversation with Col. Moulthrop, when he called to inquire about 44th BGVA membership, I expressed the hope that in his joining us he would represent a rallying point for the veterans of the 44th SMW to follow him in joining with us as part of the 44th family. His reply: "I would certainly like to be involved and try to generate interest with folks of my generation in the 44th BGVA. As the last commander of the 44th Missile Wing, I have deep feelings for the organization, and really believe anyone who served under the 44th colors is a part of the family. I stand ready in any way I can."

That says it all! Welcome to the family, Roscoe, Julie, Scott and Elizabeth. We hope to see you in San Antonio.

SOME NOTES REGARDING THE REUNION

There will be a Registration Desk in the lobby of the hotel that will be manned all day Thursday and Friday until noon. It is suggested that attendees check their Registration Packet at that time to be assured they have all the required tickets. After Friday noon, there will be information posted on the bulletin board as to where to receive their Registration Packets.

A bulletin board will be displayed in the hotel lobby with a roster of those attending and other pertinent information.

If there are spaces remaining for the Friday or Sunday tours, tickets will be available at the Registration Desk.

Everyone's name tag, guests included, will be designated by their Squadron affiliation and will attend the appropriate Squadron dinner Saturday night. Those who do not belong to one of the four Squadrons are free to attend any of their choosing. The dinner sites for each Squadron will be announced on the bulletin board. After the Squadron dinner, there will be a brief intermission while the preparations are being made for the dance.

There will be a Memorabilia room available for the duration of the reunion. Please bring any pictures, books, records or VCR tapes. As it would be unwise to leave the room unattended, the last one to leave at any time should lock the door and return the key to the front desk. The key will be available from the front desk at any time to any one with a 44th reunion name tag.

Tickets for individual events will be available at the Registration Desk for those who have made reservations for that function. Reservations must be made with Jim Clements prior to the reunion date, either by letter or phone. Reservations will be considered confirmed unless notified immediately that space does not exist.

Tickets cost:

<i>Buffet and Squadron Dinner</i>	<i>\$25/Each</i>
<i>Banquet</i>	<i>\$30/Each</i>
<i>Monday Breakfast</i>	<i>\$15/Each</i>

The reunion hotel rates will apply for those wishing to arrive early or stay in San Antonio afterwards.

THE SHIPDHAM TOWER REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TO: ALL SHIPDHAM TOWER PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS & 44TH BGVA MEMBERS

The 2nd Air Division Reunion in Lexington, Kentucky on July 3 - 6 afforded the opportunity for Dick Butler, Will Lundy and me to meet, read and discuss their respective reports on the Shipdham Tower Restoration investigation and recommendations.

In short, they both conclusively report that the viability of restoring the Shipdham Tower as a 44th BGVA project is, at best, a risky project in which to invest any further funds accrued to the "Tower Project."

First, although Mr. Doug Genge, the tenant of the Tower property, states he is willing to invest his own money into further restoration, there is question whether he has any more than a verbal agreement that he is permitted to occupy the property. This information surfaced in a meeting of our representatives with Mr. Genge and Mr. Nick Saffel, representing Mr. Vincent, the property owner and father-in-law of Mr. Saffel. The point of the discussion was the question of proceeding with restoration if a long term lease could be negotiated. In response, Mr. Saffel stated that it was doubtful that Mr. Vincent would consent to any lease agreement beyond five years, especially if the property was improved to the point that it had commercial potential. The matter of the memorial plaque remaining in place was discussed with Mr. Saffel stating, "it would be questionable, should he reclaim the building, that the plaque would be allowed to remain." Also, Mr. Vincent is a somewhat whimsical man and "he (Saffel) would have to wait for a time when Mr. Vincent was in a favorable mood before the matter of a lease could be approached."

In summary, with the other attendant problems of accessibility; the cost of bringing the building to a climatologic state in which we would

dare place our memorabilia, pictures, archival materials, etc.; bringing power and water to the site; and not least, someone to staff the tower; we most certainly don't want to enter into a lease agreement with an individual who, according to mood and profit motive could conceivably let us improve his property and then refuse lease renewal at his whim.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Based upon the facts presented by our representatives, the 44th BGVA Executive Board by a vote of 8 to 1, recommends to the Tower restoration contributors that the Tower restoration be abandoned and, after deduction of certain administrative expenses and refund of any individual contributions demanded, the residue of restoration funds be offered to the 44th BGVA as a single donation to a Memorial Fund account. The Tower contributors must have a floor vote on this recommendation at the General Membership Meeting at San Antonio.
- 2) Next, the BGVA members must be alerted to a General Membership Meeting floor vote on which the members present can vote yea or nay to accept the transfer of the Tower funds to the 44th BGVA as specified above. If approved, Will Lundy can settle any outstanding obligations of the Tower Restoration Project, then transfer the balance to the BGVA Treasurer by check, closing the books on the Tower Restoration Project.
- 3) Also, the Executive Board must describe to the BGVA members the alternatives to the Tower Restoration Project and alert them to a floor vote on a choice of



those alternatives, which include tabling any decision on an Association project until an investigation of other projects can be undertaken.

ALTERNATIVES

In conference with a group of Arrow Air members and management, our representatives visited the old Combat Wing Headquarters to once again examine the possibility of, in some way, preserving and possibly moving the World War II walls and mural art thereon from the path of certain destruction, since the property is for sale. All of the group agreed the walls and art work should be preserved.

Mr. Nigel Wright, owner and operator of Arrow Air, a charter and flight school operation on Shipdham has long been a faithful friend and supporter of the 44th (calls the flight school the 8-Ball'ers). He is in need of an expansion in the form of a pilot's lounge which would also take interior form as a 44th Memorial Room. In a meeting of our representatives with Mr. Wright, they pursued the idea of the 44th entering into a cost sharing agreement with Arrow Air that would be coincidental with the desire to conserve the 14th CBW Headquarters walls on which the World War II murals are painted. Mr. Steve Adams (another of our most ardent supporters) is in contact with a British Historical Foundation whose business is the restoration and transport of historical structures such as the Wing HQ walls so dear to us all. The plan here would be (once we obtain the permission of Mrs. Rix, the owner) to have this organization remove and restore the two mural walls, then incorporate them into the construction of a new Arrow Air addition. Steve feels certain the cost of the walls removal and restoration will be borne by the historical foundation. Obviously, with this plan we would accomplish two significant projects at the cost of one. Further, we would be relieved of the worry of all the negatives mentioned in connection with the tower project. Dick Butler points out that Nigel Wright has an enthusiastic membership in the Arrow Club who actively support the history and heritage of the 44th and Shipdham. We would always have a place to go with someone there to host a visitor.

Two other possible locations to move the walls to are:

A) Shipdham Heritage Center. This is a small old chapel building at the Shipdham Village Cemetery. It is not big enough to accommodate the walls and something would have to be constructed at considerable cost to protect them. Although much more accessible, they would be far removed from Shipdham Airfield. This is not a recommended location.

B) Duxford Museum. Museum authorities no doubt would like to have the art work. While this is a fine museum, the wall art would be far removed from the Shipdham and would be rather insignificant among the thousands of items in this predominantly British oriented museum. This is not a recommended location.

All of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association membership present must be prepared for a floor vote at the San Antonio General Meeting on these matters:

- 1) To accept the Tower Restoration funds for a 44th BGVA Memorial Funds account.
- 2) To reject the Shipdham Tower Restoration as a 44th BGVA project with the proviso that, in the event Mr. Genge continues to occupy and improve the Tower to the point it could be made accessible to visitors by contacting his office, we maintain an informal arrangement with Mr. Genge that would facilitate such occasional visitations in the future without liability as occupants of the building.
- 3) To accept as a 44th BGVA project, within financial limits set by the Executive Board, one of these projects:
 - a). The Arrow Air Corp. addition with incorporation of the Combat Wing Mural walls.
 - b). The relocation of the Mural walls to the Shipdham Cemetery Heritage Center.
 - c). The relocation of the Mural walls to the Duxford Museum.

NOTE: In their report both Butler and Lundy recommend naming Steve Adams, who resides in Norwich, as On-Site Consultant and Coordinator for the 44th BGVA, should this project be approved. Steve has volunteered to perform these duties without salary, but with reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses. Steve will be working under the supervision of a small oversight committee most likely headed by Will Lundy. Since it is obviously much less expensive for Steve to travel here, than to send one of our own back and forth to monitor the project, I agree with the Butler and Lundy proposal that the Tower Fund underwrite the costs of his attendance at the San Antonio Reunion. In the meantime, he will undertake obtaining release of the walls by Mrs. Rix and arranging with the agency for their restoration.

A REPORT ON THE 2ND AIR DIVISION REUNION



*Norwich, England VE Day Parade
Commander Richard Butler
U.S. Flag Bearer Will Lundy
leading all 2nd Air Division Veterans*

The 2nd Air Division Reunion in Lexington was a good one -- over 700 attending. Pete Henry has decided to stay on as our Group Vice President to the 2nd Air Division, so Dick Butler (much to his satisfaction) is back in the ranks providing advice and counsel whenever called upon.

The 44th didn't get much in the way of recognition, except your ol' Prez won the golf tournament low gross with a 74, and I was invited to participate in the candle lighting ceremony and was honored to light the Ploesti candle. Also, we picked up a couple of new members (2nd Air Division members who were not inclined to join the 44th HMG). We were privileged to see the video of the 2nd Air Division celebration and parade for VE Day. Man, it made your chest swell and the tears roll down your cheeks to see our 44th guys, Dick Butler and Will Lundy out there leading all of the 2nd Air Division vets. Also, our guys brought back a great video record of the Eastbourne Dedication of the "Ruthless" Memorial. Hopefully we'll give it a showing in San Antonio.

The 2nd Air Division is down a little, over 400 in net memberships, i.e. folded wings versus new memberships. We can help them here by either maintaining your membership or, if you are not a member, joining up with them. Drop a \$15 check to Evelyn Cohn, Vice President, Membership, Apt. 06-410, Delaire Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114.

Two status reports on the Norwich Library 2nd Air Division Memorial were given. One by Ms. Phyllis Dubois and the other by Mr. David Hastings, Vice Chairman of the Memorial Board of Governors. Both were highly charged with the spirit of survival and restoration of the library and memorial wing. The memorial wing is up and running in temporary quarters and the recovery of salvageable archives, as well as replacement books, is making solid progress.



OLD FOLKS ARE WORTH A FORTUNE

Remember, old folks are worth a fortune, with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a little older since I saw you last, and a few changes have come into my life since then. Frankly, I have become quite a frivolous old gal. I am seeing five gentlemen every day. As soon as I wake up Will Power helps me out of bed. Then I go see John. Then Charlie Horse comes along, and when he is here he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life.

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should think of the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do all the time. No matter where I am, in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement I ask myself, now what am I here after?"

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

May 6 - 8, 1995
St. Louis, Missouri

The first 44th BGVA Executive Board Meeting convened in St. Louis, Missouri on the weekend of May 6 at the Holiday Inn - Westport. Attending were President Roy Owen, Vice President Jim Clements, Secretary Ed Dobson, Treasurer Gerald Folsom, Director Mike Mikolosky, Director Bob Lehnhausen, Membership Co-Chairman Art Hand and Member Mel Trager.

After the call to order, Reunion Entertainment Co-Chair Mel Trager posted the US Flag presented to our association by his VFW Post No. 367 in Joliet, Illinois. The highlights of the meeting were: (1) To review and pass a Financial Year '95 Budget. (2) Introduce our new Treasurer and have him review the accounting system he intends to pursue in handling our finances. (3) Confirm the appointment of Richard Butler to replace Pete Henry as Group Vice President to the 2nd Air Division. (4) Comply with Article VI of the Constitution by adjusting the initial terms of the initial elected Board members to stagger and balance the terms of the elected Board since all except the Secretary and Treasurer were elected simultaneously to serve two year terms. (5) Address the Shipdham Tower Restoration Project by initially appointing Richard Butler and Will Lundy as Board Representatives while in England to investigate once and for all the viability of that project for the Tower Restoration fund contributors and in turn make recommendations to enable the Board to make a decision to recommend whether or not the 44th BGVA should get involved with this project. (6) Tour St. Louis and the Holiday Inn - Westport in terms of electing St. Louis as the site for our 1996 Reunion.

Reference: (1) The budget proposed by President Owen and

Treasurer Folsom was accepted and passed unanimously by the Board and appears herein integrated with a mid-year abbreviated financial statement. (2) The Board reviewed, accepted and complimented Treasurer Folsom on his financial accounting system. A full Treasurer's report will be available for review by any member at the General Meeting in San Antonio. Review of the financial statements of your BGVA is not a privilege bestowed upon a few, it the right of all of the membership to do so at our annual General Meeting. (3) This appointment became moot since at the 2nd Air Division meeting in Lexington, Pete Henry stated to those 44th members present, that he felt he could continue to serve a 44th Group Vice President, was so nominated, Vice Dick Butler and re-elected. The appointment of Dick Butler by the 2nd Air Division President was rescinded. (4) After review of Article VI of the Constitution and considerable discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried unanimously to set three Director positions to expire this year and the seats of the three Directors not present would be opened for election for a new two year term at the October General Meeting. Board members were to submit two nominees for each vacancy from which a Nomination Committee will select a venue of nominees (2 for each office) to run for election in October. (5) This was accomplished. Dick Butler and Will Lundy presented their report to President Owen in Lexington. The report has been circulated among the Board and a summary of the report and the Board recommendations are presented herein

under separate title. (6) St. Louis was unanimously selected to host our '96 Reunion, October 3-7, 1996.



Left to right

Art Hand, Mike Mikoloski, Ed Dobson, Gerald Folsom, Jim Clements, Roy Owen, Bob Lehnhausen, Mel Trager.

67TH BOMB SQUADRON HISTORY

*EXCEPT FROM STARS AND STRIPES
DATED THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1943*

FEBRUARY 16, 1943
ONE LIB CREW GETS FIVE NAZIS

These were the stories that came out of the homecoming of Eighth Air Force bombers that returned to their bases in Britain today after dropping hundreds of tons of explosives on St. Nazaire, one of the biggest Nazi U-boat bases, in a daylight attack. For the Liberators, it was their second raid in 19 hours, following Monday's visit to Dunkirk.

Good-naturedly ribbing the Forts, the navigator of "Miss Dianne," a Liberator piloted by Capt. Clyde Price of San Antonio, challenged the B-17's to match their record of five enemy planes shot down.

The navigator, 2nd Lt. J.A. Augenstene, Jr. of Pittsburgh, also recounted the engagements: "As we were flying in the tail-end formations, the Germans would attack Fortresses flying ahead and below us from the front, circle around, and then come at us from behind." "The first plane we got," Lt. Augenstene continued, "was blasted from 200 yards away, exploded and went all to pieces in the air. The second stalled when it was hit, plummeted straight into the clouds below, leaving a trail of smoke behind."

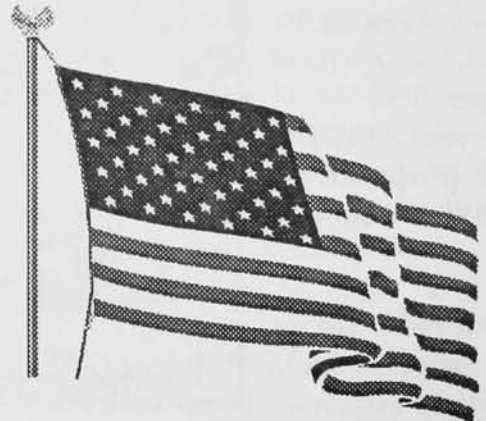
Dalton L. Snell of Marked Tree, Arkansas, top turret gunner, and Sgt. I.C. Wyer, waist gunner from Clarksburg, West Virginia, each got two of "Miss Dianne's" victims. Sgt. Lewis J. Fleshman of Virginia, the tail turret gunner, got the fifth.

Fleshman's bullseye was scored on a plane that made the fatal mistake of exposing a vulnerable underside as it turned.

The rest of Capt. Price's crew were 2nd Lt. Robert E. Forrest of Columbus, Ohio, copilot; 2nd Lt. Morton P. Gross of Denver, Colorado, bombardier; Sgts. Kenneth Laughton of Pine Grove, California, radio operator; Kenneth L. Erhard of Clearfield, Pennsylvania, waist gunner; and Earl W. Holton of Mulliken, Michigan, rear hatch gunner.

NOTE: Crew Chief of "Miss Dianne" is M/Sgt. George Baccash of the 67th Bomb Squadron. A/C #41-23784.

EDITOR: This is such a great feat, it deserves repeating. On the other hand, I'm disappointed that I could not find a one of the Price crew on our membership roster. It is interesting to note however, that our beloved historian, Will Lundy, was a member of M/Sgt. Baccash's ground crew.



MAIL CALL



This comes from:

Daniel L. Culler

750 South La Brisa, Green Valley, Arizona 85614

8/25/94

Dear Will:

I'm glad to see your continuing on with the 44th. I'm not sure I'll be able to do anything except be a dues paying member; but it's good to belong to a group of men that put everything on the line for freedom years ago.

I have been writing books since I retired in 1983. I'm not an author, just a writer of stories.

I sent my last manuscript "Circle of Thorns - The War Years," to many publishers and was rejected with their usual pre-written stationery with my name added to the top - you know the kind.

Because I feel - as most writers do - that I have a good book with a story to tell; out of desperation, I sent information to Carlton Press, a subsidized publisher from New York. Naturally they requested I sent the complete manuscript for a free evaluation.

A week ago they sent me the evaluation, and a contract to be signed. I darn near had a heart attack when they requested \$21,560 to do the book. I refused the contract, and will do as I did on my first book. I had it done by a small publishing house in Tucson for under \$3,000. I'll then take it a step at a time to see how it sells.

I did have a very unusual war record, with many things that happened to me, and me alone -- a prisoner in Wauwilermoos was just one example -- and I intent to eventually have my book published, but instead of 1994, it will have to be done in 95, I hope!

Just thought you might want to know what I was up to, as we haven't had any communication for over four years.

By the way...the Pima Air Museum here in Tucson is one of the best in the Country. Its only rival is Dayton, which no museum could compete with. It has, in a big hanger, one of the best restored B-24s in the U.S. Enclosed is a copier picture, from the picture of me in front of it. Because of Davis Air Base here in Tucson, the museum has many, one of a kind, WWII and later planes.

Tucson wouldn't be a bad place to have a future reunion, except it would have to be in late fall or early spring to get away from our horrible hot summers.

I wish the Association all the success, and I trust we will all be on this earth long enough to see it become a great remembrance for WWII, 44ers.

By the way...Did you ever get the -I believe it was the - Shipdham Tower restored. Sorry I didn't do anything to help you on that.

Sincerely yours, a member of the 44th in war and peace.

EDITOR: Good luck on your book, Dan. When you get it published, we will give it a shot in the 8 Ball Tails.



This comes from:

William L. Paul

6410 Old Sauk Road, Madison, Wisconsin 53705

12/12/94

Dear Will:

I enjoyed the first issue of the 8 Ball Tails. This letter is addressed to you as "Historian" because you may just have the information I'm looking for. In the "Folded Wings" column I saw that Louis J. Obus passed away in October, 1988. Jack was our bombardier and I had completely lost contact with him for forty years or more. I would like to contact his family and would hope that you may have his last known address. If you have an address, please send it to me and I will take it from there.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,



This comes from:

Chuck Taylor

2120 Detroit Blvd., Sanford, North Carolina 27330

12/12/94

Dear Will:

Got your Newsletter the other day. Re-reading, I noticed the name of the bombardier of our crew listed in the "Folded Wings" section. It was very shocking to me, as I assume it will be to our other crew members. I had him on my mind for so long. He and I had a very good relationship while we were together.

It was so nice to know that you have that kind of information. I appreciate your efforts even more.

Thanks a lot and have a Happy Holiday.

P.S. His name is Louis J. Obus

EDITOR: Amazing, the irony of two queries about Louis J. Obus dated on the same day. You two must have been on exactly the same wave length, December 12, 1994! Anyway...Major Louis Jack Obus, USAF (Ret) of the 67th Bomb Squadron is survived by:

Mrs. Dee Obus

202 SE Edgewood Drive

Stuart, Florida 34996

He was not a 44th BGVA member. She might be pleased to know he was memorialized in the 8 Ball Tails.



This comes from:

Charles "Shep" Gordon, 68th Squadron
15 Maybrooke Road, Rochester, New York 14618
12/12/94

Dear Mr. Lundy:

Your note of 27 Sept 94 was a wonderful surprise, especially the crew log. It is amazing how 50 years can disappear so quickly. I can remember 1st phase combat training in Tucson and 2nd and 3rd phases at Blythe, California. The trip overseas and Thanksgiving in England - unfortunately the sauce had spoiled and everyone was running all night in the cold English countryside.

I would like to hear about the 44th Veterans Association and would appreciate your sending me the information.

How was it that you kept the crew log for Bowman? I would also like to hear your stories about a couple of our missions - I pulled the cotter pin and tag from the bombs and kept one for each of our missions. The crash landing you referred to was on our 6th mission to St. Aniscourt. We cracked up and burned on a spitfire base near Bristol. Does this correspond with Ken Dropek's memories? I do remember him.

Thank you so much once again and it will be a great pleasure to continue this correspondence.

Sincerely,

P.S. I flew my 30th mission on D-Day over the beach. Doolittle decided we need 30 strategic - so I flew five more to finish up on 16 July with a mission to Saarbrucken. I was then sent to another Group as Intelligence Officer.

EDITOR: Shep, we see a listing on our master roster for Alcom A. Bowman of Colorado Springs; but so far have not had a membership application. Can you give us a hand?



This comes from:

Alex J. Toth
226 Main Street, Tiltonsville, Ohio 43963
2/15/95

Dear Art:

Thanks for the information about my crew members. The bombardier that you mentioned probably flew with us as a spare or whatever, don't remember him.

I would like for you to place our pilots name in the "Folded Wings" section. Theodore B. Hoffiz, 66th Squadron Pilot 27 Sept 44 to 15 March 45 passed away April 92. Spoke with his wife, Mary. I was shocked to

learn that Ted had passed away. I gave this information to other groups of people and it never materialized. Hopefully it will make our next edition.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

EDITOR: Thanks for your support of the 44th BGVA. Alex, we will do our best to serve you.



This comes from:

SMSgt. Carlton D. Pepper, U.S.A.F. (Ret)
Route 1, Box 241E, Laurel, Delaware 19956
4/21/95

Dear Sir:

I served with the 44th Bomb Wing at Chennault Air Force Base, Lake Charles, Louisiana from 17 Jan 58 to 26 May 60. I was assigned to the 44th Armament and Electronics Squadron as NCOIC of the Electronic Countermeasures Section, was a Master/Sgt. at the time. We had B-47's.

EDITOR: Carlton just joined us and we're mighty happy to have him. I would like you all to welcome him to the 44th BGVA. We need to gather in as many of the 44th Bomb Wing era vets as we can. Hope to see you in San Antonio, Carlton.



This comes from:

Dan Brandt
2 Nottingham Circle, Bella Vista, Arizona 72714
12/12/94

Dear Will:

Yes, I want to again be part of the 44th Bomb Group.

Thanks for the information in the crew log for which I may have an addition. For about the last 12 or 15 missions we had a different navigator. If my 50 year memory is correct, his name was Milton Jobert, a 1st Lt. I am not sure of the first name or the spelling of his last name, but he became our navigator when we became the lead crew.

Over the years, Bob Gunton and I have had infrequent contact - Xmas cards, visits, phone calls, etc. I have had no contact with any of the other crew members - I would sure like to hear from them or have a reunion.

I have often wondered if any sort of a history of the 44th BG or the 67th Squadron had been prepared - books, papers, articles, etc... If so, I sure would like any information as to where I could obtain them.

Thanks again for your efforts on behalf of the 44th Bomb Group.

Best wishes.

EDITOR: I see Bob Gunton is a life member, and we will put Art Hand on the trail of Lt. Milton Jobert. We don't have him on our roster and I don't see him listed in the Harvell history of the 44th; but we'll see if we can help you with that crew reunion.

This comes from:

Wallace R. Forman

2161 West County Road B, St. Paul, Minnesota 55113

Dear Mr. Owen:

The enclosed material may be of interest to the editor of your Organization's periodic newsletter, if you have one. I ask that you pass this on to that person.

The up-coming 50th anniversary of the end of World War II is lending popularity to some subjects which are normally not even thought about very often. One such thing is World War II aircraft nose art, names and pictures, crewmen used to decorate their planes. It was very popular on heavy bombers because their large sides provided almost a billboard on which to paint nose art.

One of my hobbies has been collecting World War II nose art, particularly from heavy bombers, the B-17's and B-24's. With almost 5,000 of their pictures and a data base of names going far beyond that, it is possible with the computer to drag out some conclusions as to which nose art names were the most popular, as well as to list the cutest names.

List #1 has a couple hundred of what I thought were the cutest and cleverest names, out of lists of almost 16,000 named B-17's and B-24's.

List #2 has a comparison of the most popular names, B-17's vs. B-24's.

The lists are offered free, should you feel your members would enjoy seeing these names (maybe again!). No strings attached; but, if your unit uses it, I would like a complimentary issue of your newsletter so I may see how you used the material. Happy nostalgia. A hobby shared is a lot more fun than one which just collects dust on a shelf!

Sincerely,

EDITOR: Very interesting offer. I did not include the lists here as they are so extensive. I will send Mr. Forman a copy of this 8 Ball Tails so any of you interested can take advantage of his offer.

This comes from:

Ed Schwarm

251 Regency Dr., Marstons Mills, Mass. 02648

1/16/95

Dear Will:

You can't imagine how happy I was to have you and the other "right guys" set up the 44th BGVA. Needless to say, we will both be at the San Antonio soiree. We can now look forward to some great times together. I was glad to see Pete Henry as a part of the team. He worked so hard to get the 2nd ADA and the 44th HMG to work together, but was thwarted at every move. We can now continue by working together, with all of that petty dissension buried behind us.

The 2nd ADA amateur radio net continues to flourish. With Bill and Shelagh Holmes meeting with us weekly from Norwich and 15-20 of us getting together each Tuesday morning, we have participants from all over the U.S. Of our about 50 members, 10 are 44th B.G. members, a real hot-shot bunch. With the sunspot cycle at the low, propagation is not too reliable, but we do get through to England and California most of the time. It is an 11-year cycle, and things will start getting better in about a year, so we will hang in there.

I recently got my copy of the 2nd Air Division history, and the article by "Jack" Whittle (Page 70) jogged my memory. When Bar-C crashed, I was on the scene shortly after and looked over the plane. They apparently tried to unfeather two or maybe three props at the same time and burned out the single fuse which fed all four feathering pump motors. They again demonstrated that a B-24 will not hold altitude on one engine. I wrote to Whittle about this and received an interesting letter back from William Heyburn II, who was the radio operator that day. It all makes a story which may be of interest to the 44th gang, so I am writing it up for your consideration for the 8-Ball Tails. I'll send it to you in a few weeks.

Thanks again for helping to resurrect the 44th. If I can be of any help here in the Northeast, please let me know. We are going to Norwich in May. Hope to see you there.

From one 8-Ball to another.

EDITOR: This comes to us from the ringleader of the 44th Bomb Group Ham Radio Net.


This comes from:

George Insley
865 Little Valley Road, Roseburg, Oregon 97470
6/9/95

Dear Will:

We just had the All American B-24 and 909 B-17 at our home town for the first time, though I had seen it in a couple other places.

I also took the opportunity to fly to Corvallis with them!

While in Corvallis, I had a fellow ask regarding the 44th BG as his father, Ken Caroon served with the 44th. So I gave him your address, as well as gave him info. His father had been shot down, was a POW, and I believe he died in the 50's. The son's name was Mike and had not known his father as an adult.

Mike Caroon's address is 4144 Durillo Place, Albany, OR 97321.

I had hoped to be able to get to the reunion in San Antonio, but we had made a commitment with tickets last Fall on a Special, so guess we will have to try for 1996.

We had three of us 44thers get together here:

Norm Nutt - Pilot, 66th Sq.
2210 Egret Court
Grants Pass, OR 97526-5993

Alex Ziel (shortened) 66th Sq. Bombardier Evadee 30
Dec. 43 LTC Retired
480 Horizon Lane
Myrtle Creek, OR 97457

Myself, George R. Insley, Pilot, 66th & 506th (Two tours).

We had over 20 pilots and crews from all Theatres. We are getting a lot of retired people here.

All for now, Thanks.

EDITOR: Thank you George for the information. We hope you can join us in 1996. I have written Mike and given him information about his father, who had flown with Flaherty in Africa, Ploesti, again to Africa in Sept 43, bailed out of Oakley's plane coming back from Weiner-Neustadt and became a POW.


This comes from:

Charles H. Wagner, 245 Aronimink Drive
Newton Square, Pennsylvania 19073
7/25/95

Dear Roy:

Congratulations are to be extended to you and the executive board of the 44th BCVA for continuing the organization so well. I have read the Spring issue of the 44th Journal and found it to be fascinating and reminiscent of those days we spent in Shipdham.

I was with the 68th Bomb Squadron, working on one of the many ground crews that were obligated to "keep them flying." My crew chief was M/Sgt. Barton O. Craemar. We had the privilege of working on such stalwart B-24's as "The Captain and The Kids," "The Captain and the Kids Ride Again," "Pistol-Packing Mama," and the famous "Corky."

I read with interest the account of the Butterfly bombing of our airfield as told by Barrett Taylor in your recent issue. His story was quite accurate because I was there and can confirm much of his story. I wonder how Barrett knew it was a JU-88 that dropped the butterfly bombs. As I remember, it happened at night, not in the daytime.

To the best of my recollection, the RAF was using the Shipdham runway for night takeoffs and landings; therefore, the runway lights were on. We were asleep in our barracks at the 68th site when I believe the siren alerting us to the presence of enemy aircraft sounded.

Fortunately, our barracks in the 68th site were adjacent to a bomb shelter. I blush to tell you what many of us did at the time. Many of the gallant combat crews of the 44th faced danger and death time and time again. From the comparative comfort of our communal site we never faced similar dangers. This was the only time our lives could be in jeopardy, so we flew from our beds and went into that bomb shelter.

I think I remember that the German aircraft flew somewhere over our 68th site on its homeward trek.

The next morning, we were alerted to stay away from the airfield while a British demolition team detonated all the bombs they could find. The nature of the butterfly bomb was that it was dropped onto a surface, but that impact on the ground only armed the bomb. The next object or person to touch the bomb would be blown up. The next morning, the British demolition team would sneak up on a butterfly bomb, place a fuse adjacent to it, and then from a safe distance would detonate the bomb. I suppose for several days, they used that process to demolish as many bombs as they could. Yes, as Barrett Taylor tells the story, a Britain in a small van ran over one of the bombs, and it blew his foot off.

Our 44th group obviously had to suspend operations until the bombs were cleared away.

Well, I know that the British demolition crews missed at least one bomb. You know that a taxi strip surrounded the three runways, and all the B-24's were parked in dispersals on either side of the taxi strip. Our dispersal area was on the northeast end of the field, not far from the firing range. Just at the corner where the entrance to our dispersal intersected the taxi strip, there was a clump of high grass. We had made a path through that high grass from the taxi strip to our dispersal. We must have used that path for months after that night attack and had not noticed that there lay a butterfly bomb, not detonated, hardly a foot away from our path. Anyone of us could have unconsciously detonated that bomb, but we missed it. Well, we often reflect on our good fortune. I don't recall, but someone or some persons must have set it off. So now I wonder, as the British reclaimed Shipdham field, tore up the runways and taxi strips, and converted the field into a field of sugar beets, did anyone else discover another butterfly bomb, much to his or her dismay?

This was my only exposure to life endangering combat all through my nearly four years at Shipdham.

Well, one might say that we faced other potential dangers, such as the V-1 buzz bomb approaching in the night, and we could tell that the engine had cut off. Laying there in our bunks, in that dead silence between engine cut off and impact, we wondered, "Is it headed for our barracks?" We heard the explosion, but it was always some distance away.

My wife and I would like to join the 44th at San Antonio, but we have to resolve a conflict in scheduling.

Thank you again for keeping the 44th historically alive. We are quite familiar with at least one member of your executive committee. Colonel Robert Lehnhausen had been our last Squadron Commander at Shipdham, but now he and his good wife, Liz are among our dearest friends in the still alive 68th Squadron.

Best regards.

EDITOR: Charles, your great letter reached me just in time for this issue of the Tails. Man, did you make your old Editor happy! My aim is to print stories that will stimulate others to respond with another story. No matter what your assignment was in that Group, there are stories to be told. As for what you seem to feel was an under exposure to "life endangering combat" you have no apologies to make. We were all there doing the job and when you learn about things like E-Bar flying four back to back missions twice in one month, you know there were some "Knuckle Busters" working like hell to keep that kind of turnaround rate going. If you asked them about it, like as not, you would hear "I'm just doing my job."



This comes from:

Jim Moos

Rt. 7 Box 142, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

6/20/95

Dear Will:

There was so much information in the Spring issue of Eight Ball Tails that I'm still trying to absorb and process it into responses.

Also my word processor has gone a little crazy with the key which moves the cursor to the right quitting on me. Fortunately I can work around it.

Was happy to hear that the Tower project is to be looked at again by our new organization.

I am sending Steve Adams a couple of chapters of my memoir which pertain to my crew's time in the 66th, where we first started out. You mentioned also wanting stories pertaining to the group as a whole. I'll forward soon the chapters relating to combat and prison camp.

Thank you for the information on Gene Miller. He was in the 44th but must have been transferred. I lost track of him when my crew went to London on a long weekend. His crew was shot down and Gene was killed. I met up with his pilot in Miami where POW's were processed and went through medical exams.

The story by Rob Fisk and "Pings Away" is a classic and the one about the Christmas supper and candles is another. They are as important to our history as any. On Mission number 23 to Bugbein, we were hit by nine hundred forty two and a half Me 103's ..." Does he have more stories to share with us?

That Christmas we were in prison camp, but you'll see that when I send the accounts.

Just got the package off to Steve Adams.

I think the problem with my word processor was the high humidity. We had had a week of rain, downpours each day: now that the humidity is lower, the 'chine is working fine. However, I believe we have grown some condor-size mosquitoes. My wife has welts all over her arms and legs, in spite of repellent.

We understand from Irene O'Dopnnell that the American Wing is up and running in temporary quarters; I imagine at partial speed.

Our family doctor has recommended a British film, "Hope and Glory." Are you familiar with it? It's about a family with three children during the blitz and there are some priceless observations from the younger ones, a wonderful little film.

Won't bend your ear any longer, just wanted to say thanks.

Best.



This comes from:

Norm Nutt

*2210 Egret Court, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526-5993
Friday the 16th*

Hi Will:

Just a short note to say 'Hello' and send a picture.

Last week the B-24 All American and its flying mate, the B-17, flew into Roseburg, Oregon on its current tour. Roseburg is about 70 miles north of Grants Pass. I had previously called a fellow Vet living in Roseburg (who helped me last year when the planes visited Grants Pass) to see if they were stopping at Roseburg this year. Sure enough, they were so I went up there for a couple of days to join in the fun.

Of the many old geezers who came out of the woods was George Insley, who I had met the previous year in Grants Pass. Hence the picture. I believe he was in the 66th Squadron as well as the 506th; when, I don't know. I think that's his original A-2 jacket with the 8-Ball patch. Thought the picture might be of interest to you. There was a pretty good crowd to see the planes; but if the weather had been better, I think a lot more would have shown up. It was typical Oregon weather, cloudy, showery and cool.

All for now, Will. This computer toy takes up a lot of my time. But it's much easier and faster to keep up with my correspondence.

Please don't feel obligated to answer all my ramblings, I know how busy you are!

So far, I have gotten positive responses attending the San Antonio Reunion from (only) James Marsh, Bob Godwin and Elmer Kohn of my crew. I'll keep trying.

My best to Irene.

Sincerely,



*Norm Nutt of the 66th & George Insley of the 66th & 506th.
Roseburg, Oregon Airport
B-24 "All American"*

This comes from:

Jake T. Elias

*7 East Union Street, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania 18634
6/16/95*

Dear Roy:

I am assuming that you are still President, Editor & Publisher. Hence, I am enclosing a story for the Tales entitled "A Prayer For the Living." Also, I would like to know if you can arrange a review of my new novel, WAR & WOMEN. The novel tells the story of an air gunner, a clerk and several characters in a bomb group outside Dereham. And it follows the adventures of a couple paratroopers in training, overseas in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. As the title discloses, it brings in the women the men meet during their years in training and battle, from innocent young things to experienced babes.

Definitely, I plan to attend the 44th reunion in San Antone, as my buddy, Ken Smith calls it. After missing the last two reunions of the 44th through conflicts, I am anxious to see all my dear friends in person (I picture them often in my mind, and I must confess, conduct a conversation with them in absentia).

You must note in FOLDED WINGS, the death of one of my best friends, Otis Van Rogers. I had a call from his daughter in February that he was very sick and she had little hope for him. Then two weeks later I got a call from his son telling me he had died. Van was a very religious man and lived according to his beliefs, not pretended. His wife, Esther, is just as noble, and I feel for her, knowing how she must be missing Van. We lived in the same hut of the 68th Squadron. Eugene 'Gino' DeWaters, the engineer of my group, (deceased now several years) once told me that Van was Bob Lehnhausen's favorite engineer. One night he put a twenty millimeter shell in the hut's stove and it blew the stove apart. After that, 'Gino' was No. 1. At least that was 'Gino's' story. We'd have to ask Bob if that is true.

We are all proud of the guys who took over and resurrected the 44th Group and we are willing to give them our help whenever asked. All the best to all of you.

Sincerely,



A SILENT PRAYER FOR THE LIVING

By J.T. Elias

It was a typical morning in Hut #7 of the 68th Bomb Squadron. The 'alert' had been posted on the bulletin board the previous evening, but no crew caller had interrupted the night's sleep. Still, with nerves on edge, I, and I suspect, most of the guys had one eye open during the damp cold night, twisting and turning under their scratchy blankets. But no door had suddenly opened, cruel bright lights turned on, and the abrasive yell of "up and at 'em" waking the heavy sleepers.

About eight o'clock, most of us were up. I turned on the radio, my first act on rising. A few minutes later the music stopped, an announcer came on with the news, and it was the big one. "Today, June 6th, Allied Forces stormed onto the shores of Normandy in France for the long awaited attack of Hitler's Europe."

There was complete silence in the hut. But after a minute, the routine of the day resumed - the men had been expecting the invasion for weeks and they quickly shrugged off the news. What surprised them was that they had not flown out to support the invading forces.

Some of the men went out to their bikes for the ride down to the mess hall for breakfast. Several of us roused the dormant fire in the tiny stove sitting in the center of the hut. Bread was brought out from someone's locker, jam and margarine from another's locker. Bob Keegan put a pot of water on the stove for the coffee. Most of us preferred this simple fare to the unappealing bland powdered eggs or S.O.S. served in the mess hall.

Outside, the sky was overcast, the air damp, the wind cold. A typical Norfolk day. We tramped through the muddy walk, about eleven o'clock, to the Aero Club across the road. There we ordered our morning tea and toast, sandwiches, scones. Two pretty English farm girls were behind the counter, taking our orders and smiling at our flirtation. They had months of experience fending off all kinds of offers from women-hungry G.I.s, yet they liked us and kept coming back for more.

We sat down and enjoyed our snack, the comfort of sitting at tables and chairs instead of benches and long rows of tables. Most of the talk was the usual - home, girlfriends, passes to London, bikes, the happenings at the pub in Hingham. Yet, in the back of every mind was the thought of men hitting the beaches in Normandy, of friends in the infantry, artillery, paratroops, brothers, cousins facing bullets and cold steel.

Back in the hut an hour later we were still on 'alert', and shortly the crew caller was in through the door. His eyes were solemn, his voice subdued. "Your turn to go, men. Briefing at 1:30."

Then began the usual round of getting ready. "Gino" DeWaters, our engineer; Ken "Sparks" Sprowl, radioman; Bobby Burns, tailgunner; Johnny Shelton and Pete Perrine, waist gunners; myself, nose gunner. From the other crew came Joe Hofkin, Paul Luthman, Bob Keegan, Van Rogers, Harry Ricketts, Erwin Summers. Dressed in our fighting clothes, the ones we might have to wear if we were shot down, we got on our bikes and headed for the briefing room. As we suspected, we were going to Normandy. This time, though, instead of the usual 27,000 feet of altitude, we were to go in at 12,000, just to make sure we hit the target, and not our own troops.

We went through all the rigmarole attendant on preparing to fly: picking up escape kits, flying clothes, pistol, seeing our chaplain. Then on the truck for the ride to the side of our plane, "Flak Magnet." There we threw our jackets and 'chutes on board, sat down with the officers to await the flare from the control tower whether or not we would be operational. "Skipper" Smith conferred with Al Bogdonas, our crew chief, who was so efficient, all "Skipper" had to do was ask if everything were okay. It always was, and we never had to abort due to mechanical failure.

This was the time to work off some of our tenseness and fear. Bobby Burns and "Gino" began to wrestle, while we all egged them on. Kenny Sprowl, when the wrestling was over, grabbed Johnny Shelton's hat and was chased around the plane. As they rounded the tail, the green flare went up. We boarded the plane, all smiles gone, all was now business.

Assembly went well in daylight, once we went through the first layer of clouds, we were on our way. Around London, we watched as it slid by and we wondered if we would be lucky enough to go on pass there again. The barrage balloons looked like small pearls, the suburban developments like tiny toy houses. Then the coast and now the broad expanse of water. Everywhere the sun glinted on the restless water, and the water seemed to be painted with ships, small, large, in between, ships everywhere, one lane going to France, one to England.

We listened on the intercom as "Skipper" told about his exploits with the women in London, Powner and



Barlow breaking in to tell of the women they had and their adventures with them. Were they boasting? When men are facing Death, are facts the only things that matter?

From my vantage point in the nose, I could see the gaggles of planes ahead, the vast armada of ships below, and soon the dark line of land ahead. As we neared, we could see smoke rising in columns from the earth. At twelve thousand feet, we would be easy prey for the sharpshooting flak gunners below. Now we were over the shore, now swiftly moving inland. Ahead I could see the black bursts with their dead red center surrounding the squadrons in front of us. And seconds later, the bumps that told us on the toggle to drop the bombs - I was to switch them out when our lead bombardier dropped his bombs.

The sweat poured down my brow as my eyes focused on the planes ahead. When, oh when would he drop those bombs? The flak surrounded us, the plane shook and stumbled and wiggled. At last, the bombs fell. I flicked the switch, the plane rose momentarily as the bomb burden dropped from it. We turned to the right. Then the plane shook almost out of control. "Skipper" managed to right it. "Gino's" voice came over the intercom: "Number four engine is smoking." I could not turn around to look, my eyes had to scan the sky for bandits. But moments later "Gino" had the fire under control and soon it was out. Now, with three engines and the shock of the flak, we were out of formation. But it was only minutes before we were over the coast and out of harm's way.

I looked down at the smoking coast. Down there were my friends from home. Had they survived? Were they wounded and bleeding to death? Were they prisoners? Were they making headway or were they surrounded by the enemy? Were they able to make progress? Were they wet and cold? Were they hungry? All these questions entered my mind. Here was I, up out of harm's way, going back to a dry bed and hot food, and down there were my friends and relatives, and I did not know how they were faring.

We flew back alone, on three engines. We were leaving the action. But down there, they would be in the thick of action for days, weeks. All the way back I prayed silently for those poor men who were down below, for those who had died in the assault, and for the living.

EDITOR: Thanks Jake for the letter and the Silent Prayer For The Living. You've expressed the feelings we've all had. Looking forward to seeing you in San Antonio.



A FEW OF OUR NORWICH AREA FRIENDS

By way of introduction for those who have not had the pleasure of meeting personally these English friends of the 44th, the big fellow on the left is John Page who has, over the years, done so much in support of the 44th, there is not space to enumerate. Visibly, besides being tour guide for any visiting 44th'ers, John and his wife Janet have for many years annually traveled to Cambridge to place the 44th Memorial Wreath at the American Cemetery. Next is Paul Wilson, expert cabinet maker and artist. He built and installed all the 44th memorabilia display cabinets at Arrow Air. He had done a great deal of 8-Ball art work for us, and like John, is a ready volunteer guide for 44th visitors. In the center is Tony North, Master Librarian, recently retired by failing vision from many years of service in the Memorial Room of the Norwich Library. Tony probably is the most knowledgeable person in England about the history of the Second Air Division and is a particular friend of the 44th. Next to Tony is Steve Young, a supporter so steeped in 44th heritage, he is currently writing the history of the 66th Bomb Squadron. Steve will be serving as our on-site consultant and representative for the Arrow Air Center/44th Bomb Group Pilots Lounge-Memorial Room project. On the far right is David Morgan, the man responsible for setting up the 44th Bomb Group memorial exhibit at Arrow Air, with Steve and Paul they collected (in large part from Bill Cameron) the great display of 44th history in the existing Arrow Air building. You will be seeing Steve Young, his wife and Paul Wilson at San Antonio. Kevin Watson, pictured in the Eastbourne-Ruthless Memorial of which he was the driving force, will also be making a brief visit with us at the reunion. Be sure to make them feel as welcome as they do us when we visit Shipdham and Norwich.

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2522 Red Oak Trail
Crest Hill, Illinois 60435-3197
Phone: (815) 725-3439

SEARCH - ROSTER - MAIL LIST

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

Art Hand

517 Elm Street

Paris, Illinois 61994

Phone/Fax: (217) 463-5905

If you move or change any aspect of your address or phone number, wife's name, want to stop receiving the 8 Ball Tails or whatever, please notify:

Tom Shepherd

10597 Cambrooke Cove

Collierville, Tennessee 38017

Phone: (901) 854-6558 Fax: (901) 853-4229

.....

ABOUT RECEIVING YOUR 8 BALL TAILS

Although we had the membership/ mailing list pretty well scrubbed, we had a bunch of calls about not receiving Issue #2 and we had a lot of Address Correction Requested returns. Both require re-mails which cost \$1.01 to mail first class. This added to the .50 cents postage due for the return, the \$1.90 per copy publishing cost, and we're looking at \$3.71 to put the 8 Ball Tails at your correct address, to say nothing of the phone costs sometimes to get the thing straightened out. A lot of it is moving and failing to send us a change of address card (recently, after two long distant calls and two re-mails it turns out the member had been at another address for three years and had failed to give us a change). Those of you who are "Snowbirds" are our next biggest problem. You must drop Tom Shepherd a note when you are making your Summer and Winter moves. Otherwise, when the Spring and Fall issues go out and we guess wrong on where you are, we get the Tails back with 50 cents postage due and with a sticker on it saying Temporarily Away and we go through the re-mail exercise again.

IN THE FUTURE, IF WE GET A RETURN AND YOU HAVE FAILED TO GIVE US A CHANGE OF ADDRESS, WE WILL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO PAY THE RETURN AND RE-MAIL POSTAGE. HELP US TO SERVE YOU AS BEST WE CAN!

THE 44TH MAKES ITS MARK AT LEXINGTON

The 2nd Air Division held its 48th Annual Convention at the beautiful Marriott Griffin Gate Resort outside of Lexington, Kentucky July 3-6, 1995. In terms of Group recognition, there's not much of it at 2nd Air Division reunions, but notwithstanding our small 26 head representation (wives and all), our "return to the fold" was made known to all. First your ol' Prez took advantage of a beautifully kept, somewhat short golf course to shoot a 74 and win their Low Gross overall championship going away. More significantly, I was invited to participate in the Candle Lighting Ceremony and was afforded the honor of lighting the Ploesti Candle in the memory of all of your gallant comrades who paid the ultimate price for the success of that amazing feat.

Will Lundy and I also met with Mr. Dave Turner, President of Turner Publishing, who did the beautiful 2nd Air Division History. We have agreed to have Turner do a 44th History in a similar format. There will be more information to you in future 8 Ball Tails, but I must tell you now this will, in all probability, be the last comprehensive history of the 44th done in our time, and it will be beautiful. Don't miss the plane on this one!

Also, Will and I met with Lt. Gen. Buck Schuler, CEO of The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center to discuss their request for our participation in developing a master computer data base for every known person, unit, base and airplane that participated in World War II and forward in Eighth Air Force. It will take a lot of input, but the day will come when it will be possible to punch a name and see a read out of an entire history of Eighth Air Force service associated with that name.

Also mentioned elsewhere, was the decision by Pete Henry that he wants to continue on with his duties as our Group Vice President to 2nd Air Division; so the appointment of Dick Butler was rescinded. Dick will happily return to the ranks and resume his role as one of the "elders" of the clan dispensing his advice and counsel when requested.



Roy Owen flanked by Floyd Mabee (93rd) on the left and George Makin (389th) on the right lighting the Ploesti Candle.

Roy Owen and Lolly accepting the Golf Tournament Gross plaque from Tournament Chairman Pete Henry.



WILL LUNDY

THE LITTLE GUY WITH THE BIG FLAG

For a change, the 44th Bomb Group had a bit of leadership in an 2nd Air Division affair. The big Sunday parade in Norwich on May 7th organized in a parking lot in front of the Central Library that burned. Our American vets were scheduled to bring up the rear, following the Salvation Army's band. That was good (they were replacements for another band that couldn't make it) because it helped us (at least a few of us) to keep in step. Dick Butler finally stepped in to take on the command of our members, which was in columns of three (narrow streets) and three "squadrons" of about 100 each, maybe a bit less. After the Mayoress gave her speech, the active military and several hundred assorted veterans' groups marched ahead of us, for quite a distance through the city streets to the Cathedral. Dick Butler was the drill commander, with me right behind him carrying the American flag, with the two other flags (2nd ADA and 8th AF) on each side of me. So we led our 2nd ADA contingent past the city hall, along side the market square, and along the streets, receiving much applause and cheering. I am sure all of that noise of appreciation was because we were able to walk, not for our marching! But for me, at least, it was quite a thrill. It brought tears to my eyes.

However, my job was not finished when we eventually got to the huge Norwich Cathedral, not at all. We had to wait because the church people had not opened the Cathedral as the crowd was so huge, they had to restrict entrance to invited guests only!! There were many hundreds of "honored" guests, and so only a few others could find standing room only.

And there was me, alone except for an RAF Union Jack flag bearer. The two of us were to be the last to enter, slow march, carrying the two flags, side by side. I didn't have the least idea of what I was to do except watch this other guy at the altar, that proved to be at the far end of the Cathedral. However, the aisles were so narrow, or full, that at times I had to fall behind him, and then follow. It was a bit funny to the observers, I suspect, because I couldn't begin to do what he did! Have you ever tried to hold a 10 foot flag staff and a large flag in front of you? You could only see to the sides, not in front. And secondly, here I was, a person who can't walk a straight line even cold sober, because of the loss of balance in an accident years ago (blood clots in the back of my head). This guy ahead of me in perfect beat to the music, with a slow, halting step, typically perfect English march, and this old, short American faithfully following him, weaving from side to side, not being able to maintain his balance for that foot up, hesitating step!

In my wobbling walk, I also caught my foot on the uneven stone floor and nearly tripped. Then further along, again following my perfect guide, but not seeing him, he lowered his flag in order to pass through the opening which also was quite low. Naturally, I banged into the overhead arch before I saw it. I tried to bend my

knees to lower the flag, but couldn't get low enough. So desperately, I backed up a step, got the staff out of the pouch holder, and thanks to a thinking gentleman who dashed forward to help me carry the lowered flag through the arch, I could again raise it high and put it back into the pouch.

Finally, we approached the large altar, which proved to be a very large stone, rather coffin-like. No flag standards, so the priest took my flag and draped it over the altar. Was I through making a spectacle of myself? No!

About two-thirds through the ceremonies, the two of us returned to the altar to retrieve our respective and respectful flags. This professional had a bearer harness with a metal cup in which he would place the staff. Mine was a new, white, heavy canvas thing that had been stored so long, it was folded closed and difficult to keep open while I placed the wood staff into it. Well, you already know what happened from the above description. The priest lifted my flag, handed it to me, and I raised it high, lowered it to the canvas pouch. Naturally it was partially closed and the flag would not enter. Have you ever held a heavy flag staff 10 feet long, with a heavy metal eagle on top, plus a large flag? Well, neither had I until then. I tried to hold it all alone with one hand that was attached to an arthritic shoulder and fumbled with the other trying to mate the two. Needless to say, it was obvious to many hundreds observing it all that I needed help. The pole was getting out of a vertical position, making it even harder to hold up in the air, let alone straight; and my strength was failing. Embarrassingly, the priest stepped forward, supported the pole until I finally got the darn thing into that canvas cup, and then I followed the perfect example ahead of me back down the center of this huge Cathedral. However, on this return route I knew about the arch and managed to remove the staff, lower it, go through the arch, and with exceptional good luck, get the pole back into the pouch.

In the center of the Cathedral, we both stopped again, separated and stood about 15 feet apart. Flags were upraised until they played the two national anthems. The English lowered their flag to the floor when the American anthem was played, but I was told not to lower mine for any reason. When my time came, I held it aloft, hoping that I was following the proper protocol and was not insulting our hosts.

Finally...the long walk back to the front door. About 100 feet into the courtyard, we again stopped, separated, and again stood at attention while the whole congregation filed back outside. By then I felt that I was married to the flag. It had been so much a part of me for at least 2 1/2 hours. It truly was an endurance feat and proved once again to me, NEVER VOLUNTEER!

EDITOR: I just couldn't let this go by!





Arthur King unveiling the Memorial



Pictured from left, Mayor Ron Parsons, former Mayor Maurice Skilton, Mayoress Elsie Parsons and Mrs. Stella Myshrall at the ceremony.



AMERICAN Stella Myshrall, aged 80, whose brother, Chester Yurick, died in the crash at the age of 27, came to England especially for the Butts Brow ceremony.

The following is taken from the Eastbourne Herald, Saturday, May 20, 1995, reported by Maria Brooks and pictures by John Wade:

Plaque marks spot where bomber crew died

Americans' memorial

THE steadfast commitment of one man culminated in a moving ceremony at Butts Brow in memory of 10 American airmen who lost their lives 50 years ago.

Arthur King, who saw the American bomber Ruth-Less crash into the Downs from his Victoria Drive home, never forgot the tragedy and went to the spot every year on Remembrance Sunday to lay flowers in memory of the young men who died so far from home.

On Saturday, May 6, Mr. King was once again at Butts Brow, but this time hundreds of people, including the sister of one of the crew, were there to see him unveil a permanent memorial.

The Reverend Roger McAvoy gave the opening address and the Bank of the Royal British Legion played the hymn O Valiant Heart.

Willingdon man Kevin Watson, who had been instrumental in bringing the memorial about, described how the crew had failed to return safely after a bombing raid in Northern France.

Colonel Dick Butler, Staff Sgt. Will Lundy and Sgt. Harry Jenkins, who all served in the same squadron as the crew, flew over from the United States to pay their respects, as did 80-year-old Stella Myshrall, whose brother, Chester Yurick, died in the crash aged only 27.

The first wreath was laid by Lt. Col. Thomas Snukis, representing the American Ambassador, who said it was critical that present generations should remember what had been done, and how the sacrifice of many had paved the way for the freedom we have today.

**VE
DAY**

Mayor of Eastbourne Ron Parsons said he was honoured to represent the citizens of Eastbourne who had responded so generously to the memorial appeal.

The Vicar and Rural Dean of Eastbourne Canon Nicholas Reade read Psalm 121 and the crowd sang the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

As the American and British National Anthems were played, 16 standards were lowered, and the finishing touch to a moving and memorable occasion was provided by five of the Red Arrows, who dipped their wings in salute on a perfectly-timed flypast.



The following was taken from the *English Framlingham Times*, March, 1995:

ONE LIBERATOR AMONG MANY

By Ian Hawkins

Among my numerous wartime memories is the crash-landing, on Sunday, 20th February 1944, of an American B-24 Liberator, a four-engine heavy bomber, very near my home in the small Suffolk Village of Freston, four miles south of Ipswich, Suffolk, where I spent my childhood and part of my adult years.

At that time, I was totally unaware that the B-24 was part of the 8th USAAF's first mission in the "Big Week" series of operations when General Jimmy Doolittle threw down the gauntlet to the Luftwaffe to come up and fight. This the German Air Force did, and the resultant air battles were among the most fierce in the history of air warfare.

Having run out of fuel while returning from the mission to Helmstadt, Germany, the B-24, after taking the tops off several mature oak trees, then reducing a tall telegraph pole to matchwood during its gliding approach, was wrecked on landing on a large field between two extensive areas of dense woodlands, Cutler's Wood, Freston and Holbrook Park. After crash landing, the 27-ton bomber broke in two halves while slewing round to face the direction of its approach. We subsequently heard that the B-24 had been based at Shipdham, Norfolk.

During those desperate, dramatic and eventful wartime years, East Anglian youngsters were very familiar with all the different types of bombers and fighters of both the Allied and the German Air Forces, principally to ensure one's own survival in case of low-flying Luftwaffe aircraft, but also due to the close proximity of many Royal Air Force and American 8th Army Air Force airfields located near the East Anglian coast, which juts out into the North Sea directly opposite the then front-line Luftwaffe airfields and military bases in occupied Holland, Belgium and northern France, a mere 30-minutes flying time away.

On arriving at the crash site about half an hour after the B-24 came down, I found several other local people were already clustered around the wreckage. It was the first time I'd seen a Liberator so close: we'd all seen the bombers on the occasional day of clear weather, B-24's and B-27 Fortresses, flying high overhead in precise formations, appearing like hundreds of distant crosses. The combined sound of those thousands of aircraft

engines made the ground tremble.

What impressed me most was the B-24's vast size. How anything so big and heavy could actually fly was quite beyond my comprehension. There was no sign of the bomber's crew, but someone said they'd been taken to a nearby house to await transportation back to their base.

Following the youngsters, I climbed inside the bomber's fuselage and vividly recall the dozens of thin, multi-colored plastic coated electrical leads extending along the interior of the roof and fuselage sides, together with the distinctive smells of plastic, oil and petrol. Long, looping belts of .50 calibre ammunition inside the cluttered and confined space, heavy machine guns, oxygen bottles, discarded oxygen masks, the odd twisted propeller blade, thick, broken chunks of bullet-proof perspex from the gun turrets, many strips of silver anti-radar "chaff" and various items of other equipment all provided ideal souvenirs which subsequently kept the local "Bobbies" (village policemen whom we all greatly respected) at full stretch for several weeks afterwards as they endeavored to track down and confiscate the more dangerous "souvenir" from their schoolboy "owners."

A few days later the wreckage of the Liberator was hauled from the crash site on low-loader trucks, via Freston Village, around the Ipswich by-pass and on to the vast aircraft "grave-yard" at Woodbridge Airfield, the emergency landing runway, for eventual salvage.

Many years went by and it wasn't until October, 1991 that I finally established contact in America with two of the surviving crewmen from that Liberator: Herman Glasser, left waist-gunner and David Talbott, pilot. I subsequently learned that two of the bomber's crewmen, T/Sgt. George Clausen, top-turret gunner/flight engineer and S/Sgt. Robert Werning, right-waist gunner had been seriously injured during the crash-landing and they never flew combat missions again. The crew had been taken to a country house in Holbrook where the owner's daughter was preparing for her forthcoming wedding, but she required suitable material for her wedding dress. Lt. Talbott solved the problem by giving her his silken white parachute.



Three weeks later, during the mission to Brunswick, Germany on 15 March 1944, Lt. Talbott and his crew, with two replacements, were shot down and forced to bail out from another B-24 over Zwolle, Holland. Sadly, Lt. Arthur Goldman, (Navigator), and Lt. Clifford Montgomers, (Bombardier), were killed in action. However, Lt. Talbott and T/Sgt. Raymond Swick, Radio Operator, evaded capture and escaped. They subsequently fought alongside resistance organizations in occupied France until liberated by advancing Allied forces in August, 1944. The six surviving crewmen, copilot and five gunners, were made Prisoners of War in Germany and Austria until they were also freed by advancing Allied Armored Units in May, 1945.

Present day photographs of the crash site near Cutler's Wood, Freston and of the beautiful country house at Holbrook, both virtually unchanged since 1944, were taken in November, 1991 by my wife Mary. Copies of each picture were sent to Herman Gasser and David Talbott. These were much appreciated and brought back vivid memories of those dramatic times.

As 1944 progressed, the quite extraordinary sight and sound of 1,000 American bombers all heading east, going to war across the North Sea, was a common sight to a generation of East Anglians. A little later the escorting fighters would speedily and noisily follow the bomber's lingering contrails to keep their prearranged and precisely scheduled rendezvous with the bombers over mainland Europe.

When those aircraft returned to their bases from long and often bloody missions in the late afternoon or early evening, the evidence was clearly visible. The saying, "Three engines turning...one burning..." was not a misnomer and was an all too common sight to a generation of East Anglians.

Many severely damaged Allied bombers and fighters sought the sanctuary of the huge runway at the emergency landing airfield at Woodbridge, 10 miles from the Suffolk coast. As many as 50 emergency landings were handled in any one 24-hour period. As darkness fell, the temporary silence would again be broken by the sound of aircraft engines as long streams of Royal Air Force Bomber Command aircraft in the night skies continued the "round the clock" bombing offensive. The wartime skies over East Anglia were never still.

However, the cost in young men's lives flying bombing missions from England was very high. RAF Bomber Command lost 55,000 killed between 1939 and 1945.

The 8th and 9th USAAF lost 26,000 and 1,500 killed respectively between 1942 and 1945. In addition, the RAF and the 12th and 15th USAAF, operating from bases in North Africa and Italy, also suffered grievous losses.

The records reveal the grim statistics of the 44th Bomb Group: "The Flying Eightballs" lost 153 B-24 Liberators missing in action and a further 39 bombers to other operational losses between September, 1942 and May, 1945.

After the war, Jacob Elias, a former waist gunner with the 44th Bomb Group, returned to what had once been a noisy, thriving and bustling bomber base at Shipdham: "In 1955 I went back to Shipdham...seams and cracks in the concrete, sprouting weeds...derelict shells of wartime buildings...out on the main runway stood an abandoned farm machine...Up in the control tower broken glass covered the floor, an open door creaked eerily in the breeze..."

"Faces flitted through my mind, faces of men - boys really, who had become men before their time. Where were all those wonderful kids?...Kids who didn't speak of patriotism, love of country, fear of death, but who went out, did the best they could - clumsily at times, perfectly sometimes, but always the best they could..."

EDITOR: We got this from an English Newspaper. One of the best we've read perceptions of the air war being waged from East Anglian through the eyes of a young lad who lived through those years.

MISSING - ONE EACH NOSE GEAR

By *Bob Lehnhausen, 68th Squadron*

The Wiener-Neustadt mission, the first one, flown on August 13, 1943, (I think) was for us an easy mission for the first 85% of the flight. My recollections of this mission are most vivid, for I have always considered it to be the best bit of flying that I did during my Air Corps career. For me, this mission had a lot of unusual circumstances. It was the first mission that the group flew after the August 1, 1943 Ploesti Low Level Mission. It was my first combat mission with the 68th as a First Pilot. Although I joined the unit as a Pilot, I flew all of my missions up to this point as a Co-Pilot. All of my four engine training had been as a B-17 Pilot. In fact, our crew flew a B-17 to England. At Bovingdon, we were transferred to B-24's. I flew with Stub Garrett through the July 2, 1943, Lecce, Italy mission which ended in our ditching. The Ploesti mission was flown as Co-Pilot for Shannon, filling in for George Armstrong who had become ill.

The Wiener-Neustadt mission was flown with Ben Gildart's crew. I flew as Pilot, Gildart as Co-Pilot. Frank Davido, who was the Co-Pilot for this crew, flew the mission on the flight deck. Our Squadron Navigator, George Kelley, also was on this mission with us. It was the first combat mission for this crew,

and, understandably, they were not happy that their Pilot was in the right seat and a guy they didn't know was in the left seat. For myself, I wasn't happy either to be flying with an inexperienced crew who made no secret of their dislike for the arrangement. However, I was thrilled to have the first opportunity to fly in the left seat after a five month "training period" with the 68th.

The BENINA MAIN briefing for this shuttle mission gave some emergency airfield alternatives to the planned landing field in Tunisia. Such briefing information was usually of secondary importance. However, we did copy it down, never dreaming that we would have need for this intelligence data.

My recollection of the target was that we were bombing an aircraft assembly facility that was adjacent to a military airfield. The military had a training unit stationed at the field. We could anticipate some opposition in the target area.

Mission take off, assembly, penetration to target, bomb run and withdrawal from target area were all routine and uneventful. We dropped our bombs in clear weather and experienced no enemy opposition. It was a true "milk run," well, until we were midway across Italy. A routine check of fuel indicated we were very low on one engine and not in good shape on a second engine. An attempt was made to transfer fuel from the other

tanks to balance the supply, but we were unable to get the available fuel to the needed areas. This signalled an emergency situation. We determined that we could not possibly make our planned landing in Tunisia. We would have to seek an emergency landing field.

George Kelley gave the location and approximate flight times to the emergency fields that had been given to us by Intelligence at our morning briefing. It was decision making time. I opted to try for one of the fields given to us, located in Sicily. Even though that meant an over water flight, I had confidence that we could solve the fuel transfer problems. However, prudence required being cautious.

We reported our situation to the Squadron Leader and left the group formation as we left the Italian Coast to head across the Tyrrhenian Sea. We departed the Italian Coast just south of Naples. My memory is that this was also the day that Allied troops took the city of Naples.

The first briefed emergency field we approached on the northern coast of Sicily had been totally devastated by bombs. It looked like the field had grown a massive case of pocks, so close and so many that the pocks had pocks. No chance of putting down there.

At that moment of disappointment, I spotted the glint of sun off an East-West



blacktop runway many miles in the distance, directly south of our position. It proved to be the second alternative listed. We continued to this second location. We were still working on the fuel transfer system – unsuccessfully.

As we approached the area of our intended landing, we lost and feathered our #3 engine. As the field came into view, it was apparent that the field was in use. A unit of American fighters was dispersed about the perimeter of the field. However, the paved strip was filled with bomb craters and painted empty oil drums stood on end to indicate that it was not in use. The grassy area of the field used by the fighters was short and with many bomb craters throughout it. To me there appeared to be a space on the east end (approach end) of the grassy area of the field that may be usable if the width of the landing gear was less than the distance between two of the bomb craters. It would permit us to make our approach and touchdown ahead of the craters and then use the grassy area beyond for roll and slow down. In my judgement, we had no choice, we must try it. It had to work. There was no opportunity for a go-around. Even if we had had power available, a range of mountainous foothills off the west end of the field discouraged a go-around.

For a landing, our line of flight to the south made it necessary to fly a base leg and turn onto a

westerly approach. We had 5,000 feet of altitude to lose between base and touchdown. As we prepared to land, some of the crew on the flight deck discouraged me with "You can't make it, you can't make it."

As we turned onto the approach, we lost our second engine – out of gas. God was good to us though. All of the hours of training in flight school and in four engine flying came to fruition. Few can imagine the thrill of successfully making a "spot" landing in such a situation. To touchdown at precisely the point selected as ideal and to realize that there would be sufficient space between craters to permit maximum use of the field available. It was momentarily exhilarating.

Having achieved successful touchdown, now the challenge was to get stopped as quickly as possible. We had gotten the aircraft and the crew safely to a briefed alternate airfield, had it on the ground, now we had only a limited amount of clear real estate available to us. We still had work to do.

We immediately lowered the nose to permit early braking and shortening of our landing roll. The self-satisfaction of the successful touchdown was very short lived.

The forward push on the control column to put the nose wheel onto the field went beyond normal. Lo and behold, the nose continued its downward movement and so did

the whole plane – tail high. The nose gear had failed to extend. With all the other problems, no one had bothered to check upon it. We skidded to an abrupt stop.

We shut down everything and made a hasty exit.

Such a sad end for one of our noble ships. Only after return to base did I learn that: 1) the nose gear had been replaced the night before the mission and had not been flight tested; 2) the #3 engine was a "gas hog"; 3) the crew who flew it on Ploesti had had that problem.

Unfortunately, I have always had the feeling that my superiors were displeased that we had left that plane in Sicily. It also demonstrates one of the situations in life where perspective made a tremendous difference in the evaluation of the act.

I hope this assists you in fleshing out the mission report. The irony of it is that 52 years after the fact, someone asks what really happened. I have given you a brief account of the vivid recollections of the actions of a young pilot in unusual circumstances. Not the best of missions, but certainly not as disastrous as it might have been. Thank God.

EDITOR: Like this article, Bob is ageless. His contributions to the 44th BGVA are too numerous to mention...besides, he would "fat lip" me if I did.

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
DRAFT BUDGET FOR
CALENDAR YEAR 1995

Projected income:

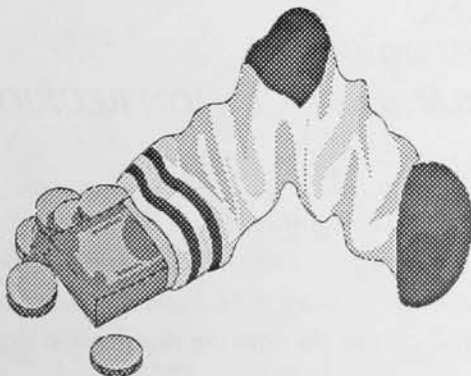
145 Life Members (allocated @ \$15)	\$2,175
750 Regular Members @ \$15	11,250
Reunion Income (net)	2,500
Contributions (estimated)	300
Investment Income (estimated)	500

Projected Expenditures:

3 Issues of 8 Ball Tails @ \$2,000	\$6,000
(first issue \$2,883)	(883)
Historian	900
Unit Historians 4 @ \$150	600
Archive Research	200
Membership Search (Hand)	600
Roster (Shepherd)	200
Treasurer	400
Directors 9 @ \$500 (travel)	4,500
President (Admin & travel)	900
Secretary	300
Tax Exempt Status Fee	465
Bulk Mail Permit	<u>150</u>

Total	\$15,215
	<u>(883)</u>
	\$16,098
	\$16,725
	<u>- 16,098</u>
	627

We need another 150 Members @ \$15 \$2,250



**THE DOLLARS AND
CENTS
OF
THE
44TH BOMB GROUP
VETERANS
ASSOCIATION**

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITY AND BUDGET
PERIOD JANUARY 1, 1995 TO JUNE 30, 1995

	BUDGET 1995	INCOME PERIOD 1/1/95 - 6/30/95	YEAR TO DATE	
			OVER BUDGET	UNDER BUDGET
INCOME				
Life Memberships				
145 Projected	2,175			
Actual 139		814		1,361
Regular Memberships	11,250	4,685		6,565
Reunion Income	2,500	-		2,500
Contributions	300	1,514	<u>1,214</u>	
Investment Income	<u>500</u>	<u>396</u>		<u>104</u>
Totals	16,725	7,409	1,214	10,530
EXPENDITURES				
8 Ball Tails (3 issues)	6,000			
8 Ball Tails (1 issue)		2,957	957	
Historian	900	591		309
Unit Historians	600			600
Archive Research	200			200
Membership Research	600	175		425
Membership Roster	200			200
Treasurer	400	443	43	
Directors Travel (9)	4,500	1,061		3,439
President (Adm & Travel)	900	749		151
Secretary	300			300
IRS Tax Exempt Filing	465	465		
Bulk Mail Permit	<u>150</u>			<u>150</u>
Capital Equipment		<u>287</u>	<u>287*</u>	
Totals	15,215	6,728	1,287	5,774
Income Exceeds Expense:		681		

This abbreviated statement portrays our operating accounts versus our operating budget. Our reunion income and expenditures are kept in an account separate from our general operating accounts.

**Fax machine for Treasurer.*

**44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS
ASSOCIATION
1995 REUNION SCHEDULE
OCTOBER 19 - 23, 1995**

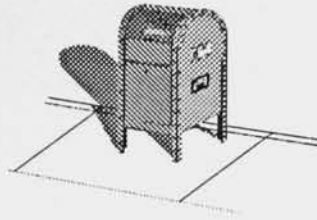
<i>Thursday 19 October</i>	<p>9:00 a.m. Registration all day.</p> <p>3:30 p.m. Reception, Hors d'oeuvres, cash bar.</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room opens, free bar. Dinner on your own.</p>
<i>Friday 20 October</i>	<p>9:30 a.m. Hospitality Tour No. 1.</p> <p>3:00 p.m. Hospitality Room opens, free bar.</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner in Ballroom, cash bar.</p>
<i>Saturday 21 October</i>	<p>9:30 a.m. & 10:00 a.m. Buses leave for River Walk.</p> <p>2:30 p.m. & 3:00 p.m. Buses return to hotel.</p> <p>3:30 p.m. Business Meeting in Ballroom.</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room opens, free bar.</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Squadron Dinners. Dance following. Sponsored by the 506th Squadron.</p>
<i>Sunday 22 October</i>	<p>8:45 a.m. Golf, Ft. Sam., Transport TBA.</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hospitality Tour No. 2.</p> <p>3:00 p.m. Hospitality Room opens, free bar.</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Banquet: Preceded by Color Guards and Candle Light Ceremony presented by 506th Squadron. Mexican dancers to follow.</p>
<i>Monday 23 October</i>	<p>8:00 a.m. Farewell Buffet Breakfast -10:00 a.m.</p>

**DON'T WAIT ANY LONGER!
GET YOUR RESERVATIONS IN NOW!**

DON'T MISS THE FIRST 44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION!

For those of you who are driving or are not particularly interested in the tours being offered and might be inclined to rent a car for a day to do some adventuring on their own, 44th'ers Ed and Jane Donnelly of Kerrville, Texas (about 75 miles NW of San Antonio suggest some touring of the Texas Hill country, which among many other attractions, has the LBJ Ranch. There will be maps and touring information at the reunion registration desk to guide you through a "do it yourself" tour of this beautiful part of Texas.





GENERAL ELECTION

In accordance with Article V, Section 1. (2) the Executive has adjusted the initial term of three Directors-at-Large to one year to accomplish the staggering of terms. Those Directorships selected were the Support Group, the 67th Squadron, and the 506th Squadron. Al Ruby, the elected Director for the Support Group asked to be relieved in June for health reasons. President Owen appointed Melvin Trager of HQ. Squadron to complete that term. Ray McNamara, Director for the 67th declined re-nomination as did John Milliken, Director for the 506th. The Constitution requires the nominating committee to submit two candidates for each vacating officer. VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE FROM EACH OF THE THREE UNITS, OR CHECK THE BOX GIVING YOUR PROXY TO THE PRESIDENT.

Cut Here

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BALLOT

SUPPORT GROUP

- MELVIN TRAGER, Incumbent, HQ., CREST HILL, ILLINOIS
- R.H. "PHIL" PHILLIPS, 14TH CBW., LINDSAY, OKLAHOMA

67TH BOMB SQUADRON

- ROBERT I. "BOB" BROWN, 67TH., SAN RAMON, CALIFORNIA
- DONALD CHASE, 67TH, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

506TH BOMB SQUADRON

- SHERMAN "BUD" DOWETT, 506TH, GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA
- THOMAS "TOM" HOBSON, 506TH, COLUMBUS, OHIO

- I hereby authorize Roy W. Owen, President, 44th BGVA, to cast my vote by proxy using his best judgment in the matter of this election of officers only.

Signature

Date

Unit

Check your selection, and in the case of a proxy, sign above, then either bring your ballot to San Antonio to drop into the ballot box at registration; or prior to October 1, mail your ballot to: James H. Clements, Vice President, 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, 4124 Calculus Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75244

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION

SAN ANTONIO '95

OCTOBER 19 ~ 22

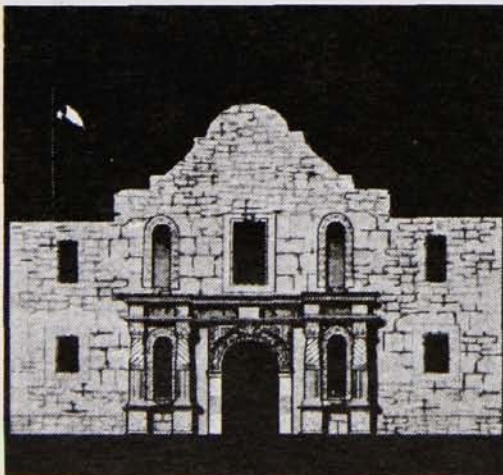


44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association
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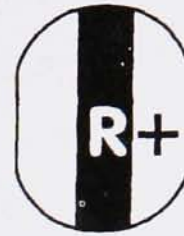


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Reunion '95 October 19 - 22

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 1 - Issue #5

Non Profit Veterans Organization

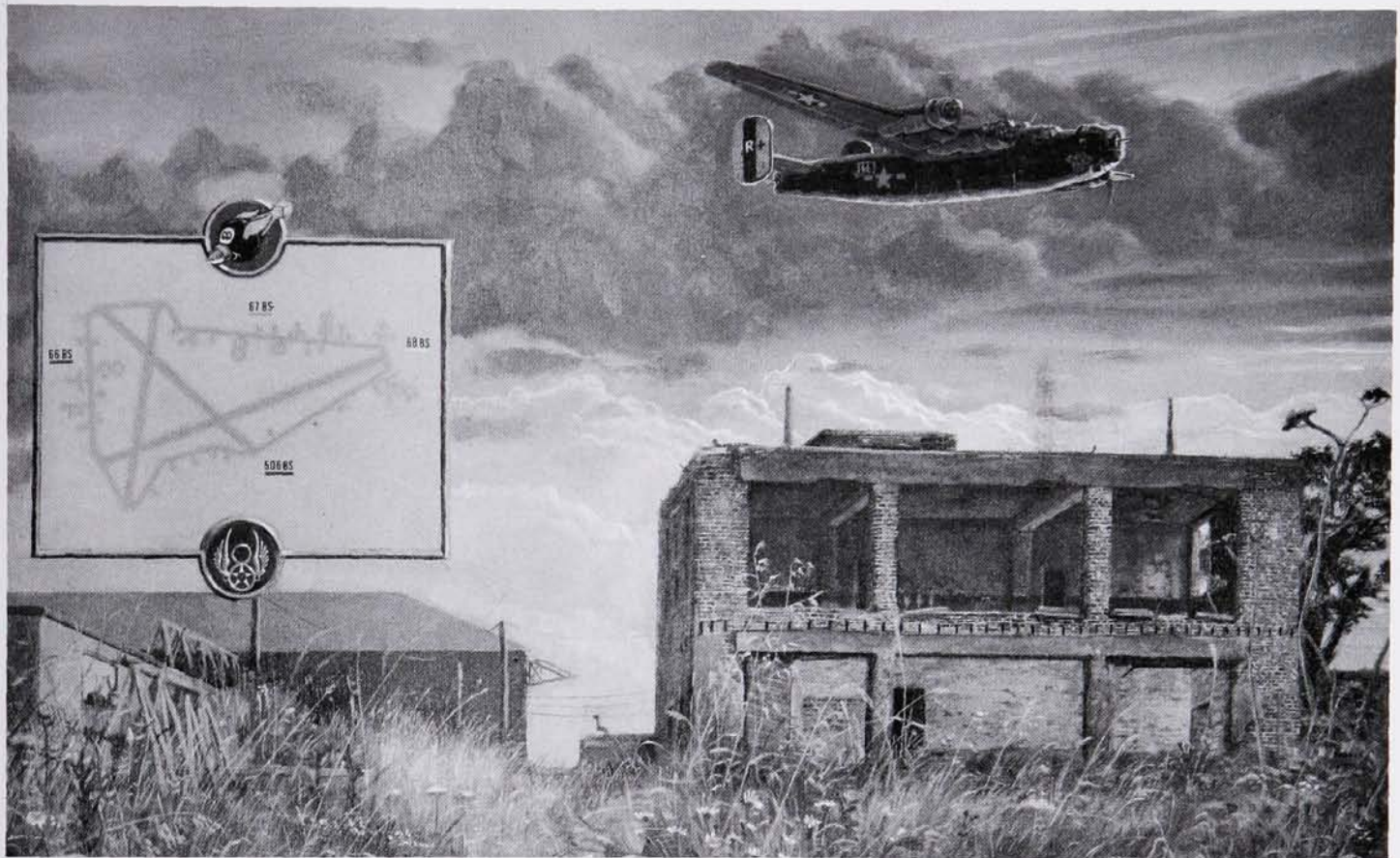
Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association



Spring 1996

EIN #68-0351397

Glory Bee

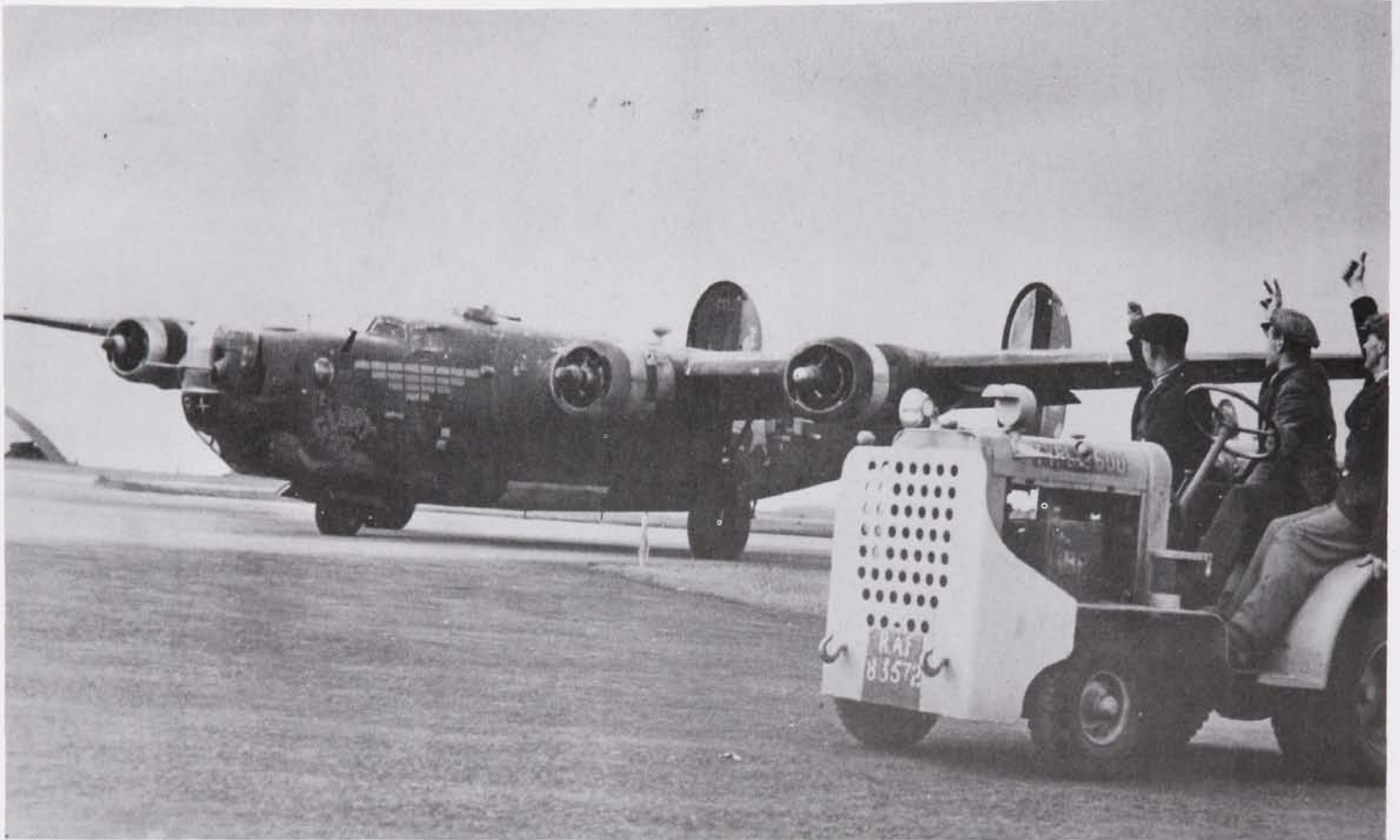


Pilot MERCER, NAME: "GLORY BEE", B-24H 42-52616, CALL SIGN R+. RETURNED HOME 31 MAY 1945

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

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

Glory Bee



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

"FLY-BY"

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

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

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



Glory Bee

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

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

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



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

May 18, 1989



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

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

Glory Bee

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



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



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

ALL ABOUT ENGLAND - THE ARROW AIR PROJECT

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

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



The Shipdham Tower Memorial Plaque

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

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

Saturday, 25 November 1995



Dear Will:

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

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

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

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

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

With best regards,
R. Lee Aston

The Return to England

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

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

- Assemble at a main terminal of our chosen airline for the flight to London.
- A two or three night stay in London (one night at the theatre).
- Then bus to Norwich for three nights (probably at the Lord Nelson).
- A day of leisure to stroll around Norwich and see the rebuilding of the Library (yes, and see if the Sampson & Hercules is still standing).
- Then a day and evening at Shipdham (more about this later) to visit our friends and to see our Arrow Air Project.
- We would then bus to Cambridge with a brief stop at the beautiful American Cemetery at Maddingly.
- Then on to Duxford for a visit to the new American Air Museum.



- We would then travel South to Portsmouth for a stay to allow a tour of the Overlord Command post where General Eisenhower directed the D-Day operations and a trip to Eastbourne to visit a memorial placed just last May in the memory of the James O. Bolin crew, which was killed in the crash of their 506th airplane "Ruthless" (see page 22 of the Spring '95 8-Ball Tails).

The 44th has a standing invitation to visit with the people of Eastbourne, who have for 52 years treated the loss of the "Ruthless" crew as if it were their sons who perished in the crash.

Incidentally, we hear from Kevin Watson, coordinator of the memorial, there has been so much interest in the Ruthless Memorial, the visitors have worn the grass surrounding the memorial to the point the Committee is making plans to lay a granite walkway surrounding the memorial.

- From Portsmouth, those so wishing, would have the option of returning to London for the return flight (or extend a London stopover). Otherwise, the tour would continue on with a Channel crossing to Cherbourg to tour Utah and Omaha Beaches and pay our respects to our 44th comrades buried at the most beautiful American Cemetery at Omaha Beach (something that every American should see).

- Then on to Paris for a three day visit.



- Return to London via Calais.

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

THE CAPTAIN VERSUS THE COLONEL

By: James Clements, 506th Bomb Squadron

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

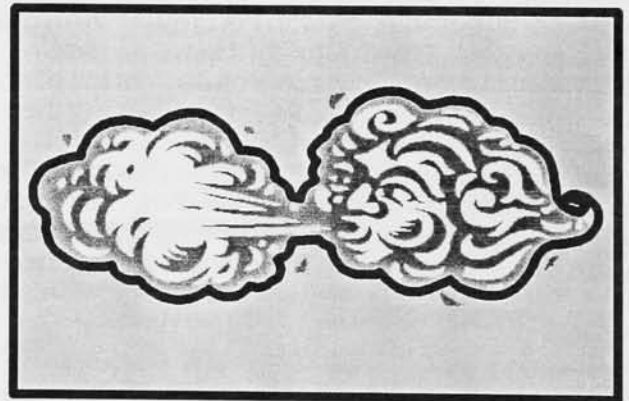
My memories of most of the missions I flew are not too clear. However, that mission is firm in mind. I never stop thinking, "What if the clouds hadn't broken?"

Editor:

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

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

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



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

By: Ann Carpenter Wing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Robert Gunton Crew, 1944

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Roy Owen, President



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

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

Other Income (Not Budgeted)

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

Total Income for Period \$23,867

Expenses (Budgeted)

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

Items Not Budgeted

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

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



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

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

ASSETS

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

LIABILITIES

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

SURPLUS - EQUITY NON COMMITTED FUNDS

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

The 8-Ball Tails

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

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



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

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

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

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



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



Roy & Lolly with Helen & Casey Jarvis.



*Del and Ann Mann
with the Prez.*



BEATING THE BUSHES

by Art Hand & Will Lundy

STILL FINDING 44TH COMRADES

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

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

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

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

611 of these are deceased.

231 are mail returned.

2,708 are living and on the mailing list.

147 Life Members

6 Widows

1 Honorary

4 Associates

2 Complimentary

864 Total Membership

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

170 located using phone disks.

Last six months: 162 searches

39 located.

24 located, deceased.

65 have not replied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEW MEMBERS:

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

WILL SEZ

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remember...keep those cards and letters coming.

Will Lundy



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



66th Squadron from C. Hughes' files.

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

A/JHG/15

20 June 1944

SUBJECT: Relief of Combat Crews.

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

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

John H. Gibson
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.



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

66th Squadron

AM

COPY

KHI 072245 B MAY 45
SECRET

D-66755

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

--- DOOLITTLE ---

COPY

COPY

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



FOLDED WINGS

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

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

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

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

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BOARD

President: Roy W. Owen (506th)
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Phone/Fax: (406) 587-2490

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San Ramon, California 94583-3824
Phone: (510) 828-4529 Fax: (510) 828-1551

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

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

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



MISCELLANIA

A RED FACE OVER "CORKY"

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



IF YOU LIKE YOUR 8-BALL TAILS

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

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

BACK ISSUES - 8-BALL TAILS

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



MORE ABOUT "WELCOME SIGHT"

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

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

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



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



Do the
"Missouri Waltz"

&

"Meet Me In St. Louis"



so you don't
sing the



"St. Louis Blues"



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1996 REUNION - October 3 - 7, 1996

*Holiday Inn Westport
St. Louis, Missouri*



REGISTRATION FORM

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

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

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

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

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



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

✂ Cut on line!



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1996 REUNION OCTOBER 3-7, 1996

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

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

SHARING ROOM W/ _____ SMOKING NONSMOKING KING 2 DBL

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

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

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

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

AMOUNT _____ SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____ CHECK # _____

CREDIT CARD # _____ TYPE _____ EXP. DATE _____



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

Airport Limousine Available: Call from courtesy phone in lobby.

1996 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION NOTES



REGISTRATION

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

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

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

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

Tour #1: See St. Louis.

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

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

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

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

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

Metrolink

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

TOUR #2: GRANT'S FARM

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

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

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

HISTORIC ST. CHARLES

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

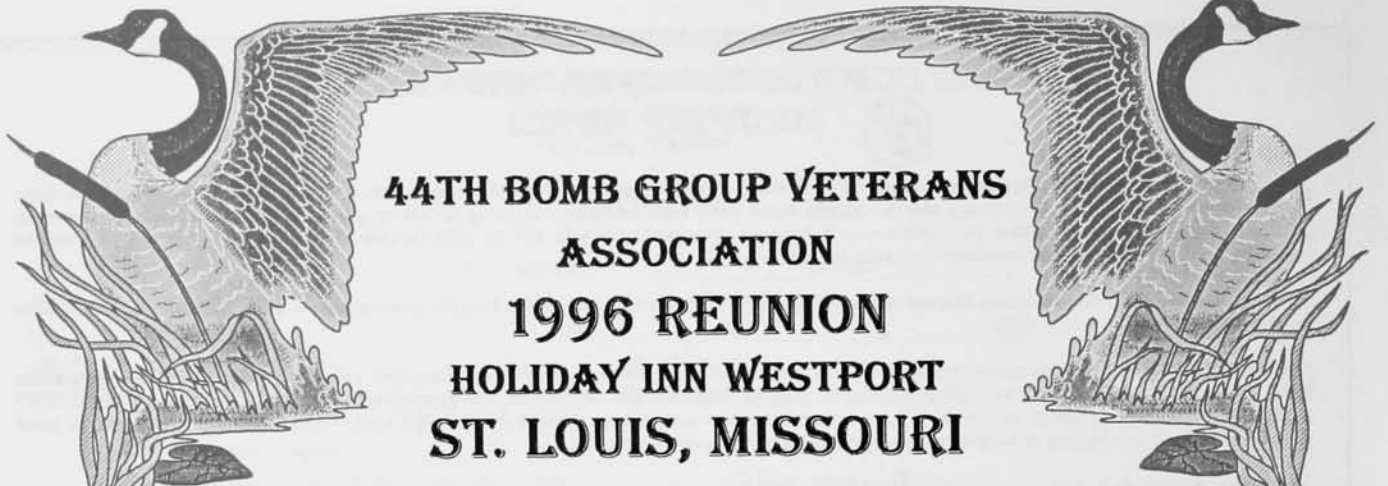
The day we will be there, St. Charles will be celebrating Oktoberfest. Oktoberfest is a citywide celebration of St. Charles' German heritage, featuring a parade, German bands, grape stomps, ethnic food, costumes and enjoyment. There will be a free shuttle bus making the rounds of the activities.

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

CASINO ST. CHARLES

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

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



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

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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



KEEPING US INFORMED

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

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

Change of address, please notify:

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

NOTICE:

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



44TH BGVA ROSTERS

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Will:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Brother Returns to East Anglia

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Butterfly Bombing of Shipdham Airfield

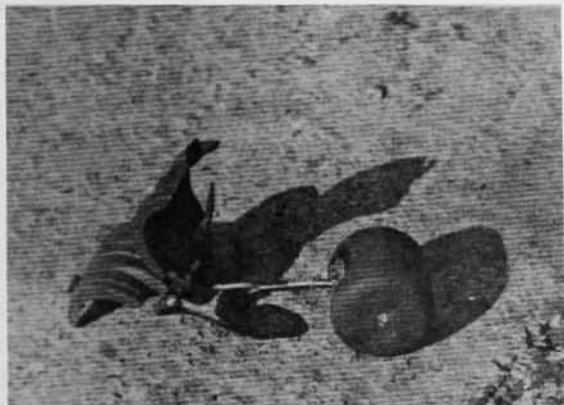
In the past two issues of 8-Ball Tails, there have been letters and photos relating to the bombing attack made on the field. I personally had a story to tell about it -- may appear elsewhere in this issue, but while at San Antonio Reunion, I was given yet another story, clarifying a couple items appearing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

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

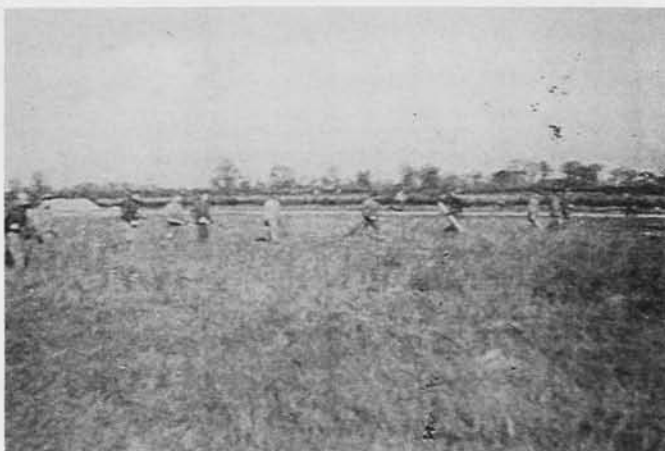
David also hastened to correct the method used to locate these nasty little antipersonnel bombs. The method used to locate them was by his personnel, not animals. It took three sweeps by his men fanned out a few feet apart, slowly working the entire area, one slow step at a time, eyes glued to the space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

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

Thanks David for your information. Are there any others?



Capt. Nathanson



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

Hi Roy,

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,
Jim Dietz
Ukiah, California

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



A Great Response to the "Corky" Story

Jan. 15, 1996

Dear Will,

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

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

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

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

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

19 January 1996

Dear "Bob",

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Again, thank you.

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



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

October 13, 1995

Mike Caroon
4144 Durillo Place
Albany, OR 97321



Dear Mr. Caroon:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FIRST COMBAT MISSION

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

Primary: Danzig

Secondary: Gdynia (hit)

44th had 13 A/C

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

9 Oct 43

G 870 No Name

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

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

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

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

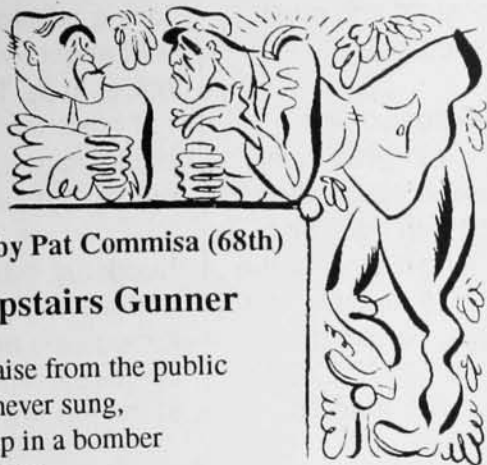
About 50 miles west of Denmark, the fighters broke off attacking, going back to their base. Suddenly I felt the ship yaw and I saw the fuel pressure of #4 drop to zero. I feathered #4 and called over the intercom about the engine emergency. Just then #3 pressure dropped and I feathered that one. Then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

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

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



TWO POINTS OF VIEW



Submitted by Pat Commisa (68th)

The Upstairs Gunner

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Just another Gunner~

Responsibility

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Signed: James O. Auman

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

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



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

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

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



UNSUNG HERO

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

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

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

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

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

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

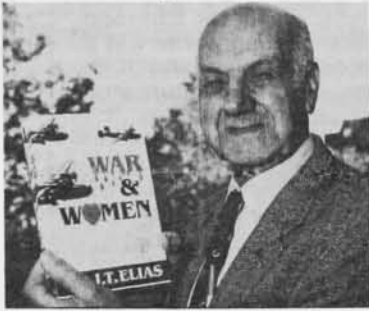
Respectfully yours,
Major Albert A. Martin
USAF (Ret)
2313 Hidden Valley Drive
Santa Rosa, California 95404-2310



MAIL CALL



This comes from:



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

ANOTHER AUTHOR AMONG US

Roy,

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

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

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

Let's promote one of our own!

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

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

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



This warm response comes from:

**"Mum"
Linda Weston**

Hello Lolly & Roy,

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

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

Love from Mum Linda

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



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

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

Dear Roy,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please excuse the tardiness of this reply.

Sincerely,

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



2/16/96

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

Dear Lois,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Roy Owen



This comes from:

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

Dear Will,

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

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

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

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

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



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

Thank you again for the letter.

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



This comes from:

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

Dear Will,

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

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

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

Will this aircraft be featured in a future issue?

More from Merritt

MORE ON DECISION MISSION 24

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours truly,

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



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

Some Differences of Opinion about "Down De Hatch."

This comes from:

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

Dear Will,

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

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

This comes from:

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

Dear Art,

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

The crew on this last mission is as follows:

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

* Deceased

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

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

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

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

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



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

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

Dear Sir,

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

Thank you.

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



This comes from:

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

Dear Will,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely yours.

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

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



This comes from:

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

Dear Roy,

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

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

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

kindest personal regards.

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

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



This comes from:

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

To C.W. Lundy

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

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

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

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

This comes from:

Albert Martin

Dear Jerry,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely yours.

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



This comes from:

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

Dear Will,

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

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

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

All the best.



*44th Bomb Group Association
1996 Reunion*

October 3 - 7, 1996

St. Louis, Missouri

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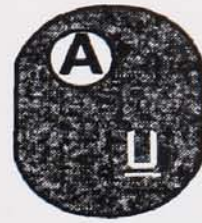


Address Correction Requested



Reunion '96 October 3 - 7

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 1 - Issue #6

Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Summer, 1996

EIN #68-0351397

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



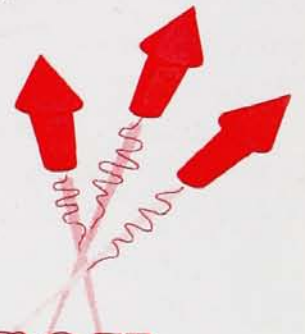
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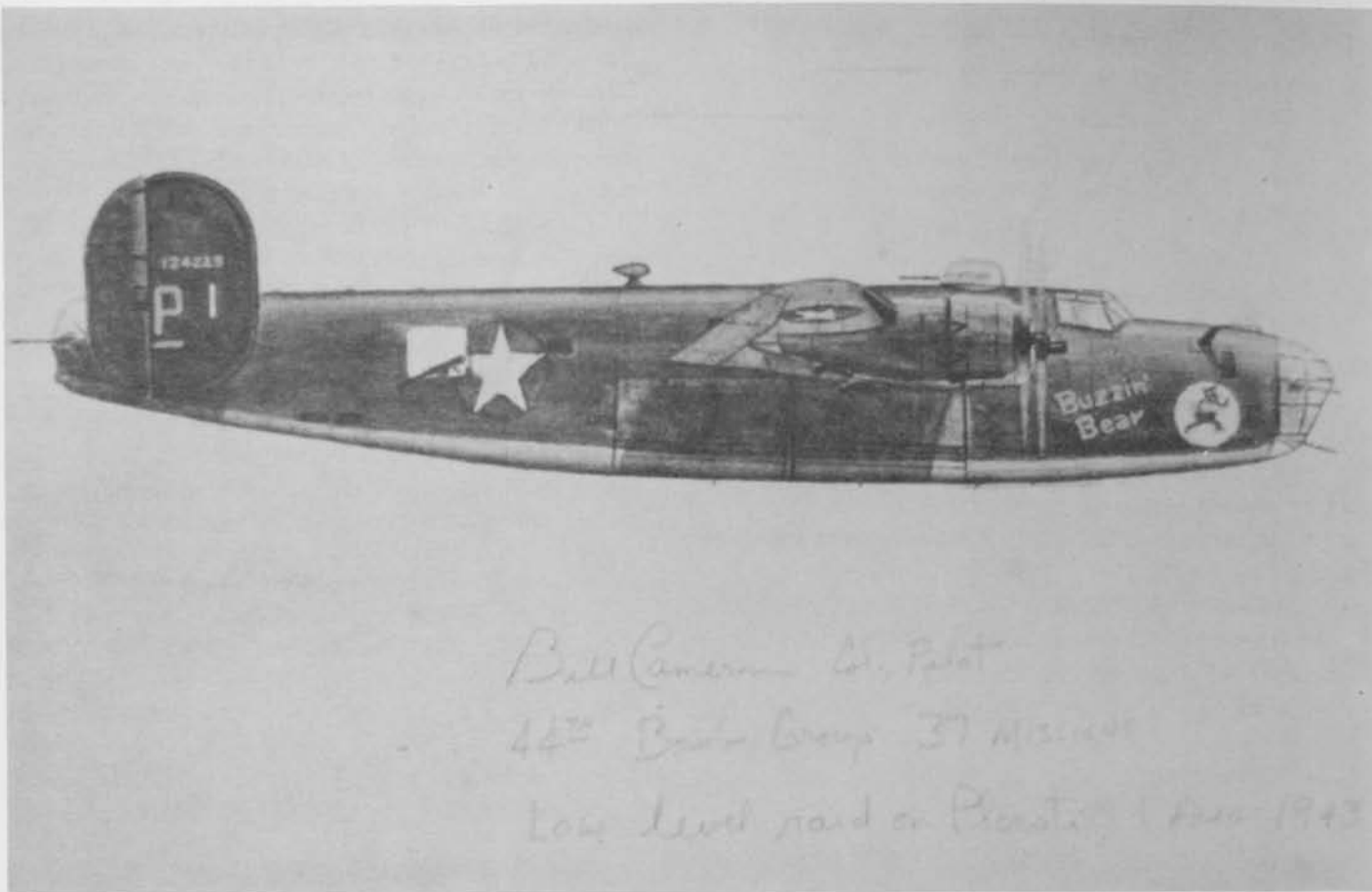
*to our
President Emeritus
&
Gallant
Combat Leader*



GENERAL LEON W. JOHNSON

92 YEARS YOUNG





*Bill Cameron Co. Pilot
 44th Bomb Group 3rd Mission
 Low level raid on Brest, France 1943*

And Then There Was One

In this issue we are featuring two aircraft, the first, B-24D 41-23807 U, "Little Beaver," one of the nine original 67th Bomb Squadron assigned aircraft. Her crew chief was MENNO UNRUH. The other aircraft is B-24D 41-24229 P "Buzzin' Bear," a direly needed replacement which arrived at Station 115 in late April 1943.

Inseparable to the record of these two aircraft is the story of the incredible combat career of now retired COLONEL BILL CAMERON.

Bill's initial assignment to the 67th Bomb Squadron was Co-Pilot on the crew of LT. CHESTER "GEORGE" PHILLIPS who, because he habitually called everyone "George" became himself known as "George." After stateside training at Grenier Field, New Hampshire, the crew deployed in their newly named "Little Beaver" for England on October 4, 1942.

The 44th Bomb Group, consisting at the time of three Bomb Squadrons, the 66th, 67th and 68th, assembled at Shipdham Airfield, designated Station 115, located 16 NM West of Norwich in East Anglia. During the next two months, the crews flew training missions and the aircraft were cycled through the Lockheed plant near Belfast, Ireland for combat modification. In late November and early December, the Group flew a series of diversion missions in support of other 8th Air Force bombing strikes and three bombing missions on December 3, 12 and 20. The "Little Beaver" crew aborted the December 6 mission with engine problems and did not successfully complete a mission until the January 3 raid on St. Nazaire, France.



S/Sgt. Menno Unruh, Crew Chief of "Little Beaver."



Lt. Chester "George" Phillips

The crew of the "Little Beaver."

**Standing: Mike Denny, Engineer; George Brice, Radio; Unknown; Dale Glaubitz, Gunner; Chuck Foreman, Gunner; Bill Cameron, Co-Pilot.
Front: Ed Phillips, Assistant Radio; Tom Bartmess, Navigator; Chester "George" Phillips, Pilot; Jim DeVinney, Bombardier.**





15 February 1943, The 44th over Dunkirk Harbor

Bill remained on the Phillips crew through the terrible months of February, March and April when the daylight bombing attrition decimated the 44th Bomb Group; especially the 67th Squadron. Of the original roster of Pilots and Co-Pilots their losses were: Major Donald W. MacDonald, Squadron Commander and Command Pilot shot down with Capt. Art Cullen on the 15 February raid on Dunkirk Harbor to sink the German Radar Ship TOJO; Lts. Rufus Oliphant and Co-Pilot Charles Wilkes, also lost over Dunkirk; Lt. J.B. Long and Co-Pilot Lt. John McCormick killed in a mid-air collision with a 66th Squadron aircraft on the 16 February raid on St. Nazaire; Lts. Clyde E. Price and Co-Pilot Robert E. Forrest, along with Lts. Robert W. Blaine and Co-Pilot Lawrence J. Roetto were simultaneously shot down on the bomb run over Rouen, France on March 8.

The "Little Beaver" flew on each of these tough missions including the TOJO raid on which Major MacDonald was lost. (See accompanying story.)

By the 8 March 1943 raid on Rouen, the 67th had lost five of its original nine crews. Jackson Hall had been grounded for medical reasons. Two weeks later "Bucky" Warne and

crew were lost on the 22 March raid on Wilhelmshaven. Lt. William A. Roach, Jr. had just arrived with his new airplane, so the 67th was again down to three aircraft and crews. "Suzy Q", "Little Beaver" and the new "Annie Oakley."

Turning to experienced co-pilots to bolster the force, Lt. Bill Cameron quickly soloed in the "Beaver." With an American transfer from the RAF, Lt. Bill Dabney as Co-Pilot, a new crew was formed and assigned a newly arrived aircraft, which was promptly named "Buzzin' Bear," (Bill was a product of UC Berkeley, The Golden Bears).

In a small way of celebrating the formation of the new crew, they were granted a three day pass. Cameron and Dabney accompanied by Howard Moore, who had taken command on the 67th after the loss of Major MacDonald, went to

London. Upon their return to the base in the early morning hours of 14 May, they learned that the Group was preparing for a mission launch against the Krupp Submarine Works in Kiel, Germany. Although it was a maximum effort mission, the 67th could muster only three crews. "Suzy Q" was being repaired, so the third

14 May 1943 Shipdham Airfield, "Sweating Out" the return of the Kiel Raid. The 67th: Three up-an empty sky on return.





M/Sgt. Marion Bagley, Crew Chief on "Buzzin' Bear."



M/Sgt. Bagley and his crew.

The Crew of the "Buzzin' Bear" - May 11, 1943

Bottom Row: Bill Cameron, Pilot; Bill Dabney, Co-Pilot; Jim DeVinney, Bombardier; Tom Clifford, Navigator (not in photo).

Top Row: Jerry Sparks, Radio Operator; Jerry Grett, Waist Gunner; Gola Gibby, Flight Engineer; LeRoy Winter, Assistant Engineer; Ernie McCabe, Waist Gunner; Frank Maruszewski, Tail Gunner.



(TOP ROW - L-R: 44311 E-4327845 SPARKS, 22941 GRET, 3307 61884, 7197 WINTER, 57307 McCABE, 5044 MARUSZEWSKI, 1612 CAMERON (PILOT) 1612 DABNEY, 1612 DEVINNEY)

crew to be piloted by Lt. Robert I. Brown, Major Moore's Co-Pilot, on his first mission as Pilot, was forced to fly a replacement aircraft named "Miss Delores." This aircraft had, to this point, a dubious record for completing missions. The other aircraft and crews were, of course, Lt. Roach in "Annie Oakley" and "George" Phillips and Co-Pilot Lt. Everett W. Wilborn, Jr. For the first mission the crew was to fly without Bill Cameron in the right seat. ALL THREE CREWS WERE LOST. Robert I. Brown and Co-Pilot Hartley A. Westbrook and five others bailed out and were captured. Three Gunners in the waist and tail went down with the plane. Hit directly by heavy flak right after target, Lts. Roach and Co-Pilot Ross A. Henney plus six of the crew were KIA, the Navigator and Bombardier successfully bailed out and were captured. "Little Beaver" was hit directly under the flight deck at the same time as "Annie Oakley." Phillips and Wilborn, along with five other crew were KIA, four others successfully bailed out and were captured. OF THE ORIGINAL 67TH PILOTS, NOW THERE WAS ONE!



England-June 1943. Low level Training flight prior to the North Africa deployment. #1 "X" 41-23816, 68th "Black Jack"; #2 "L" 41-23817, 67th "Suzy Q"; #3 41-23774, 67th, "Hitler's Nightmare."

Newly promoted 1st Lt. Cameron had flown his first mission as Pilot on April 4 in "Little Beaver" on a diversion mission along the Dutch Coast. His second crew mission was over Brest, Germany in his new aircraft "Buzzin Bear." Ed Mikoloski was his Navigator on this 16 May raid. On May 17, and again on May 29, Cameron and the Group flew missions to Bordeaux and La Pallice, France. All three missions were without losses and the post-Kiel mission morale took a sudden rise. During June, the 44th flew low level practice missions over England and prepared for the Africa deployment on June 26.

Between "warm-up" raids against Italian targets on July 2, 5, 10 and 15 Cameron flew low level training missions in preparation for Ploesti. On June 17, Cameron and Co. took "Buzzin' Bear" to Naples. Instead of the usual light defenses of the Italian targets, this day the Group encountered fierce fighter opposition comprised of both Italian and German E/A. The "Buzzin' Bear" crew wrote a page in history when during some thirty minutes of constant attack, they destroyed three Macci 202's, one ME 109 and one ME 110, all officially confirmed, and no crew injuries.

For the first time with "Buzzin' Bear" enough

damage occurred on #3 engine from a probable 20mm hit that caused a loss of oil pressure and Cameron was forced to feather #3. At this point they began to drop behind the formation. In addition to the #3 shutdown, they had high cylinder head temperatures from the high power settings attempting to stay with the formation. The high power settings with rich mixture in attempts to keep the engines cool, had depleted their fuel reserve. Additionally, they had lost the two generators. All things considered, the decision was made to attempt to reach Malta rather than a return to Benghazi. Sometime after setting course for Malta, they saw land ahead and while Navigator Clifford argued it was too early to have reached Malta, the fuel situation dictated a landing as soon as possible. With the usual Cameron luck, a long shining strip was sighted on the land which they could identify as a landing strip. As they turned toward it, one engine quit. Flight Engineer Gibby quickly transferred fuel and got it restarted. Cameron also restarted #3 engine and proceeded with a straight in approach and landing. Prior to that time, the crew had donned their May Wests and parachutes and stood by to bail out if things got quiet. A safe landing was made, and rolling to a stop, they were met by a British Officer in a jeep who informed them that they had landed, not on Malta, but Comiso Airfield on Sicily, just a few miles from the front lines. He advised them to remove their aircraft as soon as possible, it was a big target!

By loading 600 gallons of fuel by hand from British 5 Imperial Gallon Jerry cans most of the day and into the twilight, and lacking any food, the Buzzin' Bear was back in the air sometime after midnight, enroute to Malta. After landing, Cameron, DeVinney and Clifford, fortified by two pieces of stale toast and a cup of tea in the Officers Mess, attempted to sleep in chairs. The location of the other crew members remains a mystery.



June 17, 1943, The "Buzzin' Bear" crew at the "Self-Serve" station, Comiso Airfield, Sicily.

A return to Benina Main was accomplished the next morning. When the near starving Cameron caught up with him, Major Moore's greeting was "Where in Hell have you been?"

In the afternoon of that day, Cameron was instructed to attend mission briefing for a very important target. In the briefing he learned that he was to lead the Group in "Suzy Q" against transportation targets in Rome. Half of Moore's crew had dysentery and "Buzzin' Bear" was undergoing four engine changes by the ground crew and half of the flight crew. Apparently not expecting an attack on the Holy City, defenses were light and the mission uneventful except that this was Cameron's 26th mission. In his words, we have his thoughts on what was to be his 27th mission, Ploesti:

"After the Rome raid, we started practice bombing and flying in larger formations of aircraft at low, very low, altitude. I had actually completed my combat tour of duty with the Rome raid, and I didn't believe that Howard (Moore) or Colonel Leon Johnson really expected me to fly the upcoming mission. I don't know why I did either. However, it was "high adventure" and although I didn't know what the destination would be, I hated to miss out on it. Furthermore, the crew of the "Buzzin' Bear" didn't want to go with a new pilot. As

an additional incentive, I was thoroughly enjoying the low-level flying. So I went.

The only other individual that I am aware of who had also completed his tour (there probably were others) and volunteered to go was Captain Roland B. "Sam" Houston, one of our best people and an old friend. Sam was killed with crew while following Jim Posey's formation over Target Blue Five. He bombed successfully, but went down during assembly for the return. Sam's gunner also shot down the German Fighter as they were crashing."

Flying the slot directly behind Colonel Johnson in "Suzy Q", Bill Cameron was the designated deputy leader should "Suzy Q" go down. Notwithstanding that his target had already been mistakenly struck by another flight, Colonel Johnson took his formation through fire and smoke, attacking fighters and withering fire from an unexpected Flak Train to deliver their bombs on target, then turned to fight their way homeward until the enemy, out of fuel and ammunition, gave up the pursuit. True to form, two aircraft returned to Benina Main non-stop with four engines running, "Suzy Q" and "Buzzin' Bear" piloted by the Bullet Proof Pilot Bill Cameron.

Two weeks after the Ploesti raid Howard Moore, having completed his combat tour, turned command of the 67th Bomb Squadron to the newly promoted Major Bill Cameron. Bill was making preparations for the return of the Group to England when the Group was ordered to mount a raid on the airfield at Foggia, Italy. So on the 16th of August, one day after taking command, with great great pride, the new commander, with some new crews having arrived, scheduled seven aircraft. There was Jim Hill and Charlie Henderson, the veterans; three new pilots and crews, the Cameron crew with two new pilots, Lt. Leighton C. Smith and Flt. Officer Joseph S. Milliner (had flown Ploesti with Henderson) in "Buzzin' Bear," and a veteran crew from the 506th, Walter Bunker with Dick Butler, who had been transferred to the 67th, as Co-Pilot. Lt. Walter R. Bateman and crew, on their first combat mission were in "Suzy Q", and the new crew of Lt. Carl S. Hager were in their new plane "Black Sheep." In his words, Bill Cameron describes that day:

"Because of their experience, I scheduled the former 506th crew to lead the 67th. Previous missions to targets in this area, as well as the one I had flown to Foggia, had been made without loss and not much opposition. So on 16 August, I proudly watched them take off—the first mission of the Squadron under their new



"Little Beaver."

Commander. It was a heady feeling!

The first hint of trouble came when the veteran lead crew returned early with engine trouble. Later, when it was all over, only Hill returned! Our men had run into an estimated seventy-five to a hundred German fighters which had been recently moved down to Italy. Our Squadron lost five of the seven planes and crews, including my own "Bear" and the "Suzy Q." It was very hard to take. From that day on, I never sent a crew out on a mission that was not absolutely required, or a crew that I did not consider tried and ready for combat."

Bill Cameron signed on for another tour, took the Squadron back to England, then the return to Africa and back to England. He relinquished command of the 67th when he was promoted to Lt. Col. and replaced Bill Strong as Group Operations Officer where he remained, with the exception of a stint as Vice Group Commander, until the end of the war. In his post-combat crew service, Bill Cameron flew nine more combat missions as Command Pilot without mishap.

In reading this combat account of two aircraft and a pilot, even a quick mental count of missions, losses and injuries during the time when the 67th Bomb Squadron had been mathematically wiped out twice, the uncanny survival of the two aircraft and one pilot defies explanation. Then to explain the loss of his original crew and their airplane the first time they flew without him, followed by the loss of his own crew and airplane the very first time they went into combat with another pilot. Discounting some early mechanical

problems caused by Turbo-supercharger mismanagement, guns freezing up because of inadequate oil, and poor electric heated flying suits, the "Little Beaver" and "Buzzin' Bear" were tireless and reliable. Neither the Phillips crew or "Buzzin' Bear" ever had a casualty and Cameron only once shut down an engine, and that was precautionary, until the engine was needed for landing and was re-started.

In some typically brief remarks at our 44th Bomb Group Reunion in Rapid City, SD in 1989, General Leon Johnson stated, "In my view, Bill Cameron is the finest combat pilot I have ever known." When one reflects on the amazing circumstances and puzzling relationship of his presence and an imperviousness to danger, General Johnson could well have added: and the luckiest! In the words of Ernie Pyle, it could be said, "He is a fugitive from the law of average."

Bill Cameron and your President/Editor have been friends and Air Force colleagues since those Shipdham days. Thus I feel entitled to say his gentle, polite and caring demeanor belies that within lives the "finest combat pilot" our General Johnson knows.

The German Ship TOGO

By Steve Adams

August, 1955, Col. Bill Cameron arrives on Guam to take Command of Hq. 7th Air Force (Advanced). Greeted by Capt. Roy Owen, Operations Officer. Lt. Col. Dick Butler was also there serving with SAC's 3rd Air Division.



The morning reconnaissance flight of 15 February 1943 over Dunkirk Harbor showed indications that the German ship TOJO was preparing to sail from the harbor. There was some mystery about this ship, thought to be a raider, with a puzzling Japanese name. If the ship were allowed to slip out to sea our intelligence was that she would be raiding allied shipping lanes. Crews were called and hurriedly briefed. The 44th launched 17 planes which rendezvoused with aircraft of the 329th Squadron of the 93rd Bomb Group. The formation was led by Capt. Arthur Cullen of the 67th with Major Donald MacDonald, 67th Commander as Command Pilot. This aircraft and the aircraft of Lt. Rufus Oliphant were both heavily hit by AA immediately after bombs away. Major MacDonald and six of that crew were KIA; all of the Oliphant crew were lost. Unfortunately the enemy ship survived.

Later intelligence revealed the ship was not a raider, but a radar equipped Nightfighter control ship and her name was not TOJO but TOGO and she was being moved up from the channel ports area to fill a gap in the Ostmark area. She was equipped with a Dreh-Freya at the bow. This was an early warning radar that operated in the 90 to 200 Mhz band; the effective range was between 20 and 40 miles over flat terrain or water. She had two Y lenses amidships and a FuG Wurzburg-Riese. This was a fighter ground control radar and height finding system for air raid warning radars. Fixed installation and rail mounted. Search capabilities: Azimuth 360 degrees, elevation -5 to +95 degrees. The R.A.F. Code name for this radar was "Basket." There is no information as to what finally became of the ship, or if it was ever attacked again. The TOGO was renamed Rudolf Lück in September 1943; she would keep this name until the end of the War when she was again renamed Svalbard and was put back into service as a merchant vessel. It is thought the name TOGO was shortened from Togoland, which was a German protectorate in Africa before the first World War, but was taken away from Germany at the end of that war.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN '97

Here's what you've been waiting for! We have just put together the itinerary and broad details of the return to England next year that you voted on at San Antonio. And we have gone you one big extra with an optional extension to France and Belgium.

Here's how we will be doing this:

Day One - May 27 To accommodate our members from all parts of the country, we will be using eight gateway cities (San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Cincinnati, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Boston, Miami and JFK New York and three airlines (Delta, Virgin and British Airways) to have everyone arrive in London (Heathrow or Gatwick) on the same day, May 27. You will be responsible for your own round trip transportation to the Gateway airport nearest to your home. You will be met at your London arrival airport and transferred to our hotel. You will have dinner at the hotel that evening, otherwise you have the evening free.



Day Two - May 28 Morning; London sightseeing tour with included lunch. Afternoon tours, your choice: Coach 1-Kew (Royal Botanical) Gardens; Coach 2 - Hampton Court; Coach 3 - Hendon RAF Museum. Dinner at Hotel.

Day Three - May 29 Free Day - Golf available - Dinner at Hotel.

Day Four - May 30 Travel to Norwich - Check in Hotel - afternoon free to shop and explore Norwich, Dinner at Hotel.

Day Five - May 31 Free Day - Golf or optional tour to Coast; Cromer & Sheringham or Great Yarmouth and The Broads; alternatively a visit to the Royal Residence at Sandringham Castle. Dinner at Hotel.

Day Six - June 1 Visit to Shipdham, visit the Heritage Centre and Church with a Memorial Service at the 44th Memorial. Visit and tour the Airfield and Squadron Sites. Visit Arrow Air Hangar and new Visitor and Pilot's Lounge. Enjoy a Wine, Beer and Soft Drink Reception with the people of Shipdham at the hangar followed by a Barbecue and dance music in the hangar.

Day Seven - June 2 Depart Norwich for RAF Duxford and American Air Museum, then on to Eastbourne, Check-in and Dinner at Hotel.

Day Eight - June 3 Optional tour of Sussex historical sights - Pevensey Castle - 1066 Country, Bodiam Castle, etc., or Free Day for golf or relaxation.

Day Nine - June 4 Visit to "Ruthless" Memorial on the South Downs and Social Program with people of Eastbourne (hopefully a reception with the Lord Mayor).

Day Ten - June 5 The England only group return to London area for last night stay. Dinner at Hotel. (French & Belgian Tour group cross the Channel today, see add-on itinerary.)

Day Eleven - June 6 British Tour only - Transfer to departure airport.

FRENCH AND BELGIAN EXTENSION

- Day Ten - June 5 Depart Newhaven for Channel crossing arrive Dieppe 10:15 a.m. Short stay in Dieppe before traveling on to Rouen for two night stay. Dinner at Hotel.
- Day Eleven - June 6 After Breakfast travel to Bayeau, pause to see the Tapestry, then on to the D-Day American Landing Beaches and the American Cemetery at Omaha. Return to Rouen. Dinner at Hotel.
- Day Twelve - June 7 Leave Rouen, travel to Giverny for visit to the artist Monet's house and garden before checking into hotel for dinner, staying for two nights.
- Day Thirteen - June 8 Completely Free Day. Opportunity for Bateau Mouche on River Seine, visit the Eiffel Tower, The Louvre, or golf can be arranged.
- Day Fourteen - June 9 Leaving Paris, travel eastward to Reims and on to Bastogne where the 101st Airborne were besieged. Then on to visit the Ardennes American Cemetery before proceeding to Liege for the night. (Bed and Breakfast.)
- Day Fifteen - June 10 Depart for homeward journey making a sightseeing visit to Brussels enroute via Calais/Dover to London for overnight. Dinner at Hotel.
- Day Sixteen - June 11 Transfer to London Gatwick or Heathrow Airport for departure.

Costs:

(1) The Members will be responsible for transportation for round trip transportation to your nearest Gateway airport from your home.

(2) The average round trip air travel cost from the Gateway City to London and return is \$669. The England only ground package cost will be \$1,463. The France/Belgium add-on is \$498. Adding the average round trip airfare, the cost for the England only tour is \$2,132. Adding the round trip airfare to the entire tour is \$2,668 per person plus travel costs to the Gateway city. These costs are subject to fluctuations in International monetary exchange rates and in airline fuel price adjustments. This is based on double occupancy, includes all breakfasts and dinners where noted, a couple of lunches and a couple of dinners "on your own." If you desire single occupancy, there will be a surcharge of \$304 for the England portion and \$160 for the Europe extension. Otherwise, you will be riding in deluxe, air cooled buses operated by one of the oldest Coach Tour firms in England. Staying in superior hotels with private facilities and our buses will be available for side trips of our choice for up to 75 miles (150 miles round trip) deviation from our scheduled route daily.

My 44th Friends, it won't get any better than this. We are going to travel with the friends we love and pay our respects to our fallen comrades in a spirit of light hearted enjoyment they would wish us to have in their memory.

*We are limited to 124 people.
First come, first reserved.
(#125 and after go on standby)*



Fill out the Reservation Form herein, make out a check payable to 44th BGVA in the amount of \$300 per person who will be traveling and send to our Treasurer:

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

(Position on list will be determined by postmark or by date and time if paid in person at the Reunion.)

Information on cancellation policy and available trip insurance will be sent by mail after receipt of reservation.

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association Return to England/France '97 Reservation

- Yes, I want to join the group for the May 26, 1997 England Tour ONLY.
- Yes, I want to join the group for the May 26, 1997 England Tour and continue on the entire trip.

I will be traveling alone with my _____ and _____ . (Names)

I am enclosing _____ x \$300 per person = \$ _____ total
(Must be mailed to reach 44th BGVA Treasurer by October 15, 1996.)

Number of golfers: Pay your own Green Fees:

at London at Norwich at Eastbourne at Paris

Signature and name printed: _____
Signature

Name Printed

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone: () _____

My Airline Gateway City will be:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco (Delta) | <input type="checkbox"/> Boston (Virgin) | <input type="checkbox"/> Miami (Virgin) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seattle (British) | <input type="checkbox"/> New York (British) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dallas (British) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Los Angeles (Delta) | | |

You will receive airline reservation information by mail.

Eastbourne, England, The "Ruthless" memorial placed by the people of Eastbourne for the 506th James O. Bolin crew, all lost in a crash landing at this site 2 February 1942.



BATTLE WEARY

They said he was battle weary.
You could see the look in his eyes.
Which came from sixty five missions.
Thru Italy's trouble blue skies.

His hands never shook nor trembled.
But the calm deliberation,
Of each and every movement,
Was fraught with determination.

I'd read of battle weary troops,
But what that really meant to me,
Was someone overly tired.
And that a little rest would free.

True, that is what it really is,
And also the correct remedy.
But I never knew how precious,
Nor hard, that little rest could be.

I never knew that a stomach,
Could consistently refuse food.
Nor how much a mind can stand,
That can do a little more than brood.

Nor how long human teeth could stand,
Nights of continuous grating.
And the terrible love hunger,
Which seems to know no sating.

Nor the twitching, straining muscles,
As they fight once again in dreams,
And of the groaning and despair,
That ends in a curse or in screams.

Yes, they say he's battle weary,
You could still see it in his eyes.
But you'll never know what it means,
Until at your side he lies.

A poem written by a gunners father who knows what his own son and also many boys are going through after doing his tour of missions is completed, and also what the boys go through during their tour of operations.



M. P. ETIQUETTE

*So you haven't got a hat bud?
Well what do you know,
We've got just the place,
For a sloppy G.I. Joe.*

*What if you have been overseas,
Your here and don't forget,
There's still some rules and regulations,
Known as military etiquette.*

*Yes sir you guys got ribbons,
But listen to me bud,
Just because you got used to it,
You can't go around covered in mud.*

*Now I got it from the Provost,
And he gave it to me straight,
He sez to me, "Lay for those guys,
Who always come sneaking in late."*

*It's up to us he says,
Who ain't been out of the states,
To let each of these veterans know,
Exactly how they rate.*

*So if you catch 'em out of line,
Give it to 'em good,
Cause there's a war going on,
And that's to be understood.*

*So you fellows see where I stand,
I've just got to run you in,
Cause if the Provost finds out,
He'll take it out of my skin.*

*So start polishing, shining, shaving,
And stay right on the ball,
Cause if your not all shiny,
We won't win this war at all.*

Editor: The following article is the latest episode in the continuing saga of B-24H E-101, "Corky," shot down over Dortmund, Germany 28 January 1945. We featured "Corky" in the Winter issue with a cover reproduction of the original Robert Taylor painting "Welcome Sight" which depicted "Corky" amidst a formation of 44th Libs overflying Ely Cathedral on a return from a mission. Doctor Robert Reid of London, Ontario, Canada owns the painting and has become the preeminent historian in the life and death of the aircraft and fate of her crew. He is a member of our Association and is truly an amazing individual. His quest for the facts of the shoot-down and story of each of the crew will probably rank as the most thoroughly investigated combat loss in the history of 8th Air Force.

Corky (Continued)

By Dr. Robert Reid

In the Winter edition of Eight Ball Tails, the Patrick Colosimo's capture was described by two young boys. In following up with Horst Munte in Dortmund and with Stephen Klemp, the newspaper reporter for the local newspaper, the story became rather more clear.

My father had been ill and I planned a trip to visit him at the end of January. Horst was quite persuasive that I come to Dortmund and eventually we arranged to meet on the 27th of January, which would allow me to be there on the anniversary of the crash.

I arrived in Dusseldorf at 10:30 on a Friday evening in the middle of a blizzard. While driving up the Autobahn to Dortmund, having passed 20 cars in the ditch, I began to wonder what I was letting myself in for as the weather deteriorated. It was with some relief that I pulled into the gas station where Horst had arranged to meet me. By this time there was almost eight inches of snow on the ground and I was beginning to question whether I was being sensible.

However, after a good night sleep and breakfast, I was ready to go investigating. Stephen and Horst explained what they found from the telephone calls that had been made to the newspaper following two articles in November, 1985. There were 16 witnesses, claiming to have seen the crash, but on subsequent phone calls, several were describing another crash. On the 28th of January, 1945 there were in fact three B-24's that crashed in the Dortmund area. "Corky" from the 44th bomb group, a second B-24 "Miss America" from the 389th Bomb Group, 566 Squadron and a third from the 93rd Bomb Group, 409th Squadron.

The other two Liberators went down on the southeast part of Dortmund, having completed their

bomb runs. Horst had a list of the crew from Miss America of the 389th and five of this crew were killed. In the other crash, the information is not as clear, but five bodies were buried at the same time as the eight crew from "Corky" and four from "Miss America."

This partly explains the confusion when Patrick Colosimo, the survivor from Corky, had been told by the Germans that a number of his crew were still alive. It would seem that the reports were rather fragmented as to the number of survivors and dead, and in fact it's confusing even to this date who the survivors were as there were reports of two survivors from Miss America being killed by civilians but not being found till after the war. One of the families from Corky's crew had been told that one of Corky's crew had been killed by civilians. However, when the local graves registry was reviewed, only one of the crew from Miss America who was killed is missing from the burial list from the 9th of February. All the crew from Corky were listed on this list. It's easy to see how the reports became confused, particularly because of the language difficulties.

The witnesses to Corky's crash were mainly older people and young children and youths under the age of 16, all the rest of the male population being drafted into the army. This means that any witnesses would either be over 90 now or around 60. This in fact was very much the distribution that we found in the telephone reports. The plane exploded in the air and a wing came off, the main fuselage broke in two in the region of the bomb bay and wreckage was spread over 1/2 a kilometer north and south of the main east and west Autobahn in the north of Dortmund in the area of a small suburb known as Altenderne. The first of witnesses on the scene were a young boy and his sister. He was around 14 and she was around 10 years of age and she describes finding a tall blond American lying with a parachute that was partly burnt and damaged. He was dead and her brother apparently cut the parachute off and they ran away with it, as it was forbidden for civilians to go near a crashed enemy bomber or remove anything from the crash site. Shortly afterwards, a local farmer who's property lay approximately 150-200 meters from the crash site came up and described finding a tall American, but without a parachute and another crew member laying approximately 50 yards further west who apparently had a gold band on his wrist with the name Walker inscribed on it. This subsequently disappeared and as there was no other identification on this airman, he was not identified at the time, though we now know this was Joseph Walker, the engineer on Corky. The farmer also noted four or five crew members laying close to the main fuselage. The number and location varies according to the witness and it maybe that they had been removed later and gathered close together for

Corky Continued:

removal. The tail unit had apparently come down south of the Autobahn and again the descriptions vary as to whether one or two of the crew were found in this location. The wing came down to the north of the fuselage, almost in the back garden of the farm house, an engine and several bombs were found unexploded in this area also.

The fuselage apparently burned for a period and because of the risks of unexploded bombs, a cordon was put around the crash site and non-military witnesses were strictly limited following this. This story was given to us by the son of the farmer who was 10 years old at that time, his father just having passed away within the past two years.

Most of the witnesses that called in knew about Patrick Colosimo, that he had been blown across the north end of Dortmund coming down in the suburb of Mengde and being taken into custody by the local police. He was badly hurt, having been burned, his hair being singed, being cut also in the head and with a broken leg.

We could not, however, find any witnesses to Maurice Corwine, the pilot, until very recently in early March when another witness called into the newspaper following a follow up article regarding my visit and it would seem that Maurice came down between the crash site and Mengde as he had exited the plane at a much lower altitude. He apparently came down close to a flak battery, manned by young girls, and the description was that he had been taken to a farm house close by which tallies somewhat with the story given to me by relatives of the other crew members.

While this was happening at the north of Dortmund, at the south end, the crew members of the 389 plane, Miss America, were descending by parachute. Their plane having suffered a very similar fate of having a wing blown off by flak and the co-pilot, pilot, engineer and three gunners managed to get out of the plane and survive the descent, five of the crew did not survive. One of the five is not listed in the mortuary records in Dortmund and what happened to him is not clear as he was known to have left the plane.

Tom Riggles - Co-Pilot, Keith Holdrige - Radio Operator, and Will Crum - one of the Gunners, are all alive and having contacted them they confirmed some of the details of the raid that day.

The civilians around Dortmund were particularly

upset with US aircraft and all survivors described having been fortunate in having been captured by the army of Luftwaffe. Will Crum describes being escorted by a Luftwaffe, Sergeant Major Heinrich Fischer, back to the air base back in Dortmund and Fischer having to threaten a group of women with his gun, who were intent on assaulting the prisoner, to keep away.

The survivors from Corky, Miss America and the other B-24 were gathered together at the air base in Dortmund over the subsequent few days and Will Crum remembered Patrick being brought in. Apparently the Germans had wanted him to be taken to the hospital, but he declined and wanted to stay with his fellow survivors. He was quite badly burned about the head. He had several other cuts and a broken ankle. None of the survivors remember Maurice Corwine well and it's possible that he wasn't actually brought to the air base as several other survivors had been taken to local police stations and then directly transferred to the Prison of War processing center near Frankfurt. The remainder of survivors from the 28th of January raid, were transported to Frankfurt by train, four or five days after the raid and then transferred to the Prisoner of War camp.



Dr. Robert Reid with German Historian Horst Munte at the site of the "Corky" crash in the suburbs of Dortmund, Germany. Note the dark area of grass where the main fuselage and one wing came to rest.

With the story from Stephen and Horst, and the members of Miss America's crew, what happened to the crew from Corky was almost completely cleared up. Three parachutes were reported as

coming out of the aircraft and one of them, I understand from two other 44 bomb group observers, had been caught in the explosion and was damaged. The evidence would suggest that this was Robert Lough, the co-pilot, as he was considerably taller than the other members of the crew as can be seen in the photograph in the last edition of Eight Ball Tails. The confusion over whether or not there was a parachute is explained by the removal by the two young witnesses.

How the story, that one of them had been killed by civilians, came about is not clear but what we suspect is that this was misidentification with one of the other crew members from one of the other aircraft. The civil records for that time are fairly complete, though all the Airfleet 4 documentation from the air base were destroyed at the end of the war. The local mortuary records account for all dead, except for one crew member from Miss America, who was known to have

Corky Continued:

parachuted safely according to his colleagues, but was not found until after the war. He may be the victim that had been discussed earlier as a possible casualty due to civilian maltreatment.

In some of the papers that Horst Munter gave me, there was a form signed by 2nd Lieutenant Herbert Copelan, 3046 QMC company that investigated the crash at the end of 1945. Herbert is now a physician living in Florida. His memories of that time are patchy, but he was able to give me some details about the investigation. At that time, because of the number of casualties, investigations were frequently not as in depth as would probably have been optimal, but he indicated that the crew from Corky had all perished at the crash scene.

In early 1946, they were moved from Dortmund, to the Ardennes National Cemetery in Belgium and later, all except, Burt Steinmiller, Edward Weinman and Robert Lough, were removed to the US for burial in their hometowns, Wayne Scott was buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington.

After having discussed all the information over breakfast, Horst and Stephen took me out to the crash site. The crash site is traversed by the main east/west Autobahn. Surprisingly, it's not yet been built on, though one can see that within the next few years, the houses will expand out from the town, but at this point it's much as it was in 1945. The fields are still cultivated and because of this, the farmers are reluctant to allow anyone to dig on it. The soil contains clay and there's only a very short period in the spring when the ground is not frozen or waterlogged to allow a proper search. Ten or twelve years ago an engine had been found, but this had been sent for scrap. A propeller had been found also and blades of this had been given to individuals. Horst and I later went looking for one of them which was apparently set outside a building in the south end of Dortmund; however, it had been there three months before, but was gone when we got there. It had been removed following renovations to the front of the building and the owner's weren't helpful.

The other propeller blade was in the possession of a technical sergeant in the German airforce and apparently he had been transferred to Canada (strange coincidence). In the field where the main fuselage section had come down, there's a slight change in the contour of the land and in the color of grass, apparently related to the fuel and the burning of the soil at the time of the impact.

It's a very quiet spot with a small road along its northern boundary, mainly used by families walking children and surprisingly peaceful despite being so close to the main Autobahn.

The photographs show the site of impact of the main fuselage and the point where the tall section came down.

The wing, engine and apparently five bombs came down in the field to the north of the lane, close to the farm house.

The snow on the ground and the weather, according to the witnesses, were very similar to that 50 years before. Later that day, Horst and I drove out to the crash site of Miss America to meet one of his friends who spent almost four years going up and down the crash site there and has collected large numbers of parts of the aircraft, but most are very small, the largest piece being a hydraulic pump and an engine cowl flap.

The following day, which was the 51st anniversary day of the crash, Horst and I went back out to the crash site at noon, the time of the crash.

The scene was very peaceful and didn't belie the violence that had occurred. It was a bright sunny day, though mildly overcast, very similar to that in 1945. There were people walking along the lane with small children from church, several crows and magpies were flying around, this being the only sound until an aircraft was heard. I have to admit, it rather sent a shiver up my spine. It was one of the commuter airliners going into the local airport. It gave me a rather eerie feeling. Several people came over to speak to Horst and one or two knew about the crash and asked what we were doing.

On leaving the crash site, we drove down to the cemetery where the crews were initially buried. It's a quiet place, just across the road from the main cemetery. The plots where the Allied air crew were buried have not been used since. The cemetery is dominated by a large monument to 6,000 Russian workers who were killed in a number of air raids during the war.

As the weather was brightening up, Horst took me out to the Mohn Dam where the Royal Air Force used the famous Bouncing bomb to blow the dam up. On the south side of the Autobahn about five miles from the dam is the crash site of one of the Lancaster's from the raid. In contrast to the farmer in Dortmund where Corky crashed, here they had to give up cultivating part of the farm in the area of this site because of the number of visitors to the monument that has been placed there in memory of the crew.

In all, there were approximately 40 Allied aircraft crashes in the vicinity of Dortmund during the war. Horst, since he retired as a teacher, has investigated almost 32 of them and has found artifacts in many of the sites and also documented the stories of the aircraft. He still has many witnesses to see, one of the elderly gentlemen who called the newspaper, was one of the people first on the scene, was willing to go with us to

Corky Continued:

see the crash site. Unfortunately, because the weather was rather cold he couldn't as he was in frail health. He said he'd be happy to do it later and I suppose it's an excuse for another visit to Dortmund. This time to perhaps comb the field with Horst with his metal detector to see if he can find any artifacts from Corky.

I would like to thank several individuals for their help in my search for information about Corky including Will Lundy, Pete Henry, all of the members of the crews of Corky who have corresponded with me, and to Douglas Howard from the Department of Army Mortuary Records, Alexandria, Virginia, and Tony Mastradone who has aided the search for information in the National Archives.

Frequently, government workers are given little credit for doing their jobs, but in all my dealings with the people in Washington, they've been extremely helpful and understanding in helping me get information.

Some more first hand stuff on "Corky"

Dear Will:

In the Volume 1, Issue 4, the article on "Corky" is accurate about Rueban Rickett's crew flying three missions on the 8th, 10th and 17th of June, 1944.

Webb Todd's 68th Squadron history is in error (omission) - there was a mission by the 68th on the 10th of June. The mission was to Orleans Buchy, France. I verified the dates with my form 5 flight records.

On the 7th of July, Rueban Rickett's crew took the plane to Bernburg, Germany, not Darenburg. This was the day of the "Big Shoot." We could not get fighter cover because all our fighters were engaged with the German fighters. We were attacked by JU-88's coming out of the sun just as we prepared to turn on the IP. The Navigator's window was shot out. The three lead aircraft (of our Section) were hit - they, in turn, hit each other, going down in a massive spin, apparently locked to each other. Some chutes were observed coming out but how many I don't know.

Rickett's crew became the lead 68th aircraft at that time, bombs were dropped by the Navigator, me! Some bombs hit the target, and aircraft plant. But most of them took out the main road through town.

Rickett's crew flew "Corky" to Saarbrucken on the 16th of July and the mission on the 12th of July was to Munich. A previous mission to Munich was also made on the 11th of June, I believe.

All of the above dates are from my form 5 flight records and diary.

Rueban Rickett was an excellent pilot. His service record would show he was an A&E aircraft mechanic before going to flight school. He was a rated B-17 pilot who was taken out of phase training as a B-17 co-pilot and sent to B-24 transition training. He picked up all his crew except the Navigator at Wendover Army Air Base in Utah.

I, as Navigator, joined the crew in phase training at Gowen Field Army Air Base at Boise, Idaho in January, 1944.

Any time that we had aircraft mechanical problems, Rueban could diagnose the problem and save the ground crews many hours of hunting. I think that he

was one of the best and safest B-24 pilots in the Air Force.



**January 28, 1996,
Dr. Robert Reid overlooking
the crash site of 68th
Squadron Corwin crew
aboard "Corky" shot down
51 years prior over
Dortmund, Germany.**

On 12th of July, 1944 we were scheduled for a raid on Saarbrucken, but had to abort because of a blown engine. The weather was so bad we had to get to

an auxiliary field to land. We were directed to Molesworth, a B-17 group. When Rueban landed, we had a full load of bombs and 2300 gallons of fuel. He "greased" that B-24 in so smoothly you couldn't feel it touch down. When I complemented him on the landing, his reply was, "This is a B-17 field and I don't want them thinking I'm driving a truck!" He was proud of the B-24 - so were we all, the B-17 gets glamorized, but the B-24 was the real work horse in all theatres.

Best wishes,
Elwyn A. Meyer, 68th
Idaho Falls, Idaho

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Back on the job again! We just returned from a six week+ vacation to the beautiful Provence region of Southern France, then a three night visit in Paris on our way to London for five days. I put Lolly on a return home flight on July 9 and I stayed over for a run up to Norwich/Shipdham to complete plans for our 44th BGVA England trip next year. Also, I met with Steve Adams (our English representative) and Nigel Wright, President of Arrow Air Centre. In this meeting we came to an agreement on management and funding of the construction of the Arrow Air Centre addition which will be the Visitors Centre housing the 44th B.G. museum and the Arrow Air Heritage collection. While the actual construction plans were not ready for review, we went through a verbal description of the addition and I looked over the site and was impressed. The room will occupy a vacant spot on the rear of the existing building accessed from a hallway that will provide access from the Pub. The feature of this location is that the exterior side of the addition looks over the airfield and will have large windows that will present a view clear across to the old Control Tower. The draft of the funding and construction agreement is currently being reviewed by your Board of Directors. Hopefully this will soon be completed and signed, funds transferred and construction begun. Our dream of preserving and transferring the wall art from the 14th CBW walls to the new building will not be possible. The old Rix farm was recently purchased by Mr. Andrew Doubleday. He is an ardent supporter of the 44th and the preservation of the Shipdham heritage of our outfit. In that sense, he has denied the removal of the wall art in the fear it would not survive the transfer. Instead he has promised renovation of the buildings to protect that which remains and will allow access to view the CBW area by anyone making arrangements through Arrow

Air Centre or Steve Adams.

Our mail-out of some 1800 letters to former 44th people who have never belonged to a 44th member organization has, to this point, provided rather disappointing results with only 48 memberships so far. Although by using "Address Correction Requested" we have new addresses for a bunch of those people, and knowing Art Hand, rest assured he will keep pounding the beat and that number will grow. Those who have come into the fold after all of these years are astounded that we found them and amazed to find that someone still cares enough to make the effort to locate them. Most of those newly found members are looking forward to meeting with us in St. Louis.

You certainly have observed that for this issue, we have moved the cover picture of our featured aircraft "Buzzin' Bear" to the inside so we can pay tribute to our President Emeritus and Combat Leader GENERAL LEON W. JOHNSON on the occasion of his Ninety Second Birthday, September 13.

Should you care to wish him a HAPPY BIRTHDAY and CONTINUED HEALTH with an individual card, he may be reached at 9100 Belvoir Woods Parkway, Fairfax Apt. 334, Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060.

See you in St. Louis!



Roy Owen, President

Beating the Bushes

By Art Hand & Will Lundy

DR. MYRON F. SESIT: Sutton Place South, New York, NY 10022 (212) 486-9055. 68th Squadron. Joined 8/3/42; tour to Africa September 1943, etc.

FRED HEICHEMER: 42 Lincoln Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13905 (607) 723-3157. 68th Squadron. Joined 11/2/44; C/T on 4/10/45. Co-Pilot for Beckingham. Transferred to 459th BG.

JEROME WILNER: 10209-D Ashbrooke Ct. Oakton, VA 22124. 68th Squadron. Bombardier for N. Anderson. Joined 10/25/44. Home on 5/28/45.

CHESTER F. CRANTZ: Box 36, 293 Main, Vulcan, MI 49892. 68th Squadron. Gunner on Cary's crew. Joined on 10/8/43. C/T on 4/1/44.

GEORGE C. TRIBKE: 102 West Willow Avenue, Woodstock, IL 60098-2571. 68th Squadron. To ETO Queen Mary, 9/5/43, returned same way 6/16/45.

FRANK A. WILSON: 1904 Oneida Avenue, Muscatine, IA 52761. 68th Squadron. Returned from ETO 5/22/45 on A/C #44-50769.

MYRON H. LONGAN: 26 Park Lane, Milton, PA 17847 and (717) 742-9219. 68th Squadron. Radio Operator on J. Cary's crew. C/T 4/1/44.

ROBERT C. MANTHEY: 1019 N. Franklin Street, New Ulm, MN 56073 and (507) 354-6692. 68th Squadron. Gunner for Bravakis crew. Transferred to 458 BG.

RICHARD E. KING: 2517 Henderson, Memphis, TN 38127 and (901) 357-7752. 68th Squadron. Joined on 4/27/44. To ZOI 5/28/45. Flew home on 42-95021.

PHILIP L. CARTIER: 382 Ferry Road, Sacp., ME 04072 and (207) 284-5709. 68th Squadron. Gunner on Borah's crew. Joined 6/23/44; C/T 2/14/45.

WILLIAM JACOB: 50 Fairfield Street, Bristol, CT 06010 and (203) 582-4505. 68th Squadron. Was transferred to 231st Hospital (Wymondham) 3/26/44.

ROBERT HENSLER: 2032 Pleasant Street, South bend, IN 46615. 66th Squadron. In from 391st Squadron, 34th BG.

CLYDE SILVIS: 156 Beckwith Dr. Battle Creek, MI 49015 and (616) 962-2346. 68th Squadron. (No details on him yet.)

ELBERT B. "Jim" WALTON: 825 East Belt Boulevard, Richmond, VA 23224 and (804) 231-3904. 68th Squadron. Gunner on Van Dykes crew. In 1/28/45 and home on 5/28/45. Flew in A/C #42-95021.

DALE STUFFLEBEAM: 620 East Van Buren Street, Washington, IA 52353 and (319) 653-3018. 68th Squadron. In on 1/27/44; C/T on 7/4/44 to 8th AF HQ.

ROBERT C. SWANK: 2929 East 800 North Ossian, IN 46777-9105. 68th Squadron. Engineer on Kay's crew. In on 6/23/44. C/T on 11/21/44.

ARTHUR C. RUHL: 18375 Ankenytown Road, Fredericktown, OH 43019 and (614) 694-5203. Gunner for Kessler crew. Joined on 8/3/43 and C/T on 4/1/44.

JOSEPH E. WAWERNA: 7702 Rosewood Drive, Port Richey, Florida 34668 and (813) 868-2937. 68th Squadron. Front Gunner for Gayman. Joined 5/1/44, completed 22 missions.

DARRELL D. BELYEU: 3433 North Dougals Boulevard, Spencer, OK 73084 and (405) 771-5719. 68th Squadron. Aircraft Mechanic. To ETO 9/5/42; flew home 5/30/45 A/C 42-95001.

EDWARD W. DANZIGER, III: 1341 Missouri Avenue, Bridgeville, PA 15017 and (412) 221-6565. 68th Squadron. Radio Operator on Kiggins crew. Joined 1/22/45. Flew home on 5/21/45 via A/C #44-50755.

EDWARD A. WEDDELL: 1448 Westminster Drive, Fairfield, CA 94533-1827 and (707) 425-3176. Engineer on Lt. Honmyhr's crew. In Sq. May, 1944, C/T November, 1944.

ALBERT PSCHIRER: 370 Michigan Avenue, Mansfield, OH 44905 and (419) 589-6922. 68th Squadron. Engineer on Seever's crew. In 7/16/44 and C/T 3/24/45. Had DS to Belgium November, 1944 into '45.

RICHARD F. COWARD: 119 First Street, Nederland, TX 77627 and (409) 722-8515. 68th Squadron. Gunner on Seever's crew. Also in on 7/16/44 C/T 3/24/45.

CARL C. SHOOK: 9151 South 700 East, St. Paul, MN 47272-9512 and (317) 525-6799. 506th Squadron. May have been known as "Curtis."

RICHARD A. BOYKIN: P.O. Box 128, Port Haywood, VA 23138 and (540) 725-5426. 506th Squadron.

Beating the Bushes (Continued):

COL. JAMES G. CARY: Ret. 5580 North Shore Way, Pensacola, FL 32507 and (904) 492-0423. 68th Squadron. Pilot of own crew. Arrived 10/8/43 and C/T on 4/1/44. Transferred to 448th BG.

EDWARD W. ROBARDS: 6476 Halcyondale Road, Sylvana, GA 30467 and (912) 857-3830. 506 and 67th Squadrons. Co-Pilot for E.C. Yatkones. Arrived in 67th Squadron 8 June 1944. C/T November, 1944.

WILLIAM FATUR, SR.: 8201 Sante Fe Drive, #165, Littleton, CO 80120. 68th Squadron. Gunner on Borah's crew. Joined 6/23/44 and C/T 2/10/45.

SIGMUND GOLDMAN: 1670 Huron Terrace, Maitland, FL 32751. 68th Squadron. Navigator for Beckingham's crew. In on November 2, 1944 and C/T 30 March, 1945.

PERCY GAUDIN: P.O. Box 125, Kiln, MS 39556. 66th Squadron. Gunner for J. McKenna. POW 6 August 1944.

LLOYD K THOMPSON: RR #1, Box 145 L, Sedans, KS 67361. 68th Squadron. Gunner for Principe's crew. Arrived on 3/5/44 and C/T 8/24/44.

DANIEL BERGER: 1351 S.W. 125th Street, #314, Pemborke Pines, FL 33027 and (305) 436-5878. No details, but listed as 68th Squadron. Todd doesn't have him.

TOM REEVES: P.O. Box 511, Clearlake Oaks, CA 95423. 66th Squadron.

VINCENT V. VRANAS: P.O. Box 41555, Sacramento, CA 95841-1555. 66th Squadron. Bombardier for Paul Dusossoit. Arrived about February, 1945. Flew 17 missions.

LOUIS A. TEBBE: 523 East Sunset Avenue, Santa Maria, CA 93454 and (805) 922-2206. 68th Squadron. Nose Turret for Roy Boggs crew. Joined 8/3/44, C/T and flew home on 5/28/45 in A/C #42-52643.

HOWARD W. BEAMAN: 3113 Calvary Road, Council Bluffs, IA 51503-1907. 66th Squadron. Waist Gunner for Lt. McPhillamey, POW 26 February 1943.

EDWINE. ROSS: Route #4, Box 56B, Eupora, MS 39744. Cannot identify.

EDWARD PICARDO: 6532 39th Avenue, N.E., Seattle, WA 98115 and (206) 522-5926. 67th Squadron. Tail Gunner for Jay Spencer. First mission August, 1944 and completed tour 12/31/44 - New Years Eve!!



“Joe” the Navigator

A poor downtrodden soul is he.
Who guides our planes o'er land and sea.
Fogs don't alarm him, clouds or foam.
His d/f loop will get them home.
The gunner on this loop may star.
But poor “Joe” tells them where they are.
The pilot brags, “I dodge the flak.”
“Joe” gets him there. “Joe” brings him back.
The bombardier waits his load to drop.
At his wireless sits the radio op.
The wrist gunner, his lonely vigil keeps.
And o'er them all a deep peace creeps.
While all alone, brow damp with sweat.
The busiest guy you've ever met.
His desk alive with charts and maps.
Compasses, dividers, a Dalton perhaps.
A sextant, star tables, a few log forms.
He's the most crowded soul that was ever born.
And when the results of the raid are read.
Hats off to the gunner (of course he's dead).
For his part in the marvelous bombing spree.
They gave the pilot the D.F.C.
The bombardier's aiming the load was hot.
The D.F.C. was the praise he got.
Then for the navigator, forgotten cuss
The simple admission. “Yeah! He was with us.”



Art Hand will be taking orders at the Reunion for felt Group Patches for jackets. Each of the Squadron colors will be available. See Art at your convenience.

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



Do the
"Missouri Waltz"

&

"Meet Me In St. Louis"

so you don't
sing the



"St. Louis Blues"



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1996 REUNION - October 3 - 7, 1996

*Holiday Inn Westport
St. Louis, Missouri*



REGISTRATION FORM

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

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #1: | Full Reunion | \$110.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #2: | Thurs, Fri (Sq. Dinner, Sat (Banquet) | \$70.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #3: | Sat (Banquet), Sun (Buffet), Mon (Breakfast) | \$80.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Option #4: | Saturday Banquet and Dance only | \$35.00 per person; | No.: _____ \$ _____ |

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour #1: | St. Louis 8:30 - 12:30 Friday | \$13.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour #2: | Grant's Farm 1:00 - 4:30 Friday | \$13.00 per person: | No.: _____ \$ _____ |
| | | | <i>Total:</i> _____ |

(Please check your arithmetic.)

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

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

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



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

✂ Cut on line!



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

1996 REUNION OCTOBER 3-7, 1996

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

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

SHARING ROOM W/ _____ SMOKING NONSMOKING KING 2 DBL

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

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

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

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

AMOUNT _____ SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____ CHECK # _____

CREDIT CARD # _____ TYPE _____ EXP. DATE _____



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

Airport Limousine Available: Call from courtesy phone in lobby.

1996 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



REUNION NOTES

REGISTRATION

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

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

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

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

Tour #1: See St. Louis.

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

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

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

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

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

Metrolink

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

TOUR #2: GRANT'S FARM

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

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

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

HISTORIC ST. CHARLES

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

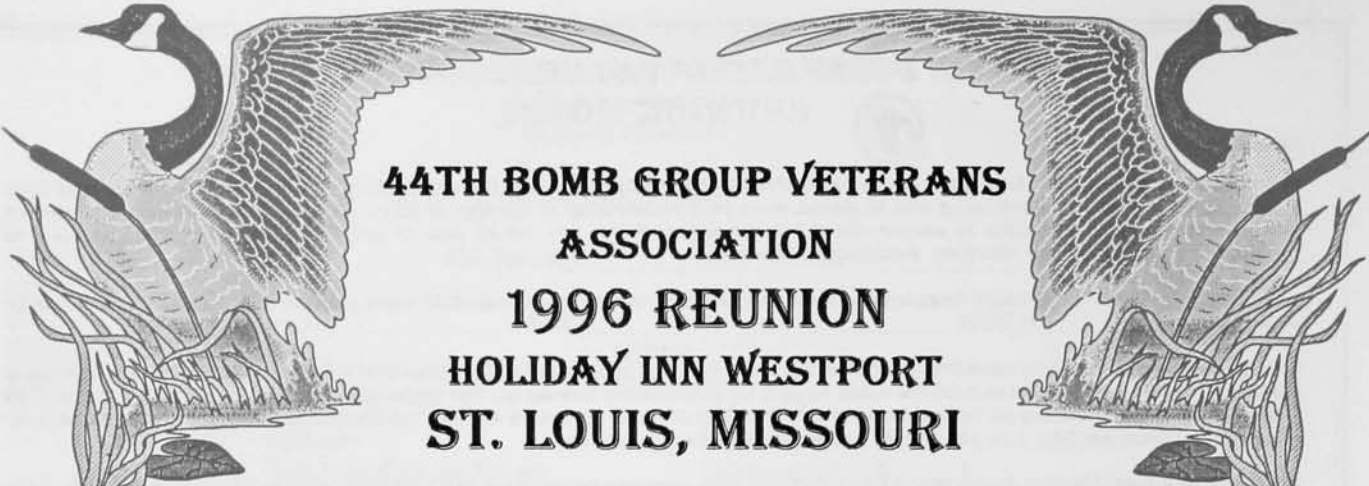
The day we will be there, St. Charles will be celebrating Oktoberfest. Oktoberfest is a citywide celebration of St. Charles' German heritage, featuring a parade, German bands, grape stomps, ethnic food, costumes and enjoyment. There will be a free shuttle bus making the rounds of the activities.

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

CASINO ST. CHARLES

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

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



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

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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



SOME NOTES ON THE REUNION RESERVE SEATING FOR THE REUNION BANQUET

Reserve seating for the Saturday Banquet will be implemented by using a Floor Plan of the Dining Hall that will be displayed on a bulletin board in the lobby. The Floor Plan will display each table which will be numbered.

Adjacent to the bulletin board there will be a listing of the dining room tables with numbers and spaces to enter names.

To reserve spaces at a table, select one from the Floor Plan and enter the names of those to occupy the seats on the list under the table number. Do Not "Ditto". Each space reserved must contain a name (initials of first name o.k.). There are ten seats at each table.

Be sure to check with all those in your party to determine that they have not reserved any other table. Any duplicate seats will be deleted from the list.

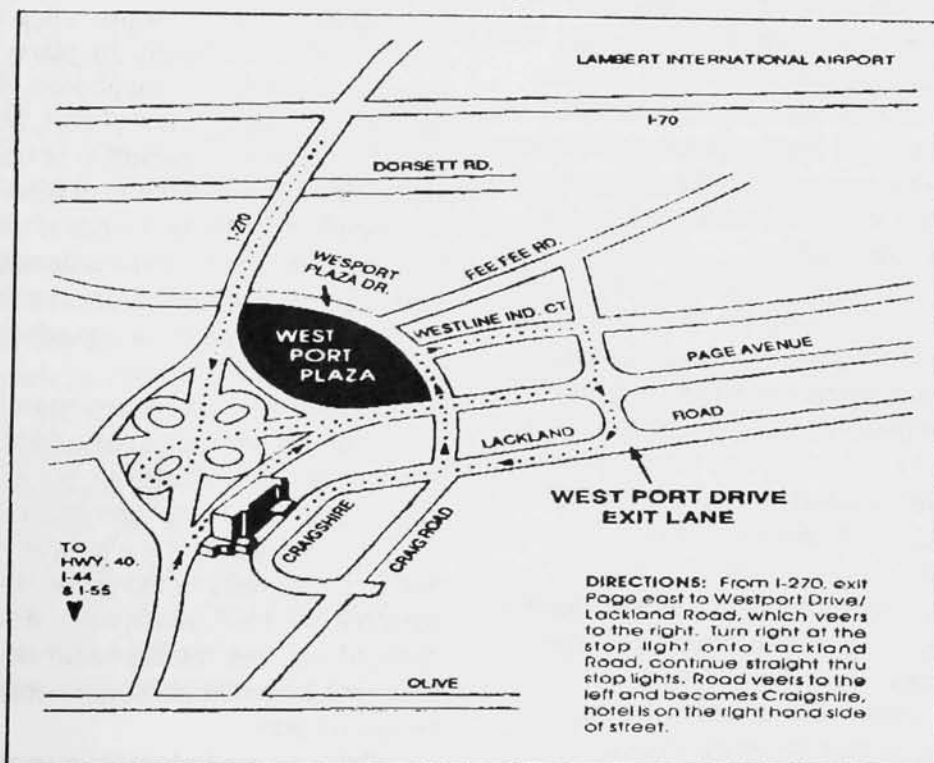
To make this arrangement a success, will depend upon each persons cooperation by adhering to the procedures.

EASY COME, EASY GO

Simple directions to

Holiday Inn
WESTPORT

1-270 and Page Avenue



Courtesy van shuttle to and from Westport Plaza and the airport
12 Minutes from Lambert International Airport
Conveniently located at the center of West County business and entertainment

For Reservations, Call (314) 434-0100

1-270 and Page Avenue, 1973 Craigshire, St. Louis, Missouri 63146

WILL SEZ

Although the Turner Publishing Company announced in their last "Flyer" that August 2, 1996 would be the deadline for reserving your copy(ies) of the 44th bomb Group "The Flying Eightballs," it might not be too late to send in your money for your copy. They would like for all of us to participate by sending in our order for a book as well as your personal biography. Our book will be larger and better with each order submitted, and personal accounts of war experiences, photos, etc. will be welcomed! We can have one of their best books published if we all contribute.

In the Spring 1996 "Tails," Page 8, Ann Carpenter Wing began her article with a plea to all of us - one which I've been nagging at you for some time. She said, "To those of you who have not recorded your experiences during the war, please do so! It means so much to future generations. You are an important part of history. I can tell you from a personal viewpoint that this knowledge means a great deal to me and my children and grandchildren." She is absolutely correct, and went on to tell you her story. If you missed it, dig out your copy and read it.

Your President, as well as all of his Board, are determined to make this 44th Bomb Group the top organization of not only the 2nd Air Division, but the entire 8th Air Force, so far as the recording of our history is concerned. We are making progress, but we can do so much better if we can get each and every one of you to get YOUR story onto paper and to us to preserve for you and your family.

It is so disheartening to get a letter from a wife or child, even a grandchild searching for ANY information about YOU, the veteran who served with us in WWII or later. Sometimes I am lucky and manage to dig up some information for those kinfolks, but all too often I have so very little that I can give these folks. All too many of you are far too modest, hiding behind the words that "I didn't do much, no one will be interested." Not so, let me assure you. I've been bugging you for quite some time, more as a personal request, but please remember that your own family surely want your stories themselves - first!

If you can't type, write - if you can't write, print. And if you can't even do that, try using a voice recorder; talk your story into a tape recorder. But do get your recollections recorded somehow. One of our combat men got his wife to write down his story - not all at one time, but many evenings during the winter. He was an only survivor from his crew, managed to evade immediate capture, made his way across France,

and with help from French Resistance, crossed the Pyrenees in winter. We now have it in our archives! Your time with the 44th is just as important and will help us with our goal to be the most complete historic bomber group in the U.S.

In the same vein for those in the 66th Squadron, Steve Adams of Norwich, England still needs much more data for his 66th Squadron history book which he is compiling. He asked me to thank those of you who have sent in their stories, especially for the first year of the War, but lately your mail has dried up. He needs material about all periods of the War, but especially important at this time is the 1944 period and Spring of 1945. So while each of you are working on your personal stories, try to remember to help Steve with any story which he can use for this 66th Squadron history. He is a fine young man who devotes most of his off-work hours, not only for the 66th Squadron history, but for the entire organization as well. I can't say enough good things about this very productive historian! Please remember him.

Before I wrap this up, I should also caution you with a few words about your personal photographs. As time permits, all of us should review those albums, books, or even shoe boxes to determine what you have, and try to gather them into some order. And especially make an effort to identify the place taken, as well as the names of those in the photos! Most of us can identify the people in our photos, but strangers would not. Photos can do a great job of helping us all tell our stories, but if the personnel in them are identified, it will complete the story. Try not to write on the reverse side with a ball point pen - it damages the photo itself. Best suggestion is to type or write the names on another piece of paper or adhesive paper which can be attached on the back.

Just recently I have received two "shoe boxes" of photos of various sizes to be added to our archival records. I am thrilled with all, but all too many are blank on the reverse side, not identified. They would be so much more valuable if the people were identified so that future viewers would know exactly what that person looked like, which base, which airplane (more difficult), etc. Yes, it takes some time and mind-searching to remember some names, but the story will be much better.

While you are reviewing your photos, tie a knot on your finger to help remind you that I, as your archivist, need more photos to go along with our stories to expand our story for the public knowledge as the years fly by.

Thanks for listening.

Will Lundy

More on Dan Culler our 66th Squadron Author

Editor: In Vol. 1 Issue #4 Page 27, Winter 1995 of the Tails we did a short article plugging Dan Culler's book Black Hole of Wauwilermoos. In his story Dan tells the riveting account of the savage treatment he suffered after his capture from an escape attempt whereupon his status was changed from internee to civil prisoner.

After appeals to the Swiss Government, Dan and his wife were invited to Switzerland by the President of the Swiss Confederation. While the visit resulted in an official apology by the Swiss Government, the return to the sites of his torture and humiliation have resulted in a relapse to a state of psychological trauma in which the memories of his torture are affecting his life quality.

Dan has sent us a package of the correspondence he has had with the Swiss and the Chief of Staff of the USAF. We are including these letters in their entirety. Hopefully they will stimulate your interest in the Dan Culler story. It is a story that needed telling. You may have a change in perception of the "neutral country."

From:

Daniel L. Culler
750 South LaBrisa
Green Valley, Arizona 85614-2232
April 11, 1996

Dear Will:

I'm very sorry that I haven't got back to you before, but have been having a rough time of it since I returned from Switzerland. Anyone who tells you you can go back and relive horrors of your past are full of baloney.

I appreciate all the information you sent me, and others have flooded me with much information, but sorry to say, not the things I really needed. Maybe General Fogleman will be able to get me some more. I have sent to every place that anyone has suggested to get duplicates of my records, but its the same thing — everything destroyed.

I at least wanted to send you a check for books ordered through the 44th Journal. It seems not very many interested, so there is very little money to send. I'm sending an extra \$10 for placing the ad in the Journal.

Most of my orders came from the Swiss Internees and from Switzerland, France, Germany and Brazil. I have my book in every state, and many who ordered the first one have sent for reorders. Maybe people are tired of hearing about WWII.

I was just interviewed by our local TV station yesterday, but I have decided after a night of horror, that will be the last time. It's too hard on my wife Betty to watch me have those nightmares and try and bring me back to reality.

The people who ordered the book through the 44th are the following: 2 - Will Lundy; 1 - Cliff Powell; 1 - Joseph Crandell; 1 - John Wikle; 1 - Robert Lehnhausen, and I believe 1 - Henry Baumgardner. That makes seven ordered, so I'll send \$7 + \$10 to the 44th, so check #3036 will be for \$17.

Thanks for your support.

Enclosed is some information you might be interested in.

Sincerely,
Dan Culler
(520) 625-5581



CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON


11 Mar 1996

Dear Mr. Culler

Your story of the trauma and suffering you endured in Wauwilermoos is a gripping one -- one I'm sure would be of interest to military members and retirees. I had my staff research the requirements for getting your book, *Black Hole of Wauwilermoos*, into Air Force exchanges and I am passing that information on to you.

If you will contact the AAFES buyer, Ms. Teri Waters, she will provide you with the proper procedure to go about getting your book into the exchange system.

Thank you for the opportunity to read your compelling story.



RONALD R. FOGLEMAN
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Attachments:

1. AAFES HQ POC
2. '95 AAFES Suppliers Handbook

cc:
Ms. Willis, AAFES HQ

Mr. Daniel Culler
750 S. La Brisa
Green Valley, AZ 85614-2232

HQ AAFES
ATTN: Ms. Teri Waters
Buyer, Stationary Branch
PO Box 660292
Dallas, TX 75266-0202
(214) 312-3239

THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

Berne, December 7, 1995

Mr.
Daniel L. Culler
750 S. La Brisa
Green Valley
USA - AZ 85614-2232

Dear Mr. Culler,

Your visit of 30 October 1995 in the Federal House in Berne was not an easy one for either of us. For that reason I want specially to express my gratitude for your friendly words addressed to me and our Embassy staff in Washington. I shall remember you as a person who has learned to accept our country without hate - despite the traumatic experiences.

I am pleased your visit did not release just negative feelings but that it made constructive meetings and pleasant memories possible. I hope this improvement will intensify during your futur visits.

With best regards to your wife,

Yours sincerely,



Kaspar Villiger,
President of the Swiss Confederation



CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON


12 February 1996

Dear Mr. Culler

Thank you for the signed copy of *Black Hole of Wauwilermoos*. I appreciate your kindness and look forward to reading your book. I just returned from a long overseas trip, so I haven't had a chance to open it yet.

I will ask my personnel staff to look into the medals you mentioned and report back to me. Although it may take some time to research the matter, you will be hearing from me again.

Thank you for thinking of me and for taking the time to write.



RONALD R. FOGLEMAN
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Mr. Daniel L. Culler
750 S. La Brisa
Green Valley, AZ 85614-2232

April 4, 1996

Carla McClain
Citizen Staff writer
Tucson Citizen
PO Box 26767
Tucson, AZ 85726-6767

Dear Ms McClain:

I read what I considered an excellent article in your paper, "Veteran Relives Torment in Switzerland". I was concerned and angered over the retraumatization that Mr Culler experienced as he returned to the prison where horrific traumas had occurred to him. I have much respect for the courage it must have taken for Mr Culler to revisit the scene of so much misery and pain. Few people can truly appreciate the suffering Mr Culler has endured while a POW and in the following fifty years. Chronic posttraumatic stress disorder, such as he has and is experiencing, is a very serious disorder in which a person suffers from flashbacks, night terrors, uncontrollable reliving of the traumas, numbing out, emotional deadness, depression, and often feelings of going insane.

As a psychological trauma therapist, I have worked with WWII vets suffering from posttrauma reactions. I agree with Mr Culler that these wounds need to be healed, assimilated, and a closure and letting go obtained. I also agree that returning to the

1132 S. Desert Senna Loop Tucson, AZ 85748 (520) 298-6824

2

scenes of the brutality is one way relief can be obtained. However, the chance of retraumatization is great unless there is organization, support, predictability, and a gradual reintroduction to the trauma memories. Psychological trauma is a reaction to an event which is sudden, overwhelming, fragmenting, and filled with overpowering emotions. The manner in which he was reintroduced to his prison cell was cruel and inhumane (taken to the prison at night without warning by a TV crew). Mr Culler's description of his reaction, "memories of 50 years ago came rushing through my mind like a bolt of lightening....I fell against the wall and cried uncontrollably. My legs buckled beneath me....I wanted no more" says to me that retraumatization has occurred.

Mr Culler still needs to somehow make peace with his experiences. I would like to say to Mr Culler that the impact of PTSD can be lessened; peace can be found. Find an understanding and empathic person: a friend, minister, therapist, or physician, and talk through your traumatic memories but do it in small doses over time. Don't rush into these memories but do talk them out. Good luck.



Bob Gilliland, PhD
Trauma Specialist
Pinnacle Management Group

The Forgotten Man

Submitted by 7th PR Gp Assoc Secretary
Richard Brown of Downey, California.

Through the history of World Aviation
Many names have come to the fore
Great deeds of the past in our memory will last
As they're joined by more and more.

When man first started his labour
In his quest to conquer the sky
He was designer, mechanic and pilot
and he built a machine that could fly.

The pilot was everyone's hero
He was brave, he was bold, he was grand
As he stood by his battered old bi-plane
with his goggles and helmet in hand.

To be sure those pilots all earned it
To fly then you had to have guts
And they blazed their names in the Hall of Fame
On wings with baling wire struts.

But for each of our flying heroes
There were thousands of little renown
And these were the men who worked on the planes
But kept their feet on the ground.

We all know the name of Lindberg
And we've read of his flight into fame
But think, if you can, of his maintenance man
Can you remember his name?

And think of our Wartime heroes
Gabreski, Jabara and Scott
Can you tell me the names of their crew chiefs
A thousand to one you cannot.

Now pilots are highly trained people
and wings not easily won
But without the work of the maintenance man
Our pilots would march with a gun.

So when you see the mighty aircraft
As they mark their path through the air
The grease-stained man with the monkey wrench
Is the man who put them there.
(Anonymous)

***Editor: We're not going to forget 'em EVER!

FOLDED WINGS JULY, 1996

James C. Beam	506	506th C.O.	7/96
Earl E. Brahmer			8/20/94
Edward M. Burtsavage	67	Navigator	11/95
Williams S. Aldridge	67	Pilot	6/26/96
Joseph L. Cadrin	68		Unknown
Richard Castillo	68	Howell's Crew	12/8/95
John N. Clark	68	Sq. Exec.	3/21/96
Sylvester D. Cole	67		5/31/96
Joseph L. Cumbria	68	Bowman's-Nichols (Interned)	Unknown
Howard F. Dart	68	Armament	Unknown
Albert J. D'Anna	68		Unknown
James P. Davie	66	Kimball's Crew	10/6/95
Kenneth S. Dropek	68	Bowman's Eng.	1992
William F. Drumel	506		1995
Ted R. Fernbach	68	Alexander's Crew	3/22/96
Robert M. Flake, Jr.	66		Unknown
Agrippino P. Gesimondo	66		Unknown
Stanley R. Gordon	68th	Bomb (Bowmans)	11/30/83
Don R. Hill	68		Unknown
O.K. Kady Hill	506	Pilot	2/96
Arthur Ingvertsen	806	Chemical	1983
Frederick A. Kenyon 68 &	506	Stahler's	Unknown
Milton J. Krueger	66		Unknown
Edward R. Kupczynski	66		Unknown
Bruno W. Lorenzetti	68		5/4/96
Leon Mascola	506	Marx's Crew Nav POW	Unknown
James H. McMaster	506	Gurman's Gunner POW May 28, 1944	Unknown
Tom McKenna	66	Assoc (Brother)	4/15/96
Howard Mertz	464th	SD	Unknown
James Musser			1986
Alan F. Oberlin	67		6/22/96
Frank Orehowsky	506	Titter's Crew	2/8/96
Carl Satterlund	506	Co-Pilot	11/15/92
Everett D. Smith	66		Unknown
George B. Strutz	67	Griffith's Gunner (Intern 3/18/44)	3/9/96
George Sweeny, Jr.	68	Schaefer's Crew	Unknown
Marion Tiemeir	506		Unknown
Joe Werenko	66		11/28/95



Colonel James C. "Seal" Beam Folds Wings

Funeral Services were held Monday, May 13, 1996 in Gulf Breeze, Mississippi for retired USAF Colonel James Carroll "Seal" Beam, 78. He had been a resident of Gulf Breeze for 17 years.

In World War II, Col. Beam was Commander of the 506th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group. He led his Squadron on August 1, 1943 when the 44th Bomb Group, flying B-24 Liberators with three other B-24 Groups flying at tree top level bombed the German oil refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. For the high level of success in this daring raid in which a third of the force was lost fighting its way to the targets through ferocious anti-aircraft and enemy aircraft defenses, the 44th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for Bravery. Col. Beam was individually awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. He had stated that his proudest moments were giving the Oath of Office to his three sons as each graduated from the Air Force Academy.

Colonel Beam is survived by his wife, Mary Jeanette Beam, his three sons, James, Charles and Lance, nine grandchildren, four step-children and three step-grandchildren.

Thankful to Families and Their Interest!

Editor: Sometimes fate seems to step in whether you want her or not. I had this letter from Frank Orehowsky, my editorial reply and an illustrative picture of B-17's flying above some B-24's all ready to go into the last issue. Then we had to cut a few pages to allow for our Reunion Centerfold, so I saved the Orehowsky piece for this issue. Sadly, we received a letter from his daughter Anne George telling us of her father's passing. I think her letter certainly tells the kind of 8-Ball guy her Dad was. I wouldn't take any bets that the B-17 versus B-24 argument isn't still raging on in the Heavenly Hangar and that Frank is in the middle of it! Thanks Anne for sharing your memories of Frank with us.

Editor: Some good words from Frank Orehowsky of 512 Montgomery Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046.

12/2/95

It took 50 years for an appropriate organization such as yours to surface. Congratulations, it pays fitting tribute to the Libs and the men who flew in them. Keep up the good work. I dropped out of the 8th AF Historical Society because of their preference to laud the B-17 and being indifferent to what Libs and their crews contributed. The 44th BG Vets Association fills a deep need.

Good Luck
Frank Orehowsky
50th Sqdn.

Editor: Thanks Frank; I'm in agreement with you on the 8th AFHS B-17 bias. I think if the movie producers had featured a B-24 outfit in a major picture, all of the Liberator crews would have reaped their fair share of Air War Europe fame. Between "Memphis Belle" and "12 O'clock High" our kids are still saying "Dad, tell me again, what was the name of that bomber you flew in combat?" We know though who it was up there bombing from 4 to 5 thousand feet above us, and the times their bombs came whistling down through our formation. Ah, well that Fortress - Liberator argument will go on as long as any of us are on our feet!

Editor: What it looks like to me is those Liberator Boys are going to, once again, get to read the graffiti on the Fortress bombs as they plummet through the "Lib" formation. Let me tell you, it's an undecipherable rush to read "Up yours, Adolph" on a 500 pounder as it sails down past the cockpit window!

May 28, 1996

Dear Sirs;

I am writing this letter, being the oldest daughter of Frank Orehowsky, who passed away February 8, 1996.

My father subscribed to your publication, as well as many other WWII periodicals, and was an active member of the Eighth Air Force Association.

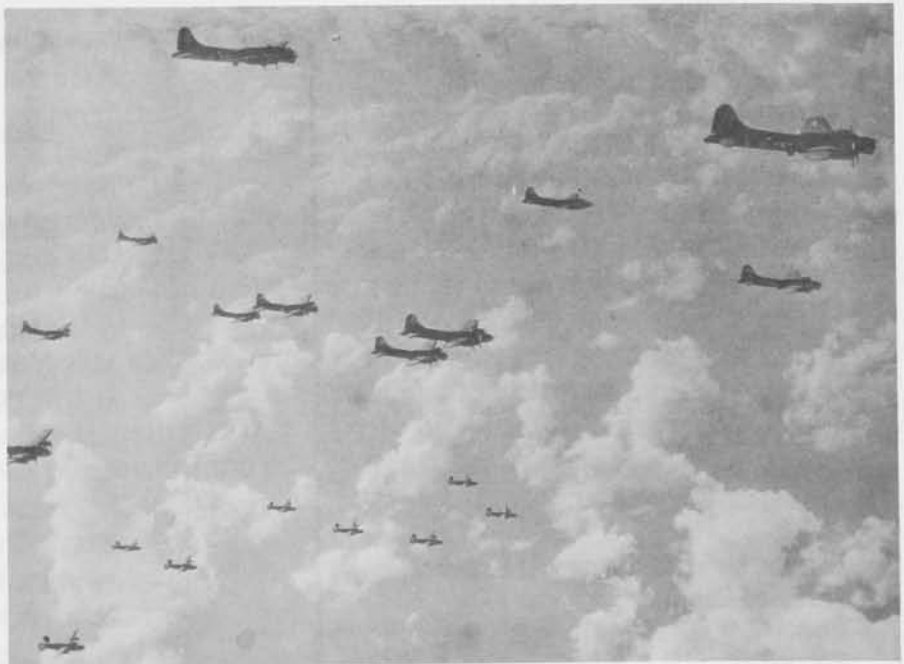
My dad was 18 when he went overseas, and served with the 44th Bomb Group, of the 8th Air Force in England as a Flight Engineer; B-24 Liberator. He participated in 24 raids over enemy held territory, one of which I remember his telling me many times as a child; the infamous "Ploesti" bombing mission. He advanced in rank to Staff Sergeant, and received the Air Medal with three Clusters, Bronze Star and numerous battle ribbons. He also was involved in D-Day; going over the English Channel not once, but twice, as I so well remember his telling me.

After coming home, my dad continued to serve his Country, but as a civilian. He worked at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, starting as a Pattern Maker, and retiring as a Senior Project Engineer, Submarine Division in 1985.

I would feel it an honor to have you mention my dad in "Folded Wings," and let any of his buddies that are still around read it in your periodical, as he communicated with many after joining the Association, and rekindling friendships with them.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Anne George
1200 Van Kirk Street
Philadelphia, PA 19149
(215) 537-4835

The "official" caption on this photo says "(A) Formation of B-24 Liberators shown operation in perfect coordination with B-17 Flying Fortresses in "Round the Clock Bombing" of industrial and naval nerve centers of the German War effort. This photo was taken during an actual operational flight on an unnamed German Target."



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44th BGVA Rosters

For you late joiners and short memoried long time members, we want to remind you that our membership rosters are still available from Art Hand for \$7 postpaid.

It's a wonderful way to keep track of your crew and other squadron friends and it is kept up to date with addenda published regularly. Send a check for \$7 made out to 44th BGVA (please note ROSTER in the lower left corner of your check). Mail your order to our

Membership Co-Chair:

Art Hand
517 Elm Street
Paris, IL 61994

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association Application for Membership

Name: _____ Squadron: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Spouse's Name: _____ Crew Name (if applicable) _____

Inclusive Dates of Service with 44th: _____

If this a family lineage membership, give parent name: _____

Mail Check to:
Gerald W. Folsom, Treasurer
44th BGVA
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367

Annual Dues: \$15
Life Membership, Age 60+: \$100
Life Membership, Age 40-59: \$125
Life Membership, Age 39: \$150

WHY BE A 2ADA MEMBER? THE JOURNAL ALONE IS WORTH MORE THAN \$15 A YEAR!

The Second Air Division in Europe was made up of fourteen bomb groups, five fighter groups, plus other attached units, and, for all intents and purposes, these groups ceased to exist when WWII ended in May, 1945. Luckily for us, that wasn't the end of the Second Air Division. It would take too much space to describe the actions that created the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF and the Second Air Division Association that have been so closely entwined over the last 45 years. Instead, I urge you to read Jordan Uttal's fine articles on pages 15-21 of *Turner's General History of The Second Air Division, USAAF, 1942-1945*, to gain an understanding of our roots within the 2nd Air Division Association and the importance of the 2ADA to the eventual formation and life of the 44th Bomb Group (H) Association. That does not mean that relations between the two organizations have always run smoothly, but there has always been a 2ADA Vice President for the 44th Bomb Group. The big change in the relationship, to the advantage of the bomb groups, was the 1994 change to the 2ADA bylaws that mandated six *voting* Vice President slots in the Executive Committee instead of three. The effect of the change has been a shift in control of the Executive Committee to a more democratic board that listens to the needs of the groups, not always the case in the past.

It is now up to those of us in the bomb groups to take advantage of the shift and to become more active in 2ADA affairs, both in membership and in attendance at yearly conventions and scheduled regional dinners. Here's why. First, our most important link to history is the Memorial Room in Norwich, and our point of entry is the 2ADA representative to the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust. Bud Koorndyk holds that position, and has performed brilliantly in furthering our interests there. The disastrous fire that destroyed the Norwich Library is beginning to be seen as an opening opportunity to an unbelievable future for the library and the Memorial Room. We need to be part of that endeavor. One need only look back to the treatment of the Enola Gay and the end of the war in Japan by the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum to realize that it's up to us to preserve our history as we lived it; not as some juvenile historian rewrites it to suit his liberal, revisionist theories. The Memorial Room will preserve our history and it needs our wholehearted support. Our point of contact is through the Second Air Division.

Second, we probably have another four or five years as a viable group association. At some point, a reduction in numbers will likely make it advantageous for us to regroup within 2ADA, both for the pages we "own" in

the *Journal* and the conventions, where the 44th always has its group dinner. The main objection to 2ADA conventions in the past has been the large number of people in attendance, and our people have preferred the smaller, stand-alone 44th conventions. As we lose members to age, we need to be able to still function as a group but may eventually find it easier to function under the umbrella of the Division. The 44th has certainly benefited by its independence, but we lose nothing and have much to gain by increasing our membership in 2ADA and our attendance at 2ADA functions. It may be too expensive or impossible to attend both the 2ADA and the 44th conventions in the same year, but, when circumstances permit, such as a 2ADA convention or a regional 2ADA dinner in your area, you might find it worthwhile to attend. It will certainly broaden your knowledge of important happenings where the Second Air Division Association is involved: the Norwich Library and our Fulbright librarian, Savannah and the 8th AF Heritage Museum, and the new American addition to the Duxford Air Museum in Cambridge, to mention a few. Less than half of our 44th members belong to the 2ADA, and 44th attendance at 2ADA conventions is usually small, but it will be to our group's, as well as your own, advantage to increase both. The cost of 2ADA membership is only \$15 per year, and the *Journal* alone is worth more to you than that. Make your check payable to "2ADA" and send to: Evelyn Cohen, 06-410 Delaire Landing Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19114. Meanwhile, you and the 44th will continue to be presented by an active 44th Vice President on the 2ADA Executive Committee.

Ralph Elliott (467th Group VP)
6000 Rafter Circle
Tucson, AZ 85713-4365

Editor's Note: All you Group VPs should make sure Ralph's succinct comments appear in your group's newsletter, so that the message reaches the right people. If you don't have a newsletter or don't want it in there, why don't you get about 10-20 of your group's 2ADA members to mail say five to ten letters with a copy to all non-2ADA members? I'll supply the copies free! Just ask!

THE MIGHTY 8TH AF MUSEUM OPENING

Article and photographs by: Forrest Clark

Several memorable events took place during the opening day of the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum that reminded all of the 8th Air Force veterans of their proud tradition dating back half a century.

First there was the number of notables in the WWII 8th Air Force and the air war. Second, there were the ceremonies held throughout a long day marked by ceremonies; and thirdly, there were the memorials to the men who didn't come back.

A 32-square foot cake measuring 8 feet long and 4 feet wide was wheeled into the huge rotunda for the grand buffet that was served to 2,000 veterans, their wives and families. The cake was decorated with a huge 8th Air Force logo and symbol in color. The cake was cut and 2,000 pieces were served to those present.

Another highlight of the day was the introduction of distinguished guests, among them Col. Paul Tibbetts, pilot of the B29 that bombed Japan in 1945; Col. Francis "Gabby" Gabreski, WWII fighter ace and 8th Air Force writer and historian Roger Freeman whose book the Mighty 8th is a classic in its field.

I had a chance to get to see Gabreski and meet him. He was delighted in the Heritage Museum and its exhibits and in the fact that so many were still able to be there on the opening day.

Phyllis DoBois talked with me and others in the 44th Bomb Group and was very proud of the archival space at the museum and the way it was fashioned. She took a glowing report back to the Second Air Division Memorial Library at Norwich, England.

There were the dedications of the various memorials in the Memorial Garden and tributes to all the groups.

The Glenn Miller concert by the Band of the Air Force Reserve put a fitting conclusion to the day's many events.

Of special interest to all 44th veterans is the memorial plaque in the rotunda giving the Bomb Group list of its achievements in WWII.

The atmosphere of remembrance, nostalgia and pride experienced by all was outstanding.

So vivid was this atmosphere that for any 8th Air Force veteran it was an easy matter to recall the sights and sounds, the faces and the figures of the crew members who did not return from that air war.

One touching moment was when two men, both veterans of the 8th Air Force stood at attention during the playing of the Air Force hymn, tears on their faces. Yet they stood erect and proud dressed in their WWII uniforms.

Another veteran dressed in full flying gear including a parachute harness and oxygen mask circulated throughout the crowds of veterans.

To add to the memories were the many friends who met at the opening and who said as they left and the

final music of Glenn Miller faded away, "We'll meet again, I don't know where, I don't know when."

Museum officials said that already many groups have made reservations to hold reunions in Savannah and to include the heritage museum in their plans. Since the opening, this number has increased.



Photos:

Top Right: Opening Day, May 13, 1996 The 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA.

Bottom Left: Dedication Ceremonies at the opening of the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum.

**By Forrest S. Clark
44th Bomb Group**

ACES OF WWII MEET

The gray haired man with the burly build and posture sitting to one side in the crowded rotunda of the new 8th Air Force Heritage Museum was once the most feared fighter pilots of WWII whose guns claimed 28 enemy planes.

I recognized him immediately as Col. Francis "Gabby" Gabreski of the famed 61st Fighter Squadron of the 8th Air Force. I asked if I could sit next to him and I took the one remaining vacant chair. I noticed that many old timer pilots of the 8th came up to him, shook his hand and greeted him warmly.

Gabreski not only commanded one of the most feared U.S. fighter squadrons of the war in Europe 50 years ago, but was captured and spent some time in a German prison camp. His exploits as a persistent fighter pilot who kept up a relentless battle against the FW190s and Messerschmidts earned him the admiration of fellow pilots, but also of many of the Luftwaffe pilots. When he was captured after crashing his fighter, a German officer said, "Gabreski we've been looking for you for a long time."

His keen sense of combat and flying record contributed to making him the leading American fighter ace, but also helped establish a legend that has continued to this day.

It was most appropriate that he should be there when the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum was dedicated 50 years after the war. He is still a symbol of American flying in wartime and in the records of history ranks with Eddie Rickenbacker of that earlier war, WWI.

He may walk a little slower and squint a little more, but those large hands once controlled fighter planes in some of the greatest air war battles of history.

Younger people came to him as he sat near me just to see him and express their good wishes to him. There may never be another air war like that in which he engaged and the bombers also, but the memory is alive in the 8th Air Force Museum a few miles outside Savannah, Georgia.

One officer summed up the feelings of most of the air war veterans when he said, "This was our time and we should be proud of it and our part in it."

All of the 44th BG men and their wives present felt this pride and yet is was tinged with a nostalgic sadness that so many of their comrades in the air were left behind and never grew up to see this day.

Each man in his own way contributed to that victory 50 years ago, fighter aces, as well as bomber pilots and their crews.

ANOTHER FORREST CLARK REMEMBRANCE

Return to Belén

On a recent trip to New Mexico, my wife and I were on our way down I-25 south of Albuquerque when I spied a sign reading "Belen Ahead 2 Miles."

Immediately something clicked in my mind and I slowed down to make the exit. There was a flashback inside me by the name Belen that carried me back 52 years to a spring day in 1943.

I was drawn off that interstate highway by a memory stronger than I could resist. My wife said, "What are you doing?" I didn't reply, but drove straight through town to the railroad station. As if my mind was in a time warp, I immediately recognized the station. Then the whole story flashed before me.

In the spring of 1943 I was stationed at Clovis Airbase and received orders to a new assignment at El Paso, Texas to join a combat crew and later the 44th Bomb Group. I had a 3-day delay enroute to reach El Paso. I took a train westbound from Clovis and got bumped off the train at a small station 30 miles south of Albuquerque. That town was Belen.

Fifty-two years later I found myself in that town and looking at the same railroad station. I went inside and found a woman at a desk. "I think I was here before, 52 years ago," I said to her. She smiled and said, "No. Not another one." I told her how I recalled sleeping on the floor of the station in the spring of 1943. She reached up to a keyboard, took down an old rusty key and said, "follow me." We went into the station and she unlocked door, opening it into a large room. "Here is where you slept", she said.

Sure enough everything looked the same and I could see the railroad and hear the sounds of 52 years ago. Above one wall was a drawing. I looked at it closely and saw, "Kilroy was here." Then I felt at home.

That station is today a historic site occupied by a museum of some WWII objects, but above all, it is a place of memories and overwhelming nostalgia to me.

Editor: This stirs memories of those wartime built GI troop cars with double deck bunks and GI mess kitchen cars and those hot, hot trips down through the Southwest. Neat places like Blythe, California; Casa Grande, Arizona; Deming, New Mexico and Van Horn, Texas.

*Editor: The Ralph Golubeck story on "Princess" (p. 33, Vol. 1, Issue 4) in the Winter '95
8-Ball Tails prompted this letter from Richard J. Comey to Ralph.*

I hope the following information is of some benefit to you. My fiancée was named Charlotte, so I, in turn named all of the B-24s I flew "Princess Charlotte." Though I trained in B-24s, the first Princess Charlotte was a B-17 which I flew across the Atlantic with my crew.

The first few missions, including Ploesti, I flew with Joe Flaherty, 66th Squadron, 44th BG. He was a single-engine pilot who came to the 44th straight out of flight school, and was permanent co-pilot on several missions until I got there.

He sat on the left side and I sat on the right. It was sort of a cooperative effort between the two of us to get the plane to the target and back. Our fourth mission (13 July) saw us lose two engines and land at Malta on a small field. We left the first B-24 Princess there for repairs. The Princess that went to Ploesti kept her engines running all the way in and all the way back - for which we were duly thankful. While several people shot at us, including a "75", we were extremely lucky as the Princess only picked up one bullet hole, as I remember it.

We flew her to England. But immediately after Ploesti I moved to the left seat and my regular co-pilot, Tom Drysdale, moved back in to the right.

Back to Ploesti - we bombed White V, right behind General Johnson. However, so many planes were shot down, disabled or out of position, it was like we were all alone after hitting the target on the nose. So we re-joined another squadron of the 44th and came home.

The 44th made a second trip to Africa (in September) and we had a mission to Wiener-Neustadt. Besides losing an engine, we acquired an unbelievable number of holes in our plane. We landed near Naples at a British fighter base and left the plane there. We rode back to England on a DC-4.

On a later raid (11 December 43) out of England, we received a direct hit on the nose, right above the Navigator, Louis Trouve. The force of the explosion knocked him backwards over the nose wheel doors, and out he went. Fortunately, though wounded, he opened his chute, landed in a bay and was picked up by the Germans. (Lou and his wife, and Charlotte and I got together in New York after the War.)

After Lou was gone, we found flames were licking out of the hole in the nose, so I pressed the alarm button, "Prepare to Abandon Ship." The Ball Gunner (Neitzel?) saw Lou go by his turret and decided things were really serious. He tried to get out of his ball, but some empty shells or perhaps a belt or two had jammed the back exit door. With brute strength - and he was not a very heavily built guy - he pushed the door right off its hinges and got out. The Bombardier passed out in the nose turret and we thought he was a goner.

It turned out the flame was fed by a broken oxygen line and when the oxygen was used up, it went out! By then I was half way out of my seat and preparing to signal "Abandon Ship" when I realized things were not so bad, and finally got things back on keel again. However, we were now alone and I headed for the Channel, losing altitude at a rapid pace. When we reached about 10,000 feet or so, the Bombardier's voice comes on the inter-com. He was alive and ok - just passed out from lack of oxygen.

We very luckily crossed the Channel and returned to Base without encountering any German fighters. The hydraulic system was shot out, but there was enough pressure still in those spheres to work the brakes. I should have stopped at the end of the runway and received a hero's welcome, but I taxied back to our pad and coasted very slowly off the edge of it when the pressure finally ran out.

That "Princess Charlotte" (Really Nice & Naughty) like all the others, got us home ok. We were blessed with good fortune as far as the crew was concerned.

I believe I saw her fuselage on the junk heap later. (Yes, she crashed at Shipdham on 4 January 44 while on take off). I still have the stencil that says "Princess Charlotte" used on some of these planes.

Completed 25 missions in the Princesses - some bore the name in paint, others mind only. Some bore two names, but as far as I was concerned, they were all Princesses and all great. I flew missions for the 66th Squadron, although for Ploesti we were assigned to another squadron (67th?) to fill out the formation.

Charlotte and I have been married 50 years and are living here in Stowe, Vermont.

Regards,

Richard J. Comey, 66th

This is an excerpt from the headquarters monthly log. Probably kept under the watchful eye of Col. Goodman Griffin, Group Exec. We came by this among some rescued microfilm from the Norwich Library fire. We'll publish some more as we get it.

44TH BOMB GROUP - SHIPDHAM AUGUST, 1944

Quite a few changes in personnel this month, but we're thankful for no change in weather. We've had a full month of real, honest-to-goodness, sun shiney weather and we're all campaigning for more. During the month, 91 Officers and 228 Enlisted men returned to the Zone of the Interior by way of different Replacement Depots. The 44th went on ten missions into Germany and ten more into France; having done an excellent job on most of them. Two missions went off on the 4th; the second one being our 200th operational mission, a high reaching goal in the past, but now an occasion for celebration and an opportune moment to pay tribute to those of us who could not see it reached.

The 15th of the month brought many changes in key personnel. Col. John H. Gibson, Group Commander, former American Airline pilot, and holder of the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, returned to the States on DS for a 30-day recuperative leave. Coincidentally, the name of Colonel Frederick R. Dent, Jr., former 44th Group Commander, appeared on the same letter orders from Eighth Air Force, to return to the States. On this day Colonel Eugene H. Snavely, a former 44th Group Operations

Officer, assumed command. On the same day Major Robert E. Felber, Commanding Officer of the 67th Bomb Squadron and holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters also returned to the Zone of the Interior for a recuperative leave. Major William R. Cameron, who had been acting as Group Operations Officer in the absence of Major William H. Strong (also DS to the States), and who had formerly been Commanding Officer of the 67th Bomb Squadron, resumed his old command. Major Cameron is holder of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. Lt. Col. John I. Turnbull, former Group Operations Officer of the 492nd, has now taken over as Group Operations Officer here.

On the 2nd of August, Captain Withers V. Tolbert, Group Bombardier and holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, finally started that long but gratifying trek home. Coincidentally again, Captain Joseph J. Young, a former Group Bombardier who had been on DS to the 492nd, and holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, also departed for the States by authority of the same special orders. On this day, Lieutenant

Norman A. Vickery, who completed his operational tour as a member of the 66th Bomb Squadron, stepped in as Group Bombardier. Lt. Vickery is holder of the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Purple Heart.

On the 19th of the month, Tech./Sgt. Verl T. Marnell, a former Group Operations Clerk here, returned to his old stomping grounds. On the 28th, Tech./Sgt. Arthur H. Tillett finally made his way back to the Homeland. (0382)

On the 11th of the month, seven days after our 200th operational mission was flown, the Group took time out to celebrate the occasion. Now we shall take time out to glance over some of the highlights of those 200 missions. The Group began operations on the 7 November, 1942 and completed its first 100 missions in 16 months. They then went on to complete its second hundred missions in five more months. During this string, the organization was twice cited by the War Department for distinguished action. The first citation came after the attack on Kiel on 14 May 1943 when the Libs were attacked by 120 enemy aircraft during an unescorted bomb run over the target. They dropped their incendiaries effectively and in four minutes destroyed 15

enemy fighters. Their total score for the mission was 23 German planes destroyed and 13 probably destroyed. The second citation was for the first and historic low level attack on the Ploesti Oil Refineries in Rumania on 1 August 1943. On this operation they flew through bitter opposition and over exploding bombs of a preceding Group, to drop their explosives with devastating results. Brigadier General Leon W. Johnson (then Colonel), who was Group Commander and Air Commander of this mission, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his action that day. Eleven Distinguished Service Crosses and 16 Silver Stars were awarded to other members of the Group for their contributions toward the successful fulfillment of the mission.

During those 21 months, the Group had operated from Africa twice and was credited with the destruction of 354 3/4 enemy planes. The highest score attained in any one day, was made from a North African base when the Group attacked the Messerschmidt plant in Austria on 1 October 1943. Creating a record that would be outstanding for even a fighter Group, our Libs accounted for 51 FW-190's and ME-109's. However, the score that was probably the most outstanding rung up, was made on the Vegesack attack on 18 March 1943, when they were engaged in a vicious air battle, destroying 17 enemy aircraft while losing none themselves. *Editor: Total must be wrong - only 330 for total was official.*

Eighty-four of their 200 missions were to Germany, with the others ranging over France, Austria, Italy, Rumania, Poland,

Norway and Holland. They have bombed three capitals, taking part in the first aerial attack on Rome and striking Paris and Berlin on numerous occasions. The Group also took part in the first 8th Air Force Attack on Germany proper, when they participated in the blow on Wilhelmshaven on 27 January 1943.

Now, for the celebration, but first we would like to reprint for you, the announcement that came out in our Daily Bulletin on the preceding day.

HEAR YE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

You are invited to step inside to the greatest carnival since Noah—the 200th mission party of the 44th—on Friday, August 11th—Beer—Hot Dogs—Dancing Girls—Games of Chance—The first officer found waring insignia of rank to be shot out of a cannon by the lucky private who wins the draw—No rank for the day—what there is is reversed—Colonels become Privates and vice versa—Master Sergeants are reduced to 2nd Lieutenants.

Athletics in the morning—the most colossal display of muscles and grit since David scored a probable on Goliath—see the First Sergeants battle the Privates at volleyball with no holds barred—Watch Capt. “Stretch” Weaver and his “Stringbeans” compete with Sgt. “Fat Stuff” Rosen and his “Pumpkins” in the most outstanding display of Eighth Air Force pin-ups since Mr. America signed with Minsky.—See Col. Gibson’s “All-Brass” softball team take the field against Lt. Horne’s “Single-Bar” boys—Bike races, sack races, chin races, horse races—And to top off the afternoon, a softball

game between the two leading station teams—pop bottles specially designed for umpires supplied to all spectators.

And in the evening, the Carnival moves into Hanger #2. Dice tables, games of chance, concessions of all sorts—The USO show “Petticoats,” the biggest and greatest entertainment spectacle since the Follies of 1918.—Brimming beakers of beer brewed by Britain’s best—Luscious hot dogs so tender they yelp when you bite into them—Special entertainment by Station celebrities including the following songs: “Going My Way?” by Capt. Vaughn — A duet by Lt. Col. Shachtman and Major Barnes entitled “We Got Plenty of Nothin” and Capt. Wright leading his S-2 choir in “It ain’t Necessarily So”—

Its the biggest thing to hit England since the Blitz: The Flying Eightballs” 200th mission celebration. You can’t afford to miss it: It will be something to keep from your children. Come one, come all: It’s Carnival Time at Shipdham.

Well, suffice it to say that in that announcement, you have read the story of what happened, before it happened. It was all that and then some.

To start the day off right, the boom: of our stubby little cannon at 1000 hours, signified reveille - a fine time of day for reveille. Anyone who might be looking toward innovating a permanent change in the standard Army hour for rising, could probably find a host or votes of approval here; although we suggest that this “Gallup Poll” be made when it’s all “Over, Over There.”

The festivities were opened with a softball game between Col. Gibson and his “All-Brass”

and Lt. Horne and his "Buckin'-One Bars." It was good fast-moving game, but Horne and Co. pulled a bad bit of strategy by winning the game, although the score was close, 2-1. They are now known as just "The One Bars."

Interest then turned toward kegs of beer flowing along the sidelines and other athletic events such as football, volleyball, football throwing, baseball pitching and a three-legged race. This last race featured the team of Johnson and Phillips (General Johnson, 14th Wing Commander and Lt. Col. Phillips, 14th Wing A-3). They were doing nicely until just after the turn into the home stretch, when they seemed to make a coordinated duo-swan dive into the ground. But they got back on their three-legs and finished in time to congratulate the winners.

One of the most popular gestures of the day was General Johnson, holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, driving to the ball field. In place of the usual emblem of rank, there was a small khaki flag adorned with buck-sergeant stripes. The General was at the wheel and the sergeant, his regular driver (Mike Fusano), was taking his ease in the back seat.

All rank and army rule was dispensed with for the day, with the exception of the Military Police and Lt. Col. Griffin, the Ground Executive Officer, who became an M.P. The rules stated that any person found wearing rank insignia was to serve beer for five hours. However, in the course of the events, someone decided on a more suitable punishment - a dunk in the fish pond beside the Aero Club. It all started with Lt. McCaslin, the Group Training Officer, who was

found "impersonating" a Master Sergeant. Before the afternoon was half over, the dunkings were frequent regardless of whether a person was found violating the rules of the day or not. "Baths" were even handed out to General Johnson, Col. Gibson, WAC Lt. Luce, our Cryptographic Officer, and Phyllis and Sally, our Red Cross girls. Phyllis and Sally were dressed in coveralls but they had their own clothes soaked when two men dressed in the familiar blue skirts, jackets and hats were also given a "swim." A few unfortunate officers, visiting the post at the wrong time, were thrown into the drink before they had a chance to explain. But it only served to get them into the spirit of things also.

In the evening, the carnival moved to one of the hangers and the U.S.O. show "Petticoats" featured the entertainment program and was heartily acclaimed by all. Beer was more than plentiful - five kegs are still unaccounted for - guess someone enjoyed a prolonged celebration.

Well, a good time was really had by all - but it ended with the close of day. Operations were resumed on a normal keel and the Group went on to do an excellent job of bombing on the following day.

On the 16th of the month, Billy Conn and his retinue arrived at this station to put on a boxing show for the boys. It was a good show and Conn showed that he is all we've heard about him.

All in all, it was a good month of living and also a good month of war.



The 8-Ball Tails

**Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association, Inc.**

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MAIL CALL



This comes from:
George Hill
W9TGN
2116 Ewing Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201-2004

Hi Will,

The enclosed cartoon brought to mind an incident that I have not written before. So here is a couple short ones for you.

On our first trip to Africa (June '43) M/Sgt Bagley began teasing me about taking along and eating a full can of Spam. That was not true, of course, but from then on until we returned back to the States in 1945, I was "Hey, Spam!! or Hell, Spam.

Later, Our Sgt. Wade Bond, who was a great kidder and joker, was ripe for retribution. Wade always had a caper or story to tell, always working on someone, usually with one of us winding up the goat. But we got even with him one time!

As you know and remember, most of us carried our coffee "Cups" with us all the time. After continued usage and dips in the hot water tubs for cleaning, these cups were usually mud-colored inside.

One day we got hold of his cup, unknown to him, and we drilled three or four tiny holes in it, just below where his lips would come while drinking from it. For a week or so we had much fun chiding him about being a sloppy eater, as coffee was dribbling down his chin! Unfortunately, one day he decided to scrub his cup, discovered our work.

On our second trip to Africa (Sept. '43) we shared an airfield with a B-17 group just outside of Tunis. Near us we could see the ancient aqueduct that the Romans had built - a short distance away. It has served ancient Carthage. One day it was announced that a German supply dump had been discovered containing among other things, a large supply of all kinds of liquor!

Rather than destroy it, a decision was made to divide it up amongst all of the men. I can still remember a fair-sized box of all kinds of booze coming into the Communications section for all of us to enjoy. The Commanding Officer of the field said that he was closing down the field for 24 hours - and for us to "get rid of it!!"

What a party we had. We really had a ball. I woke up the next morning with a big head, but to this day I say, "Bless that C.O.!" He was a real wise man.

All is well here. Mary and I took a trip to Alaska last

September and enjoyed it very much. It is a beautiful country.

Our Radio Net is still going strong, but with the sunspot cycle at near bottom, we have not been able to talk to our English members every week, but conditions should improve a bit.

A PBS television program called "Nova" had a very interesting program about a group of men (Darryl Greenamyer - Ex-Lockheed Test Pilot) who went up to northern Greenland to reclaim a B-29 that had been forced down nearly 50 years ago. What a job! Won't tell you the story as I taped it and if you haven't seen it, I'll be happy to loan it to you.

A couple weeks ago I noticed a fellow in line ahead of me at the checkout, had a cap on from the 40th Group - a B-29 outfit from the Pacific. I only got a short chance to talk to him - a minute or two - but he said that there was a Squadron in his group that should have belonged to the 44th!?? (Possibly was the 404th BS, which was borrowed from the 44th at Will Rogers in July '42, sent to Alaska to stop the Japanese invasion of the islands??).

Regards to you and Irene
See you in St. Louis!



This comes from:
Albert E. (Ed) Jones
12415 Eagle Point Place
Little Rock, Arkansas 72211
(501) 227-4198
3/4/95

Dear Will,

The reason that I knew Ed Clark was because he was my C.O. at the Shipdham Control Tower. Before he was there, I worked for Clifford T. Lee who was transferred to Germany some time after Normandy invasion. Ed and I were shipped back to the States at the same time, had our 30-day furlough, and went back to Sioux Falls for re-assignment.

Even though he was my boss, I considered him a good friend, but we lost contact until preparations for the 44th BG Reunion in England in 1992. At that time, I found out about and joined the 44th BG, 2nd Air Division and 8th AF organizations. That is how I was reunited with Ed, though we didn't actually meet until we were at the Reunion in the Hotel Nelson in Norwich, England. Since then, Ed and our wives have attended two 2nd Air Division Mini-Reunions or Regional Meetings in Dallas.

We planned to be at the Dallas meeting this year as well as the 2nd Air Division in Norwich. However, I was forced to forego both because of the planned cataract surgery on 21 March. Hope that I'll make the next 44th meeting in Texas.

I worked at the Shipdham Tower from about August, 1943 until July, 1945. I was in charge of the Alert Crew which worked directly for the control tower, and worked out of a

front room on the first floor of the tower. The Alert Crew took care of most, if not all, of the "hands-on" duties of the control tower - we parked, serviced visiting aircraft, maintained, corrected, updated records of location and condition of all B-24s on the base. Pulled them out of the mud with a clet-track when they got off the perimeter taxi strip, and various other duties.

One of my primary duties was to operate what we called the radio jeep. This jeep was equipped to communicate with the tower, as well as with pilots of aircraft. Similar to the checkered van, but much more mobile.

During bad, foggy weather, I would take the radio jeep as far out in the field as possible and look for our bombers on their cross wind leg, get them turned toward the runway and above the trees until landing time. Once, when they were very low on gas - one pass or else - they decided to "Follow the Leader" and one make it, all make it, or none. Fortunately, they all made it, but they looked like a string of weenies going down the runway. Probably couldn't happen again without a few crashing.

I learned the area outside the base so well that one of my jobs was to find the bombers that had gone down, radio back directions for the ambulances and fire trucks, give identifications of the plane. Through all of this, of course, we had to observe radio silence when in effect. One of our duties was to hand-carry changes in orders to the lead commander prior to take off on missions. We had to enter the plane and actually hand it to the command pilot. Incidentally, we had an extra receiver in our radio equipment and when not too busy, could listen to local broadcasts via the earphones.

The fire trucks were housed in a building next to the tower (east) and the crew on duty had quarters in that building. However, all tower and fire crews off duty staff lived in a Nissan Hut directly behind the tower building.

For much of the time in England, the fire crews and tower staff were assigned to the tower from the various squadrons in the 44th BG. I was from the 340th Service Squadron. But finally the Air Force formed squadrons just for their type duties, called Complement Squadrons and to which we were then assigned. However, I never lived in the squadron area and can't remember its number.

Since our flights were day missions, our main night duties consisted in landing British bombers who's own base was too fogged in to land. Our radio jeep was equipped with a metal stand for one man to stand on while directing the aircraft where to park. Of course, on these nights, the regular control tower radio operators were, to say the least, quite busy.

Will, I can't remember the names of the guys who rode motorcycles (one was Bill Hawkins) but they were the Air Force MP's. They did spend some time on duty around the tower a lot, and were our friends. In fact, it was in that setting that I first learned to ride a motorcycle - the WWII Harleys.

I could tell you lots of things that happened at crash sites

around the area during the War, but I'm sure you are getting bored, so will hush for now. (*No, I'd never get bored by stories about the good old 44th*).

I am sorry that the old 44th HMG was sort of disappointing, but am looking forward to meeting with our new one. Keep up the good work.



This comes from:
Donald C. Prater
1608 E. Candlestick Drive
Tempe, Arizona 85283
Phone: (602) 820-3838
Fax: (602) 839-7778
6/11/96

To Roy Owen & Gerald Folsom:
Gentlemen:

Thank you for "finding" me. For years I have belonged to the Air Force Association and have read each month's magazine carefully searching for some information relative to the 44th Bomb Group. I have never seen a thing. Don't know how you located my name but I am thankful you did.

I definitely am making plans to attend the 1996 Reunion in St. Louis October 3-7. This will be a triple bonus for me. First I hope to see some of my friends from the Korean War Era (1951-1955), second, I was born and raised in Mexico, Missouri which is only about 1.5 hours drive from St. Louis, and third, the Oktoberfest in St. Charles will be right up my alley - I am of German-American heritage and love German polka and waltz music. I will bring my lederhosen, Hut, and other paraphernalia with me.

There is a registration form enclosed with your mailing to me. Should I use this form and go ahead and register, or should I wait to receive my membership number from you prior to registering?

Thanks again and I look forward to October in St. Louis.

Sincerely,

P.S. Wife's name: Phyllis C. Prater
Military Organizations:

1951-1953 - 44th Bomb Wing (44th Air Police Squadron)
1953-1955 - 806th ABG, (806th Air Police Squadron)




This comes from:
Daniel Berger
1351 S.W. 125 Avenue #314
Pembroke Pines, FL 33027
Phone: (305) 436-5878
Wife's Name: Shirley Berger
68th Squadron
6/12/96

To Gerald Folsom
Sir:

Enclosed please find check in the amount of \$15 for membership in the organization and future copies of the 8-Ball Tails.

Yours truly,



This comes from:
James (Jim) Branson
3908 O'Briant Place
Greensboro, NC 27410
Phone: (910) 665-0393

Gerald:

Thanks for your letter of May 31, 1996, about the Association of the 44th Veterans.

Enclosed you will find a check for the annually dues (\$15). Below you will find name, address, phone and wife's name (Nancy Branson).

Sincerely,
506th Bomb Squadron


This comes from:
Robert J. Stine
2600 Quail Place
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(618) 333-0636
6/11/96

Dear Roy:

Thanks for your letter of May 31, 1996, advising that the association will hold a reunion in St. Louis in October, 1996.


You indicated that your records do not show that I have previously belonged to your organization. On January 3, 1995, I forwarded to the Association my Check No. 5539 in the amount of \$15 covering the 1995 dues. This check cleared my bank on January 9, 1995. Since I received no further communication from the Association, I assumed it had faded away as the 44th Heritage Memorial Group did. Consequently, I made no attempt to tender my dues for 1996.

Since I now know the Association remains active I am, with copy of this letter, sending my check to Gerald W. Folsom, Treasurer, to cover my 1996 dues to the Association. Please enter my name on the membership list. My wife's name is Wintress C. Stine.

So that you will know that I qualify to membership, I was assigned to the 68th Squadron in early August, 1942 at Will Rogers Field as navigator on Tom Holmes crew and flew to the UK with the 68th Squadron. I completed 26 missions with the 68th Squadron. The low level raid on Ploesti (August 1, 1943) was my last mission. I was navigator on the lead ship of the lights attacking Blue Target flown by Major John Diehl with Col. James Posey as Command Pilot in the co-pilot's seat.

I returned to the zone of interior in late August, 1943.

Sincerely,


This comes from:
Irvine G. Smith
405 North Columbus Street
Lancaster, OH 43130
Phone: (614) 687-1958 Fax: (614) 654-2509
6/13/96

Dear Roy & Gerald:

Nice to receive letter and information of the October Reunion.

For the time being...I have enclosed a check for membership of \$15. I hope I can attend the reunion in October...for the moment, I have a conflict. I will know if I can attend late next month. I will let you know if and when...and thanks for the registration form.


Information you have asked for:

Wife: Mary Peters Smith. Extra: have two sons both married with son and daughter each. Names: Frank R. Smith in business with me...and second son David S. Smith - Sales Manager for local Lancaster Glass Co.

I was a 1st Lt. with the 80th Chemical Co. stationed near Norwich with 44th BG.

Will be glad to receive anything in the future relating to our war efforts.

Many thanks,


This comes from:
Raymond Kovach
4102 Pershing Avenue
Parma, OH 44134

Dear Art:

In the "8-Ball Tails" Issue #5, Spring, 1996, I read the story - "A Brother Returns to East Anglia" by Tom McKenna, brother of Jim McKenna, 66th Pilot, KIA over Hamburg, August 6, 1944. Tom McKenna was at the San Antonio Reunion and asked if any of the crew or anyone who know Jim, get in touch with him.

Being on Jim McKenna's crew as Radio Operator and Gunner, I wrote to Tom the same day. I had hopes we could maybe get together some day, or at least write, so I could tell Tom what a great guy and Pilot Jim was.

I received a letter from his wife, Jane with the sad news that Jim died on April 15, 1996 and that he had sent the articles and pictures about his brother Jim to the 44th Bomb Group Magazine shortly before that. Hearing Tom has died was a real shock. I felt like I was shot down again! At best, we can say, he found out where and how his brother Jim died, and I believe he located his body and brought him home!

Art - Percy Gaudin - Tail Gunner on Jim McKenna's crew - I don't believe has joined the 44th Bomb Group Veteran's Association. I do not think he was ever contacted. His address is: Percy Gaudin - Tail Gunner, P.O. Box 125, Kiln, MS 39556.

P.S. Art - If Percy Gaudin is not a member of your group yet— mail him a copy of Issue #5 of your 8-Ball Tails. But if he is and has received a copy of Issue #5, put check in treasury pot.

Thank you,



This comes from:
Oliver E. Duerksen
Lt. Col (Ret) AF
2650 Yale Avenue
San Angelo, TX 76904

Dear Mr. Folsom:

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$15 for my annual dues.

I am one of those who did not know your (our) organization existed. I am proud of whoever started it. There are not so many of us remaining, time and health takes their toll.

I was a member of the 66th Squadron, arriving in England in December, 1944 and Shipdham AAF Station 115) in January, 1945. Capt. Will R. Vahrenkamp was our adjutant at that time. We had trained (B-24) in Mt. Home, Idaho, and arrived as a crew replacement. Lt. John Muldoon (from Nebraska) was our crew pilot, I was co-pilot, Karl D. Grossman was Navigator.

My wife, Wilma J. Dougherty Duerksen died April 4, 1995. She was from Illinois.

Thanks for getting in touch,



This comes from:
Mrs. Don R. Hill
311 N. Genessee
Bellaire, MI 49615

March 28, 1996

Dear Will,

Evidently Art Hand did not tell you that Don died last August. I can however give you at least some of the information you asked for as he spent most of the early summer making a tape of his most exciting life experiences.

The following information comes from the tape as closely as I can report it. Don joined the crew of James Collins in Pueblo, Colorado. This crew trained together there. Don mentioned that they made an almost unbeatable volleyball team during training. He also mentioned, somewhat boastfully, that since he had been on the pistol team in college, he helped train his crew in the use of the automatic colt 45's they were given. They were sent to England on the Queen Elizabeth, arriving in Glasgow on June 6, D-Day.

After a 15 day orientation training period in Ireland four of the crews were sent to Shipdham. Here they replaced some of the crews lost during the Ploesti raids for which the 44th Bomb Group became famous. Colonel Johnson became a General about this time. Don mentions him with great respect. He said that he, Don, didn't eat breakfast and so often missed the bus to briefing. More than once, the General stopped and picked him up as he was walking down to join the others.

As to the events of the August mission you asked about, Don put the date as the 7th of July rather than the 9th. It was during their fifth raid into France. Their ship was hit by flak, tearing through the wind screen and destroying it. The co-pilot (Fred Schuyler) was badly wounded in the shoulder. The same flak hit Don in the belly as he was sitting behind the co-pilot. He said on the tape that this was his one heroic moment in life. He gave the co-pilot first aid ignoring his own wounds. He added that he really was so shaken by the sight of the other man's wounds that he really did not realize he had a problem until he had done what he could. Then he realized that his flak suit had shorted out and he was quite badly burned on the stomach and legs. He carried these scars for his lifetime. After landing, he and the co-pilot were taken to the hospital, but he was released in a few days and went on many other raids.

I do remember him telling of the incident of Stanley Ducki, though I don't remember his mentioning the name. Don flew as a replacement on several crews toward the end of the war. He also helped with the radio shack on the ground at the base. As I remember he was supposed to be at the shack or had just left when the accident occurred. He often said that he believed the LUCK of the Irish (his mother was a Reiley) was working for him.

Don was, as most of you men are, very proud of his Air Force career, and rightly so. We had 47 happy years together, and yet I often thought that he was closer to the men of his crew and Group than we could ever be. Or at least in a very special way that those who were not part of the time and place could ever be. I only wish he had been in touch before he died.

Thank you for being concerned and doing something about it.

Sincerely,
Marion Hill



Elmer Reinhart, a great old Ploesti Raider turned Beach Boy, living in Waikki. Here with your Prez on a recent visit to Honolulu. We had lunch and a good visit. Hadn't seen each other since Norwich in '92 where he was dating not one, but two lovely English ladies on alternate evenings!



Picture Taking Time

Those of you that attended the HMG Reunion at Colorado Springs in '86 and or the Reunion at Rapid City in '91 will recall the photograph album that was produced during those reunions. This project was highly successful and provided valuable keepsakes.

As we predict a large attendance at St. Louis, it would seem to be a good time to repeat this operation. Therefore, "REUNIONS" Inc., the same company that produced the last albums, has consented (at no obligation to the 44th BGVA) to photograph all couples and individuals plus candid shot of some of the activities. These pictures will be then made into a "Memory Book" available at a nominal cost.

A photographer will be set up all day Friday in the Hotel for this purpose. It is suggested that those not going on the tours be photographed in the morning so as to permit those on Tour No. 2 to have their pictures taken in the afternoon upon returning from the tours.

How you want to dress for these pictures is optional, casual or otherwise.

There will be ample pages devoted in the album to candid snapshots of activities taken by members, so bring your cameras. Members that were not able to attend the reunion are invited to send in 35mm pictures of themselves to be included. Also those arriving Saturday can have their pictures taken by a designated member and be included in the book.

Those photographed will be sent color proofs and asked to indicate the pose they wish to be used in the book. At that time they may order pictures if so desired.

This is an excellent opportunity to have a lasting record of your friends in the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, so please cooperate and make this project a huge success.

44th Bomb Group

VETERANS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2367

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84110-2367



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Reunion '96 October 3 - 7

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 2 - Issue #4

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Winter, 1997

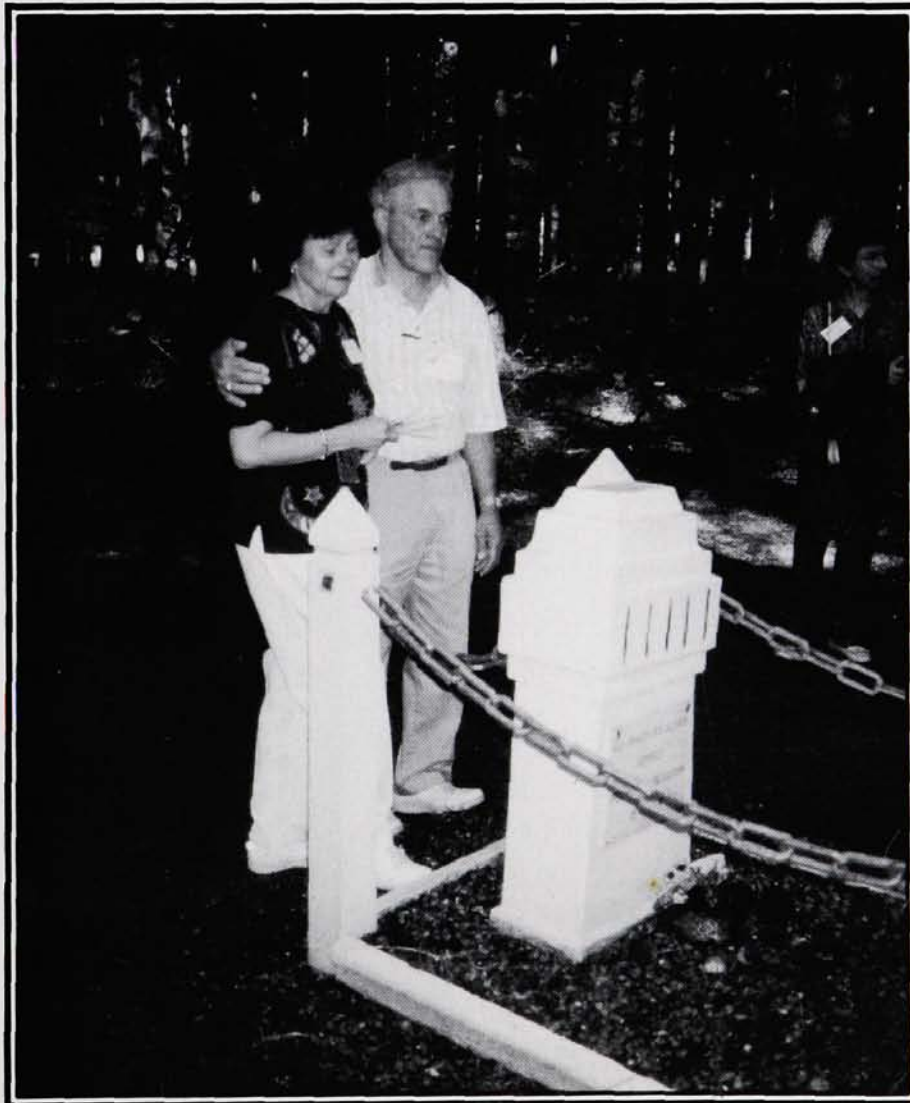
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Instead of a featured airplane for this issue, we have a Cover Lady in the person of Lois Shaeffer Cianci and her husband Tony of Sinking Springs, PA. This is a preamble to installment two of

THE TRIP - THE TRIP

story last issue in which we covered the England part of our tour. We have made this our feature story and cover because the series of ironies, coincidences and completely unforeseen events that occurred during the European portion of our trip not only stretch one's imagination, they exemplify every principle and meaning for which our Association exists.



Lois Shaeffer Cianci and husband Tony at the crash site of the 67th Squadron B-24 which was shot down on January 21, 1944 with her father T/Sgt. Clair P. Shaeffer and his pilot Lt. Frank W. Sobotka, Jr. aboard near Gratenoix, France.

To start, I must refer you back to Vol. 1 - Issue #4, the Winter 1995 copy of The 8-Ball Tails page 12, where we did a rewrite of the beautiful article "Letters of Love" written by Dawn Drago, Staff Writer of the Reading, PA Eagle/Times. The story told of Lois, the little daughter of her single parent father, Technical Sergeant Clair P. Shaeffer, 68th Bomb Squadron and all of the letters he had written to her from the time of his entry into the Air Corps until he died in the shoot down of his plane over France on January 21, 1944.

In the conclusion of our story, we told how Lois, attending an Air Show, approached a man wearing an 8th AF Historical Society cap and inquired how she might find information on the death of her father. He in turn put her in touch with Pete Henry, who put her in touch with us and Will Lundy. Doing his usual great work, Will provided her with all the information he had and that she had sought since, as a five year old, she was informed that her dad was MIA.

In a closing letter to Lois, I told her about the 44th BGVA and informed her that she was a part of the 44th family and we welcomed her membership. I also noted in one of her letters that she hoped, someday, to travel to Nuepre, Belgium and visit the Ardennes American Cemetery where her father was named on the Wall of Honor. I told her I was in the final stages of planning a 44th BGVA tour to England, France and Belgium and I promised if she and her husband would join the tour, I would route the tour to visit the Ardennes Cemetery.

Now, the first coincidence; in November, not long after I received a tour reservation from Lois and her husband Tony, I received a letter from two officers of de L' Association Nationale Des Sous-Officiers de Réserve de French Armée de L' Air (ANSA) translated: National Association of Non-Commissioned Officers of the French Army Air Reserve. It was written by M. Jean-Pierre Marie, Historian and translated by M. Joël Huard, Public Relations Officer, respectively, of the Rouen branch of ANSA. The Association carries on research of the WWII air war over France, and the letter was an inquiry on the loss of two 44th BG aircraft on an 8 March 1943 raid on the railway marshalling yards at Rouen. I sent the letter on to Will for his research and in my answer to them said to expect the information they requested to be provided by our historian. I also noted it was ironic we should hear from them, for I was planning a 44th BGVA trip to England and France and we would be staying in Rouen as a base for a visit to the Normandy Invasion beaches on 6 June 1997.

From that point on the letters full of anticipation and excitement over our visit began to arrive. They offered assistance, English speaking guides; even a change in hotel for better accommodations. Most of all they simply wanted to arrange to visit with and thank us for our part in their liberation from the hated Nazi occupation. Little did we know the wonderful reception that awaited us wherever they had arranged our visit to a memorial or social reception. If there was any concern among us that we would be faced with a haughty and perhaps inhospitable attitude from the French, they were dashed from the moment our bus rolled off the ferry at Dieppe! It was almost comical; when on our last night in Eastbourne, I got a phone call from Joël Huard saying that the reception committee was so excited over our arrival, they could not stand to wait until we reached the hotel in Rouen, so were going to drive to Dieppe to meet us and lead the bus to our first scheduled ceremony! On with the itinerary.

Day 10 - June 5. Even with our early (0700) departure, we had a grand farewell with several of our Eastbourne hosts who had arrived at the hotel in time to have breakfast with us. We were also bidding farewell to Kevin and Diana Lundy and Richard and Betty Haft who were taking only the England portion of the tour and were returning to London for a nights rest before flying home. As partial replacements, we were being joined by Kevin Watson and his father-in-law, Tony Wood, both of Eastbourne. Kevin, a Senior Supervising Flight Attendant for British Airways, was the individual responsible for planning and organizing the "Ruthless" Memorial and all the ceremonies of our Eastbourne visit. Each would prove to be a great asset to our group in his own right.



A 44th BG "Italian Bobby" (Lou DeBlasio) escaping from London.
Ruth and Perry Morse in the next seat.

After a lovely morning tour in our bus to Newhaven, we boarded, bus and all, a SeaLink ferry for a smooth crossing in beautiful weather to Dieppe, France. As our bus came off the ferry and we quickly went through an immigration check, we saw a group of uniformed men holding a sign which welcomed the 44th Bomb Group to France.



Mr. Sylvain Dezelee, President of the ANSA, Normandie Association to greet us with a Welcome Poster at Dieppe.



Sylvain Dezelee and Jean Pierre Marie greeting us at Dieppe.

Those members of the ANSA there to greet us were: Jean Pierre Marie, Joél Huard, and Sylvain Dezelee, President of the ANSA, Normandie Association. After hurried greetings, with the French delegation leading in their car, we set off for Villers Ecalles, a small town outside Rouen, and the first memorial ceremony arranged by the ANSA. When we pulled into what appeared to be the parking lot for the town recreation park, we were amazed to see about 150 people led by The Honorable Mayor, Mr. Albert Coeligniet waiting to greet us.



Roy Owen, Will Lundy and Bob Vance meeting Mayor Albert Coeligniet of Villers Ecalles, France location of the "Miss Diane" crash site.

Another ranking dignitary was Mr. Christian Holle, Sub Prefect de Seine Maritime and approximately 20 fully uniformed ANSA members and a military band were also present. We were introduced to Mr. Maurice Quillen, holder of the United States Medal of Freedom awarded by President Eisenhower for his heroic service as leader of the French Resistance in the Rouen area during the German occupation. Also we met Mr. Guy Cressant, son of the Resistance leader in the Cauville Area during the war.

The next unbelievable coincidence; Guy was age 10 when he and his father found the wreckage of the 68th Sqdn. Frank Sobotka crew aircraft shot down on the 21 January, 1944 raid against the V-1 sites in the Palais de Calais area. T/Sgt. Clair Shaeffer, Flight Engineer on that crew was killed over the target and went down with the plane. He was Lois Cianci's father. This information surfaced during a period of welcoming and interchange of greetings between the French hosts and our group prior to the memorial ceremony we were to attend. After being introduced to Guy Cressant, Lois mentioned that her father had been shot down on January 21, 1944 somewhere in the area. Guy responded that yes, he knew of the crash and its location. When asked by Lois if he knew of her father when she spoke his name, Guy responded that he was not sure but it did sound familiar. He said he could not promise anything, but at his home he was still in possession of some items he and his father had collected from the crash sites of several U.S. aircraft and he would search through these things. Further, if the group desired, he would guide us to the crash site if time could be arranged during our stay.



CRASH
SITE.

With the welcoming over, the entire assembly was led up a street about a hundred yards to an intersection with a small park with a flag draped memorial which marked the (nearby) crash site of the 67th Sqdn. Lt. Clyde Price crew flying "Miss Diane." They were shot down on the Rouen Marshalling Yard raid March 8, 1943.

After eloquent speeches by Mayor Cloenigniet and Sub Prefect Holly and the playing of the National Anthems of France and the U.S., Roy Owen and Will Lundy placed a memorial wreath at the base of the memorial and were instructed to unveil the marker which revealed a newly struck bronze plaque listing the names of the eight crewmen lost in the crash.

Immediately after the ceremony our group was surrounded by the French expressing gratitude for our visit and for the sacrifices by our men to restore their liberty from the German occupation. Then when we boarded the bus and were escorted to the Hotel de Ville (City Hall) to find ourselves guests of the Mayor at a champagne and hors 'd oeuvres reception did the magnitude of sincere gratitude and joy being expressed by the French over our visit begin to sink in. After another welcome by Mayor Coeligniet, Mr. Sylvain Dezellee, President of the ANSA 39.45 Association Du Normande presented the Association Medal of Service to the 44th Bomb Group and a like medal to Leo O. Frazier, Navigator and lone survivor of the 67th Sqdn. Lt. Robert W. Blaine crew, also shot down on the 8 March 1943 Rouen raid. Leo Frazier was unable to accompany the tour for reasons of health; Roy Owen accepted the medals in behalf of the entire 44th Bomb Group and Leo Frazier (presentation of the Frazier medal in Oakley, Utah on July 4 is covered on page 14 of this issue). Lois Cianci

was presented a Souvenir Plate from The French Evereux Air Base in Villers Escalles by Mr. Le Capitaine Relmy, Commandant Le Armee De L'Air Information. All of our men were then asked to autograph litho prints of B-24s for the French.



SIGNING B-24 PICTURE PRINTS AT THE MAYOR'S RECEPTION AT THE VILLERS ESCALLES HOTEL DE VILLE.

We were then notified that we were due at another reception and must again board the bus. We were also told by our ANSA hosts that after conferring, they had agreed that if our group concurred, on the morning of June 7, before our departure to Paris, they would meet us at the hotel and escort us to the Sobotka crew crash site for a brief visit. It was unanimously voted to make that visit.

THE TOURING EIGHTBALLERS LINE UP FOR THE CAVIAR AT THE MARITIME DEPARTMENT RECEPTION IN ROUEN (CAILLIER, ADRIAN AND DOVEY ALWAYS WEAR THEIR CAPS AT COCKTAILS AND CAVIAR RECEPTIONS).



A short trip took us to the Hotel Du department De Seine Maritime, a beautiful multi-story building facing the Seine River, where we were met by our host the President Du Conseil General De Seine Maritime, Mr. Charles Revet in a lovely large reception room. The entourage was again treated to eloquent expressions of gratitude for the part the 44th took in the air war that helped to liberate the country. The elegance of the reception also rose with the addition of caviar to the hors d'oeuvres.

The irony of all this was what with our very early departure from Eastbourne to make the Ferry, we were expecting to go first to the hotel in Rouen, check-in, freshen up, change into some appropriate clothing and then proceed to meet the Mayor of Villers Escalle. The ANSA party meeting us realized with all the activity they had scheduled, we would never make it if we made the stop at our hotel. So there we were in Dockers, short sleeve shirts, sweaters and jackets; all of the women in slacks and everywhere we went our hosts were in suits and ties (or uniforms) and the ladies in dresses. In spite of us really looking like "tourists," our appearance was politely overlooked and we were treated as though we were formally attired.

When this, our last of the day, reception concluded, on the way back to our hotel, Jean Pierre Marie and Joél Huard led our bus to a beautiful vista overlooking most of Rouen at sunset. Easily in view were the River Seine and the Railway Marshalling Yard which was the 8 March 1943 target objective of the 44th Bomb Group.

Upon return to our hotel we were properly checked-in, had plenty of time for shower or, if the preference of Arnold Dovey, to bathe, dress and after cocktails enjoyed a great dinner in the hotel joined by Jean Pierre and Joél.

Day 11 - June 6. To appropriately spend the 53rd anniversary of D-Day on the Beaches of Normandy was our plan and we did it perfectly. On the nice morning trip from Rouen, we stopped at mid-morning in Bayeux so those desiring could visit the William the Conqueror Center which houses the 231 foot long Bayeux Tapestry which depicts the 1066 Norman invasion of England by William the Conqueror or stroll through this lovely small city.

Jean Pierre and Joél who accompanied us on the bus this day had arranged for a retired French Army Colonel who had landed with the Canadians on June 6 to act as our guide. He was a gentle and patient man who led us along in his car and stopped at each point of interest to tell us of the significance of the various beach positions in the height of the landings. We started at Omaha Beach which is overlooked by the everlasting beauty of the American Cemetery. It is often said that each American owes him or herself a visit to this beautifully serene piece of United States soil to view the monument to all of the Servicemen and Women of all branches who paid the ultimate price for the liberation of Europe and freedom from the tyranny of Fascism. We visited Pont du Hoc, where the Special Forces scaled the cliff and captured this observation point which commanded a 180 degree view of the invasion area; we saw Arromanches where some of the steel and concrete dock segments which were floated in and sunk to form a harbor are still visible; we saw the one gap in the sand cliffs where the U.S. invasion forces were able to ascend and advance off of Omaha Beach. We were all the way to Utah Beach and the Village of Montebourg which changed hands five times in the first few days of the assault and was left in a pile of rubble when the U.S. 4th Army overran the German defenses and advanced inland.

Aside from the ravages of the sustained bombing and naval shelling of the fortifications on Point du Hoc, there is little evidence of the massive battles which ensued on these quiet beaches where the visitors now stroll and the children play on the gently sloping sand. It is difficult to imagine the scenes that we have seen on film or possibly from the air on June 6, 1944 as actually happening until one returns up the hill and strolls among the row after row of white cross or Star of David marked graves of those we lost. Every Bomb Squadron of the 44th Bomb Group has men at rest there. This most memorable of days finished with a return to our hotel and a lovely dinner with some of our ANSA friends.



Dick and Betty Lynch dine with Mary and Lee Aston at the Hotel Mercure in Rouen.



D-Day, prior to departing for the Normandy beaches, Roy Owen and Doug McPhail joined Marilyn and Mel Murrack and Lois Cianci for breakfast at the Hotel Mercure in Rouen; Lolly Owen took the picture and Tony was wandering around with his camcorder.



Joel Huard and Jean Pierre Marie stayed with us and returned to the hotel for dinner after our D-Day tour of the invasion beaches.

Day 12 - Sunday, June 7. After an early breakfast and checkout, we met our ANSA escorts comprised of about six or seven cars and we set out for the Sobotka crash site in a forested hill area called Beaussault near the village of Gratenois. After driving a few miles, we left the paved road and proceeded up a lightly travelled dirt road until we reached a suitable area for the bus and the autos to park. It was a rather cool morning with some cloud cover and we departed the bus for a walk of about 200 yards along a barely discernible road in a lovely young forest of trees about six to eight inches in diameter and the ground blanketed with leaves and fir needles. When we came to a small sign with some French wording, we turned into the forest and had walked about 50 yards when we came upon a memorial marking the crash site. The small site was bordered by a shiny metal chain suspended from white painted cement boundary posts. Lying on the ground in the center of the chained area were several sizable fragments of bulletproof glass, some metal fragments and a small electric actuator motor from the downed B-24. Tearfully, Lois Cianci bent over the chain boundary to feel and stroke those pieces that had fallen from the sky with her father. After two or three very touching moments, the group was asked to gather around the marker with Guy Cressant and Lois standing at the head of the marker whereupon Guy reached into the inner pocket of his jacket and withdraw a small notebook and began to speak in French reading from his notes. In the course of his remarks one could hear mention of Sobotka and Clair Shaeffer and the date 21 January 1944.

Translator Jean Pierre Marie related that the 10 year old Guy and his father, head of the French Resistance, had reached the crash site before the Germans and were able to do little more at the time than gather the dog tags of those they could find, then leave the scene. It was the practice to send one of the usual pair of dog tags back via the underground so to reach the military unit of the deceased. What of the remaining dog tag? It was kept in the event the other was lost. Guy Cressant again reached into his jacket and withdraw a small box and presented it to Lois Cianci. Her hands shaking, she opened the box to find a dog tag identifying Clair P. Shaeffer, his next of kin Lois Shaeffer and the address where she resided with her Aunt. Every person at the scene was awash in tears.

AT THIS UNBELIEVABLE MOMENT 53 YEARS 4 MONTHS AND 17 DAYS AFTER THE CRASH, Lois holds HER FATHER'S DOG TAG TO HER LIPS.



GUY CRESSANT HANDING LOIS SHAEFFER CIANCI THE BOX CONTAINING THE CLAIR P. SHAEFFER DOG TAG.

Miraculously at that moment a very quiet, gentle rain began to fall. Lolly Owen was heard to say: "It's as though God is crying with us." After a few moments of joyful astonishment over this amazing coincidence, as we were preparing to leave, the rain ceased to fall, the sun came out and a small miracle had come to pass. Unforeseen, unplanned and unbelievable, yet there it was 53 years and 4 months later, a "Missing in Action" father was joined with his beloved daughter by a small fire-blackened steel pendant that had at last fulfilled its purpose.

We bade farewell to our new friends of the ANSA who had, in gratitude and respect for all the veterans of the 44th Bomb Group extended the hand of welcome to us with such sincerity we, on the departing bus, were somehow silently saddened for almost 20 minutes, each thinking over the joys of the past two days and nights. Happiness soon returned when we reached Giverny, the home and wondrous gardens of the renowned French impressionist Claude Monet. There we had lunch and a memorable two hour stroll through this colorful legacy to the French people by the artist.



THE VIEW OF THE OMAHA BEACH CEMETERY FROM IN FRONT OF THE STATUE.

Leaving Giverny, we proceeded to Paris where we stayed at a hotel of good name, but of no similarity to the member of the chain on our stay in Rouen. Operated by Hindu Management, we had the worst check-in of any trip I can recall. I will never forget our members struggling with their bags when they were dumped in a hallway and we were left to either wait for the one bellman or wrestle your bags to your room on your own. From there it got worse, so I'll leave it alone except to vow never again will you hear the name Owen associated with the name Hotel Relais Mercure in Paris. We stayed two nights only with one full day free for everyone to do as they pleased. This means there are probably almost as many different adventure stories of who did what as there were on the trip. We did all get together to avoid another dinner at the hotel, and relying on the ingenuity of Keith Waterhouse our driver (and Waterhouse owner), had a great fun and reasonably priced dinner at a place he had utilized before. After dinner, Keith took the whole bus load to the Montparnasse district where we went to the top of one of Paris' taller buildings and had a beautiful Paris night lights view of the city.

Day 14 - June 9. Leaving Paris we travelled Northeast toward Liege, Belgium with a rest stop and visit in Reims. We then continued on to Bastogne for lunch and a walking tour of the (then small) village where the 101st Airborne were encircled during the Battle of the Bulge. When told to surrender or be killed, General McAuliffe, 101st commander, answered "nuts!" Traveling on we arrived at the U.S. Cemetery at Ardennes



Will Lundy and Roy Owen in front of the OMAHA BEACH CEMETERY STATUARY SYMBOL OF ALL THOSE AMERICANS AT REST HERE.

We had previously notified them of our arrival and that we would be accompanied by Lois Shaeffer Cianci, daughter of T/Sgt. Clair P. Shaeffer, KIA whose name is marked on the Cemetery Wall of Honor. She was met by the Cemetery Superintendent who escorted her to the point on the Wall of Honor where her father's name appears. It was marked with a beautiful wreath. Taking her then for a stroll through the grave markers of those unknown servicemen, the superintendent explained to Lois that after the war this cemetery had served as one of the few forensic cemeteries in Europe where last extensive efforts were made to identify each remains.



JEAN PIERRE MARIE AND JOËL HUARD ON THE NORMANDY BEACHES TOUR.



J.R. REVILLE AT THE BASTOÛNE MEMORIAL.



IRENE LUNDY AND OUR GUIDE AT ONE OF THE GERMAN ARTILLERY BUNKERS AT POINT DU HOC.

When this proved impossible, the remains were buried with the marker reading "Known Only to God." He went on to say that while her father's remains were not positively identified, she could rest assured that he was buried here among those also unknown.

As we were leaving the cemetery, Lois, although again with eyes reddened with tears, had a look of relief and quietly told me she felt, finally, the wondering and thinking and hoping that someday he would come back were over. Now she knows and can go home and tell her children the true story of the death of their gallant grandfather. She said she could never begin to tell the members of the 44th BGVA how profoundly thankful she is for making this all possible for her.

My only wish is that all the membership could have shared this joyful experience.



LOIS SHAEFFER CIANCI AT THE ARDENNES NATIONAL CEMETERY, BELGIUM, KNEELING OVER THE WALL OF HONOR MARKER BEARING HER FATHER'S NAME.

Day 15 - June 10. As you might expect, this will be an anti-climactic finish. We left Leige, after a splendid nights rest at the Holiday Inn, on our journey to Calais with a stopover in Brussels for lunch and some browsing.



The wreath and marker memorializing T/Sgt. Clair P. SHAEFFER, 68th Bomb Sqdn., 44th Bomb Group.



The Plaza in Brussels.



The Little Lost Boy in Brussels.

From Calais we had a much shorter ferry trip to Dover. After a drop off of Kevin and Terry, it was on to London and the Kensington Hilton for a last night of farewells. It was a great ride; one for which every member of the 44th can look upon with immense pride, for it magnificently fulfilled the basic mandate of our charter: to bring together, physically or spiritually, the family and comrades of both our deceased and living members.

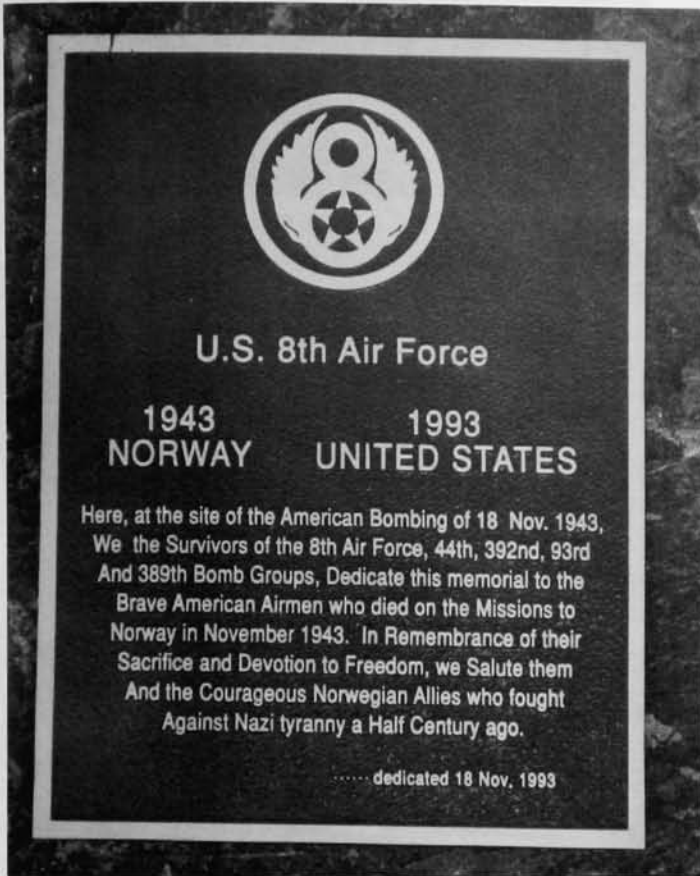


Col. Bill CAMERON and his lovely bride, HENRI.

MORE TRAVEL

Newlyweds Bill Cameron and his lovely wife Henri travelled to Norway in early September on what could be termed a delayed honeymoon.

In Oslo, Bill and Henri were escorted by USAF (Ret) Col. Knute Kinne to view the new stone and bronze memorial to the American Airmen who lost their lives on the 18 November 1943 raid on Kjellar Airfield. The new memorial dedicated on 18 November 1993, which replaced a wooden marker, was funded by donations raised by Ed Dobson, Jr. whose pilot father was lost, and Forrest Clark who flew on the mission. Bill and Henri were quartered in a very old farm house which is being restored by the Norwegian Air Force. The house is located on a hillside overlooking the airfield. Bill reports a number of bomb craters from the raid are still distinguishable on the hillside.



The Kjeller Airfield Memorial



Bill CAMERON with Col. (RET.) KNUTE KINNE of Oslo, at the Kjeller Airfield Memorial.

Some great poetry from the ranks.

Editor: Our hard working U.K. Representative, Steve Adams came up with this great piece of poetry from his 66th archives which Cpl. Asa W. Dye dedicated to (then) Lt. Col. Dexter Hodge. He says Col. Hodge wanted a poetical resume of the 44th Bomb Group and this was his inspiration:

The Forty Fourth Bomb Group

We've pulled our share of missions,
And we've really had a "go"
Among the first to fly "Old Glory"
Out across the E.T.O.

There's a cloud ripped trail behind us
From the "Dame of Liberty"
When we kissed good-bye in parting,
With a vow to keep her free.

We were glad to see old London,
And hear "Tommy's" Cheerio!
He admits he'd almost had it,
And was glad we'd have a "go."

So with mighty engines roaring,
And a sandwich made of Spam
We went out to meet the "Jerry"
With these "Libs" of Uncle Sam.

Then we found we had an airship
That really stood the test
And it's fifties blazed a verdict
Sending lots of "Jerries" west.

Our wings have thrown their shadow
Over France and Italy,
The 44th has blasted targets
Over all of Germany.

They've heard our engines roaring
from Gibraltar to Oran
And Rommel will long remember
The fighting "Libs" of Uncle Sam.

Yes, we've blazed a trail of glory
That will end in victory
Then only one more "mission"
For the 44th there will be.

Then we'll all attend a "briefing"
Just to hear the C.O. say,
Navigators please, attention,
Plot your course for the U.S.A.!



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

6304 Meadowridge Drive • Santa Rosa, CA 95409 • 707-538-4726 • Fax 707-538-1212

July 25, 1997

Group Captain A. F. 'Bertie' Wallace CBE, DFC, RAF (Ret)
President
Eastbourne Combined Ex-Services Association
c/o Mr. Nigel Whitely MISM
24 Tavistock
Devonshire Place
Eastbourne BN21 4AG England

Dear Group Captain Wallace:

This letter is purposely overdue in order that I could write, organize and see to the publishing of our journal which, in the enclosed Summer issue, we have told the story of the wonderful visit by a contingent of our 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association to your beautiful city.

Our June 2-5 visit was prompted by reports from our small delegation which were able to attend the original "Ruthless" Memorial dedication two years ago. From the welcome extended to those members, we expected a most hospitable welcome by the caring people of Eastbourne; the ceremonial events and shower of heartfelt respect and love extended to us by your city was such an emotional series of events we were overjoyed and shall never forget our visit with you. Particularly the lovely buffet luncheon hosted by The Royal Air Force Association at your Club. This afforded us the opportunity to mix and socialize with some of the wonderful people of Eastbourne for which we are most grateful.

The honor, respect and love your citizens showered upon us demonstrated, most beautifully, the bond of friendship and love between the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association and the people of Eastbourne. A bond forged in the flaming wreckage in which ten of our valorous comrades paid the ultimate price for the liberty we now enjoy. It is our hope this bond will be an enduring one. We thank you,

Sincerely,


Roy W. Owen, President
Colonel USAF (Ret)

p.s. Please pass on my personal greetings and thanks to all the members of the Royal British Legion Band and those members of the various branches who proudly bore their colors so impressively to make the "Ruthless" memorial ceremony complete.



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION

6304 Meadowridge Drive • Santa Rosa, CA 95409 • 707-538-4726 • Fax 707-538-1212

July 24, 1997

Cllr. Beryl Healy
Mayor of Eastbourne
Town Hall Chambers
Grove Road, Eastbourne BN21
East Sussex, England

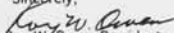
Dear Mayor Healy:

This letter is purposely overdue in order that I could write, organize and see to the publishing of our journal which, in the enclosed Summer issue, we have told the story of the magnificent visit by a contingent of our 44th Bomb Group to your beautiful city.

I am not certain that I can properly describe the dimensions of emotion felt by all of the 44th visitors to have been a part of all the range of heartfelt ceremonial events which you and the caring people of Eastbourne arranged in honor of our visit. Beginning with your hosting of the joyous reception and tour of the City Hall; to the solemn and beautiful reverence of the Butts Brow ceremonies honoring our "Ruthless" crew, then on to the hosted luncheon by the Royal Air Force Club and the tour of the Redoubt Fortress. Finally, along with the leaders of Eastbourne, honoring us with your presence at the gala dinner marking the end of our visit to Eastbourne.

I must say, to all of we American visitors, the welcoming embrace with which your city took us into their arms was beyond our highest expectations. The honor, respect and love your citizens showered upon us demonstrated, most beautifully, the bond of friendship and love between the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association and the people of Eastbourne. A bond forged in the flaming wreckage in which ten of our valorous comrades paid the ultimate price for the liberty we now enjoy. It is our hope this bond will be an enduring one. Please accept our sincere thanks and when it is opportune pass our gratitude on to all of those who participated and made our visit so memorable.

Sincerely,


Roy W. Owen, President
Colonel USAF (Ret)

Our 1998 Project

At our Salt Lake City Board of Directors, Col. Dick Butler, our Group Vice President to 2nd Air Division, briefed the Board on the project undertaken by 2nd AD to commission the sculpting of a 1/6th scale monumental bronze B-24 Liberator model to be placed in the USAF Academy Honor Court adjacent to the Academy Chapel at Colorado Springs.

The sculpture, to be done by Robert Henderson of Canon City, will join bronze models of the P-40, P-38, P-47, P-51 and, the most recent addition, a B-17. Henderson is recognized as the only sculptor to create monumental bronze airplanes. The gathering of models of the most famous of the AAF warbirds of WWII in the Honor Court is meant as "The Study Hall" of these aircraft and will be studied and seen by millions from all nations and future generations to visit USAF grounds each year. Most important of those to whom the Honor Court will truly be a classroom are our new leaders - our future - our Cadets. Failure to have a B-24 in that study hall would be unconscionable!

In answer to this challenge, your Board has unanimously approved joining with 2nd AD in the financing of this project as our major '98 effort. While 2nd AD will be the ultimate collection point for the various 2nd AD units, each unit is free to organize its own finding campaign. Our campaign is on "contribute as you feel you can" for individual members and the Board has approved an Association matching contribution of up to \$4,000. This means for every individual member contributed dollar, our treasury will donate a matching dollar until we reach the "as we feel we can" \$4,000. Point. We, of course, would like our total contribution to reach the \$8,000 mark. It is my understanding that our Treasurer left the General Membership meeting with around \$1,200, so we are off to a typical 44th "go for it" effort. (You guys make me so proud to be your leader, I can't tell you!). I think the most contributed by any 2nd AD unit is \$7,500 -- so what does that tell you? MAKE YOUR CHECK OUT TO: 44th BGVA and down in the Memo space write: Bronze Model Fund. Mail to: 44th BGVA, P.O. Box 2367, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367.

Farewell to General Leon William Johnson, USAF (Ret)

13 September 1904 - 10 November 1997



Our beloved combat commander and President Emeritus, General Leon W. Johnson passed away quietly in his residence at the Fairfax in Ft. Belvoir, VA on 10 November 1997.

Memorial services were held on Monday, 17 November 1997 at the Fort Myers Chapel at 1000 hours followed by interment in Arlington National Cemetery.

The General shared most of his military career with his wife, the former Lucille Taylor of San Antonio who predeceased him. He is survived by his two daughters; Sue, who is married to Major General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Jr. USAF (Ret), and Sarah Abbot Johnson.

Born in Columbia, Missouri he spent his boyhood there and Moline, Kansas. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in June 1926. He later received his Masters Degree in Meteorology at the California Institute of Technology. After a number of flying assignments and progression in rank, the entry of our nation into World War II saw him selected as one of the first four flying officers assigned to the 8th Air Force when it was activated at Savannah, Georgia. He served as

Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations for that command in its formative period. He accompanied the 8th Air Force to England in June 1942. In January 1943, he assumed command of the 44th Bomb Group. In June of that year, he took the group to North Africa on loan to the 9th Air Force for the daring low level attack on the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania. For his heroic leadership of that raid, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. On his return to England in September 1943, he organized the 14th Combat Wing and remained its commander until the end of the war in Europe.

General Johnson went on to a number of command and important staff assignments such as Chief of Personnel Services, Hq. USAF; Commander 15th Air Force; First Commander of 3rd Air Force Mildenhall, England, Commander Continental Air Command; USAF Representative, Military Staff Committee, United Nations; U.S. Representative, NATO Military Staff Committee; Air Deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe at SHAPE Hq., Paris before his retirement.

During this illustrious career, General Johnson never forgot his combat group, the 44th. Over the years since the 44th had written its pages of valorous deeds indelibly in the history of the air war over Europe, this heroic leader remained humble, always disclaiming his role in the Ploesti Raid success as being any more a contribution to the mission as any other. It seemed his happiest act when at an assemblage of 44th Ploesti veterans, he would mingle among the men wearing the Medal of Honor around his neck and asking, "Would you care to hold your medal? Please take it in your hand, it belongs to you, I am merely wearing it in your honor."

We will miss you, Sir. It has been a privilege and an honor to have served our Nation with you under the colors of the 44th Bomb Group and 14th Combat Wing. May God give us more like you. The family requests that memorial remembrances be made to the Air Force Aid Society in his name. The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association will make a donation on behalf of our members.

1st Lt. Leo Frazier, 66th Squadron is Decorated

In early 1943, 1st Lt. Leo O. Frazier, Lifetime resident of Oakley, Utah, was assigned to the 66th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group in England as Navigator on the 1st Lt. Robert W. Blaine crew. On 8 March 1943 their B-24 aircraft was shot down by German fighters while attacking the railway marshalling yards of Rouen, France. Lt. Frazier managed to bail out and survive, only to be captured and held in a POW camp until the war ended. He was the lone survivor of the shoot-down.

Leo returned to his Oakley home after the war where he operated a family store, and served his community as Mayor and Summit County Assessor.

When plans were being made for the 44th BGVA trip to England and France and we had began to communicate with the National Association of Non-Commissioned Officers of the French Army Air Reserve regarding our plans to visit the Normandy Beaches using Rouen as a base, they invited us to visit the crash sites of the two 44th aircraft lost on 8 March 1943. When we notified them that Leo Frazier, lone survivor of the Blaine crew was alive, the French extended a most excited invitation for him to accompany our trip so they could honor him. Unfortunately, he did not feel up to the foreign travel. During our visit, the French Air Reserve Association presented their Medal of Allied Service, commemorating participation in the liberation of France, to the 44th Bomb Group and individually to Lt. Leo O. Frazier. Both medals were accepted for the Group and for Leo by 44th BGVA President, Roy Owen.

Upon return home to Salt Lake City (60 miles from Oakley) our Treasurer, Jerry Folsom, unbeknown to Leo, made arrangements with Oakley Mayor Dick Woolstenhulme, Leo's son Blake and local veterans and Leo's family to attend a surprise presentation of the medal during the intermission of the annual 4th of July Rodeo in Oakley. The emotional presentation, made before an audience of 5,500 rodeo fans, included a congratulatory telegram from 44th BGVA member Robert I. Brown, who was Leo's roommate in the Stalag Luft III prison camp.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF SPENCER YOUNG OF THE DESERT NEWS, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.





THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

WOW! What a show! It sounds like a lot of hype after each reunion to keep saying this one was greater than the last one, and so on, but those who came will know what I'm saying is our Reunion Co-Chairmen, Jim Clements and Jerry Folsom TALKED THE TALK AND WALKED THE WALK this time! Salt Lake City and our fourth was REUNION -- BIG TIME. In spite of unexpected construction on the hotel's third floor and getting our registration desk stuck in a remote corner of the Hilton Hotel, everything else was super well planned and executed. The weather intervened causing a change from the Snowbird Tour up in the 10k altitude and flying snow, to a city tour and trip to the Kennecott Copper Mine (biggest man made hole on the planet). But everyone seemed to enjoy Plan B. Other highlights were the great dance band of Bud Hutchings we had at the banquet (would you believe folks stayed and danced 'till 11 p.m. instead of jumping up and running for bed as soon as they finished dinner!)

Sunday morning we were honored guests at the nationwide TV broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The announcer gave a brief combat history of the 44th, then asked us to rise while we were honored with a huge ovation. Then after the broadcast, we were treated with the choir singing Battle Hymn of The Republic in our honor. Mighty touching! That afternoon we bussed out to Hill Air Force Base for a great lunch at the Officers Club followed by a welcome by the Air Force Heritage Foundation of Utah Chairman, Lt. Gen. Marc C. Reynolds (Ret) and Col. Nathan H. Mazer (Ret) in the beautifully restored WWII Chapel of the museum grounds. While still seated, we were given an address written and delivered by Captain (Chaplain) Phillip A. Baker, USAF. The thrust of his talk (not sermon) was a thanks to us and others like us (and his Dad, a WWII Navy veteran) for refreshing his, and the minds of his generation, of the sacrifices we made for the precious liberty they and their children now enjoy. The memorial service was beautifully closed by the retreat marched to the haunting strains of Amazing Grace played by a Bass Drum and Bagpipe trio of young women dressed in traditional kilts. They were Misses Jennie Jensen, Celeste Mahnke and Stephanie Winters, directed by Ms. Merilee Terry; all from Ben Lomond High School, Ogden, Utah.

The next excitement for the group (especially your Prez) was a walk through their aircraft museum,

where in the museum building sits the SR-71C which I was privileged to fly and join the ranks of those who have flown the Blackbird in excess of Mach 3 in level flight, and fewer still, those whose flying career spanned from the B-24 to the SR-71.

We finished our last day of this great reunion with a splendid Italian buffet dinner after which we were entertained by a 40 man strong Mens Barbershop choir called The Beehive State Men's Chorus. They sang for a full hour and really capped off our visit to Salt Lake City. A BIG THANK YOU JIM AND JERRY -- FROM ALL OF US THERE -- A JOB WELL DONE!

Speaking of jobs well done, we elected three new squadron representatives to the Board. P.H. "Phil" Phillips will replace Mel Trager in the Support Units seat; Tony Mastradone replaces Robert I. Brown representing the 67th Squadron; and Michel "Mike" Yuspeh is replacing Richard "Dick" Pedersen in the 506th seat. To those stepping down, you have done a tremendous job in representing your constituencies during this critical period of re-birth and getting the Association up and running. You are all loyal, strong and proven men and all know one does not have to occupy a seat on the Board to serve our Association. There will be need for your help in the future and I know you will answer the call. For those joining the Board, congratulations. The membership has given you their trust and confidence and I am looking forward to having you on the management team as we continue to lead our Association to new successes.

LOLLY AND I WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR -- MELE KALIKIMAKA AND HAU'OLI MAKAHIKI HOU. I will see you in Savannah in October.



Roy Owen, President



1997
A REALLY
GREAT
BIG
REUNION



THE TREASURER AND HIS LOVE, BEV REALLY LOVE TO DANCE!



JIM AND JEAN CAILLER "SHOWING OFF."

A lot has already been said about the overall program, and the photos below capture the fun and enjoyment everyone seemed to have at the scheduled events, but I find myself short of pictures taken in that great unscheduled activity THE HOSPITALITY ROOM. Really, for the first time in our four reunion history, have we had so many of the wives come in, sit down, and stay to visit. It was really great. The atmosphere was friendly, lots of laughter, even a bridge game. The smokers were mindful and stepped outside when they needed to puff (which had a lot to do with it). There is no question, it was the happiest, most fun hospitality room we've ever had. It taught me a lesson, when we negotiate for future reunions, we're going to talk about a big, comfortable hospitality room as first priority!



Lolly EVEN GOT THE PREZ OUT ON THE FLOOR!



CHARLIE AND CAROL SIMPSON HEADING OUT TO DANCE.



BOB MYERS HAD BERYL APGAR SWINGIN' OUT!

TOM AND SARAH
PARSONS REALLY
UNDERSTAND THE
"BIG BAND" STUFF.



TONY AND CATHY MASTRADONE IN THE BACK GROUND.



"FRITZI" SELASKY TELLING IT LIKE IT WAS!

CHANGE IN '98 REUNION PLf PLEASE MAKE NOTE

NOTICE - NOTICE - NOTICE
 Just returned from Savannah;
NEW CONFIRMED REUNION DATES:
October 25 - 28, 1998

Days Inn/Suite on Riverfront.
 Reservation forms will be in Spring Issue of 8-Ball Tails.

We recently got word from our Savannah Museum Display Chairman, Tom Parsons, that the expected completion date for the 44th BG Ploesti Raid display in the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum is August, 1998. The Board agrees the 44th members should assemble to dedicate and view our display as soon as possible after completion. Accordingly we will slip the new Orleans reunion to 1999 and plan our '98 reunion for Savannah, GA and the Museum. This was unanimously approved. The dates available to us for the Museum are October 23, 24 and 25, so we will follow the usual four day schedule and start the reunion on October 22. Mark your calendars for October 22 through 25, 1998.

Mike Yuspah, our new Reunion Chairman, will be meeting with me in Savannah on December 2 to make arrangements for hotel or motel accommodations. Unfortunately we could not have that information in time for the 8-Ball Tails deadline which will be in the mail the first week in December. All of the details on the reunion program and our housing will be forthcoming in the Spring issue of the 8-Ball Tails. In the meantime, at the bottom of this page there is a Reunion Pre-Registration form. If you are planning to attend this most significant reunion, it would be a really big help to Mike in his planning for your maximum enjoyment of this historic area, to have you fill out the form to the best of your ability and send it to him.

The program and costs will be approximately what we had in Salt Lake City and we will have our usual schedule: Registration and Reception Thursday; Friday a tour of Savannah and free afternoon for exploring the River Walk, Squadron Dinners in the evening; Saturday morning, General Membership meeting, lunch and tour 8th Air Force Museum, evening cocktails and Banquet; Sunday, Buffet Breakfast and farewell.
 SEE YOU IN SAVANNAH! Your Prez.

CUT HERE

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association 1998 Reunion Registration Form

Please Print:

Last Name _____ First Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Guests _____ Total to Attend: _____

- Option #1: Full Reunion Number _____
- Option #2: Thursday, Friday (Squadron Dinner) Saturday (Banquet) Number _____
- Option #3: Saturday (Banquet), Sunday (Lunch & Buffet) Number _____
- Option #4: Saturday Banquet and Dance Only Number _____



Mail to: MICHAEL YUSPEH • 7214 Sardonyx Avenue • New Orleans, LA 70124



A 1998 44th BGVA Tour



For all of those who were unable to attend the Salt Lake City Reunion, we were getting so many verbal questions from the membership asking were we going to have another trip like the one we had last Spring, that we decided to run a survey at the General Membership Meeting. Not surprising, I guess, after the first installment of the trip story telling all about our adventures, out of 80 responses (usually representing husband and wife) we had enough "YES" we would want to travel on the same itinerary as the '97 trip that we already have a bus full, (this doesn't mean that because someone filled out a survey that they have reserved places on the bus) so we are going to be off on another one next June.

There will be some small variations such as having an outlying hotel on our visit to Paris because of the World Soccer Tournament, but essentially we will visit Norwich, Shipdham, Duxford, Eastbourne, Rouen, Paris, Bastogne and Brussels. See the Outline Itinerary. We will be fine tuning the details and have them to you well before the trip dates.

IN THE MEANTIME, FILL OUT AND SEND IN YOUR RESERVATION/DEPOSIT FORM AS SOON AS YOU CAN. ENGLAND AND FRANCE WILL BE CROWDED THIS SUMMER BECAUSE OF THE WORLDS SOCCER TOURNAMENT. WE NEED TO BOOK OUR HOTEL REQUIREMENTS AS SOON AS WE CAN TO BEAT THE WORLD'S SOCCER CROWDS WHICH WILL JAM LONDON AND PARIS THIS SUMMER.

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association 1998 England and/or French Tour Outline Itinerary

- June 6 Day 1 Arrive London from New York.
- June 7 Day 2 Morning sightseeing tour of London-afternoon free.
- June 8 Day 3 Leave for Norwich-afternoon visit to Maddingly Cemetary.
- June 9 Day 4 Free day in Norwich.
- June 10 ... Day 5 Shipdham tour - picnic lunch and evening bar-b-que.
- June 11 ... Day 6 Leave for Eastbourne - Duxford lunchtime visit.
- June 12 ... Day 7 Ruthless Memorial Service - 1066 Country tour; p.m. tea. Evening, gala dinner hosted by the Mayor of Eastbourne and the local member of Parliament.
- June 13 ... Day 8 End of British Tour (depart for USA) or French tour - leave for Normandy - stay in Rouen.
- June 14 ... Day 9 Visit to Landing Beaches and Bayeaux.
- June 15 ... Day 10 Free day in Rouen.
- June 16 ... Day 11 Leave for destination near Paris.
- June 17 ... Day 12 Paris sightseeing tour; optional Bateau Mouche cruise on the River Seine, optional evening dinner in top city restaurant.
- June 18 ... Day 13 Day at leisure.
- June 19 ... Day 14 Leave for Brussels via Bastogne.
- June 20 ... Day 15 Leave Brussels for London overnight.
- June 21 ... Day 16 Leave for USA.



The above itinerary is subject to change, depending on local arrangements being made.

**44th Bomb Group Veterans Association
1998 England and/or French Tour Airline Reservation/Deposit Form**

Please reserve _____ flights for persons named below from JFK-New York to London on June 5, 1998 - Return date _____. If you wish to return at a later date Open Jaw ticket cost will be given on request. Group fare for tour dates: £359, tax included.

Please Print:

Title Number	Given Name	Surname	Frequent Flyer #
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Lead Name _____ Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____ Fax: (_____) _____ - _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I wish to pay the deposit of £75 Sterling per person by Credit Card (Visa or MasterCard only) Total amount £ _____ Sterling.
 Card Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Expiration Date: _____
 Deposit Non-refundable. Balance due 8 weeks prior to departure.



Signature: _____

Mail to: One Stop World, 163 Terminus Road, Eastbourne BN21 3NX, England; Attention: Alan Bacon
Inquiries: Roy Owen at (707) 538-4726

----- CUT & HERE -----

**WATERHOUSE TOURS
44th Bomb Group England/France, Belgium Tour**

Please reserve _____ spaces on ENGLISH TOUR ONLY *£869. OR _____ spaces on the entire ENGLISH/FRENCH TOUR *£1363. (* Approximate prices subject to adjustment). Group fare for tour dates: £359, tax included.

Please Print:

Last Name _____ First Name: _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone: (_____) _____ - _____ Fax: (_____) _____ - _____

Names of other persons travelling _____

I wish to pay the deposit of Sterling £200 per person by Credit Card (Visa or MasterCard only) Total amount £ _____ Sterling.
 Card Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Expiration Date: _____
 Balance due 8 weeks prior to departure.

Signature: _____



Mail to: Waterhouse Tours, Ltd., Dillons Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6JG, England
Inquiries: Roy Owen at (707) 538-4726



Beating the Bushes

By Art Hand & Will Lundy

Winter, 1997

DONALD E. CARLSON: 1455 2nd Avenue, Apt. 1314, San Diego, CA 92101. Radio Operator for Lt. Gerald G. Lindsay. 68th Squadron.

THEODORE "TED" CLICK: 71 Fairway Terrace, Winchester, TN 37398. Tail Gunner for Bill A. Dolan crew. 68th Squadron.

HARRELL L. GARDNER: 481 East Lydia Highway, Hartsville, SC 29550. Tail Gunner for C.N. Atkin's crew. 506th Squadron.

ELWOOD "EDDIE" HAIRR: 1530 Rock Spring Street, Greensboro, NC 27405-3716. Turret Gunner on L. J. Winsatt/J.W. Wood crew. This man completed his tour on B-17 Memphis Belle.

WALTER LOCKETT: 103 Castleshoals Drive, Granite Shoals, TX 78654. H.S. Borkowski's crew as Bombardier. 506th Squadron.

THERESA MURPHY MCKINNEY: 308 Goodwin, Eliot, ME 03903. Daughter of William T. Murphy, KIA on 18 November 1943 when Lt. J.L. Houle's crew ditched, out of fuel. 67th Squadron.

MARVIN J. REDDICK: 3241 Harbor Beach Drive, Lake Wells, FL 33583. Co-pilot for A.H. Dittmer (68th Sq. POW after being shot down on 24 August 1944.)

CHARLES TORNO: 2224 Edwards Street, St. Louis, MO 63110. Engineer for J.W. Parks, Jr. on 10 May 1944. 68th Squadron.



ANGELS CORNER

Just a few days after returning from the Reunion, a short thank you letter arrived in the mail. It went like this:

Mr. President,

Enclosed you will find a check for two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) to be used as needed for the 44th. Thanks for a great reunion, hope to see you in Savannah for another great reunion.

Many Thanks,

Jim Branson, 3908 O'Briant Place, Greensboro, NC 27410

P.S. Roy, give to yourself, your family and the 44th Group the best you can and the best will come back to you,
Branson, 506th

When I read this to Lolly, she said you ought to make an "Angels Corner" for members like Jim who appreciate their Association and let you know it with a generous donation. Thank you very much Jim. You, along with **Bill Strong, Jr. (\$500)** are our first members of "Angels Corner."



Please note: Since our treasurer and our accounting system are unable to set up, manage and disburse funds from separate accounts required when donations are made by members for specific memorials, scholarships or projects, the Board has established a policy that all donations are placed in the general fund to be disbursed in payment of those memorial projects determined by the Board as most appropriate to perpetuate the heritage of the 44th and the memory of those valorous men who served our nation under the 44th colors.

Miscellanea



OUR NEWEST - NEW MEMBER



MEET AUSTIN JEFFREY STUTZ 7/23/96 GREAT GRANDSON OF JIM & NETTIE CLEMENTS, SON OF JEFF & LISA STUTZ (GRAND DAUGHTER) OF LINDON, UTAH ATTENDING HIS FIRST REUNION.

Like Everything Else,
Dues are going up...

Not much, but up nonetheless. We've been trying to hold the line as long as we were able, but most of the increase has been in the cost of the 8-Ball Tails. When I briefed the board on the cost increases in layout, pictures and printing, I pointed out that this left us with number of pages as the only variable available to reduce costs. In a complimentary burst, the Board members were kind in taking the position that they were opposed to any reduction in the quality level of our journal. From the many, many complimentary and supporting comments about the "Tails" from the membership attending the reunion, it would seem the members share the attitude of the Board.

With that, the Board turned to a raise in general membership dues as the next viable means of keeping up with costs. After some discussion, the Board settled with a \$5 raise to start March 1, 1998. This means the annual December 1, 1997 billing will go out invoicing 1998 dues as \$15 if paid and in the hands of the Treasurer by March 1, 1998. FROM THAT DATE ON, DUES WILL BE \$20 PER YEAR BILLED ANNUALLY ON DECEMBER 1.

Please remember, we run along pretty good by keeping a close watch on our costs versus income, but if you can stick an extra fin or sawbuck in the dues envelope, it's always welcome. In fact as

you read through this issue, you came across a new section we are calling "Angels Corner." Stop and read it and meet our first and second Angels.

Only McAtee is missing from our "Gathering of Leaders."



Left To Right
Charlie HUGHES, 66th;
Bill CAMERON, 67th;
Jack GIBSON, 44th CO;
Goodman GRIFFIN, 44th EXEC.;
Bob LEHNHAUSEN, 68th.



Other Reunions

The Florida Chapter of SECOND AIR DIVISION ASS'N will hold its annual reunion in Fort Myers, Florida March 26 - 29, 1998 at the Sheraton Harbor Place in downtown Ft. Myers. For information, contact: Frank K. McConnell, P.O. Box 482, Cape Coral, FL 33910; telephone: (941) 549-2747.

WILL SEZ

For this session at least one could probably call this "Bits & Pieces" as I have several items of interest to most 44thers.

First of all, Steve Adams, our 44th BG Representative in Norwich, England telephoned recently and gave me several items.

- 1) He has obtained a copy of the book, 14th Combat Bomb Wing written and prepared by Barrett Taylor originally back in 1946 which was reprinted by a firm in England. Barrett gave us the permission to have the reprint made, and for any profits to become the property of the 44th BGVA. Steve states that the reprint was made on better, glossy papers so that now the reprint appears better than the original. The cost to us has not yet been established at this moment, but probably will be in the 40s, and he will advise me the purchase data as soon as it is determined. So, keep tuned.
- 2) Steve has located some microfilm in the archives at Norwich covering some 44th BG reports of operations which are not available on 44th BG microfilm. Of particular interest to me are the reports of our 66th BS PFF planes which flew various leads for other Bomb Groups in the 2nd Division of "D" Day. We have reports on all planes and crews for our 44th BG missions, but not for those planes and crews that flew with other formations. Steve will copy and forward the data to me so that we can complete the story of that famous day for use in a future issue of 8 Ball Tails.
- 3) Steve has enrolled in a class at the college to learn how to operate and utilize all of the bells and whistles in his new computer setup. He is determined to make the best use of this new equipment as possible, and quickly as possible. I am sure that he will do just that!
- 4) At the 44th BG reunion at Salt Lake City this month, one of the tours organized by Jim Clements and assisted by Jerry Folsom was the visit to the famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir on Sunday morning to view their weekly TV broadcast. This was my first visit, as it probably was for many of us veterans, and I was impressed by the professional way it was organized, closely supervised, having us file into the building single file, across the front to the left main aisle and back towards our reserved section. Many guides directed us to our front, center section apparently in our honor. As Irene and I were shown to our seat, our guide said, "What a very large group. I never thought so many of you were still alive!" I've been reflecting on that comment ever since. We must be ancient, or else WWII is considered so by the younger generation.
- 5) At the Board meeting during the reunion, several subjects were discussed and probably will be covered

by our Prez elsewhere in this issue. One item in particular seemed especially important to me was the presentation by our Vice President to the 2nd ADA, Dick Butler. Dick told us about the discussions and decisions made at their Board meeting concerning the bronze B-24 replica to be placed at the U.S. Air Academy near Colorado Springs. As there will be a B-17 model placed there, surely we must support the costs of placing a B-24 model there too. Future class men and women, as well as the public in general, must not forget that BOTH bombers helped win that war for our freedom.

Our 44th BGVA Board agreed that we should support this endeavor and \$4,000 was appropriated. Too, they encouraged our membership to personally make any donations as each one cared to, and add it to the \$4,000 to show our support.

- 6) Closely related to the above item is the subject of a phone call which I received two days ago. Ray Ward, author of "Those Brave Crews," an epic poem in book form, as well as a WWII historian, advised me of an action which he recently made concerning his residual supply of that book.

But to refresh your minds or tell those of you not familiar with this masterful work, Ray wanted to write an epic poem about the world famous low level Ploesti mission of 1 Aug 1943. He contacted me in the late 1980s to obtain as much data about the part the 44th BG had in that mission. I furnished him a copy of my Roll of Honor. Ray was so impressed with the 44th BG's history up to that time that he decided to utilize much more of our records in his writings. As a consequence, our 44th BG's feats can be found all through that book.

Recently Ray realized that he still had a small supply of his books in his basement and decided to dispose of them. Recalling that he had received a very flattering letter from the Air Force Academy for a few books which he previously donated to them, he contacted them to inquire if they would be interested in more. Yes, indeed they were very interested, could he furnish 51 more of them! It seems that the Colonel in charge of their History Department will set up a class utilizing "Those Brave Crews" as their classroom prime reading book and will be made available to all students for as many years as the books hold together. They have also sent a certificate to Ray making him an honorary graduate member of one of their organizations.

So, if all goes well, there will be a class taught at the Air Academy honoring the feats of our B-24s, as well as the crews that flew them. Do we finally have one up on the Forts?

Will Lundy



FOLDED WINGS

October, 1997



- Charles N. Atkins '89 506th Captain, completed tour 9/11/44.
- Francis W. Beasley, Sgt. 4/26/95 67th Sgt., Aircraft Mechanic, Msgrt K.D. Gong's crew.
- William K. Bechtold, S/Sgt. 8/24/94 506th Left Waist Gunner, Capt. C.N. Atkins crew.
- Robert Bohaty '55 Unknown, all we have is an old address. We need some help on this one.
- Robert H. Boney, T/Sgt. 4/12/96 66th Came in with the Pathfinder crews. Later sent to the 392nd BG.
- Peter P. Budarf, T/Sgt. 7/97 68th Radio Operator on Lt. Roy M. Boggs crew, 29 missions, flew home 28 May '45.
- Robert J. Bulson, S/Sgt. '78 66th Top Turret Gunner on Lt. P.V. Dussoit crew, 17 missions.
- Davis L. Brookins, Cpl. 1/8/84 67th Came over with the original 67th on the Queen Mary.
- Carl G. Carlson, T/Sgt. 7/10/97 66th Flight Engineer on Lt. P.V. Dussoit's crew, 17 missions.
- Norfleet R. Cheek, 2nd Lt. '97 464th Sub-Depot Supply Officer.
- J. Davis Clark, S/Sgt. 8/24/95 66th Tail Gunner on Lt. P.V. Dussoit's crew, 17 missions.
- Mark Critchfield, Unk Unknown 66th One of the 44th originals at MacDill.
- John E. Devich, T/Sgt. '85 68th Flight Engineer on Lt. A.H. Dittmer's crew, shot down 8/24/44; POW until April '45.
- Beuford P. Fletcher, T/Sgt. 1/91 506th Radio Operator on Lt. D.E. Saylor's crew, completed tour early 1944.
- Howard N. Garrett, S/Sgt. 1/22/71 68th Waist Gunner on Capt. Gus Konstand's lead crew. Shot down 12/28/44.
- James C. Holcomb, 1st Lt. Unknown 67th POW Pilot; crew organized Dec. '43 at March Field, joined 67th June '44, completed combat tour.
- David J. Taylor, T/Sgt. 11/26/96 Unknown .Very little in the archives on this man, we need some help here.

FOLDED WINGS (Continued)

- Shelby O. Turner, M.D., 1st Lt. 2/16/97 68th Navigator on Lt. T. Ackerman's crew; 28 combat missions. Post-War became an MD, rancher.
- Preston E. Vaden, 1st Lt. '96 506th Bombardier on the Lt. George Rebich original 506th crews flying Mr. 5x5. Flew Ploesti with Major J.C. Beam. Completed combat tour.
- George Van Son, S/Sgt. '95 67th Tail Gunner for Lt. Elmer Reinhart. Shot down and wounded on Ploesti raid. Internee/POW in Romania.
- Romie C. Vaughn, Sgt. 5/21/97 68th Aircraft Mechanic. Had two cruises on the Queen Mary, over on 5 Sept. '42 and returned home on 6/16/45. His wife Martha has joined the 44th BGVA.
- Delbert Hunter, S/Sgt. 7/2/94 67th Waist Gunner on Lt. Charles H. Mercer's crew. Combat tour completed Feb. 1944. First 67th crew to start and finish with the same ten crew members.
- Warren E. Kline, S/Sgt. 4/25/75 Right Waist Gunner on 1st Lt. C.A. Bohnisch's crew shot down 5/4/44 over Central France. Kline was the only survivor. Captured & POW.
- Arnold P. Kleinschmidt, Capt. 6/26/97 66th Assigned to 66th Feb. 45. Trained and was Flight Cmdr. of new, Loran equipped B-24J's. Post-War cattle rancher and Lexington, TX School District Superintendent for 30 years.
- James F. Rowan, Unknown 5/28/97 464th Sub-Depot Instrument Technician.

FOR SALE

GATHERED AT Ojai, California for the signing, THE FOUR ARE PICTURED HOLDING ONE OF THE LIMITED EDITION PRINTS OF THE PAINTING. LEFT TO RIGHT: DICK BUTLER, CHARLIE HUGHES, BILL BRANDON AND BILL CAMERON.



NEW PLOESTI PAINTING

Nicholas Trudigan, an oil paint artist well known for his work in landscapes, has turned his interests to aviation art. His newest work is a rendition of the Ploesti raid entitled OPERATION TIDAL WAVE, The Ploesti Mission. Joining artist Nicholas Trudigan in signing his new limited edition of the painting are four distinguished 44th Bomb Group pilots who flew the historic raid; Major Gen. William H. Brandon (Ret), who was lead pilot in "Suzy Q" with Group Commander (then) Colonel Leon W. Johnson in the Co-Pilot seat. Colonel Richard D. "Dick" Butler (Ret) flew as co-pilot with Walter Burke in "Earthquake McGoon." Colonel William R. Cameron (Ret) in his "Buzzin' Bear" was designated deputy lead to Col. Johnson and flew in the slot position of the lead element directly behind "Suzy Q." Colonel Charles E. Hughes (Ret) flying "Flossie Flirt" which was badly damaged during the attack but managed to limp into Turkey where he was interned. He later managed to escape to Cyprus in a fishing boat thence back to England where he went on to command the 66th Bomb Squadron.

The 8-Ball Tails

Official Journal of The
44th Bomb Group

Veterans Association, Inc.

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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.



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Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367

MEMORY LANE

Spring of '45. Yankee ingenuity; build a little stand and bring the beer to the party. The rectangular barracks had a hallway down the center with two man rooms on each side and one large (width of the building) room on the end. This was the 506th Bill Smith crew officer's room with Lts. Roy Owen, Bill Rodrian, Pete Masonis and Smith in residence. This also seemed to become the 506th officer's club annex (the keg of Whitebreads Ale may have had something to do with this) with people coming and going most of the time. This picture was taken during one of our impromptu "gatherings." The picture is pretty dark, but if you look closely, hanging on the keg spigot you can make out a Flak Helmet to catch the drippings. Also, you can tell it's spring 'cause someone is sitting on the "Slow But Sure" stove top. I tell ya' war is a whole lotta doin' with what ya got!



THE 200 MISSION PARTY BASEBALL GAME.
NAME THE BATTER.



From the picture we included in the last issue of the visit to our Airbase by Norwich Lord Mayor Finch, we asked if anyone could identify the Red Cross Lady escorting Col. Dent and the Mayor's party through the Aero Club. Frank B. Bata, a two combat tour man from the 66th and 506th gives us the answer.

Sirs:

In the 8-Ball Tails, Vol. 2, Issue #3 is a photo of the RED CROSS LADY on page 35. She is pictured with the Lord Mayor and Col. Dent at the Red Cross Arrow Club. I believe this lady is Helen Hobak from Roanoke, VA.

I was in the 44th BG and had a younger brother in the 93rd BG stationed at Hardwick, who was very lax about getting in touch with me. Each week Helen would contact his base and then let me know that he was ok. My brother completed one tour of 27 missions and was then sent to Ireland as an Instructor. I completed two tours (a total of 54 missions) and then returned to the States. We all appreciated what Helen did for us.

Yours truly,

Editor: Dear Frank, I can see that our Memory Lane section is going to be fun! I'd bet your recognizing Helen Hobak was a surprise, and telling of her keeping in touch with your brother means she was a Red Cross lady that was working at her job. Art Hand has located two of our members and one of my best Air Force buddies was born, raised and retired in Roanoke, so we'll see if we can get some information on Helen and perhaps get some communication going. She certainly ought to be a 44th BGVA member!





The Night I Rode With Santa

By
Ivo F. DiPiero



The holiday was upon us, and throughout the house rooms were decorated for Christmas. A large box was brought up from the basement. I knew it was the right one, as it was boldly marked "XMAS DECORATIONS." Coming from the kitchen was a wonderful aroma of cooking flowing through every room. On the table was my favorite fruitcake with a large sign on it which said, "Do Not Touch Until Xmas." As I passed by, I slyly put a piece in my mouth. I then noticed my great granddaughter, slowly sliding her hand across the table toward a rack of cooling cookies.

"What are you doing, Erika?" I asked. Ignoring the question, she said, "I'm having a hard time knowing what to ask Santa to bring for Christmas. Besides, you don't have a fireplace or a chimney for Santa to come down," she replied.

"Erika," I said, "finish your letter to Santa, then give it to me. I will make sure that Santa will get it. I know how he can get into the house. It's a secret and I can't tell."

"I met Santa a long time ago during World War II." Erika replied, "Oh! Grandpa, not another one of your war stories!" Turning to Grandma, she asked if I was fibbing her again. Grandma replied, "I did not know him at the time, but usually he's a pretty honest fellow."

Looking at me, Erika said, "O.K Grandpa, when was that?" Sitting at the table next to her and helping myself to another piece of fruitcake and Erika reaching for another cookie, I began my story.

"It was Christmas Eve 1942 and the sky was filled with enemy planes and I was on my way to my plane, The Lemon Drop. The pilot, Lt. Reggie Phillips, and his crew chief, Charlie Pigg, were close behind. On the way Lt. Phillips told me, "Ivo, you are going with us on this mission tonight." "Where to?," I replied. He answered, "I won't know until we arrive at the plane."

As we arrived at the plane, I could not believe my eyes. Beside our plane, The Lemon Drop, a B24D, there stood a sleigh loaded with gift packages and sitting there was Saint Nick. His reindeer were tapping their hooves impatiently. Saint Nick had flown all the way from the North Pole to Great Britain to deliver gifts to the children. Santa was afraid that his reindeer might be hurt because the enemy was dropping bombs, and there was much noise from anti-aircraft guns on the ground. The U.S. Air Force gave him permission to fly on their plane, The Lemon Drop, so he could drop his gifts to the children; children that may never have gifts because of the war.

Everyone was eager to help and all the packages were transferred to the plane. When they were finished, Santa and the crew climbed into the plane and quickly took off. I noticed that the plane was flying at an exceedingly high speed and the propellers were not turning. I radioed the pilot and asked what was happening. The pilot responded, "I do not know. There must be magic in the air as I cannot explain the phenomenon."

We kept on with our task and dropped each package out of the plane as Santa handed them to us. Each one, believe it or not, dropped down the right chimney. As soon as the last package was dropped, our pilot, Lt. Phillips, gained control of the plane and we returned safely to base.

Every one said good-bye to Santa, and as he was leaving, we heard him say, "Merry Christmas, and for your good deeds on this night, I promise you that this plane, The Lemon Drop, and it's crews will always return to base safely."

The Lemon Drop was the last of the original aircraft to survive World War II.

In 1992 Grandma and I returned again to England, and in the city of Norwich, I looked up into a clear moonlit sky, and I'm sure I saw a shadow of what looked like a B24D. I heard a voice saying, "I kept my promise, and The Lemon Drop is still flying."

If you should ever be in Norwich, England on Christmas Eve, look up to the sky. There will be a shadow of a sleigh with The Lemon Drop close behind.

Looking at my great granddaughter I said, "Erika, I promise you when your list is complete, Santa will receive it."



MAIL CALL



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
6304 Meadowridge Drive • Santa Rosa, CA 95400 • 707 538 4726 • Fax 707-520-1217

September 27, 1997

To Our Dear Shipdham Friends,

On this day of national mourning for the tragic death of your beloved Princess Diana, it was the wish of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association membership that I convey to you all the profound shock and grief we share with you, our Shipdham family, on this day of world-wide sorrow.

In the eyes of America that beautiful young woman, with her love and feeling for the people of the world, brought the American people to a feeling of being more in touch with the British monarchy than has existed in generations. She was our "Peoples Princess" as she was to you.

Our prayers today are for her and with you on this day of farewell to Diana.

With love to you all,

Roy W. Owen
Roy W. Owen,
President

This comes from:

Nick Garza, San Antonio, one of the "Iron Men" of the 506th. He was the "cog" in the '95 San Antonio reunion machinery which kept everything running (meaning we never ran short of booze or bull!)

My Good Amigo Roy:

The Trip-The Trip!! I read it in total, with much enthusiasm, and Lots of Pride! You make me very proud Col. Owen, and I think I speak for many of us in the 506th, as well as the entire 44th Bomb Group. I only wish it could have been possible for us to have shared these most treasured moments.

We hope you and Lolly are well, and, checking your passports on a more regular basis. I'm still trying to "hang in there," although its somewhat difficult at times. We saw Loy and Arlene Neepner two weeks ago. He looks good, but his malady continues. We pray for him every day!

We think of you folks quite often and look forward to the next time. You are Special!!

Love,
Nick & Nan

Editor: Gracias for your most kind words Mi Amigo. I hope you enjoy the second installment of The Trip-The Trip in this issue. I'm very happy that reading the article brought the feeling of pride that we on the trip experienced. All of the 44th men and women should rightfully be proud of having served in this valorous outfit. When we were at Barksdale AFB for the dedication of our memorial marker, all of the 44th folks present were in tears of pride listening to the words of respect and admiration for the 44th spoken by the active duty Air Force leadership present. Then, once again, seeing and hearing the expression of gratitude and respect by our English and French Allies made us all swell with pride that the heroic performance of the 44th was so vividly known to our grateful allies. The 44th wasn't simply given the destiny to lead, our proud people earned it!



This comes from:
Erwin Strohmaier
Piedmont Gardens
110-41 Street #1017
Oakland, CA 94611
September 3, 1997



Gentlemen:

I am sorry that you had so much trouble that you did not have my new address. I had special change of address postcards printed and sent them to everyone I could think of. There is always a chance that some could get lost in the mail. Enclosed is a check for \$4 to cover your expense.

I am 86 years old and in a wheelchair recovering from Gullain-Barre syndrome, a paralysis of the motor nerve system. I now live in Piedmont Gardens at the above address.

I always enjoy reading your publication.

If it was not for my computer and my fingers coming to life, I could not write this letter.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Editor: Dear Erwin, I'm not familiar with Gullain-Barre syndrome, but it, for sure, doesn't sound like a bunch of fun! I do understand "recovering" and that, for sure,

sounds like you are a fighter who intends to get out of the wheelchair. Glad you enjoy reading the 8-Ball Tails. Those are the kind of words that make the effort worthwhile. I'll keep up the good work and you keep answering the bell for the next round. In fact, get on your computer and write some good "war story" stuff to put into the "Tails."



This comes from:
Wade Elliott - 66th/506th
Peterborough, NH

Editor: Wade Elliott, Peterborough, NH, 66th/506th, was (with his wife Jessie) in the intrepid group of 44th folks on the England/France Trip. Fishing around in some WWII personal files, he came up with an old yellowed copy of Stars & Stripes that carried this bit of poetry written by a Radio Operator/Gunner before leaving for a bomber mission over Italy. It's a "goldie oldie," Wade, Thanks!

Lightnings in the Sky

Oh Hedy Lamar is a beautiful gal and Madeline Carroll is too,
But you'll find if you query, a quite different theory amongst any bomber crew,
For the loveliest thing of which one could sing (this side of the heavenly gates),
Is no blonde or brunette of the Hollywood set -- But an escort of P-38's.

Yes, in the days that have past, when the tables were massed with glasses of scotch and champagne,
It's quite true that this sight was a thing to delight us, intent upon feeling no pain.
But no longer the same, nowadays, in this game, when we head North from Messina Straits, you take the sparkling wine--every time; just make mine an escort of P-38's.

Byron, Shelly and Keats ran a dozen dead heats,
Describing the view from the hills,
Of the valleys in May when the winds gently sway an army of bright daffodils.
Take the daffodils, Byron -- the wild flowers, Shelley; yours is the Myrtle, friend Keats, just reserve one of those beauties -- American Beauties -- an escort of P-38's.

Sure, we're braver than hell; on the ground all is swell;
in the air it's a far different story;
We sweat out our track through the fighters and flak,
We're willing to split up the glory!

Well, they wouldn't reject us, so Heaven protect us,
And, until all this shooting abates,
Give us the courage to fight 'em -- one other small item -- An escort of P-38's.



This comes from:
Sarah H. Reynolds
August 25, 1997

Hello Editor:

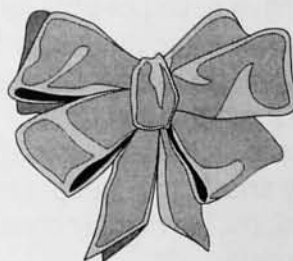
This is to request a notice to the membership concerning the huge omission of the B-24 from the special issuance of "American Classic Aircraft" stamps in July of this year by the U.S. Postal Service. I hope that the members will join me with a write-in protest to the Postmaster General and perhaps there will be a special issue for just the B-24 forthcoming. Those interested and willing should write a strong letter to:

The Postmaster General
Washington, DC 20268-6000

Thanks!

Editor: Dear Sarah, Boy oh Boy! How did I miss that? Enough is too much! We've been putting up with this looking at the bellies of B-17s for too long. Like elsewhere in this issue, we are playing catchup on getting a bronze model of a B-24 in the Honor Court at the Air Force Academy. Now, here we are left out of the "American Classic Aircraft" stamp issuance. How about it--are we going to take another "pie in the face" or do something about it? I'm with Sarah, let's make 'em put out a special issue stamp picturing the Liberator. I'd like to see someone who has been in the thick of this battle, like Don Chase, sit down and compose a letter of protest over the "American Classic Aircraft" issuance and a demand for a special issue featuring the B-24. Then send the letter to me and I will put it on the 44th letterhead and send it to the PMG. Then we can send individual letters to our Senators and House members. Thanks Sarah. We'll take it from here!

Note: Sarah is a 44th daughter; now is that a lot of spunk, OR WHAT?





This comes from:
Tony Mastradone
9111 Tuckerman St.
Lanham, MD 20706
October 2, 1997

Hello Roy:

In our 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association publication "8 Ball Tails" Summer edition, I think your story on the "Progress on the Savannah Museum Display" was very informative.

As the archivist for the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, I would like to commend an archivist at the College Park Archives in Maryland, Mr. David Giordano. He spent extra time and effort in assisting me in getting information on the historic bombing mission of the oil fields in Ploesti, Romania on 1 August 1943.

I know with your leadership and assistance, the information will be used in an informative way and make a successful display that our Organization will be proud of and enjoyed by all.

Will be seeing you in Salt Lake City,

Editor: *Tony, I was unaware that you too were doing Ploesti research for our Mighty 8th Air Force Museum display. I should have known you would be in the thick of it! Please pass on my personal thanks to Mr. Giordano for his assistance in the research of the Ploesti archives. You know it is my aim to have our replication of the lead element over the target the instant prior to bombs away be the defining display in the museum. With you on the team, assisted by friends such as David Giordano, I can see my hopes becoming reality! We all thank you for all the great work you are always doing up there in College Park. Also, congratulations on your election to the Board -- and NO, I'm not going to release you from your archivist job, you've heard of wearing two hats?*

.....
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8-BALL TAILS

Back issues of The 8-Ball Tails available in limited numbers. \$5 per copy plus postage. Contact Treasurer, "Jerry" Folsom at address listed in the Board of Directors herein.



This comes from:
Phyllis Venieti
45 Hartsdale Road
Elmsford, NY 10523
October 5, 1997

Dear Mr. Clements,

I commend you and your staff for making the veteran reunions such memorable occasions! Because of your efforts, many enjoy visiting new places where they can reminisce with their buddies, swap post-war experiences, and share child rearing stories.

My father, Pat Colucci, has made the reunion a focal point of each year. Being reunited with his fellow flyers has added something special to his life. Hopefully, he will be able to take part in this year's reunion.

Two weeks ago he was rushed to the hospital with acute pneumonia. My father's condition was complicated by the several other physical problems he bravely survived but took a toll on his body. Delirious, he had only one thought on his mind. "One more reunion...one more reunion," he feverishly mumbled in the emergency room.

I believe it was my Dad's determination to get to Salt Lake City that helped him to heal more rapidly than expected. We will know this week if the doctor will allow him to make the trip.

As children, my siblings and I were aware of my father's pride in being part of the Air Force. He never spoke of the war, but instilled in us the love for our Country and the duty to defend her liberties. Recently, he turned into an ambitious writer. He writes about his Air Force adventures, delighting his grandchildren with stories of the heroism of his buddies. Penning the positive aspects of his life as a soldier has not only been an outlet for his creativity, but has also been a therapeutic tool.

The wives of the servicemen also appreciate the reunions. My mother has had the opportunity to meet wonderful men and women, to form many strong friendships.

The camaraderie which sustained the men through many desperate situations, which survived all these years and keeps them coming back to the reunions is unique. Thanks again for giving so many meaningful and delightful trips to look forward to!

Sincerely,

Holiday Greetings



Your Officers and Board wish you a Merry Christmas!

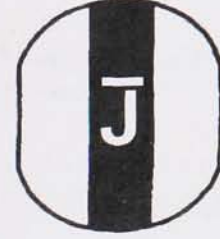
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VETERANS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2367



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44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 2 - Issue #2

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Spring, 1997

Non Profit Veterans Organization

EIN #68-0351397

“Sweating it Out!”

Crew Chiefs and Maintenance personnel awaiting return of the Kiel Mission.



THE KIEL RAID

14 MAY 1943

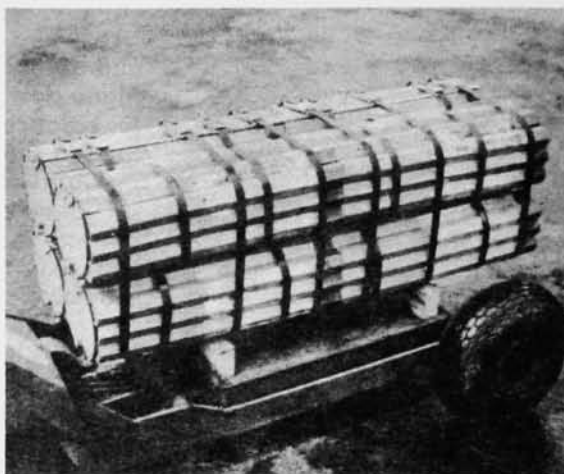
Bill Cameron Photo

Since the episodic story of Col. Bill Cameron and the terrible decimation of the 67th Squadron in our "And Then There Was One" article in the Summer '96 issue, it seemed appropriate that we followed up with a broader look at the mission for which the 44th Bomb Group was awarded its first Presidential Unit Citation and the 67th Squadron was reduced to the last one of its original nine pilots. Thus, for this issue, we are departing from the practice of featuring one of our aircraft and its combat experience in favor of a more detailed look at the 44th mission which turned into one of the greatest aerial battles of the War, when on 14 May 1943 the 44th, along with three B-17 groups of the 1st Air Division attacked the Krupp submarine shipbuilding installations and German Navy submarine pens at Kiel, Germany.

The narrative that follows was derived from the book Fields of Little America, author Martin Bowman, publisher Wensum Books, Ltd., 33 Oxford Place, Norwich, England; official 2nd Bombardment Wing Critique of Mission 107, 14/5/43 (Secret) declassified per Executive Order 12356, Section 3.3. and 745005 on 2/7/94. General Orders No. 66, 12 July 1944, Battle Honors Citation of Units; combat crew post mission debriefing reports and missing air crew reports (MACR) contained in the 44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor, C.W. Lundy; and The History of the 68th Bomb Squadron, Webb Todd, author.

In early 1943, the North Atlantic shipping lanes were virtually at the mercy of the German U-boats, which preyed on the shipping convoys that were the lifeline of the allied resistance to the German occupation of most of Europe. Although the convoys were escorted by allied naval destroyers, the escorts were limited in the protection they could provide without accompanying long range air patrol to locate the sub-packs. Until the long-range patrol gap could be filled, the allied strategy was directed to destruction of the U-boat construction to slow the relentless "Battle of the North Atlantic" U-Boat campaign to prevent the allied supplies reaching the friendly ports of England and Russia. So important was the success of this strategy, the heavy bomber forces of 8th Air Force were, for the first time, directed to attack the Kiel complex in daylight.

The Kiel attack was an experimental first by the 8th Air Force planners in the respect that aside from previous missions where the B-24 forces flew diversion missions in support of B-17s making strike sorties, the two types of aircraft had not been assigned to attack the same target in concert. Kiel was one of the most heavily defended targets in all of Germany, not only with anti-aircraft weapons, but the best of the FW190 and ME109 forces. The strike plan was for the B-17s to attack first with 500 lb. HE bombs followed by the B-24s with a new type of 100 lbs. incendiary clusters. In an attempt to compensate for the differences in aircraft performance, the briefed assembly called for the 44th to fly below and behind the high B-17 lead group. The capability of the faster airspeed of the B-24 and the



Incendiaries

slower climb speed of the B-17 necessitated the B-24 lead to make wide S's to maintain a relative position. Col. Johnson reported that these maneuvers were satisfactory until the formation reached 25,000 at which point the B-17 lead group made a rapid climb to 28,000 feet and even pulling 38" MP and 2300 RPM, he could not keep up. To avoid stringing out his group attempting to stay up with the lead group, he elected to go below the lowest B-17 group which was flying at 25,000

feet. As they turned to target, Col. Johnson had to slide his group to the right of the B-17 group above to avoid their bomb drop.

The formation had been under attack from the coast in by an estimated 120 enemy fighters. When the 44th swung right, the attacking fighters then concentrated their attack on the rear echelons of the 44th. As the 44th reached the target, they were required by the briefed trajectory of the cluster incendiaries to remain on course for an additional two miles. To make matters worse, the released incendiary clusters came apart immediately, rather than the 200 foot clearance for which they were fused. With stick incendiaries flying through the formation, those pilots following, spread their formation somewhat to avoid colliding with the incendiaries. This further invited enemy fighter attacks. Five B-24s in the rear echelons were lost in the target area and one on withdrawal. The ferocity of the defenses are evidenced by the 44th being credited with 23 enemy aircraft destroyed, 13 probables and one damaged. After bomb drop by the two B-17 groups preceding the 44th,

they made an immediate left turn leaving the 44th alone to stay the course for the incendiary drop. As the 44th turned off target, the B-17 groups throttled back to allow catch up by the 44th and the groups withdrew, with the B-24s sandwiched between the higher and the lower of the two B-17 groups.

On 15 May, the day following the raid, Brig. Gen. C.G. Hodges of Hq 2nd ADIV assembled members of his staff with Col. Leon Johnson and members of his staff to critique the Kiel mission. Their comments were:

Conclusions

1) Because of the performance of the B-24 at various altitudes is so different from that of the B-17, it is virtually impossible for B-24s to fly a tight formation and maintain the proper relative position with the B-17s during most missions—especially in emergencies when extreme action must be taken. The B-17 evidently has a higher rate of climb and a slower airspeed in the climb than the B-24s. Consequently our units do not get sufficient protection from the B-17s and until we can put up larger formations of B-24s, it is extremely dangerous for us to attack heavily defended targets.

2) When elements of a force are carrying bombs of different dropping angles (i.e., HE versus incendiaries), the entire formation should continue on the course to the target until the bomb release point nearest the target has been reached.

Recommendations:

1) B-24s not be sent on combined operations with B-17s until a combat wing of at least two full strength groups is available. Missions at this time should consist of long range attacks on targets where fighter opposition is not intense (preferably diversion sweeps to aid the B-17s and attacks on shallow targets in the same area as the main B-17 effort after the latter is committed).

The dauntless heroism displayed by the 44th crews against a fiercely defended target on a mission ill fated by poor planning, mismatched bomber performance, dissimilar bomb loads with faulty fusing and tactics which required the 44th to maintain bomb run heading alone and unprotected was characterized by S/Sgt. Richard M. Castillo, Tail Gunner on A/C #819 piloted by Lt. Malcolm C. Howell and Major James E. O'Brien, 68th Squadron Commander.

Major O'Brien reported that they had received flak damage to #3 and #4 engines causing a drop in manifold pressure and trailing smoke and knocked out intercom

to the rear of the aircraft. The smoking engines made #819 prey to the enemy fighters. According to the Tail Gunner of A/C # 8 1 6 , approximately 15 to 20 FW190s had begun to concentrate their fire on #819. A report from the Waist Gunner of another ship states that the tail turret of #819 was "firing like hell" and he saw three chutes come from the plane. At this time,

Lt. Howell was trying to get back into formation and almost succeeded when an overwhelming number of enemy fighters closed in on him. Throughout this fierce attack, the tail guns of #819 were in operation and firing. No less than two enemy fighters were seen to go down in flames as a result of hits by Sgt. Castillo. Finally his turret was disabled and he suffered an injured foot, which was wedged in by this ammo box. This attack was by two FW190s which pulled up within 30-40 feet and fired at will into the tail section. Three crew members pulled Sgt. Castillo out of his turret, pushed him out of the aircraft and pulled his rip cord, whereupon they bailed out just prior to the entire tail section separating from the fuselage. Lt. Howell apparently was killed when his chute failed after ball-out. Sgt. Castillo later reports he had no recollection of his escape from the aircraft. He remained a POW until Wars end. He was last reported living in Springfield, Ohio.



*Kiel Mission Briefing
Major Strong & Captain Morris*

Capt. Robert Abernathy and Lead Crew of the 44th Bomb Group - Kiel Raid.



Kiel Mission ~ 14 May 1943

66th Squadron

Capt. Robert J. Abernathy/2nd Lt. Spencer Hunn	936-J	Group Lead
1st Lt. Rowland M. Gentry/1st Lt. Chas. E. Hughes	769-B	
Capt. Robert E. Miller/FO Arthur W. Callahan	811-K	
1st Lt. Robert E. Kolliner/1st Lt. Curtis S. Griffin	779-G	
1st Lt. John Y. Reed/1st Lt. Geo. W. Winger	014-P	Bailed Out-England
1st Lt. Thomas E. Scrivner/2nd Lt. Everett P. Anderson	778-F	

67th Squadron

1st Lt. Rober I. Brown/1st Lt. Hartley A. Westbrook	278-Q	Lost
Capt. Chester L. Phillips/1st Lt. E. W. Wilborn	807-U	Lost
1st Lt. William A. Roach/1st Lt. Ross A. Tenney	126-T	Lost

68th Squadron

Capt. John H. Diehl/Col. John Hayden	816-X	
1st Lt. Wilmer J. Garrett/1st Lt. Rober J. Lehnhausen	094-Bar-E	
Capt. Walter J. Holmes/Lt. Willie Baxter Weant	813-V	
1st Lt. Rowland B. Huston/1st Lt. David W. Alexander	699-Bar-P	
1st Lt. Malcolm C. Howell/Major James E. O'Brien	819-Bar-A	Lost
1st Lt. George R. Jansen/1st Lt. Louis V. Girard	0009-W	

506th Squadron

Capt. William N. Anderson/Major James C. Beam	172-Bar-N	
1st Lt. Walter I. Bunker/2nd Lt. Richard D. Butler	234-Bar-U	
1st Lt. Nathaniel H. Graham/1st Lt. Harold J. Laudig	283-Z	
1st Lt. William H. Strong/2nd Lt. Lyle S. Davenport	201-Bar-O	
Capt. John W. Swanson/2nd Lt. Douglas B. Myers	295-J	Lost

GENERAL ORDERS

No. 55

(G.O. 56)

WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington 25, D.C. 12 July 1944.

Section

BATTLE HONORS - Citations of units - - - - - XII

XII - BATTLE HONORS

4. As authorized by Executive Order No. 9596 (sec I, Bull. 22, WD 1943) superseding Executive Order No. 9075 (sec. III, Bull 11, WD, 1942) citation of the following unit in General Orders No. 40, 2d Bombardment Division, 29 November 1943, as approved by the Commanding General, United States Army forces in the European Theater of Operations, under the provisions of Section IV, Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction is confirmed. The citation reads as follows: + 63rd

The 44th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), HEADQUARTERS 66th, 67th and 506th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRONS (H), have distinguished themselves by outstanding performance of duty in the attack on the naval and shipbuilding installations at Kiel, Germany, on 14 May 1943 one of the greatest aerial battles of this war.

On this mission a single group was, for the first time, fully loaded with incendiaries to be dropped after the lead groups had released their high explosive bombs. Because of the trial of the incendiaries the 44th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), which had been assigned this task, was required to continue its bombing run for some 2 miles beyond the release point of the other groups in order to bomb effectively. To accomplish this it was necessary to fly alone, without supporting fire power of other groups, over one of the most heavily defended areas in Germany with a formation considerably smaller than the minimum for mutual self-protection. The mission was undertaken with full knowledge of the extreme hazards involved. Its successful performance demanded the highest degree of bravery and skill.

With only 19 B-24's, the 44th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) followed three B-17 groups to the target. Fierce and determined attacks by some 120 enemy fighters commenced at the German coast and continued until after leaving the coast on the return route. After the B-17's had reached their release point and turned away, the 44th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) proceeded alone in the face of continuous attacks by swarms of enemy fighters and increasingly concentrated flak. By opening its formation as required to clear the incendiaries of ships ahead, it was rendered particularly vulnerable to enemy attack. Five of its airplanes were shot down on the approach to and over the target. Despite these losses, the group held the necessary formation and continued on its run alone to its bomb-release point. Bombing was extremely accurate and the target was blanketed with incendiaries. Widespread fires destroyed or damaged many enemy installations. One additional airplane was lost after leaving the target.

This small force was officially credited with 25 enemy aircraft destroyed, 13 probably destroyed, and one damaged.

The successful fulfillment of this highly dangerous mission was due to the extraordinary courage, skill, and devotion to duty of all concerned, which will always be worthy of emulation. Such heroism reflects the greatest credit on the Army Air Forces.

By order of the Secretary of War:

G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

J. A. ULIO,
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

Matthew J. Gatti
MATTHEW J. GATTI,
Captain, AC.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, AND 745005

By 28/05HNARA, Date 2/17/94**SECRET**

14 MAY 1943

HEADQUARTERS 2nd BOMBARDMENT WING
APO 634CRITIQUE OF MISSION NO. 107. 14/5/43.Target : Kiel.
Date : 15/5/43
Hour : 1045

Attendance:	Brigadier General Hodges, O.G.	Headquarters 2nd Bomb Wing
	Colonel Hayden, Executive	"
	Lt. Col. Fearing, Asst. A-3	"
	Lt. Col. Miller, Asst. A-3	"
	Lt. Col. Sullivan, Asst. A-3	"
	Capt. [unclear], Asst. A-2	"
	Capt. Starr, Asst. A-2	"
	Capt. Leatherdale, L.O.	"
	Major King, F.L.O.	"
	Col. Johnson, Commanding Officer	44th Bombardment Group
	Lt. Col. Snavely, S-3	"
	Capt. Holmes, Pilot	"
	Sgt. Garard, Gunner	"

1. Colonel Johnson told of the assembly of the 44th with the 1st Wing which he said was accomplished without trouble. The 44th, flying at 8300' was over the rendezvous point when the 1st Wing arrived, flying between about 5000' and 6000'. On the flight to the target the 44th made wide Ss in order to stay behind and to keep up a comfortable speed. Colonel Johnson said that this worked very satisfactorily.

2. When the enemy coast was reached, the top group of the B 17s was flying at about 25,000' with the 44th just above. Upon crossing the coast, the 1st Wing climbed about 3000' at a very rapid rate. The lead ship of the 44th was pulling 38" with an RPM of 2300 but could not keep up with the B17s as they climbed. Hence for fear of stringing out the group by pouring on power in order to keep up with the B 17s, the leader of the 44th elected to go below the lowest group of the 1st Wing which was flying at about 25,000 ft. As the formation was turning to the left towards the target it was necessary for the 44th to fly just to the right of the B 17s above it and this subjected the 44th to heavy attacks from the E/A which had gathered to the right of the formation. However, the 44th apparently did not keep far enough to the right of the B 17s above them because bombs of the 1st Wing were seen to fall between elements of the 44th. It was also reported that an incendiary bomb of our own ships hit the nose of another B 24; and there was some discussion of the necessity of pilots taking precaution to clear their ships of the bombs and clouds when incendiaries are dropped in a stepped-down formation.

3. Since the 44th was dropping incendiaries it was necessary for our group to continue two miles further toward the target than the B 17s which were dropping bombs. Two groups of the 1st Wing turned away from the target immediately after dropping their bombs and this left the 44th alone in the target area except for

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, AND 745005

By 2210 H

NARA, Date 2/4/94

SECRET

Office of Mission No. 107 172/A (Continued)

another group of B 17s which apparently had a different aiming point and continued on its run until about the same time that the B 24s released their incendiaries. The B 17s that bombed earlier throttled back immediately after leaving the target and the 44th was able to catch them quickly. The B 24s took up a position just above one group of B 17s and below another for the return trip.

4. It was brought out that the enemy fighter attacks were very numerous and ferocious. The FW 190s attacked mainly from 12 o'clock while the ME 109s came in mostly from 6 o'clock. When discussing the position of the various A/C in the formation of the 44th it was revealed that all of the 5 ships lost in the target area were flying in the rear part of the formation.

5. In discussing use of communication facilities, it was brought out that an A/C of the 44th sighted a B 17 down in the North Sea and reported the location over the HF/DF channel. The pilot got no reply. Lt. Col. Miller said that he had checked with the HF/DF station and found that no signal had been picked up from any of our A/C. General Hodges directed that the HF/DF equipment of all ships be tested for night flying.

6. General Hodges complimented the 44th on its bombing and general conduct of the Mission in the face of extremely heavy enemy opposition.

CONCLUSIONS.

1. Because the performance of the B 24 at various altitudes is so different from that of the B 17, it is virtually impossible for B 24s to fly a tight formation and maintain the proper relative position with the B 17s during most missions - especially in emergencies when extreme action has to be taken. The B 17 evidently has a higher rate of climb and a lower air speed in the climb than the B 24. Consequently our units do not get sufficient protection from the B 17s and until we can put up larger formations of B 24s it is extremely dangerous for us to attack heavily defended targets.

2. When elements of a force are carrying bombs of different dropping angles (i.e. H.E. versus incendiaries) the entire formation should continue on the course to the target until the bomb release point nearest the target has been reached.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. B 24s not be sent on combined operations with B 17s until a combat wing of at least two full-strength groups is available. Missions at this time should consist of long range attacks on targets where fighter opposition is not intense (preferably at the same time that 1st Wing is on a shorter mission in the same general area), diversion sweeps to aid the B 17s and attacks on shallow targets in the same area as the main B 17 effort after the latter is committed.

WARREN E. ALBERTS,
Major, AO,**SECRET**

**66th Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER
AAF STATION 115
TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR 1 JANUARY 1944**

COMBAT CREW AVAILABLE FOR SATURDAY, 1 JANUARY 1944

	#203	#236	#157
P	Jewell	Harleman	Ugarte
CP	Milliner	Benedom	Koontz
N	Johnson, H.	Cobane	Loeffler
B	Foley	Sturgeon	Holm
E	Wike	Price	Kokta
AE	Saperito	Melson	Dwyer
R	Lipczyaski	Mirkin	Lenley
AR	Guzik	Alexander	Forgich
BG	Perrier	Bourque	Beauchesne
TG	McClosky	Carroll, L.	Dave

Training:

This is the set-up for New Year's Day,
Not a ground class is scheduled,
In bed you may stay.
You worked mighty hard the whole of last week,
Stay in bed, Combat man,
If you can, you may sleep.

There may be a mission on this New Year's Day,
If this is the case,
We are sorry to say,
The crews listed above will be rousted from their sleep,
Under that circumstance,
They have good right to weep.

A very Happy New Year we wish to all you men,
If you're needed at all,
We'll let you know when,
You now have the set-up for this New Year's day,
Rest and relax is the order,
We pray!



SPENCER S. HUNN
Captain, Air Corps
Operations Officer

CHARLES L. ARMSTRONG
1st Lt., Air Corps
Ass't Operations Officer

ENGLAND, FRANCE, BELGIUM TRIP UPDATE

Everything is on schedule; on May 26, forty-three adventuresome 44th Veterans, wives, husbands, significant others, children, and one grandson will depart for a great 44th BGVA Memorial tour, and it's going to be a GREAT ONE!

Leaving from various Gateway cities, we will all assemble in London at the Kensington Hilton for a three day sightseeing/shopping/theatre or whatever spree. Then on to the Norwich Hotel for three days to include tours, shopping, a visit to the Memorial Library, climaxed with a day in Shipdham and the Airfield, and an evening reception and barbeque dinner with our local friends at the Arrow Air Hangar.

Next we travel to Eastbourne with a stop at the American Cemetery at Maddingly and the new American Museum at Duxford. Three days at Eastbourne will include tours of "1066 Country," a leisure day, and a visit to the "Ruthless" Memorial for a Remembrance Ceremony to include the Lord Mayor, a member of Parliament and other civil dignitaries and citizens who organized and financed the memorial, followed by a Gala dinner with this group.

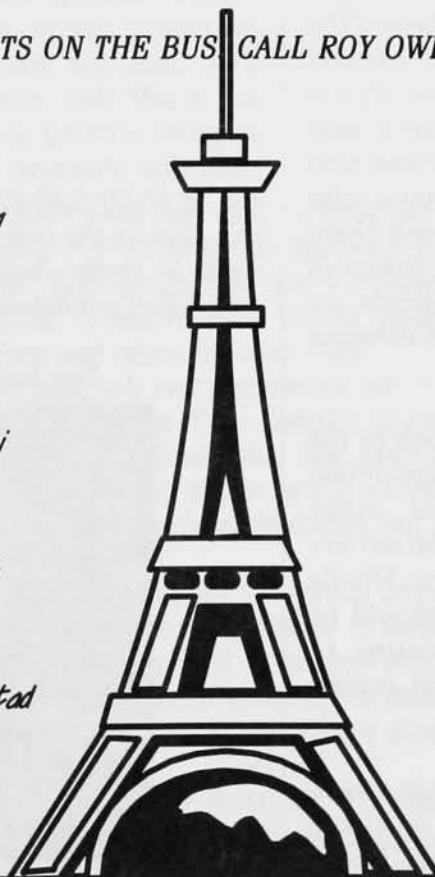
The next day we leave for Rouen for a three night stay. While there, we will be met by members of the French Air Force Reserve who will escort us to the small town of Villiers-Ecalles where we will be met by the Mayor and taken to visit a memorial marking the crash site of two 44th Liberators downed on a raid on Rouen Airfield. On June 6, the 53rd anniversary of "D-Day," we will visit the Normandy Beaches and the Magnificent American Cemetery at Omaha Beach.

From Rouen, we travel to Paris for three days of sightseeing, then on to Liege, Belgium for an overnight stay and a visit to the Argonne Cemetery where T/Sgt. Clair Shaeffer, father of Lois Cianci, one of our group, is buried. We will also stop in Bastogne, site of B/Gen. McAulliffe's famous "NUTS!" reply to the German offer to surrender his Airborne troops or be killed. We still stop over in Brussels for lunch and some sightseeing around the famous Plaza. Then on to Calais for the ferry ride to Dover and then to London for the trip home on June 11.

THERE ARE TWO MORE SEATS ON THE BUS CALL ROY OWEN @ (707) 538-4726, FIRST COME.

HERE ARE THE 8-BALL TOURISTS

Joan Adrian
Kenneth Adrian
George Apgar
Beryl Apgar
R. Lee Aston
Mary Aston
James Caillier
Jean Caillier
Anthony Cianci
Lois Cianci
Cleome Dovey
Arnold Dovey
Louis DeBlasio
Ann Natilli
Gerald Folsom
Beverly Winger
Cliff L. Fremstad
Vi Fremstad
Karl Grube
Marilyn Grube
Richard Haft
Betty Haft



Kevin Lundy
Diana Lundy
C. Will Lundy
Irene Lundy
Betty Lynch
Richard Lynch
Charles McPhail
Perry Morse
Ruth Morse
Marilyn Murrack
Melvin Murrack
Roy Owen
Charlene (Lolly) Owen
Donald Potter
Miriam Potter
James Reville
Loy Vance
Robert Vance
Donald Wells
Gloria Wells
Brice Williams

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Once again, I will use the President's Corner as a "bully pulpit" to discuss one of my favorite subjects, which is also one of my major concerns: The perpetuation of the 44th as a proud veteran's association. We, the 44th Bomb Group members, are running out of time. While it is true, our membership committee co-chairs, Art Hand and Tom Shepherd, with help from Will Lundy, have in the past two years kept our membership total ahead of attrition by finding 44th Bomb Group veterans who had never belonged to any 44th Veterans organization and are now members; we have also expanded the membership to include full membership (as well as Life Memberships) to the wives and widows. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that recruiting within this categorical universe of people is leading us to that "last person standing, drink the bottle of wine and turn out the lights as you leave" ceremony. I don't think any of us want that to happen.

The thing we must do, and must do soon, is to freshen our membership. We must abandon the mentality that makes us predominantly a WWII Bomb Group organization. We have begun to bring our progeny into our midst which is really positive. Through them, we can be sure that our WWII heritage will be preserved. The much broader dimensions of preserving the valorous history of the 44th in defending our nation in war, cold war and the preservation of peace is more than we should ask exclusively of our sons, daughters and grandchildren. Instead we must turn to those who served under the 44th colors in all its assigned roles and missions. We must not only welcome them among us as having honorably served our nation in their individual and organizational assignments, we must depend upon them to perpetuate the valorous heritage of the 44th into the future.

There are 44th organizations that exist, such as the 44th Air Refueling Squadron Veterans Association from the 44th Bomb Wing era and other organizations such as The American Missiliers Association which has many 44th Strategic Missile Wing veterans in their membership. We should be communicating and visiting these groups to familiarize them with our Association and extend an invitation to join us.

As your President, I feel strongly that these expansion efforts are my responsibility. I must say to you that in fulfilling this part of my job, I have been remiss. I am not begging forgiveness, but I

want to point out a reality and explain the underlying reason and what I think we must do to fix the problem.

Going back to our battle to save the organization, we (the Board and Officers) took those tasks we recognized as essential, divided them up and pressed on. In most cases the allocation of work and responsibilities went well. In the case of the Presidency, the job is overloaded by the regular administrative and correspondence responsibilities and the added load of also being editor/publisher of the 8-Ball Tails.

At the Board meeting in St. Louis, where the majority of the Board and Officers began their second term, I pointed out this situation to the Board with a request that they consider the problem and come up with nominations for a replacement 8-Ball Tails editor by mid-term (the October, 1997 Salt Lake City Reunion). My recruiting efforts have been fruitless and I have had no nominations from the Board. At this point, I turn to the membership. We need a volunteer.

I think we have the job arranged to be easily managed by one person with a computer. We now have a "cottage industry" publisher who does all the typing, design and layout, contracts the printing, then does the labeling and mailing. The editor's job is just that, selecting the material, doing some original writing and submitting the copy to the publisher. Anyone interested, please write or call me at (707) 538-4726 or fax (707) 538-1212. We can discuss the transition help I will provide. I don't want to think about nominating both a President and 8-Ball publisher before the current term expires.

See you in Salt Lake City!



Roy Owen, President

France Remembers

Editor: At the present time we have correspondence from three towns in France near which some of our 44th aircraft shot down over French targets came down and crashed. Apparently the citizens of these towns and villages feel very emotional about expressing their gratitude for those who lost their lives in the battle for French liberation. This has been manifested by diligent research by these citizens to learn the identity of the deceased airmen and the memorialization of their sacrifice by funding and building memorial markers naming the crews and where possible, the circumstances which resulted in the loss of the airplane and crew.

The correspondence package which follows is characteristic of the sincerity we have been seeing when one of these villages write requesting information which will assist them in establishing a permanent means of expressing the gratitude of the entire village or town populace for the sacrifices made by our valorous American Aircrews in the cause of French freedom. As usual, Will Lundy is the linchpin in providing our French friends the information they seek. In this case, it was the 5 February 1944 raid on Tours Airdrome in central France. One 68th Squadron aircraft #42-100181 Z "Star Valley" with the 1st Lt. Carl I. Bohnisch crew aboard was shot down by enemy fighters. The only survivor was RW Gunner Warren E. Klein who was taken prisoner. It is he that Will is currently trying to locate.



Roy:

Last summer I got a letter from Chaplain James A. Marvin regarding one of our planes which crashed near Blois on 5 Feb. 44. I answered back that it was 68th Sq. Carl A. Bohnisch, with only Warren E. Klein surviving. I planned to have you run this in the next Tails, but it did not happen. But I asked Art for addresses, got eight of them; but only two with full names. Wrote to two, one was wrong, the other returned, as it did not have unit number at that address. I did not follow up, apparently overlooked until now. I've tried to telephone this guy, but get no answers. One hard dude to verify.

In the meantime, I got this letter from P. Canonne of Blois seeking more info on this same crash and crew. Am trying to find W. Klein. But I thought that the article telling about the attack and downing of our plane was very interesting, might go well in Tails, if you have space.



May 19, 1996

Dear Mr. Lundy:

Paydirt! After all this time you don't know how happy I am to get some solid information to send back through the chain to France. It would be nice if you can locate Warren Klein to know he still lives and even better, if I could pass on some communication from him or even just his present address. Most important though, I think, from the French villagers' perspective, is just to know that he made it home. The 50th Anniversary celebrations evidently stirred up a lot of emotions and memories over there.

Enclosed (in translation by my wife) are two documents which describe quite well what happened to that particular plane and its crew. It would be nice if the families of these dead were to know of the consideration shown by the French and the Germans alike. Considering how much propaganda was spewed out on both sides to get us to hate enough to kill, the level of civility shown here gives me hope for us all yet. The fact that the French villagers turned first for information on the surviving American, not to us, but to German friends in their German sister city is even more encouraging.

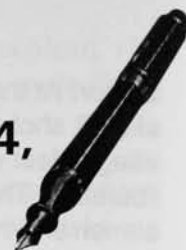
I hope you can make something of this story for your group Journal "8 Ball Tails." Some of your readers may have known these men. They certainly knew too many similar to them. It would be nice to think that others of our dead received such considerate treatment. I, myself, have been shot at a bit and once measured a shrapnel miss at three inches from my head. I had to periodically write letters home to the families of others who had not been so lucky. Not once did I have information like this to give proper closure. This is my belated chance. Please try to do something with it.

Sincerely,

James A. Marvin, Chaplain
1082 East Washington Road
Hillsborough, NH 03244

**Translation from French to English
by James A. Marvin**

**St. Leonard in Beauce, Saturday, 5 February, 1944,
10:00 German Time**



After a white frost, the weather is very calm and the sky very clear. Coming from the east there appeared in the sky at a medium altitude a very large formation of bombers heading west to return to England. The significance of this Squadron in perfect order made witness to a sight never seen.

The rising sun illuminating under the planes reflected to earth luminous streaks which moved. The inhabitants had gone out into the street, alerted by the strength of the roaring of the motors of such quantity of planes, and this in spite of the altitude of these last ones. Each one commented on thinking that the place of the bombing must have been seriously hit.

Among the group of neighbors where I found myself, a wife of a Spanish lumberman who was there with his daughters, following a glance at this aerial parade, in terror cried "fire." All turning at that moment, flames exiting from the left wing of the one (pair) near the outer motor. Several minutes afterwards, the aircraft reduced its altitude and a little after a parachute was seen opening behind the fortress. The fire spreading rapidly, one then saw the aircraft start a downward spiral to the left - the ellipses reducing and in spite of the reduced speed, the ground was soon reached. Immediately a giant black cloud was visible rapidly following a loud explosion. Flames and smoke were quickly dissipated. The last lines of bombers disappeared to the west, when at very low altitude and at lightning speed, a fighter plane passed several meters from the last houses in the direction from south to north. Was the pilot the originator of the chute and who went across to see the result of his shooting? Before the last moments, the eyewitnesses put forth some probabilities of where this plane could have crashed, to the west past the village of Sigogne.

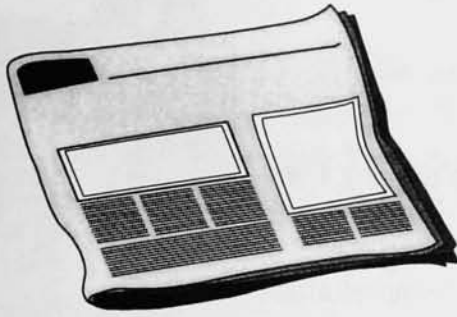
From afar, the people knowing the region had seen the impact not far from the farm of Monchaux. All the eyewitnesses of the unfolding of this catastrophe were certainly impacted by that which they came to see. Without hesitating, the mayor, Monsieur Redouin, took his bike and in parting said, "It is necessary to look over the spot immediately." On returning, he indicated

that the victims had been gotten out of the plane with the help of the people who were there, lined up and covered with their parachutes. The Mayor had taken down the identity of the flyers of whom the state of the burns made it possible. He asked the people of the village to stay away or to not let their dogs wander over the plane.

After lunch we went with the son of the Mayor to Sigogne to see the place. The wreckage was broken up, a motor was pulled off. A propeller was lying rather far away. Under the detached motor and half buried in the ground, one noticed a brown leather bag under this metallic mass. The ground was littered with metal, machine gun cartridges, pieces of organs, such small electrical motors used inside this fortress. This visit to the place did not last long, for we noticed a column of German military come out from the hamlet of Sigogne where the trucks were parked. With the other curious, who like us, wished to make a report on the plane, we believed the soldiers at arms coming from Blois.

From this moment on, there were no eyewitnesses for the transfer of the bodies or the salvage of the plane. The mature students wanted to help and to decorate the graves, but they couldn't leave the site.

The surviving parachutist, pushed north-east by the light breeze in the morning, needed his descent close to the farms of La Coudraie, south of the Marchenoir road from where, at that time, the path to the cow shed went off. The airman, after having rolled his parachute, approached the houses and went in by the north entrance at the Leroux-Genty farm. The people of the house, not up to date on the events and surprised by this presence, had the visitor come in for refreshments, but he accepted only some milk. To leave his name at the French house, which he came to enter, he discreetly wrote his name on the back of an almanac taken from a hook on the wall. The German soldiers from the watch post of Boisseau burst into the house at the same moment Madame Leroux treated several wounds on his head. This woman and her son died about 20 years later without having news of the American.



City of Blois - Cemetery Service

I undersigned, CRUSSY Henri, Commander of the Legion of Honor, Mayor of the city of Blois, certify that:

Sunday 6 Feb. at 3 PM the German military authorities carried nine bodies to the city cemetery. The commanding officer of the detachment declared that it is a matter of nine servicemen of the American Army Air Corps fallen over the jurisdiction of the community of St. Leonard in Beauce. After having examined the papers, the German servicemen left the bodies in the hut located behind the caretakers dwelling and sealed it.

7 Feb. at 5 PM Doctor LAND of the Field Command at Blois took us to proceed immediately to identify the bodies and put them in coffins which we did in the presence of a German military doctor.

After having removed the seals and opened the door of the hut, we certified that the bodies carried no distinct marks, no papers or objects and that one of five bodies had a name tag on their clothing. We immediately made the following statement:

After this operation we had the bodies placed in the coffins furnished by the German supply depot on the Avenue Chateaudun. The coffins were closed and numbered, we placed them, following the orders of the Feldkommandantur, in the public shelter.

8 Feb. at 10:00 the Feldkommandantur ordered us to place the coffins in the graves which had been prepared in the Basse Street City cemetery from the West along the outer wall.

The graves have been numbered from one to nine in accordance with the list below.

8 Feb. at 4 PM a detachment from the German army came to render military honors. Then we were given orders to fill the graves.

Drawn up at Blois, the 8th of Feb. 1944

The Mayor



The 8-Ball Tails

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc.

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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.



"8 Janvier 1997

Dear Mr. H.C. Henry,

I write to you this letter from France in the frame work of a memory I am writing on "The air war over Loir-et-Cher, 1939-1944" (area of Blois, a town settled between Orleans and Tours on river Loire, middle France).

The maister of the town is agree with my project to install a Commemorative Stone to express our recognition for the Sacrifice of the American Aircrews for our Liberation.

Therefore, I have to ask you help about two point of my searches:

1 - I am writing a special memory about the bombing on Blois, the 11 June 1944.

According to american archives one B-24 (PFF) from 44th BG was incorporated in this mission and bombed with others elements of 2nd Air Division.

Please sir, would you be so kind to confirm this aspect of the bombing?

2 - On 5 February 1944, an aircrew attached to 44th BG crashed nearby the village of St. Leonard en Beauce killing:

Eugene Edgerton, Turret
Kenneth Hall, LW Gunner
Bernrd F. Ohler, Rad Officer
Joseph Morin, Tail Gunner
John Giffin, Co-Pilot
Harold W. Spink, Bombardier
Carl A. Bohnish, Pilot
William F. Levrinch, Engineer
Hubert J. Ede, Navigator
Warren E. Klein, RW Gunner

It seems to be after the bombing on Tours.

I would be very pleased, very honoured to correspond with veterans of this Bomber Group or with they comrads or members of family to relate me this event.

I know that it is confidential life about a sensitive period and I engage my word to preserve their memories. Is it possible to find information to write a little memory to relate their last mission?

Perhaps, if you want, their names would be probably write in the Commemorative Stone for future generations?

In return, I offer my help to you Unit if you have inquiries about missions over France, missing aircrafts, etc.

I am 33 years old and, after studies at the University of Tours (where I specialized in military aeronautical life of the thirties), I teach History and Geography at Issoudun.

Your reply would be greatly appreciated by the American Air Force enthusiast (being Second Air Force and 8th AF Associate member(I have never ceased to be).

I hope my english understandable.

Thanking you in anticipation...

Sincerely yours,
Philippe Canonne
2, RUE ASSOLANT
41.000 BLOIS
FRANCE"





Beating the Bushes

By Art Hand & Will Lundy

For the past few months Art Hand has been concentrating his attention again to the Ursel P. Harvell's Roster in the back of '44th Liberators Over Europe.' As a consequence, several of those located dated back to the early days at MacDill and Barksdale fields.

MARK PARKINS: P.O. Box 40, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201. Mark is the son of William M. Parkins, Lt. in the roster, and who folded his wings 5/15/94.

CLARENCE C. PRICE: 907 Lancaster St., Rocky Mount, NC 27801. Clarence was listed as a Corporal in the roster.

CURTIS P. BABIN: 670 Mahler St., Houma, LA 70363.

SAM N. BARBER: 1645 L. "B" St., Blackwell, OK 74631. Sam has moved, relocated. 67th Squadron.

LUEY BARRINGER: 10597 Summitt, Rockford, MI 49341. Luey served with the 464th Sub Depot.

RUSSELL I. BROCKHOFF: 309 Miami St., Hiawatha, KS 66434. Assigned to 66th Squadron, and with Base Defense Unit.

HAROLD E. BRUBAKER: 14722 Mishey Road, Rt. Fredericktown, OH 43109. Harold is listed as a 1st Lt. in the 66th Squadron.

LESTER O. COLLINS: P.O. Box #3, Easton, KS 66020. Assigned to 68th Squadron (756). Flew home with Lt. Kiggins in A/C #44-50755.

CURTIS L. BROITZMAN: 117 Vermont Street, Beaver Dam, WI 53916. Served with the 67th Squadron, as well as the 491st Bomb Group.

ROBERT D. EASTERS: 573 Davis St., Elba, AL 36323. Robert was with us at MacDill Field.

GEORGE R. GOODRICH: Road #2, Box 761, Morrisville, VT 05661. George was a M/Sgt., served with headquarters.

BRUCE E. GRALEY: HC 64, Box 784, Ashford, WV 25009. Bruce served with the 506th Squadron.

BURDE A. DUNCAN, JR.: 497 Wallace St., Northumberland, PA 17857. Served with the 66th and 506th Squadrons. Combat.

JOHN A. DITONDO: 393 Delta Road #1, Amherst, NY 14226. John was assigned to the 66th Squadron and an MP.

FRANCIS T. BEECHER: 4406 Cherokee Drive, Madison, WI 53711. Served as a medic at Barksdale Field, 1942.

ELMER O. BEIGAY: 988 Polk Ave., Franklin Square, NY 11010. Elmer served with the 831st and 340 Engineering.

EMIL BURBACK: 19317 NE Pacific St., Portland, OR 97230. No records on Emil. If anyone knows him, let us know.

KENNETH G. BERKMAN: 401 S. Carver, Winthrop, MN 55396. Kenneth is listed with the 66th Squadron. He too was on the Queen Mary in Sept. 1942, ground echelon.

CHARLES T. CARTER: 605 West Brown Street, Seymour, IN 47274. Charles served at HQ, Barksdale.

JOSEPH S. DOMINO: 451 Layton Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216. Joseph was originally with the 44th, 68th Squadrons, but went to the 98th when it split off in 1942.

GRADY M. BRUCE: 5000 Lake Englewood, Waco, TX 76710. Grady served in the 66th Squadron, was with the ground echelon on board the Queen Mary in Sept. 42. He worked with crew chief Robert M. Pugh on #811, Fascinat' Witch.

LOREN L. OSHEL: 26 Holly Drive, Olathe, KS 66062. Loren was assigned to the 66th Squadron. Instrument mechanic. He attended Compass School in July, 1944.

HOWARD L. BOREHARDT: 1618 South Rose Farm Road, Woodstock, IL 60098. Howard served in the 66th Squadron also, but data could not be located at this time.



Hickam Air Force Base Patriotism Park

By Roy Owen

In late September last year, I was in Honolulu to attend an annual get-together of a fliers organization to which I belong. I was staying in the VOO next door to the officer's club and had lunch there out on a beautiful lanai that overlooks the entrance to Pearl Harbor. Having been stationed at Hickam during my active duty career, I am familiar with most of that beautiful base. The previous evening, I had occasion to meet Col. Bruce Brown, the Base Commander at the club. He asked me if I had seen the new ALOHA 'AINA PARK and memorial. I had not. He informed me that the next day was POW and MIA Remembrance Day and at 12:45 p.m. there would be a short memorial service and "missing man" fly over by the Hawaii Air National Guard in honor of these lost to us. He invited me to attend.

As I finished lunch, I saw military and civilian people beginning to arrive; they were walking toward an area overlooking the entrance to Pearl Harbor which was out of my line of sight. I departed the lanai area and joined the numbers headed in that direction. As I reached the boundary of the ALOHA 'AINA PARK (Patriotism Park), I was able to see across the lawn to the most beautiful model of a flight of four jet fighter aircraft in the "missing man" formation with the number two man just pulling up heaven bound to leave that spot vacant. The formation is set in a three level terraced garden area at the waters edge where the formation will be headed into the sunset each evening. This is one of the most breathtaking memorials I have seen.

After a brief, poignant, presentation of the meaning of the national POW/MIA Memorial Day by Col. Brown, there followed a touching remembrance of his days as a POW in Germany by an 8th Air Force Veteran. The program finished with the bugler sounding TAPS and the Hawaii National Guard flying F-15 Falcons making a spectacular "missing man" fly over.

Those of you who know me and are aware of my very low emotional threshold when it comes to memorializing our lost comrades, can picture me standing at attention in that beautiful spot listening to the bugle sounding TAPS with that magnificent aerial tribute to our MIA and POW comrades overhead. Through my tears, I felt so wonderfully proud to be an American and to have served my Country in the company of those valorous men and women we were honoring and remembering that day.

I urge anyone visiting Honolulu to make the trip out to Hickam Air Force Base (it is open to the public) to visit this beautiful memorial. THE BUS (the on-base bus stop across the street club. Plan to arrive about 11:00 am. to the back of the club. Then have beautiful buffet lunch on week memorable day.

(it is open to the public) to visit this beautiful memorial. THE BUS (the on-base bus stop across the street club. Plan to arrive about 11:00 am. to the back of the club. Then have beautiful buffet lunch on week memorable day. I promise it will be a



Photos by Lolly Owen



ALOHA 'AINA PARK



WILL SEZ

Over the years as I've "worked" in my War Room (as Pete Henry calls his), I've seen the pages drop off my calendars year after year, but keep telling myself that I am not growing older. Not me! But I am reminded of an old saying which a fellow worker used to say of his work, "The hurrier I go, the behinder I get." You know, that is exactly the way I am feeling these days - I must be slowing down because things just are not getting done like they used to.

Reflecting on this a few days ago, I decided to take a look at the things within the 44th BGVA with which I've been involved. As one thing after another popped into focus, I decided to make a list of these items, events, business, etc. Now it seems I have a reason, but not an excuse. Your 44th Bomb Group President and his Board have made superb progress since he was elected to the new 44th BGVA two and one-quarter years ago. He has brought us back from zero finances and no progress to where we stand today. Take a look at the following list to see just how far we have come in such a short period of time.

- 1) Converted the old Tower Project funds to the support of a new, larger Reading Room and Museum at Arrow Air Center, Shipdham.
- 2) Supported Kevin Watson's project to provide a memorial near Eastbourne to honor Lt. Bolin's crew and Ruth-Less.
- 3) Supported a memorial at Illfurth, eastern France, for their church and the crash site of Lt. Maynard and his crew.
- 4) OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AND SUPPORTED Stephen Adam's project to compile a 66th Squadron history, as well as to make him our official representative in England.
- 5) Approved a contract with the Turner Publishing Company to compile and print a book covering the history of the 44th Bomb Group.
- 6) Committed funds and manpower to develop an exhibit honoring General Johnson and his men for their famous Ploesti Mission at the new 8th Air Force Museum near Savannah, Georgia.
- 7) Committed funds and manpower to research the archives at Washington, D.C. and elsewhere to develop records about the 44th Bomb Group, so far

as individual personnel, missions, airplanes, etc. Computerizing this data, in conjunction with programs being set up at the 8th Air Force Museum.

- 8) Committed funds and manpower to develop and install new memorial plaques for the 44th Bomb Group's memory at both MacDill and Barksdale Air Fields, where they originated and trained in 1941 and 1942.
- 9) Most importantly, had our new leadership not taken the bit in their teeth when the old HMG was trashed, none of the above would have been accomplished. As a consequence, the 44th BGVA would not exist to be able to respond to the many requests which are now arriving for data about husbands, fathers, brothers records...Where he served? When, how did he die? Who was the crew that crashed? How can we contact survivors? etc., etc.
- 10) Organized a tour of 45 44th BGVA husbands, wives, children, grandchildren and friends of the 44th BGVA leaving May 26, which will be a memorial trip. The tour will visit Shipdham, the towns folk and the airfield which will include a memorial service; then to Eastbourne, Omaha Beach and Ardennes, where we have 44th members buried and we shall honor them according to our traditions.

Just recently, the 44th BGVA was contacted by a group of French Association Nationale Des Sous-Officers De Reserve De L'Armee DeL'Air, who live in the vicinity of Rouen. They wanted information about two planes which crashed near Rouen on 8 March 1943. Now that contact has been made and some data furnished, they would like more data on EVERY 44th Bomb Group plane which went down in all of France. Too, learning that the 44th BGVA Tour will stop in Rouen in early June, they are begging to honor our men with ceremonies, visit the crash sites, one of which has a memorial. Space does not permit the possibilities that this one contact will make.

I hope that I've made the point clear...your 44th BGVA Board has been very busy making sure that the 44th Bomb Group and their record will never be forgotten. Thank you Roy and all.

Lastly, but certainly just as important, is you the members, whose support and funding that makes it possible for our Organization to continue to grow and produce results. THANK YOU!!

Will Lundy

FOLDED WINGS

MARCH, 1997



- John T. Altman* 66th Squadron. Ploesti veteran as member of Lt. Felber's crew. 8/96
Radio Operator.
- Ned L. Anderson* 68th Squadron Pilot. Died several years ago. In 44th Bomb Group
28 October 1944, flew home on May 28, 1945.
- Richard E. Bottomley* 66th Squadron. One of the originals, worked in the Orderly Room. 2/7/97
Served on 44th HMG Board.
- Alvin V. Breeland* 506th Squadron Airman. Flew with Lt. R.L. Hoisington's crew 44-45 12/13/96
- Arnold M. Curtzwiler* Original 506th Squadron. 12/5/81
- Lyman P. Frost* Home state, Maine 9/20/89
- Eugene E. Gaster* 506th - Was one of the original complement at Pueblo, Colorado 11/4/96
- John E. Gunnell* 506th Squadron Co-Pilot for Wm. Maynor POW 20 Dec. 43 8/10/96
- Solomon G. "Sully" Handy* Died several years ago. He was a Gunner on Lt. O. Collins,
67th Squadron. Completed tour in early November, 1944.
- Ekmer K. Kohler* 68th Squadron. Pilot. Was co-pilot for B.D. Ford, then 1st Pilot. 12/7/96
Often flew Corky.
- Joseph A. Kuklewitz* 67th Squadron Pilot. Assigned to 44th Bomb Group 7 Sept 1944. 11/20/96
Completed tour 3 March 1945 with 35 missions. Joe attended
several reunions. Later flew many flights in the Berlin Airlift;
also Flying Tigers Airline.
- Charles H. Lain* 506th Squadron, Bombardier for Komansinski, bailed out 8-8-44 01/03/97
Evaded until picked up by Patton Army.
- Robert S. Lawson* Col. USAFR (Ret) C.O. 1132nd QM Co. 2/8/97
- Clifford MacDougal* 67th Squadron Co-Pilot for Kuklewicz. Comp Tour 3 March 45. 8/96
- Ronald G. McNeeley* 806 Chemical 10/29/96
- Melvin t. Novotny* 67th Squadron Gunner on Capt. Mueller's crew. Later served 1/5/97
in Engineering Section.
- Richard C. O'Brien* 66th Squadron Lt. assigned to squadron 3 June 1944. 11/96
- William M. Parkins* 506th Squadron Lt. 5/15/94
- Otis V. Rogers* 68th Squadron Flight Engineer for Zerman. Comp Tour 3/6/95
30 Missions 25 January 45.
- Pershing G. Rolfe* 66th Squadron. Original crewman at Barksdale in 1942 with 11/96
Capt. Adam's crew.
- Robert S. Schimke* 67th Squadron Navigator on Lt. Henderson's crew. Date Unknown
Badly wounded on Ploesti Raid, 1943. Served in Korean War.
Retired as a Lt. Colonel.
- Jacob "Jack" Wind* 506th Squadron Pilot. First mission 8 April 1944, 10/1/95
completed 33 missions. Served on 44th HMG Board.
Great supporter of 44th Bomb Group.

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BOARD

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Archivist: Anthony Mastradone
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Lanham, MD 20706-2709
Phone: (301) 577-1487

U.K. Representative: Steve Adams
28 Bassingham Road
Norwich, England NR3 2QT
Phone/Fax: 011-44-1603-400221



MEMORIAL DEDICATION AND REGIONAL REUNION

May 3, 1997 - Barksdale AFB, Shreveport, LA

At 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 3, the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association will dedicate a Memorial Marker at the 8th Air Force Memorial Walkway at the site of the B-24 Liberator Display. This memorial will commemorate the World War II service of the 44th at Barksdale and be a lasting tribute to the effort we all shared in that conflict. We invite and encourage all 44th Veterans, their families and friends to attend; especially those that were with the Group during its Barksdale service 15 February to 26 July 1942.

In the evening there will be a Regional Reunion at the Holiday Inn for all attendees. A reception with cash bar at 6:30 p.m. will precede the dinner. The price of the dinner is \$25. Pay when you sign in at the door.

It is necessary we have reservations for the Reunion prior to April 20th. We must have names in advance to secure clearance to the base and make name tags. All 44th members within a 250 mile radius of Shreveport, LA will receive an invitation, a reunion reservation and a hotel reservation form in the mail. We have a block of rooms set aside for us for Friday and Saturday nights at the Holiday Inn Bossier, Bossier City. Follow the instructions therein.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY APRIL 20 AND BE SURE TO INFORM THE HOTEL YOU ARE WITH THE 44TH BOMB GROUP. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE AN INVITATION AND WISH TO ATTEND, CONTACT JIM CLEMENTS BY PHONE: ☎ (972) 243-4657



BENJAMIN SMITH, JR.
 ATTORNEY AT LAW
 POST OFFICE BOX 1586
 WAYCROSS, GEORGIA 31502-1586

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FAX: (912) 285-9930

July 30, 1996

Mr. Roy W. Owens, Editor
 B-Ball Tales
 6304 Meadow Ridge
 Santa Rosa, California 95409

Dear Roy:

I am writing to see if you could run an article about the "Wall of Valor" in an issue of your newsletter. The Memorial Gardens project has really taken off and all concerned with it are very excited. They will be installing the first four sections of the wall next week and more orders are coming in every day. In addition, the reflecting pool has been installed and some of the brick walks are in place. Landscaping goes forward.

I have taken the liberty of enclosing a short article which you can use as well as a copy of our brochure which includes the order form.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please let me know if you need any other information. Again, thank you for any assistance you can render in this regard.

Most cordially,

Judge Ben Smith
 Chairman, Memorial Gardens

BSjr:ck
 Enclosures

Did you serve in the 8AF?

Join the company of valiant 8AF'ers whose names are inscribed on the "Wall of Valor" of the Memorial Gardens at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia.

Your memorial is 4 x 12" on handsome, indestructible granite. Send rank, full name, squadron and bomber or fighter group (or other unit) of 8AF. Cost is \$100 for 24 letters. Add \$1 for each extra letter.

Example:
 TSGT CLIFF BACHMAN
 360 SQ 303BG

The quickest way is to use Mastercard or Visa. Call 1-800-544-8878 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or send check to:

Wall of Valor
 Mighty 8th Air Force Museum
 P.O. Box 1992
 Savannah, Georgia 31402

There are larger memorials and/or crew memorials available. For information, call us.

Your donation is helping to create the beautiful Memorial Garden and preserve it forever.

Join your 8AF buddies in this great undertaking. It is our memorial.



AUTHOR'S CORNER



Here is a well recommended book by a B-24 guy to open our Author's Corner:

We are the World War II generation of Americans. Mostly born in the Roaring Twenties, hardened by the Depression, we carried America to victory. Of the many books written about us, none are more moving than those written by us. CREWDOG is such a book, written by John Matt. John flew B-24s with us in the Mighty 8th, the flying unit that suffered more combat deaths than the entire Marine Corps in WWII. He lived to tell about it, but that is only half the story.

A new enemy confronts our generations, and the Cold War sets in. CREWDOG's weather recon squadron penetrates hurricanes and nuclear test bomb clouds and travels to the north Pole. John Matt takes us with him, from the Vietnam of the 1950s to the western edge of the Iron Curtain. From the mysteries of Saudi Arabia to the fall of the Berlin Wall, this gifted storyteller brings us clarity and humor, founded on the American idea of freedom.

Learn for yourself why Tom Clancy, Phyllis DuBois, and Jordan Uttal, among others, have nothing but praise for CREWDOG. To receive your hardcover 512-page copy of CREWDOG, please make out a check for \$28.95 (\$24.95 + \$4 postage and handling) to Waterford Books, and send to:

Waterford Books
P.O. Box 669
Hamilton, VA 20159

Be sure to enclose your return mailing address.



Also Leroy W. Newby, 346 Pineview Drive, Venice, FL 34293, has authored TARGET PLOESTI which was the Military Book Clubs Battle Classics November Selection. Price to their members \$17.95. Those wishing to join the Doubleday Military Book Club may call (800) 321-7323.



Another author among us: BLACK HOLE OF WAUWILERMOOS authored by 66th Bomb Squadron member Dan Culler.

For your personal autograph book, please send check with your name and address to:

Dan Culler
750 South LaBrisa
Green Valley, AZ 85614-2232
\$16.50 + \$3.50 shipping and handling per book.



WAR & WOMEN

Authored by: Jake Elias
7 East Union Street
Nanticoke, PA 18634
Tele: (717) 735-8730

INFORMATION WANTED

August 2, 1944, Ploesti plus one. Gen. Ent presenting Purple Heart Medals to men wounded on the Ploesti Mission. We need the names and squadron of these men.

If you can identify any or all, notify the Editor.





*More
“Down De Hatch”
follow-up:*

12/31/96

Dear Roy Owen:

The Vol. 2 No. 1 8-Ball Tails story and photo of “Down De Hatch” was quite interesting to myself, not because our crew ever flew in that airplane, but it seemed that we, six enlisted men of the Komasiniski crew probably shared a quonset hut in the 506th Squadron site with those of a crew who had finished their tour flying that plane.

A further interest is that after being MIA in France for about a month and then returning to the 44th and 506th squadron before being sent to the ZOI by the ATC northern route, I had gone to the supply room and begged for some kind of a warm jacket to wear on the way. I was given a B-10 jacket which is fabric with a fur collar and has a warm lining, much warmer than an A-2 jacket. That jacket had painted on the back “Down De Hatch, 30 Times.” Later when examining it further, my initials and serial number were found on the inside. It had been mine previous to being MIA and apparently must have been appropriated by one of those men in our hut, but had somehow been returned to the supply room. I wore it into civilian life until being worn out; it was discarded.

Something otherwise of note, the last issue of “8th Air Force News” Vol. 4, page 14 lists heavy bomb groups and number of missions that each flew. The 93rd leads with the 44th ranking 3rd and the 303rd, a B-17 group having the 2nd most missions flown, with a total of 364.

With the help of Will Lundy, as usual, contact was established with the son of one of our long lost gunners, Coley W. Richardson. He flew with our crew on the unfortunate mission when we bailed out of that burning B-24, “My Peach,” 42-100415 on August 8, 1944. His story, as related to his son Bill is included. Bill would very much like to hear from any of his father’s original crew or from any one who knew Coley in the 506th Squadron. There is little mention of him in Norman Kiefer’s book. Bill’s address is: Bill Richardson, 2451 Cedar Drive, Laurenceville, GA 30243. He is also a 44th BGVA member and is listed in the membership listing booklet.

As I had agreed with you at St. Louis, my story is being prepared and when ready, a copy will be sent to you. Be aware though that some of it had been previously printed in Joe Warth’s 44th Logbook, but there are a number of typos. See the December, 1989, page 9 and Spring, 1991, page 36 and Summer, 1991, page 46 if you want to read any of it.

I had very much enjoyed our reunions at San Antonio and St. Louis too, even though being stranded at Grant’s Farm when the last bus left just as I was leaving the gift shop. Hope to get to Salt Lake City in October too.

Sincerely,
Frank Schaeffer

This is Coley W. Richardson's story as related to his son Bill Richardson in later years.

Anyway, "Here is my fathers account of what happened the day "My-Peach" was shot down. The story was told to me over the course of my life with my Dad, in bits and pieces, so take that into account when reading the material.

He said he volunteered for duty on the plane to get out of a detail (guard duty maybe). He liked to fly and I think this was his 30th flight. Interestingly, he said he frequently flew missions to escape ground duty!

Back to that mission, when Coley (Dad) bailed out of the plane on that fateful day, he said, he pulled his rip cord right away. This slowed his decent down, and he became concerned about ground fire. He had never jumped before but had heard that you could partially collapse a chute and speed your descent. He tried this and successfully sped up his fall. Unfortunately, he was not as successful about getting it back open. Meanwhile, he noticed ground troops closing in on his landing area. He thought they were Germans so he planned to hit the ground running (not having been to formal jump training, he said he did not understand the drop and roll technique to distribute the force). Anyway, when he got his chute back fully open, he was just about to hit the ground. He hit the ground hard with the full force on one leg because he was going to try and run from the people closing in on his location. He suffered a compound fracture of his left leg.

The ground troops turned out to be the French underground. Who, upon seeing the extent of his injuries and knowing they could not care for him, they advised him to wait and surrender to the Nazis, which he did (I think he said they liberated his money, rightfully, for their cause).

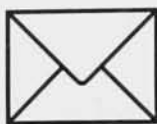
After capture or being turned over by the French (I'm not clear about this) the Germans put him into what I think was a normal "French" hospital that was converted for prisoners. His leg was pinned back together by the Germans in this hospital. He had a story he only told when he was inebriated, about the doctor not giving him anesthesia and questioning him while he worked on his leg. Dad said the doctor stopped the drill every few turns and asked him about his unit (plane count, officers on My-Peach, etc.). Apparently they soon realized how tough he was. He passed out from pain while reciting his name, rank and service number. His leg had to be reset and repinned after he was liberated.

You could see the end of the replacement pin from both sides of his knee. He had some trouble walking after his leg healed, and when he tried to reenter the service, they would not take him. This bothered him for a long time, because he had planned a full military career. Although it healed pretty good, he did die with a slight limp. After the operating room experience, he was apparently well treated by the French nurses.

A letter written by my uncle states that the Armed forces notified his mother that he was shot down and missing; however, before they reported his status, she received a letter from Dad in the hospital in "France." This doesn't seem possible, but that is the information I have.

Later he was liberated and evacuated by the Allies before he was completely healed. He also talked about giving his leather flight jacket to a soldier who carried him on his back for miles to get to the liberation point.

MAIL CALL



This comes from:
Col. Bill Cameron
2/13/96

Editor: This came to the Lundy's from our man in Carmel, Col. Bill Cameron.

Dear Will & Irene:

I have a story for you that may or may not be of interest. Sometime in 1943 (perhaps I was in London with a few friends), four of us decided to visit Soho for lunch. We found a restaurant that looked interesting (there were many at that time) and went in. We were in our Class A's, as was appropriate in wartime. The menu was of course very modest, featuring such delicacies as beans on toast, etc. I don't recall that our fellow customers included any other G.I.'s. When our lunches arrived at the table, we were quite surprised to see that each of our four plates was the same, presenting us with a large mound of pureed spinach! For some reason, despite our surprise, we accepted the dishes, and when one of us attempted to taste it, he found that the spinach covered (hid) a juicy steak!

The proprietor came over to our table and introduced himself. It turned out that he previously had a restaurant in Chicago (Greek-American?). This was his way of greeting fellow Americans.

I looked for the place in 1988. Needless to say, the restaurant and our benefactor were gone, but not forgotten.

With very best regards,



This comes from:
J.T. Elias
7 East Union Street
Nanticoke, PA 18634
Tele: (717) 735-8730

Dear Roy,

The letter from Dan Culler regretting the lack of interest by the 44th members in his book, BLACK HOLE OF WAUWILERNOOS hit a chord in me. I had similar response for my book WAR & WOMEN. As he says, "Maybe people are tired of hearing about WWII." My literary agent in London told me that the British people think of WWII as "ancient history." But ancient history is very valuable. So I would tell Dan Culler to keep his chin up and keep beating the bushes for customers. During good weather, I spent one day each week visiting bookstores and soliciting orders. Very few turned me down, but most took the book on consignment, paying only upon selling the book. But it keeps selling, though slowly.

A small publisher does not have the clout of the giant book producers with their large advertising accounts and connections to TV stations and book reviewers. So we small guys must work and sweat to put our work before the public. Since we are retired though, we are lucky to have the time.

Lew Robinson gave my book an excellent write-up in the summer issue of the '8 Ball Tails." Dr. Herbert Wilson of Bismarck, SD wrote to tell me my book was the best he'd read on World War II. Bob Lehnhausen phoned me from Illinois to tell me how much he'd enjoyed the book. These pats on the back keep a guy going, and I am very grateful to them, all very dear friends who show their friendship in concrete ways.

Enough of my story. I had to go to the funeral of a dear friend and buddy a few weeks ago. I first met Elvin Scheetz in our hut at the 68th Squadron a short time after D-Day. His crew had just filled the empty cots of a crew that had been shot down. Elvin and his buddies watched us wide-eyed as we came from a debriefing after a mission to France. We seemed to click right from the start, and ever since, we had been buddies. Not long after coming to the 68th, Elvin was transferred to a B-25 outfit in Corca, bombing Germany over the Alps. One day their plane was badly injured, one engine out, and no way of making it back over the Alps. They managed to get close enough to Switzerland for all the crew to parachute into internment. However, the pilot was too low to bail out after he'd made sure all his men were out; so he took the plane down. Elvin landed on a hill and could see the plane crash land into a field on the German side. To his horror, he saw three German soldiers pull out the pilot and shoot him in cold blood. That scene had haunted Elvin ever since.

Since he lived in Allentown, only eighty miles from my home, we often met for lunch. Elvin was always outspoken about the good of America, a true patriot who was not averse to standing up for our Country. He developed cancer, and when I last saw him in the hospital, he was the ghost of himself, dying shortly after. At his funeral, the people kept coming and coming, a tribute to a fine friend and great American.

I'd like to make a suggestion. Why not list the books of 44th Group members with their prices and where they can be bought? That way you would not only help 44th men, but help the group itself by spreading the history of which we were participants. This would take very little space and do a service to both authors and people interested in our history.

Best wishes to you and all our members.

Sincerely

Editor: All of you published authors out there, let us know where we can find your book(s).



This comes from:
Col. (Ret.) Mike Mikoloski
66th Squadron
2/13/96

Editor: This comes from Col. (Ret.) "Mike" Mikoloski, Board Member representing the 66th Squadron. There are some important thoughts about General Leon Johnson, so focus on what Mike and SMSG Walter Patrick have to say.

Dear Roy:

Enclosed are a couple of letters from SMSG Walter Patrick who did visit the General after my strong urging. Sgt. "Pat," along with Sgt. Walter Hazelton and I are the lone survivors from the crew of "JENNY," later renamed "LADY LUCK." Tom Scrivner was our Aircraft Commander and my close friend and roommate when I was in the 66th. Tom and the crew of "Lady Luck" went down over Ploesti on their 25th mission. For a long time they were listed as MIA, later listed as KIA. Pat, Hazelton and I, luckily, had completed our tours that summer and we have been in touch over all the years since. Sgt. Pat and I got together at Westover AFB after the war and we, together, conceived and sponsored an Information and Education Program that caught the eye of AF Headquarters and General Johnson, who, at the time, was Chief, Personnel Services. I was brought into the Pentagon, rejoined with the General and stayed on his staff until he retired.

After reading his letter of December 3, I asked Sgt. Pat if we could print his letter. He answered with his permission to print the original and his response. I would like to see them published in The 8-Ball Tails, as it may influence other members of the 44th, who may be in the area, to drop in on General Johnson. I can assure them they will be warmly and graciously welcomed. As for the General, there is a strong and lasting bond between him and those who served with the 44th. These visits also give him a great lift and rejuvenate his mental and physical faculties. Frankly, except for just a few of us like Sgt. Pat, B/Gen. Jack Gibson, Ed Dobson and Bill Taylor, not many others have paid him a visit. All, if not most of his contemporaries have long folded their wings, so we, the former members of his 44th are the only ones left.

Thanks and with kindest personal regards,



Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina
12/3/96

Editor: For all of us who would perhaps feel we were being intrusive by making a call on General Johnson, I'm sure you will read here that those feelings are completely unfounded. And remember, he is 83, we are fortunate to still have him...so, like SMSGT "Pat," JUST DO IT!

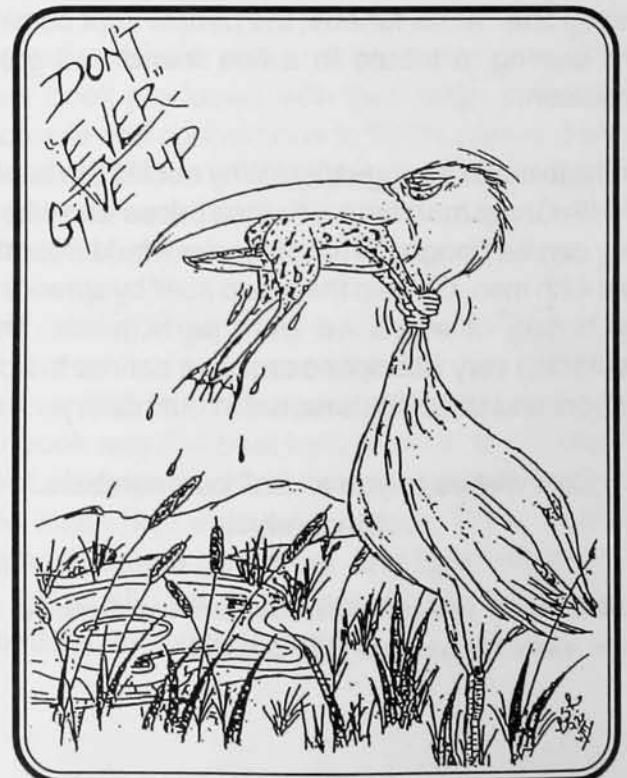
Dear Col. Mike:

What makes the General great can be revealed by the story about Sgt. Cox "The Real Flying Eight Ball" that appeared in the Winter, 1996 issue of the Second Air Division Journal, page 11. Incidentally, I didn't receive my copy until I got back from Springfield, VA on Dec. 2nd. And, yes, I did get with the General...It was a real emotional meeting for me, at least...Evelyn and I were treated Top Drawer by all the staff at the facility...we were offered dinner and dessert but, of course, we declined. Unfortunately, you were right about the medication he takes, he was very cheerful, but slightly subdued. When we arrived he was in the lounge having a piece of pumpkin pie and whipped cream...I kneeled down in front of him and placed my hands over his and began my presentation...I was wearing my Eight Ball hat and pointed to it and said, "I don't think you know me, but I flew with Col. Mikoloski on Jimmy Kahl and Tommy Scrivners crews...I went on to say "General, beside wanting to see you, I wanted you to know that I represent all the Enlisted men who ever flew with you or under your command and we think you are the greatest, most brave pilot and leader who has ever flown." He sort of had a smile on his face and as he squeezed my hand he said, "I really do appreciate your visit and what you are saying...that really got to me...here he was a Four Star General speaking to a Sergeant. This meant so much to me since I had been born and raised in the Army, my father being a 30 year Master Sergeant in the Corps of Engineers...Meeting the General, to me, was like meeting another of my military heroes, Stonewall Jackson...to me they are both the same mold. Evelyn talked to the General also...She told him

about how we used to babysit his kids before we got married...he laughed and said, "That was a long time ago!" I was pleased that, though we visited for over 20 minutes, he seemed fairly strong throughout our stay.

Besides his kind words about General Johnson in the 2nd Air Division Journal, Sergeant Cox' story also brought back an incident that Saterfield and me were involved in...we were both busted to Private, along with six other combat crew members for taking a carry-all and driving into Norwich, where we parked on a back street...An old English gentleman on a bicycle ran into the vehicle. He called the MPs and they were waiting for us to return after removing the distributor cap...Of course, we all had to fly again to at least get our Buck Sergeant stripes back...in my case it may have been a life saving incident, because I volunteered to fly with two other crews, Capt. Miller for one to Vegasack. So by the time Ploesti came along, I had 25 plus. I'm surprised they didn't make me go anyway, but they didn't. Thank the good Lord for that! Yes, Sergeant Cox was right when he said the General wears his star with authority, and his Medal of Honor with humility.

All our love,
 Pat and Evelyn





Editor: We had answered a previous letter from Dick inquiring about his cousin S/Sgt. Travis Nash, Radio Operator on the 506th Squadron Lt. George F. Brown, Jr. Crew. Brown and Nash were both killed by flak in "Tinker Belle" on the 5 April 1945 raid on the Plauen, Germany Transportation network.

This comes from:
Dick Martin
ASS Mem #48
4th FG
8AFHS
Tenn. Chapter of Same
12/96

Dear Mr. Lundy:

Thank you very much for your swift response to my request. I have requested material from National Archives and Maxwell AFB as well.

I did not know this relative existed until 6 to 8 months ago. This research is as much for Travis' brother, who is an attorney in Louisville, Ky and his 91 year old sister in Texas, who have never known exactly the circumstances surrounding his death. Maybe I can, with your and Mr. Owens' help, relay the information to them. No doubt they will appreciate it, as do I.

Thanks again, and wish you and yours a very happy holiday season.

Most respectfully,



Editor: We got a lot of feedback from the "Down De Hatch" feature. That's the purpose of these features...to stir up those old memories and swap stories. This is what Will Lundy calls "the gravy" in the history of a great outfit like ours. The first one comes from the 506th's own Ken Adrian.

This comes from:
Ken Adrian (506th)
2297 Chantala Avenue
Pueblo, Colorado 81006
12/12/96

Dear Will:

I was surprised and happy to see "Down De Hatch" as the honored plane on this issue of 8 Ball Tails.

You had a question mark on the August 26th mission - we (Wimsatt) had a mission flown to Salzbergen Oil on that date. We probably flew Bar Z. I have my records in Wisconsin and could confirm this. I kept a bomb pin with the ship number we flew and the bomb load on each mission. We did fly Bar Z as Deputy Lead on our 19th mission.

On the 27th, we had a mission to Berlin scheduled and flew to Denmark where we ran into a tremendous cold front and had to return to base. We were given credit for that one - we were shot at by the 88s. Mission #20 probably in Down De Hatch, and we flew Bar Z to Calais on August 30. (#21)

I have found a few articles in my 1996 "Intercom" that you might be interested in. It is the "8 Ball Tails" of the AGA (mostly RAF). About eight years ago, I went to one of their conventions in Southport. We were treated like returning royalty. There was a dance each night with a big band. I had a number of meals with Bill Reid (UC) as I had a Grade "A" dairy farm at the time and he had one in England. (I understand that Bill crash landed at Shipdham on his Victoria Cross mission. True). Bill and I compared notes as to who was getting the most welfare from our government. This was about the time of the dairy buyouts where you got paid for NOT milking for five years. No feeding cows, no manure to haul, no crops to put in to feed the cows. You just collected about half of your milk check, then drank beer in the local pub. He said they dumped their surplus butter and cheese into the ocean to keep from having a surplus, keep the prices up.

Peter Crouch, a former S&J Commander sat in on at least one of these sessions. He was a wheel in the outfit, now lives in Spain.

I had intended to go to the Convention in Wales a few years later, but my doctor in Missouri decided I was going to die in about a year - from heart failure. Thank God it was a missed diagnosis, as this happened about five years ago. I have a new doctor, you might guess, as I wasn't ready for the great runway in the sky.

Cheers,

Editor: Ken also sends along a couple of contradictory views about how RAF crews flying sub patrol in the B-24 viewed the training in "ditching/dinghy drill. These cut-outs come from "The Intercom", the publication of the Air Crew Association, an English association of combat airmen.

"THE FORGOTTEN AIRFORCE

The forgotten Airforce (Intercom - Summer '96) refers to the time available to the crew of a Liberator to reach the safety of the dinghy, which would have been inflated, should they have survived ditching in the Ocean.

I did a Tour of operations with 357(SD) Squadron based at CHINA BAY in Ceylon, flying across the Indian Ocean to drop Gurkhas into Malaya. Averaging 19 hours with 16 hours across water meant that we took our Dinghy-drill very seriously. Because all but the rear turret had been stripped from the aircraft to conserve weight, the time estimated to reach the dinghy was 20 seconds. Each crewman was allocated a task such as was necessary to inflate and launch the dinghy and collect the axe, etc. During the daylight hours, our height was kept at 50 feet above sea-level because our route meant that we passed close to Jap held Nicobar Islands and the northern coast of Sumatra and needed to avoid their Radar. Over the dense jungle of Malaya where the DZs were located, any thoughts of survival due to engine failure were alleviated, due to the explicit trust one had in those 4 Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines. If we had given a thought that, in the remote possibility, we would survive a crash-landing in jungle territory only to be beheaded by the Japs - a fact now revealed in the excellent book by Air Commodore H. Probert called 'The Forgotten Airforce' we could never have succeeded in playing our part.

STAN SMITH, ACA 10666, 5 MAYFIELD CLOSE, DORSET, BH22 9HS"

"DITCHING LIBERATORS

The letter by DIC Boissier reminded me of flying Liberators when I served in 224 Squadron in Milltown, Nr. Elgin, Scotland, from October 1944 to March 1945.

All our flights were over the sea and at a very low altitude, as we were on anti-submarine patrol. We heard very early in the tour that the Liberator broke in half on impact with the sea and sank like

stone in about 30 seconds. I can't recall this having any effect on the morale of our crew or indeed of anyone else that we knew. However, it did mean that we had a few extra free afternoons, because when "Ditching Drill" was down on the programme at the local baths no-one bothered to go. No doubt other ex-Coastal Command crew could let us have their comments.

G SHAKESPEARE, ACA 17395"



Editor: Francis Peck joins me in my admiration of our Ground Crews and Support people. His short letter to Will Lundy and Will's reply are two beautiful pieces of correspondence. In his reply, Will answers the question I always had about the stand-offish demeanor of our Crew Chief and his men. By the time I arrived, the days of one crew assigned to an airplane they had named were long past. We must have flown a half a dozen different planes among our missions. I figured the constant mixing of crews and airplanes was why we only got barely acquainted, rather than really friendly with those guys. Now it really makes sense. We felt the same way with the other crews in our quonset after the first loss.

This comes from:

Francis J. Peck

2620 South Lamonte Street

Spokane, Washington 99203-2450

1/15/97

Dear Will:

Until I learned that you were of the ground personnel, I never gave it much thought of what they did. During my tour of duty as an air crew member of the 67th Squadron, to my memory, I never even recognized the men around the bomber prior to take off nor on return.

Now, many times my thoughts go back to the mechanics who worked on the aircraft during the night and many times in inclement weather. The same for the men who loaded the bombs and ammunition and the technicians who checked the electronics, etc. Even the guy who used to wake us for a mission, the clerks who were responsible for the payroll, etc. I wish I could thank every one of them. Hats off to them!

Sincerely,

2/2/97

Dear Francis:

Thank you for your recent letter of 15 January, which was waiting for Irene and I when we returned from our cruise. We had taken it to celebrate our 50th.

Your comments about the ground crew and other ground personnel were appreciated by me, and I am sure by all the rest of the support people.

You stated that during your tour of duty, that you never even recognized the men around the bomber, neither on the T.O. or return. I can't speak for all the others, but there is a reason for this.

For most of us non-combatants, we were there for the duration. Most of us went over with the original combat crews, even training with them, lived with them prior to England. So when we got into combat, we started to lose planes and crews. When our friends suffered that fate, did not return from a mission, it was like losing a brother, or brothers. After it happened to me on 8 March 1943 - "my" plane went down - I made a special effort NOT to get acquainted with any new replacement airmen. It was bad enough to lose "our" plane without close friends too.

To avoid all of this, I made a special effort to stay away from you - even so far as not looking at your faces. When you arrived at the plane set for a mission, or even for the practice flights, I did my job and then got away from the plane a good distance and watched from there, making sure that the plane was ready for you. Same was true when you returned - we went immediately to work examining the plane for visible damage, and then care of the plane to get it ready for the next mission. I tried to avoid contacts with you all.

So don't feel badly about it - it was more our fault, not yours. You had a tough job, the enemy was shooting at you! Our's was to make sure that the plane would get you there and back. Sure, it was long and miserable at times, but in no way could it be compared to yours.

Things are fine down this way - hope that your wet and cold winter so far up there hasn't affected you too much.

All our best,
Will



Editor: Next we hear from another of "Down De Hatch's" Mother Squadron, crewmen, Frank N. Schaeffer of Montello, WI.

*This comes from:
Frank N. Schaeffer (506th)
Montello, WI
1/25/97*

Dear Roy Owen:

You may recall that I had written you recently with some information about the B-24 "Down De Hatch" since the 8 Ball Tails was received. Well, a bit more information has surfaced while I had been reading an old issue of the Liberator Club's publication, "Briefing." This may be old forgotten stuff, but to myself, it proved quite interesting, especially to any of the crews that had flown that plane. Included you will find a marked copy of that page with the letter by Bus Badgett, the co-pilot from the 453rd and 389th Bomb Groups. I intend to also write him with the combat record of #42-95016, if you don't mind.

Some sad news was word of Charles H. Lain passing away. He was the bombardier on our crew, Bernard Komasiński's. He had bailed out with us on August 8, 1944, been wounded, but evaded capture by hiding out in the forests of France until being liberated by Gen. Patton's 3rd Army. Death was on January 3, 1997. His home was in O'Fallon, Missouri. He is survived by his wife and family.

I'm still planning on getting to Salt Lake City in October.

Sincerely,

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "DOWN DE HATCH"?

On April 2, 1944, we picked up a new B-24 at Hamilton Field, California and flew it to Morrison Field, Florida. From there we flew the "Southern Route" which took us across the Atlantic Ocean from Natal, Brazil to Dakar, Africa and then on to St. Mawgan, England. After another short flight to Valley, England, we were approached by an artist who had come to negotiate a price for painting something on the side of the aircraft. If my memory has not misled me, I believe we were quoted a price of 60 to 80 dollars for the painting of a nude female

and a title, not to exceed X number of letters. A nude female painting would cost in the range of 30 to 50 dollars. We pooled our money and came up with 40 dollars. For this we got a painting of a bomb heading for a commode with the words "Down De Hatch."

We were very proud of our new insignia, thinking it immediately gave the bomber a unique place in the war with its own name. Still another short flight took us to Worton, England. We landed proudly with our newly christened war bird. Our elation was soon shattered, however, when we were told the airplane would remain there to be fitted with combat modifications such as bullet proof windows, iron plates, etc. This is where we left our "Down De Hatch" never to see her again. Later we flew other planes on combat missions, but, "Down De Hatch" was never one of the B-24s assigned to us. Now in my older years, I frequently wonder what ever happened to "Down De Hatch." Did any of you ever fly in this aircraft? If so, I would appreciate a card with any follow-up historical notes to help satisfy my curiosity. Thank you very much.

Bus Badgett, Co-Pilot on Ralph Woodard's crew stationed part time at "Old Buck" and at Hethel, England (453rd and 389th Bomb Groups, April-July, 1944) 3467 Mt. Laurence Dr., San Diego, CA 92117

Editor: Before you read this last letter from Roger Tewksbury on "Down De Hatch," I must tell you that about a week after we put that issue in the mail, I got a call from "Down De Hatch" Crew Chief, Jack Morgan wanting five more copies for his kids and grand kids. He said the 8-Ball Tails arrived when they were having a family get-together so the old Sarge got to tell all the family how he and the "Hatch" fought that war! YOU'RE THE MAN, JACK!

**This comes from:
Roger L. Tewksbury
57 Owen Drive
Littleton, NH 03561
1/1/97**

Dear Will:

Hope this letter finds you and yours in good health.

As historian, you might be interested in the B-24 Z named "Down De Hatch" appearing on the cover of the Winter 1996 Issue of the "44th Bomb Group Veteran's

Association" Magazine. I'll fill you in on why the Z didn't fly August 25, 1944 to September 1, 1944.

On August 24, 1944 our pilot Firman Mack (now deceased) and crew were given order to fly the B-24 (above mentioned) to Hannover, Germany. The following are notes from my diary which I kept at that time:

"Aug. 24, 1944

Mission: To bomb hangars believed to house aircraft around an airstrip near Hannover, Germany. It had been bombed before but showed signs of reconstruction.

Results: Our squadron dropped bombs about two miles short of the runway.

Reason: Because someone got an itchy finger and dropped bombs too soon. Some of our bombs hit a railroad.

Weather: Raining on takeoff, a little bit hazy over target, otherwise good.

Bombing Altitude: 22,000 ft.

Fuel Load: 2700 gal. not topped off

Plane: B-24-H, Z, not so good for speed, drawing 56 inches on takeoff. Power setting on the way into target was 2400 R.P.M., 42 inches of manifold pressure in Auto-Rich

Flak: Saw flak a few miles inside of Germany, heavy and very accurate flak after hitting IP. A few rockets seen but none very near us.

Battle Damage: #2 engine hit in cylinder bank, broke a rocker-box causing a great oil leak clear from target to base. May need new engine. Right tire hit by flak, hydraulic leak in actuating cylinder on nose gear, wiring in bombay cut up by flak, antenna cut off, flaps full of holes. Wings and Fuselage contained approximately 60 flak holes and scars.

Had a slight vibration on landing due to right flat tire. Went off runway stopping on grass turning around facing opposite of landing direction. Plane would be out approximately two weeks.

Fighters: No enemy fighters seen or reported, had P-47s, P-38s and P-51s for escort."

After checking for flak damage on return to base, I could see a small hole in top of the right wing over the right tire wheel well. Figuring that the right tire may have been damaged Mack landed on the grass so as not to tie up the runway for others. When the weight of the aircraft started to settle down on the right landing gear (tire was flat) the ship did a 180 degree turn before coming to a stop. I couldn't blame the crew chief from being disgusted after seeing the aircraft sitting in the grass and all the battle damage.

Trust this information will be of interest to you. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,



**Announcing a change of dates for our Reunion
Salt Lake City, Utah**

**Due to a schedule conflict at the Mormon Temple, we must
move our Reunion forward to October 9 - 13, 1997.**

Please mark your calendar now.

The program for our meetings and dinners will follow the one we had at our very successful reunion in St. Louis last year. Those registered for the entire reunion will attend the Reception Thursday evening, the Squadron Dinner Friday night, the General Business meeting Saturday morning, and the Gala Banquet that night. Sunday morning they attend the Mormon Tabernacle Choir concert and on to the Hill AFB to tour the museum. That night there will be a buffet dinner with entertainment to follow.

We will have our traditional Hospitality Room up and running every night.

The same options of last year will be available to those unable to attend the entire Reunion. They will be able to attend all functions scheduled for the days they are there.

There will be some very interesting tours for Friday and Saturday afternoon offered as optional. The tour details, as well as the Reunion registration and hotel reservation forms will be published in the Summer issue of the 8-Ball Tails. Look for them and mail in early.

Like everyone, we are being squeezed by creeping inflation. These rising costs, along with responding to the membership requesting a centrally located prime hotel (so the ladies can shop conveniently), you will see a moderate increase in the cost of the overall Reunion package. We will still be offering a super Reunion bargain you can't afford to miss!

1997

44th Bomb Group Veterans



Association Reunion



OCTOBER 9 - 13, 1997

**44th Bomb Group
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

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OCTOBER 9 - 13, 1997

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 2 - Issue #3

Non Profit Veterans Organization

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Summer, 1997

EIN #68-0351397

Our featured aircraft this Issue is

B-24H Serial #42-95318, Produced at Willow Run (Ford).

Arrived at Shipdham May, 1944, assigned to the 67th Bomb Squadron,
Call Sign B- (B-Bar). With Crew Chief M/Sgt. Odis E. Nelson in charge of her maintenance, she flew
an amazing 129 Combat Missions with only one Abort.



The Ground Crew of #1 Liberator Warhorse (Old) IRON CORSET
Crew Chief: M/Sgt. Odis E. "Curly" Nelson; Assistant Crew Chief Sgt. Carl Hall

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS REGARDING OUR SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH REUNION!
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Editor: Not to take anything away from the great combat crews who shared in the accomplishment of the unparalleled combat record of Iron Corset by bringing her home 129 times, but this is a Ground Crew story told by one of the great "Knucklebusters" of the 67th, our beloved Historian Will Lundy.

THE EARLY DAYS

By Will Lundy

At the time when the Air Echelon departed for England in late September, 1942, T/Sgt. Odis Nelson was the Flight Engineer for Capt. Howard W. Moore, flying what was to become the famous Suzy Q. Sgt. Nelson was given the nickname of "Curly" by Capt. Moore, who often rubbed Odis' nearly bald head for luck. Capt. Moore was absolutely right; good old Curly was not only good, but lucky as well! Capt. Moore soon became the 67th Commander and went on to complete his 25 combat missions prior to Ploesti. Curly was also denied flying at that time when severe ear problems resulted in his being grounded and then assigned as a crew chief in the Engineering Section. Curly took this reassignment very hard, apparently ashamed that he could no longer fly combat; he also felt badly that he was displacing the ground crewmen, preventing them from promotion.

Replacements Begin to Arrive

In January, 1944, Curly was a M/Sgt. with a five man crew. His Assistant Crew Chief was S/Sgt. Frank Chowanski, later to be promoted to crew chief. Second under him was Sgt. L.D. Rinn, filling out the crew were Sgt. C.C. Hall, Sgt. D.A. Evans and Sgt. A.H. McCarty. As the number of liberators per squadron increased, Sgt. Rinn followed Sgt. Frank Chowanski to become one of the new crew chiefs. Sgt. Carl Hall was promoted to Assistant Crew Chief and remained in that classification until the wars end in Europe.

Changes - New B-24 - New Name

After the Groups two trips to North Africa, they returned to start building with a rapid arrival of new aircrews and airplanes. During this time, aircraft #42-72873, Bar-E was

assigned to the 67th Squadron. On January 1, 1944, T/Sgt. Nelson and his crew moved to that plane. In March of 1944, the call letter on this plane was changed to B-Bar and it continued to notch missions into May. At that time, it was declared war-weary and transferred to the 801st Bomb Group. It was replaced by a shiny new B-24H assembled by Ford, #42-95318. The new aircraft was assigned the same call sign as its predecessor. Lt. Richard Thornton, who had been flying the previous B-Bar, picked up where he had left off on 7 May and flew the first mission in the newly named Iron Corset on 21 May 1944. During this period, Chowanski and Rinn left Nelson to get their own airplanes and Carl was moved up to be his Assistant. Three new men, Pfc. Frank Sheets, Jim Wright and Pvt. D.W. Carver filled out the crew. Even with these inexperienced men, Curly managed to continue his remarkable record for keeping Old Iron Corset flying.

The Record Grows

The 23 February 1945 mission was the 300th mission for the 44th and the 105th for Iron Corset without an abort. The Lt. James A. Struthers crew completed their combat tour on this mission in Iron Corset.



LT. JAMES A. STRUTHERS IS CONGRATULATED BY 67TH SQUADRON COMMANDER, LT. COL. BILL CAMERON AND M/Sgt. "Curly" NELSON ON COMPLETING HIS COMBAT TOUR IN "IRON CORSET."

She continued to fly until wars end, racking up 129 missions; the highest record for B-24's. Iron Corset became an Ace with five enemy aircraft shoot downs to her credit. Four times she flew five missions back to back. Two of these five were accomplished in August 1944. In this remarkable combat career,

she had only one abort to mar this record. Iron Corset had completed 109 missions perfectly, but an engine was failing so Curly "red-lined" it, taking Iron Corset out of service. However, due to a maximum effort called for a mission, the Engineering Officer overruled the status and she was launched on the mission. The engine failed and the perfect string ended.

Nonetheless, she continued to fly with amazing reliability until the job was done. Her total of 129 missions statistically represented 38 percent of the 344 total 44th Bomb Group credited missions and she flew these in 11 months of combat.

The Close Call

The entire combat record for Iron Corset nearly ended on the 18 April 45 mission to Passau, Czechoslovakia. The story comes from the combat diary of Donald G. Potter, Navigator on the Leslie W. Lee crew. Their 31st mission.

"The target for today would be Marshalling Yards on the border of Austria, deep in the SW and slightly south of Czechoslovakia. We took off in the aircraft Q-Bar. As we were climbing for altitude over the English Channel, a piston blew and we had to feather the prop on that engine. We felt that we had time to get rid of the bombs, land and use the stand-by plane and get back in the air. As soon as we were down, they transferred us to J-Bar (the call letter for Iron Corset had been changed on 12 October 44). We were all in a hurry to get back into the air, so we went through our check lists fast; TOO FAST.

In a very short time we were on the take-off run. About half way down the runway, Waist Gunner Lou Panico happened to look out the window and saw that the tie-down straps were still in place. The straps were used when the plane is parked to prevent the control surfaces from flapping around in the wind. It also meant the control surfaces were frozen and the airplane could not get off the ground!

Panico got on the intercom and shouted, "The control straps are on." In an instant, co-pilot Don Wells pulled the release. Lee had just enough time to pull the yoke back and yank us up over the trees at the end of the runway. We caught up with the formation and slipped into our slot without further problems. Panico saved our bacon that day!"

Carl and Me Some Afterthoughts

Carl Hall was inducted on 13 November 1941 in Los Angeles, the same as I was. This is where we met. After immediately joining the Air Corps and selected Aircraft Mechanic training to get as close to flying as possible, we graduated from Biloxi Air Mechanic School in May, 1942 and were taking a physical exam to become Flight Engineers at the exact same time the rest of our class were in the graduation ceremonies. We both failed. He was too tall and I couldn't pass the vision test. Three weeks later we were at Barksdale Field, assigned to

Carl Hall, Ed Cisinski and Calvin Brown
SWEATING OUT ONE OF THE "EARLY" 1943 MISSIONS.



the 67th Squadron, "acting as mechanics." It seemed we spent as much time on KP, etc. as we did "keeping `em flying."

Carl's ASN was just two numbers different from mine; at wars end, we flew home in Iron Corset. After a 30 day R&R leave, we reported to Sioux Falls, South Dakota for reassignment. We had too many service "points" to be sent overseas again, so we were sent to Albuquerque, New Mexico

to "work" on B-29's. After VJ day, we were sent to Ft. McArthur, California for discharge together and became civilians again at the same time. Most unique! Carl later rejoined the service, but did not last long. According to his sister, he died from lead poisoning, believed to be from his long association with the leaded 115 octane aviation fuel he used to clean his uniforms and had so much daily contact with in his maintenance work.

The Race Home

When VE Day finally came, I was fortunate enough to be selected to join the combat personnel when they flew their Liberators back to the States. Naturally I selected Iron Corset to be with Carl Hall and Curly Nelson. It was a very exciting few days for me, as I'd be home so much more quickly, and to fly! I just love to fly. Iron Corset was everything I knew she would be; though patched over patches to cover her war wounds, she still flew like a proud combat veteran coming home from the war. In the droves of Liberators and Fortresses streaming out and streaking for home, Iron Corset was the 44th (ironic) plane to take off from Greenland for the final leg to the States. Which plane, that day, was the first to arrive over Bradley Field, Connecticut? Iron Corset, of course! In those last hours of flight we had passed 43 other planes!! We bade farewell to our proud lady that afternoon. Home was but a few days away!

*129 Credited Missions
Five enemy aircraft
destroyed.*

*Statistically, Iron Corset
flew on 38 percent of all
missions flown by the 44th
during the war!*

129 divided by 344 = 38%



The 8-Ball Tails

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc.

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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.

67th Squadron
(OLD) IRON CORSET

B-24H-30FO

Natural Metal Finish

42-95318 B

(Call letter changed to J 12 October 1944)

COMPLETED 129 MISSIONS!!

Returned to USA 29 May 1925

MAY 1944

21st	Thornton	Siracourt GH
22nd	Duwe	Formation flying only
23rd	Thornton	Avord A/F, France
24th	Thornton	Melun, France
25th	Thornton	Belfort M/Y
27th	Thornton	Saarbrucken, Germany - 1st mission of day.
28th	Thornton	Zeitz, Germany
29th	Mueller	Politz Oil, Germany
31st	Duwe	Brussels, Belgium - Sortie credit with recall.

JUNE 1944

03rd	Duwe	Calais Area, France V-1
08th	Duwe	Angers M/Y (am mission)
08th	Gilbert	?? Recalled (pm mission)
10th	Gilbert	Orleans/Bricy A/F, France
11th	Duwe	Montfort Bridge and T.O. Suspension Bridge
12th	Duwe	Illiers L'Eveque A/F, France
14th	Gunton	Chateaudun A/F, France
15th	Duwe	Bridge - Tours to La Frilliers, France
18th	Duwe	Melun A/F, Germany
20th	Duwe	Politz Oil, Germany
22nd	Starkey	St. Cyr A/F, France
23rd	Duwe	Laon/Anthies A/F, France
25th	Duwe	Doullens Powerhouse, France

<u>JULY</u>	<u>1944</u>	
04th	Duwe	Beaumont-Le-Roger A/F, France
06th	Duwe	Kiel, Germany
07th	???	Bernberg, Germany - no formation sketch
08th	Duwe	Zuid Beveland R.R. Bridge
12th	Duwe	Munich, Germany
13th	Hyland	Saarbrucken M/Y, Germany
16th	Duwe	Saarbrucken M/Y, Germany
20th	Duwe	Erfurt North A/F, Germany
21st	Duwe	Oberfaffenhofen Armament, Germany
24th	???	St. Lo, France - Bombs not dropped, but Sortie credit
29th	Duwe	Oslebshausen/Bremen, Germany
31st	Honmyer	Ludwigshafen Chemicals, Germany

<u>AUG</u>	<u>1944</u>	
01st	Honmyhr	Corbie R.R. Bridge, France?
03rd	Honmyhr	Mery-Sur-Oise, France
04th	Honmyhr	Kiel, Germany
05th	Honmyhr	Brunswick, Germany
06th	Honmyhr	Hamburg Oil Refinery, Germany
07th	None	Available as a spare aircraft
12th	Honmyhr	Juvincourt A/D, France
13th	???	Road Junction between Rouen and LeHarve (No F.S.)
14th	Yatkones	Lyons/Bron A/D, France
15th	Bakalo	Ardorf A/D near Wittmundhafer, Germany
16th	Harris	Kothen Aircraft Factory, Germany
24th	Hurst	Langenhagen Airfield near Hanover, Germany
25th	Hurst	Schwern FW Assembly Plant, Germany
26th	Phillips	Salzbergen Oil, Germany

<u>SEPT</u>	<u>1944</u>	
05th	Spagnola	Karlsruhe M/Y, Germany
08th	Hurst	Karlsruhe M/Y, Germany
09th	Hurst	Mainz M/Y and Worms M/Y, Germany
13th	Hurst	Schwabish/Hall Airfield, Germany
18th	Hurst	Best, Holland Low Level Troop Supply
21st	Hurst	Cancelled at take off time (Koblenz)
22nd	Harris	Kassel M/Y, Germany
26th	Struthers	Hamm M/Y, Germany
27th	Hurst	Kassel, Germany
30th	Spencer	Kassel, Germany

<u>OCT</u>	<u>1944</u>	
05th	Hurst	Lippstadt Airfield (Appelin Diary)
06th	Hurst	Hamburg Armament, Germany
07th	Harris	Kassel Tank Factory, Germany
09th	Hurst	Koblenz M/Y (secondary), Germany
12th	Hurst ?	Achmer, primary; Osnabruck M/Y, secondary
14th	Yatkones	Kaiserslautern M/Y (Call letter now]).

15th	Struthers	Cologne Ford Motor Works and Gerson M/Y
17th	Kuklewicz	Nord M/Y at Cologne, Germany
18th	Kuklewicz	Leverkusen Chemicles, Germany
19th	Kuklewicz	Gustavaburg Diesel Plant, Germany
25th	Kuklewicz	Gelsenkirchen Synthetic Oil, Germany
30th	Hurst	Hamburg/Uterson (T.O.) Germany
<u>NOV</u>	<u>1944</u>	
01st	Spagnola	Gelsenkirchen - Bauer Oil, Germany
02nd	Hurst	Dortmund-Castrop Rauxel Syn. Oil, Germany
04th	???	No formation sketch
08th	Hurst	Enschede - Target of Opportunity
09th	Hurst	Metz Area - Ground Troop Support
10th	Kuklewicz	Hanau Airfield near Frankdurt, Germany
16th	Hurst	Eschweiler - Aachen Ground Support
18th	Hurst	Mission scrubbed.
20th	Bethel	Bottrop - Recalled, no Sortie.
21st	Kuklewicz	Harburg - Crude Oil, Germany
25th	Hurst	Binger M/Y Germany
26th	Hurst ?	Bielefeld Viaduct near Munster (no formation sketch)
27th	Hurst	Offenburg M/Y, Germany
29th	Hurst	Altenbecken - railroad viaduct
30th	Bledsoe	Neunkirchen M/Y, Germany
<u>DEC</u>	<u>1944</u>	
04th	Hurst	Wetzlar or Kolschauen, Germany
10th	Bethel	Bingen M/Y Briefed, but did not bomb
11th	Hurst	Karlsruhe - Railroad Bridge
12th	Hurst	Aschaffenburg M/Y Germany
18th	Hinman	Mission recalled, no Sortie credit
24th	Collins	#2 Target - Pfaszel. 61 A/C bombed 4 targets. <i>Most for any mission of the war.</i> Battle of Bulge.
28th	Collins	Kaiserslautern RR Junction and Roads, Germany
29th	Collins	Stadtkyle, Germany
30th	Collins	Altenahr - Road/Rail Junction
<u>JAN</u>	<u>1945</u>	
01st	Crandell	Pilot's name deleted. Was aircraft flown?
03rd	Crandell	Landau Ordnance, Germany
08th	Bledsoe	Burg Reuland RR Junction, Germany
13th	Collins	Kaiserslautern M/Y, Germany
14th	Struthers	Hemmingstedt Oil Refinery, Germany
16th	Collins	Villa Coublay with Dresden secondary
28th	Collins	Dortmund Coking Plant, Germany
29th	Kuklewicz	Munster, a target of opportunity
31st	Chaille	Hallendorf Steel and Blast Furnaces, Germany

<u>FEB</u>	<u>1945</u>	
03rd	Louik	Magdeburg M/Y, Germany (Abort with Engineer ill)
06th	Collins	Magdeburg - secondary, M/Y
09th	Maynard	Magdeburg - secondary, M/Y
14th	Lee	Magdeburg - secondary, M/Y
15th	Collins	Magdeburg - primary finally Rothensee Oil Refinery
16th	Collins	Kheine M/Y - secondary
20th	Harris	Nurnburg - recalled with no Sortie credit
21st	Collins	Nurnburg, Germany
22nd	Collins	Gottingen M/Y, Germany
23rd	Struthers	Weimar Rail Center (44th's 300 mission, 106 for Iron Corset)
24th	Zanoni	Misburg Oil, Germany
25th	Collins	Aschaffenburg M/Y, Germany
28th	Kuklewicz	Siegen M/Y, Germany

<u>MAR</u>	<u>1945</u>	
01st	Kuklewicz	Ingolstadt M/Y, Germany
02nd	Chaille	Magdeburg M/Y, Germany
03rd	Louik	Rothensee Oil Refinery near Magdeburg, Germany
04th	Hildebrand	Tutlinggen/Aach/Offenberg, Germany
10th	Maynard	Bielefeld RR Viaduct, Germany
11th	Chaille	Kiel Sub Pens and Docks, Germany
12th	Richardson	Wetzlar M/Y, Germany
15th	Richardson	Zossen Military Headquarters
17th	Folland	Munster M/Y, Germany
18th	Markle	Berlin, Germany
24th	Zanoni	Stormede Landing Strip (second mission of day)
25th	Richardson	Hitzacker UG Oil Storage, Germany
30th	Richardson	Wilhelmshaven Docks, Germany
31st	Bledsoe	Brunswick (Sec.), Germany

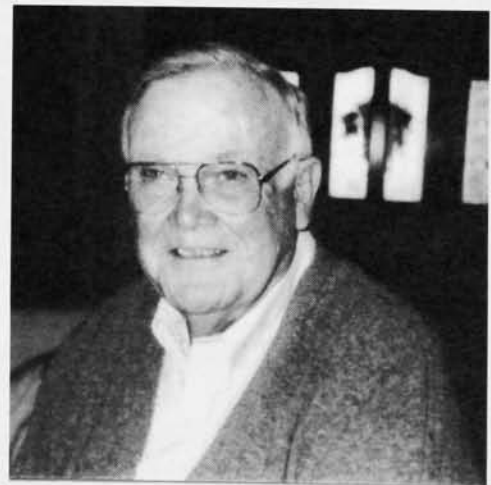
<u>APRIL</u>	<u>1945</u>	
02nd	Zanoni	Tirstrop Airdrome, Denmark - but recalled
4th, 5th, and 7th		No formation sketches found. Cannot verify.
08th	Richardson	Bayreuth Ordnance Depot, Germany
09th	Lee	Leipheim Airfield (Grunszberg) Germany
10th	Louik	Parchim Airfield, S/E of Schwerin, Germany
11th	Lee	Neumarket M/Y, Germany
14th	Manro	Royan Nazi Garrison - French Coast
16th	Berger	Landshut M/Y, Germany
18th	Lee	Passau M/Y, Czech
20th	Swartz	Irlaching RR Junction (with) Schwandorf, Germany
25th	Lee	Hallein M/Y, Austria - last mission of war
26th	???	Prague Airfield - scrubbed!!

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

There have been so many great things happening lately it's hard to believe. The progress on the Savannah Museum display; the dedication of the 44th BG Memorial Marker at Barksdale, the announcement that the 8th Air Force Museum would like to repaint the B-24J in their Air Museum to carry the 44th BG markings; the news that our £6000 match fund grant to the Arrow-Air, Ltd./44th BGVA Shipdham Museum non-profit partnership has made them eligible for U.K. Lottery and Local Council grants which could exceed a million pounds, and finally, the total success of our 44th BG Trip to England, France and Belgium. All of these are covered in separate stories within, but I mention them here to illustrate what a great roll your Association is on. Who was it that said something like: better we close the (44th HMG) organization down rather than have our widows do it for us?

This brings me back to one of my favorite Presidents Corner subjects; the perpetuation of our Organization. My plea to the board and to you, the members, is for someone to take a risk and break that first commandment of Soldiering: "Never Volunteer for Anything" by stepping forward and taking on the 8-Ball Tails. This would allow me time to visit and recruit the younger eras of 44th veterans capable of carrying the 44th colors into the next millennium. What brought this to mind was a fax I recently received from Col. Charles G. Simpson, Executive Director of the Association of Air Force Missileers, formerly of the 44th SMW and present member of the 44th BGVA. He and his wife were with us at San Antonio. He plans to attend our Salt Lake City Reunion and was requesting information that he will pass on to several 44th SMW Vets living in the SLC/Ogden area in the hopes they will attend. Additionally he noted that Lt.

Gen. Dirk Jameson (Ret), former 44th SMW crew member, 20th AF Commander and Vice Commander of Strategic Air Command is interested in coming to our reunion. This, to my mind, is the extended hand of friendship and recognition that each era of the 44th, in its various roles and missions, must look at the other eras of the 44th heritage to join and gather the strength necessary to stay alive. We simply won't make it standing alone. I know we can broaden our perspective from a WWII Bomber outfit to one that shares the pride of having served our country under the 44th colors no matter the mission or equipment assigned to accomplish the mission. We must do whatever is necessary to clasp hands and make an association for all 44th'ers,' change the masthead and title of our journal, divide the content into interest areas organized by editors from each era. Whatever it takes. If we are fortunate enough to have some Missileers or Bomb Wing types join us, grab those guys and wives and get 'em into the hospitality room and into your Squadron Dinners and introduce them and make them welcome to the 44th Family. WE NEED THEM AND THEY NEED US!



See you in Salt Lake,
Roy Owen
President

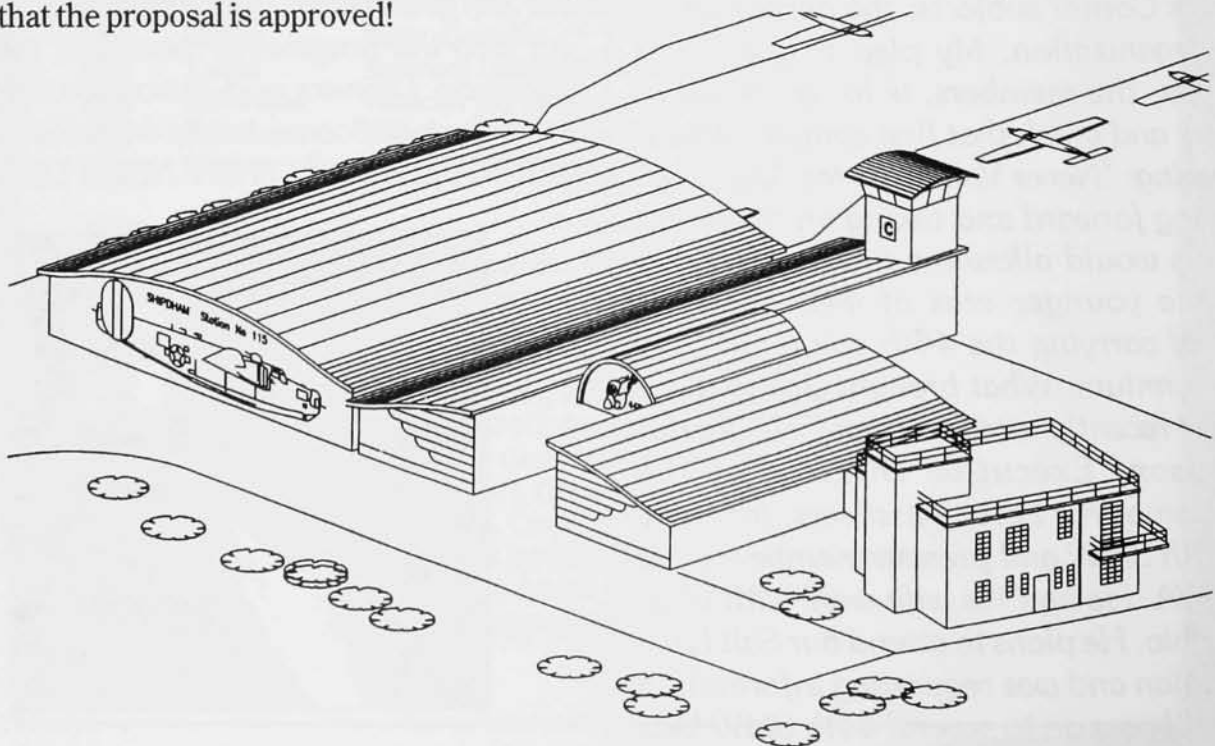
THE SMALL DREAM, PERHAPS A BIG REALITY

Two years ago when we abandoned the restoration of the old Shipdham Tower and the members approved directing that money (about \$11K) into a badly needed pilots lounge at Arrow Air Ltd, you will recall we drew up a Funding and Construction Agreement to facilitate a £6000 grant from our Non-Profit Tax Exempt Organization to the Arrow Air, Inc./44th BGVA partnership, with Arrow Air contributing matching funds.

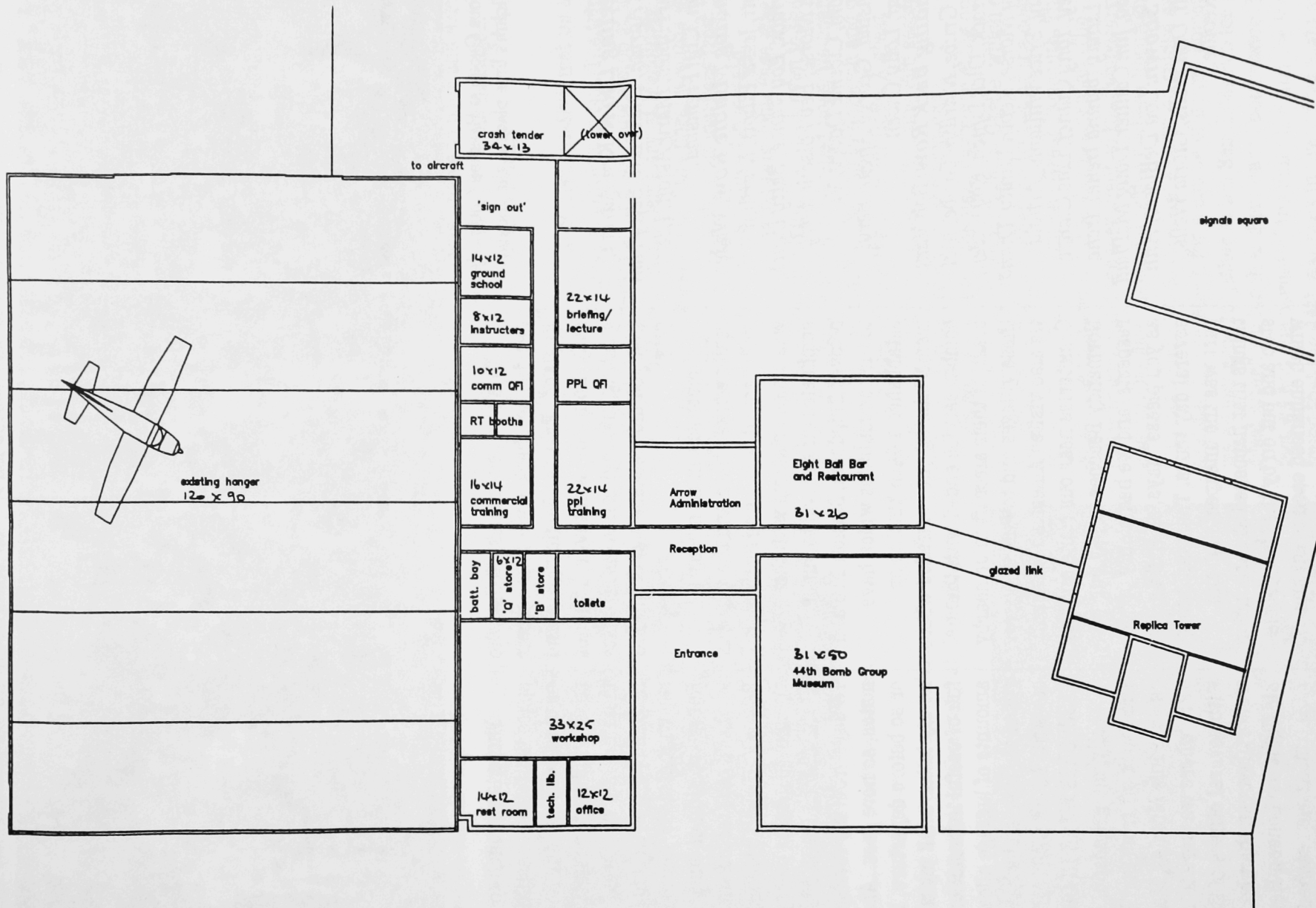
Sometimes a small key will open a lock on a large door of opportunity otherwise inaccessible to those without the proper credentials. Our little Funding and Construction Agreement, it seems, was the key that opened the lock on the door to large amounts of grant money available to non-profit organizations. Our agreement forming the non-profit partnership gave non-profit status to Arrow Air, Inc. and it is beginning to look like Pandora's Box has opened to the tune of 1 million plus from sources like the English Lottery, the European Economic Council and Regional Council.

Arrow Air has contracted with the Owen Bond (not related to Roy and James) Architects of Norwich to design a new training/museum center on the old site which will house not only the Arrow Air fixed base aviation training center and charter operation, but provide a permanent home for a 44th Bomb Group Heritage and Research Center. The Regional Council has also indicated they would look favorably upon the addition of a new (not reconstructed) replica of the original Shipdham Tower as a tourist attraction. The economic impact of this expansion on the town of Shipdham and the surrounding area tickles the imagination. Especially when the name of the 44th will be indelibly stamped on those economic rewards that accrue to "our town."

The Architects drawings of the complex submitted by them with the grant proposal are easy to read and interpret. The 44th Museum and Research Center will be housed in the 31' x 50' room to the right side of the entrance. Remember, at this point, Arrow Air is only ELIGIBLE for the grant money. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the proposal is approved!



Arrow Air Floor Plan



THE TRIP--THE TRIP

By: Roy Owen



THE TOUR GROUP AT HAMPTON COURT, HENRY THE EIGHTH'S little place IN THE COUNTRY.

Kneeling L to R: Ken Adrian, Joan Adrian, Dick Haft, Betty Haft, Terry Hynes, Mary Aston, Lee Aston, Cliff Fremstad.

Standing Middle Row: Wade Elliott, Jessie Elliott, Marilyn Murrack, Loy Vance, Betty Lynch, Ruth Morse, Bev Folsom, Jerry Folsom, Cloeme Dovey, Vi Fremstad, George Apgar, Beryl Apgar, Lolly Owen.

Standing Back Row: Bob Vance, Karl Grube, Marilyn Grube, Mel Murrack, Dick Lynch, Roy Owen, Perry Morse, Kevin Lundy, Diana Lundy, Brice Williams, Arnold Dovey, Tony Cianci, Lois Cianci, Will Lundy (behind Irene), Irene Lundy, Jim Caillier, Doug McPhail.

Not Shown: Lou DeBlasio, Ann Natili, Don Wells, Gloria Wells, J.R. Reville.

To all of you unlucky folks who decided to check your bets on our England, France, Belgium trip and stay home or whatever, I'm not gloating, just saying it is unfortunate that you did, because it was the BIG ONE!

I must say, in all modesty, I really worked hard and the trip was well planned, and, as advertised, it was a memorial trip with the emphasis being travel to our beloved Shipdham, Station 115 and to the communities which have established a 44th kinship by memorializing our comrades whose combat service ended with the crash of their aircraft in or nearby these villages and towns. Of course, we also visited American National Cemeteries near our route and the Normandy Beaches to pay our respects, and we had plenty of "do as you please" days, as well as several day tours. The astounding part was the unexpected grand things that happened at each major stop and put on by the local people which enhanced each event and function far beyond what we had planned and were expecting.

There is so much to tell, and the space limitations resulting from the need to publicize our Reunion, this replay will be done in two installments. The first, covering the England portion in this issue, and in the Winter issue, featuring the Europe portion of our trip.

Let's get started with my BIG BOO-BOO. I can't hide from it and my skin is getting pretty thick from all the ribbing I took over the whole 18 days from my loving travel mates, so here goes...About a month or so before departure, I sent a newsy letter to all my travellers full of useful information, like amounts of luggage allowed, best guess weather and what to wear, etc. AND TO BE CERTAIN PASSPORTS WERE IN ORDER.

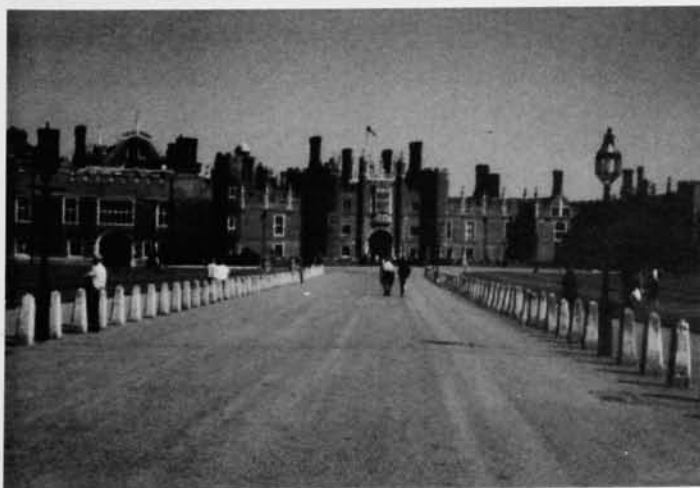
Lolly, my grandson, J.R. Reville, and I took off from San Francisco on schedule Monday, May 26 for JFK, where we were to rendezvous with several others of the group for a short layover, then board a Virgin Air flight for London Heathrow at 7:00 p.m. As we reached the gate, a young man checked our tickets and passports. He announced that

Lolly's and my passports had expired in February. We stood helplessly by as they removed us from the flight, somehow got our checked baggage off the airplane, as we waved good-bye to my travel group-me, THE LEADER, waving bye-bye to my troops. Long story short; Delta Airlines very nicely took responsibility for not picking up the expiration at SFO. Put us up at the Holiday Inn, JFK; the next morning early (6:15) we took a cab into Rockefeller Center, Manhattan (\$43). We managed, after some BIG TIME bureaucratic hurdle jumping to get new passports issued (\$55 each), expedited processing (\$30 each) and got back to the hotel by 11:30 a.m. (another \$43 cab fare). \$256 and 24 hours later, we boarded the same scheduled flight we were to be on the previous night and got into London and reached the Kensington Hilton Hotel just time to check-in, brush our teeth and join the scheduled tour of Hampton Court with the rest of the tour group and let the ribbing begin!



Ready for a PASSPORT Check

The next morning we were ready to board the bus for Norwich via the American Cemetery at Cambridge



when we learned that Marilyn Murrack had been up most of the night suffering with something stuck in her throat. Mel took her to an ER and whatever it was (suspected fish bone), they dislodged and made an appointment for her to see an ENT Doctor at 9:00 a.m. So we left without them, and after seeing the doctor, they came on up to Norwich on the train. She had an abrasion in the throat which was painful for a couple of days, then was A-OK for the rest of the trip. Now this sounds like an ill fated trip at this point, what with our passport problem and Marilyn's throat, but not so. The only other problem we had the rest of the trip was in the Mercure Hotel in Rouen, when Arnie Dovey decided to take a bath and got stuck sitting down in the narrow tub. He called to Cloeme for help and when she was unable to dislodge him, she called the front desk for help and they sent a woman to free him from his entrapment. Cloeme left the room to come to the bar for a drink since Arnie was unable to pour and serve. We never found out how his escape was managed. When he did appear, he was decidedly uncommunicative.

Steve Adams, our U.K. Representative, met us at the hotel to join us as we mounted our bus. The trip to Cambridge was uneventful and we made a stop at the always beautiful American Cemetery at Maddingly. All along the Wall of Missing all of the floral wreaths were placed appropriately below the unit markers from the celebration of Memorial Day. The 44th wreath, annually placed by the long serving John Page, was a beautiful replica of the Flying Eightball, even to the Red, White, Green and Yellow striped nose. We boarded the bus again to complete the trip to Norwich and our home for three nights, the Norwich Hotel. A great dinner followed by, you guessed it, a fine Pub session that put us to bed ready for the next day.

We split about even the next day, some going on the scheduled bus tour to Sandringham Castle, which our great bus driver, John, enhanced by taking the coast route through Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth. The rest chose to spend the free day in Norwich. The ladies shopped and the men went to the Temporary 2nd Air Division Memorial Library where librarians Christine Snowdon and Lesley Fleetwood guided and assisted our research for a couple of hours. Somehow we all managed to gather at the Bell Hotel Pub for a great afternoon lunch and prolonged pub session. In fact we had one corner of the pub filled and the locals found that the 44th was back in town! That night after dinner, the Hotel pub was again filled with 44th'ers and

locals. We had a big session of our people autographing B-24 pictures. Also joining us that evening was Chris Ling, the architect of the new Arrow-Air Complex (See article on Pages 11 and 12).

The big day we all were waiting for was Sunday. We loaded onto the bus and left for Shipdham at 10:00 a.m. When we arrived at the Shipdham Church for what we thought was to be a small Memorial Service at our Memorial Marker in the churchyard, we were greeted by what appeared to be at least half the town, followed by a full Sunday Service in the Church. We then exited to the marker where we had a beautiful laying of wreaths ceremony with the British Colors born by Don Dodd of the British Legion and our own Louis DeBlasio, 506th B.S.



lunches. Mr. Doubleday, a nurseryman, bought the old Rix farm, not knowing that he had also bought into a package of WWII history. He has vowed (and has already repaired all the roof sections that were allowing the rains to damage building interiors) to restore the complex to its wartime state as a memorial to the 14th CBW and 44th BG. We have acquired a new, and very welcome member of the 44th Family. Our second surprise of the day!



The picnic at 14th CBW.

Following lunch and a tour around the entire perimeter of the base, we made for the Arrow-Air Centre for the main event. We had invited some 125 English friends and 44th BG supporters to join us for an open bar cocktail reception, followed by a U.S.A. style barbecue and hangar dance. Unfortunately the late afternoon wind came up forcing us to abandon the dance, so we concentrated on drinking and eating. I had asked each member of the tour to bring along a bottle of wine to be served during the meal. The drinks and wine flowed freely. The food was gobbled down, everyone had a big fun time, children included, all paid for by our Tour Operator, Waterhouse Tours of Eastbourne. We had an RAF Lancaster fly-by, and the highlight of the day was a short presentation ceremony in which your President, on behalf of the entire 44th Membership, presented a check in the amount of £6000 (\$9,600) to our U.K. Representative, Steve Adams, as our contribution to the Arrow-Air Centre, Inc./44th BGVA non-profit matching funds venture. This is to be applied to a new Training Centre on the site of the present facility (see the story on pages 11 and 12). It was a party the likes of which Shipdham has never before seen-AND THEY LOVED IT! When the new training centre opens, we just may go over for another one!



ROY OWEN GREETING LINDA WATSON,
THE 506TH "MUM."

June 2, Day 7, we hit the road, again headed for Eastbourne via the new American Air Museum at RAF Duxford. We spent three hours touring the beautiful new facility. They are putting the final touches on the dramatic museum building itself. All of the airplanes are in place with workers busy doing the last touch up and positioning.



THE AMERICAN AIR MUSEUM AT DUXFORD.



We also visited the aircraft reconstruction hangars where the vintage aircraft are completely taken apart and rebuilt from square one. Had a great lunch—great gift/memorabilia shop, and then on to Eastbourne and the beautiful old Lansdowne Hotel right on the beachfront promenade. Dinner was the first of daily fine meals (by this time everyone is hooked on that GOOD English Bacon for breakfast).

At 10:00 am the next day, we went by bus, first for a tour of Eastbourne which was highlighted by a wine reception at the City Hall by Her Honor The Mayoress of Eastbourne. We then embarked upon a bus tour of Sussex Herstmonceux Castle where we had coffee.



THE TOURISTS AT HERSTMONCEUX CASTLE.



THE TOURISTS.

Then on to Hastings where William of Normandy defeated King Harold II of England in 1066. In the afternoon, we visited Bodiam Castle where we also were treated to a Cream Tea (sweet clotted cream and scones).

On Day 9, June 4, we left the hotel at 9:30 to visit the "Ruthless" Memorial on the South Downs (beautiful hills overlooking Eastbourne). There we had our next big surprise, as we were greeted by what must have been 150 people which included The Honorable Nigel Waterson, Member of Parliament; The Mayoress Beryl Healy; Lt. Col. Pat Mullen, USAF, representing the U.S. Ambassador; a full flight of members of The Royal British Legion bearing the colors of their units and representing cities and towns from all of Sussex; Reverend John Ashby; Mr. Kevin Watson, our staunch supporter who designed, organized and led the financing campaign to construct the "Ruthless" Memorial, and most importantly, 87 year old Mr. Arthur King, who witnessed the 506th Sqdn. B-24 crash on Butts Brow above his home, and rather than have the James Bolin crew be forgotten, he faithfully returned to the site and placed flowers there each year on the anniversary of their deaths.

After a welcome and introductory prayer by Rev. Ashley, your President, assisted by his grandson, J.R. Reville, was honored to place the first of several beautiful wreathes at the base of the Memorial. The sounding of TAPS by Major Jimmy Howe was followed by a minute of silence before The Exhortation was made by Mr. Frederick Gorusch, President of Willingdon Branch, Royal British Legion. The 23rd Psalm was read by Group Captain A. (Bertie) Wallace, CBE DFC. He was followed by Councillor Ron Parsons, Mayor of Eastbourne when the Memorial was dedicated. He gave a very touching memorial address. This was responded to by Lt. Col. Mullen who paid tribute on behalf of the USAF for the highest standards of human service and sacrifice for country set by this crew for which they will be forever remembered. All then sang "Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory" and the ceremony was closed by a Benediction and the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Save the Queen."



MR. ARTHUR KING AND HIS DATE MOUNTING OUR BUS FOR THE TRIP TO BUTTS BROW.



BEING GREETED BY HER HONOR THE MAYORESS BERYL HEALY AND MP NIGEL WATERSON.

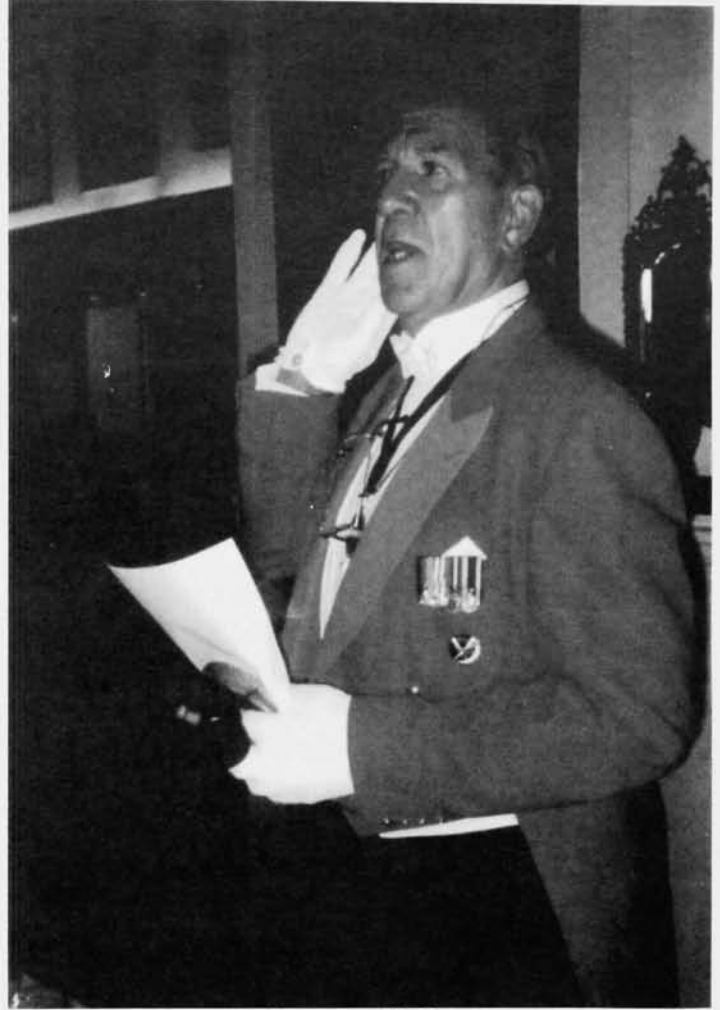


THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION EASTBOURNE IN THE LOWER BACKGROUND.



J.R. Reville and Roy Owen placing the 44th Bomb Group wreath on the "Ruthless" Memorial.

The surprises continued as we mounted the bus and were taken to the Royal Air Force Association Club as honored guests for a buffet luncheon. That evening we donned our jackets, ties and elegant party dresses to attend a gala dinner hosted by Mayoress Healy and Her Honor and escort former Mayor Maurice Skilton and the Owens, receiving the blend of Eastbourne and 44th guests so beautifully announced as they entered by Toastmaster Thomas F. Crammer in full livery.



TOASTMASTER T.F. CRAMMER.



The "Ruthless Memorial."



TONY CIANCI, BETTY HAFT, DICK HAFT AND LOIS CIANCI READY FOR THE GALA DINNER.

After the saying of Grace, the Mayoress proposed a toast to Her Majesty The Queen. Councillor Ron Parsons then proposed a toast to our President, then gave a most complimentary welcome address directed to our members in which he stated it was the hope that the bond of friendship that was now forged between their city and our group would remain a permanent one in which we would always be welcome to return.

After response by Colonel Owen, the party turned to a beautiful four course dinner prepared by the Lansdowne Hotel staff. The wonderful surprise here was the elegance of the entire evening. After a cap-off of after dinner brandy in the bar, the travellers bade farewell to their Eastbourne friends and made off to rest for the 7:30 am departure for New haven and the ferry voyage to Dieppe, France.



OUR TREASURER AND HIS BRIDE BEV, THE HONEYMOON COUPLE!
ANN NATILI IN THE NEXT ROW.

We will conclude the highlights (more surprises) of the Europe portion of the BIG TRIP in the Winter issue of The 8-Ball Tails.

Stay Tuned.



LUNCH AND "P" STOP ON THE WAY FROM LONDON TO NORWICH. STEVE ADAMS ABOUT TO GET ON THE BUS.



THE RUTHLESS MEMORIAL

Their shadows hover round the stone,
Which signifies their search for truth,
They fought for justice far from home,
Without that gentle touch from Ruth.

Young men who came across the sea,
To calm the turbulence which spread,
Across a continent at war,
Now lie at peace, their armor shed.

Yet every day their spirits rise,
To view this green and scenic land,
They love to walk these ancient hills,
Together still, one faithful band.

They meet with Saxon men of yore,
Who rest in tumuli close by,
Their spirits bound as brave men are,
They float contented in the sky.

When springtime flowers raise their heads,
They smile, at colours white and blue,
The gentle breeze then spreads the scent,
Towards the clouds where young men flew.

We men whose lives are nearly spent,
Pass on this knowledge to our breed,
That sacrifices we recall,
Will live forever like a creed.

Fear not, we guard their memory,
And walk the path towards their tomb,
We bow our heads and say a prayer,
For cousins resting 'neath the combe.

*Submitted by:
Douglas Thomas*



466th Bomb Group B-24J on display at 8th AF MUSEUM, BARKSDALE AFB, LA
with NEW 44th Bomb Group MEMORIAL MARKER in place.

BARKSDALE MEMORIAL DEDICATED

A group of 62 men and women of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association gathered in Shreveport, LA on the weekend of May 3, 1997, to take part in the dedication of a beautiful granite marker and bronze plaque placed in the 8th Air Force Museum Memory Walk at Barksdale AFB. The memorial marker commemorates the assignment of the 44th Bomb Group to Barksdale Field from February until July, 1942 and memorializes our 44th comrades who have made the ultimate sacrifice in their service to our country.

The beautiful ceremony was organized and programmed by the staff of Mr. Harold D. "Buck" Rigg, Director/ Curator of the 8th Air Force Museum and Tech/Sgt. Ray Grillo, Museum NCOIC. Protocol matters were handled by Staff/Sgt. Candace Wilkinson of 2nd Bomb Wing Headquarters.

The Dedication was attended by Lt. Gen. Phillip and Mrs. Ford and Col. and Mrs. Andrew Smoak. General Ford is 8th Air Force Commander and Colonel Smoak commands the 2nd Bomb Wing. The scene of the ceremony was in the Museum briefing room; a replica of the Nissan Hut briefing rooms familiar to all who served in the WWII 8th Air Force. Appropriately hung over the entrance was our Flying Eight-Ball Affixed to a 100# "Blue Devil" bomb and next to the podium was a large layout of AF Station 115, Shipdham Air Field, England; wartime base of the 44th Bomb Group.

President Roy Owen opened the ceremony with a welcome and introduction of the honored guests. After posting of the colors, Chaplain (Father) Randy Roberts gave the Invocation. Col. Owen followed with a brief combat history of the 44th B.G. Then introduced Brig. General John Gibson, one of the two living 44th combat commanders who made the profferance of the memorial to the 8th Air Force Museum. After the unveiling by our members Ed "Mike" Mikoloski, lead navigator on the 14 May 1943 Kiel, Germany mission and Reginald "Phil" Phillips, pilot on 1 August 1943 low level raid on the Ploesti, Rumania oil refinery, Colonel Andrew Smoak accepted the memorial on behalf of 8th Air Force.



Col. CLEM HAULMAN AT ENTRANCE TO BRIEFING ROOM.



Col. Ed Mikoloski and "Phil" Phillips
HAVING JUST UNVEILED THE 44th
MEMORIAL PLAQUE.

On the 44th side of the project, we were most fortunate to have our Colonel (Ret) Clem Haulman, who, although he lives 200 miles from Shreveport, was our main man on this project. He worked with Will Lundy on the design of the plaque, made all the contacts on Barksdale and saw to the procurement of the granite marker and the plaque. On top of all that, he wore his complete WWII pinks and green uniform (25 mission crush on the hat as well) What really made it possible to manage this project from afar was having Captain Jeffrey Swegel, son of our members Bob and Noreen Swegel, a B-52 Instructor pilot and Combat Crew Commander in the 20th Bomb Squadron at Barksdale who volunteered to act as eyes and ears for Clem in taking care to see all of the details on the project fall into place. We owe them both a big THANK YOU!

The element of the ceremony most touching to 44th members present was the obviously displayed admiration and respect held for them by the Active Duty Air Force; first by the great "Barksdale Welcome" extended to us by the Base; then by the 44th presence displayed in the Museum, also the placement of our memorial in the place of honor directly in front of the B-24 on display, but most beautifully articulated by Colonel Andy Smoak in his acceptance of the memorial:

"General Ford, General Gibson, General Moore, Colonel Owen, members of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association and honored guests. It is my privilege to be a part of this momentous occasion. The 44th left a rich tradition rooted in the ultimate sacrifices of brave men who answered the call to battle to preserve a free world. This honorable heritage includes some of the most famous battles in history, and helped build the legacy that would become known as "The Mighty Eighth." We will never forget you who carry the torch of their memory which lights the way of we who walk the same path. May this illumination make it possible for us to walk in your footsteps. This monument is a testimony to those endeavors, and will preserve their memory for future generations. As 2nd Bomb Wing Commander, and an heir to that glorious birthright, I am proud to carry on the tradition and promise to uphold the high standards set so long ago. On behalf of the 8th Air Force Museum, I thank you, not only for this memorial, but for your sacrifices made in service to your country. God Bless you all."

TOM HOLMES, R. H. "Phil" PHILLIPS AND TOM LANDRUM ATTEND THE SATURDAY EVENING REGIONAL MEETING AFTER THE DEDICATION CEREMONY.



Capt. Jeff Swegel



Left to Right: Col. CLEM HAULMAN, Col. ROY OWEN, B/GEN. HOWARD MOORE, B/GEN. JACK GIBSON.



FEEDBACK ON THE KIEL RAID

This letter comes from Harvey C. Compton of Alba, Texas, who with Robert E. Kolliner were in the Abernethy crew photo on Page 4 of the last issue (Spring, 1997) of the "TAILS." Compton went with Kolliner when he got his own crew in April. They were on Abernethy's right wing on the Kiel Raid. The Interrogation Form for the Abernethy crew lists to the composition of the crew for the Kiel Raid. The changes were: Col. LEON W. JOHNSON, Command Pilot; SPENCER S. HUNN, Co-Pilot; ED MIKOLOSKI, Navigator; EARL E. GOODMAN, Radio; WILLARD W. SCOTT, Engineer; JOHN A. ROMEO, R. Waist Gun; BERNARD G. TRAUGHT, Hatch; HOWARD M. LUCAS, L. Waist Gun; WALTER L. SUMMEY, Tail Gun.

Editor: *Sorry about the mix up. My "working document" listed only the pilots and aircraft. As a "make-up," I've come by most of the names of the 67th Sq. Personnel who were in the "Sweating It Out" cover photo. Can anyone name the officer standing in the center of the other unknowns?*

All 67th Squadron Personnel

#1 Jeep:

Left to Right

Mike Curtin, standing - Rose Hager, one head, unknown; Charlie Arthur, sitting: Richard Ward, I believe, standing; Officer Voorheese, two unknowns due to faintness; and Joe Bailey. Standing beside jeep -

George Baccash.

Officer in-between jeeps - unknown.

#2 Jeep

On hood

Left to Right

Edward Hanley and Freddie Marsh. On hood standing, M/Sgt. Line Chief Ralph Illick. Standing against jeep, Emery Shimmel. Last unknown.

*See photo on cover page of Spring, 1997
Vol. 2 Issue 2 for more detail.*



Dear Will:

I received the latest issue of Eight Ball Tails and the Kiel Raid of 14 May, 1943. The photo of Ab's crew is of his original crew. They are:

Back Row: L to R

Minder - Bombardier (William H.)

Abernethy - Pilot (Robert J.)

Kolliner - Co-Pilot (Robert E.)

Toczyl - Navigator (Benjamin R.)

Kneeling: L to R

S/Sgt. Ray Sheldon, Tail Gunner

S/Sgt. Kirt Jarvis, Waist Gunner

T/Sgt. Harvey Compton, Engineer

S. Sgt. Kelly Morrison, Waist Gun

T.Sgt. Frank Capuano, Radio Operator

Lt. Kolliner was made a 1st pilot in April, 1943 and was not part of our crew on the Kiel mission. Capt. Abernethy was leading the formation with Lt. Kolliner on Ab's right wing (#2), while Lt. Reed was on his left (#3).

Lt. Reed was having a little trouble holding formation so these two wing men switched positions. On the way in, Reed's plane was hit in the top turret - must have been by a rocket or 20 to 40mm shell. The turret was totally demolished and severely wounded Sgt. Wygonic. The radio operator, Sgt. Perry, put a parachute on T/Sgt. Wygonic and moved him to the catwalk where he sat for a short time. A short time later he was gone, and I never heard if he made it or not. *(Yes, his chute opened, landed in Kiel and was immediately taken to the hospital and survived.)*

Reed's airplane also was hit in #2 engine and in the left vertical stabilizer. The top half was sheared off and the left main gear dropped down. The plane fell off sharply to the right, and I thought that they surely were goners. But after landing and debriefing, we heard he was coming in! The crew bailed out and were picked up OK. Lt. Reed had a new gunner from the Armament shop. When he came up to our C.O. Major Hodges, I believe it was, he threw his bundled up parachute down and said, "There's your blankity-blank receipt. I quit!!" And he went back to the Armory. Who could blame him?

Capt. Robert J. Abernethy's crew that day was: 2nd Lt. Spencer Hunn, Co-pilot; Ed Mikolowski, Navigator; 1st Lt. William H. Minder, Bombardier; T/Sgt. Earl E. Goodman, Radio; T/Sgt. Willard W. Scott, Top Turret; John A. Romeo, R.W.; S/Sgt. Bernard G. Traudt, Hatch; S/Sgt. Walter L. Summey, Tail Gun; S/Sgt. Howard M. Lucas, L.W.; and Col. Leon W. Johnson, Command.

DECLASSIFIED

MISSION NO. 79

Authority

ND715005

DATE

11/5/43

By

WV1 NRRA Date 11/2/76

ALWAYS GIVE TIME, PLACE HEIGHT

Researched By
T. Mastradone
44th B. Op. Vets Assoc.

Interrogation Form

44th (Group) 66th (Sqn.) 936 (A/C No.) J (Letter) 20X100 (Bomb-load) island (Date)
head all way 09.00 15.00
(Position in formation - Where changed) (Time took off) (Time Landed)

Capt. Robert J. Abernethy	PILOT	T/Sgt. Willard W. Scott (?)	TOP TUR
2nd Lt. Spencer S. Hunn	CO-PILOT	S/Sgt. John A. Romeo	Blast BULLY GUN
1st Lt. Edward Mikolowski	NAV	S/Sgt. Bernard G. Traudt	Hatch R. W. LIST
1st Lt. William H. Minder	BOMB	S/Sgt. Walter L. Sumoy	Tail gun L. W. LIST
T/Sgt. Earl E. Goodman	RADIO	S/Sgt. Howard M. Lucas	TAIL GUN
REAR HATCH GUN COL. LEON W. JOHNSON - Passenger			

1. BOMBING ATTACK Hub 2 mi over 13.04
(Altitude) (Heading) (Wind Direction) (Wind Velocity) (Airspeed)
24000 45 (Target) (Aiming Point) (Time)

(Initial point)

(Method of sighting, individual or other - describe)

2. BOMBS DROPPED: 20
1/2 electrically (On target area) Front (Dispersion) 1/2 second (Bombs Brought Back)

3. OBSERVED RESULTS OF BOMBING ATTACK: Area of target level
of ship to attack had covered in on 50

4. ENEMY FIGHTER OPPOSITION (Use separate encounter form for each encounter):

80-100 FW's + 109's 210's
(Total number of E/A seen) (Types)
First 11.50 over island - Lost at 12.50
(Area and duration of each phase of battle)

Saw B1790 down. 2 hits

Motor on tail.
(Tactics employed by enemy)

MORE FEEDBACK FROM THE KIEL RAID

**This comes to us from Col. (Ret) Jim
O'Brien**

**5129 Baptist Road
Pittsburgh, PA 1526-1719**

Dear Roy,

After returning home from my snowbird refuge in Arizona, I finally cleaned up my box of unforwarded mail and was able to read through the Spring issue of the 8 Ball Tails which featured the Kiel Raid of 14 May 1943. Although I have played that memory over many times as a member of the crew of the "Rugged Buggy" (AC 41-23819, Bar A), I was magnetically drawn to that narrative of extreme hazards we encountered that day. The declassified Secret debriefing reports really confirmed my own assessment of the mission. I have had my "There I Was" story published several times, most recently under the title, "One Hazard Too Many," referring to the broken bundles of incendiaries coming back through the formation on a negative trajectory while MacHowell and I were trying to keep the plane in formation.

It is now ancient history, but I would like to correct the report on what happened to 819 Bar-A that day. When flak knocked out our two left engines, our fate was sealed. Dick Castillo was wounded by ME 109 shells that exploded his ammunition box, and he was pulled from his rear turret by the waist gunners, Jim MacCammand and Harold VanOyen. They dumped him out of the plane, pulling his rip cord for him. They and John Husselton then bailed out because they had no communication with the pilots. We five crewmen up front did not know they had bailed out, and we continued on over the target dropping the bomb load and returned with the Group for home. After about ten minutes, we soon had German fighters flying escort, one off the right wing and one off the left wing. An ME 109 was sitting right below the tail and giving steady bursts of cannon and 30 caliber shells and tracers. As Howell and I fully anticipated, some of those tracers ignited the fuel leaking in the bomb bay, and the game was over. The bomb bay doors were shut and there was no hydraulic pressure to open them, but dear old Ralph Ernst, the radio

operator, grabbed the fire extinguisher and redirected the fire enough which enabled him to use his heel to kick one bomb bay door open about 20 inches. Although heavy fire filled the bomb bay, that small opening provided the only escape route for the four of us on the flight deck.

The Navigator, John Bledsoe and Bombardier, Norius Crisan, saw that no one was on the flight deck, and they then parted company with the aircraft. The boys from the ear of the aircraft, including Castillo, landed in the water in Kiel Bay. All were picked up by German shore patrols, but Harold VanOyen drowned when he got tangled in his parachute shroud lines. He always told me that he would drown if he landed in water, because he couldn't swim and was afraid of water. The six crewmen from the front of the aircraft landed on terra firm about 20 miles northwest of Kiel. MacHowell's chute opened, but it had one panel torn from the bottom to the top of the umbrella. I saw the torn chute and did not know it was Howell until the German Luftwafe medic told me "The little man in the yellow suit is dead." It was a long time before I could believe that Howell was dead. I concluded that his chute was hit by some of those 30 caliber shells which were bouncing off the armor plate of our pilot seats. For those who don't know, we crewmen used the British chest pack snap-on chutes which we had to store behind our seats while flying. It was pure confusion finding the chutes and buckling them onto the chest rings.

The top turret gunner, Kenneth McCabe, should have received the credit for destroying the German fighters which were teasing us after we left the target area. He kept shouting through his oxygen mask, "Lower the wing. Lower the Wing" while they were flying along side of us. Of course, Howell and I were trying to figure out how long we were going to last.

The way I have described this story may seem very casual and sober, but believe me, it was pure panic midst the hellish noise of full RPM on the two right engines, flak, our 50 caliber guns firing constantly, German shells exploding on the flight deck and a strong odor of leaking gasoline ready to pop.

One final note on this mission. We lost five B-24's over the target and one back in England when the crew had to bail out. One B-17 was also

shot down. One month later, 13 June 1943, the mighty B-17's went to the same target and lost 20 aircraft without any B-24's to escort them.

Keep up the good work with our Association
Sincerely,
Jim O'Brien

P.S. One of the original 44th types, still flying at age 78...The enclosed photo shows John Bledsoe and me at his home in Tucson last April, 1997. John and I and Norius Crisan from Las Vegas are the only crewmen of the "Rugged Buggy" who are left. Dick Castillo died in 1995 at Springfield, Ohio. Ralph Ernst died in 1985 in Jacksonville, AR and Kenneth McCabe died in 1985 in Dekalb, IL. I have never heard from Husselton or MacCommond in the 52 years.



JIM O'BRIEN (Left) & JOHN BLEDSOE (Right).

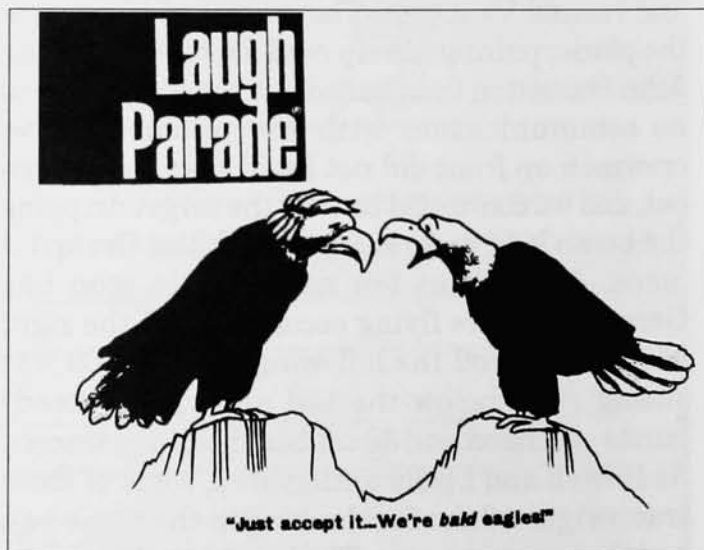
Editor: Boy! What I wouldn't give if some of the rest of you guys would loosen up and write letters like this one to me. I was remarking to Will Lundy, if I could get around and tape all of the great "war stories" that you guys sit around and tell one another after "honkin' down" a few in the Hospitality Room at the Reunion, maybe I'd be able to do more "fill-in" from the Debriefing forms, 'cause most of you go back home and "go off the air" again.

May 17, 1997

Dear Jim:

Thank you for the great letter that reached me yesterday. I want to tell you that your recount of what was going on in the front of "Rugged Buggy" while you were under that fierce attack is exactly what we are reaching out for with the format of *The 8-Ball Tails*. I stated in our third issue that we were going from a reactive editorial policy, where we plead for our members to write in and tell us their stories, then sit and wait (with rather meager results), to a format where we feature our aircraft, combat crews, ground crews and support people, hoping that naming names and dates of aircraft, missions and crews would stimulate memories long tucked away, unshared and, just as you have so vividly related, shared with all your comrades the first hand story of what went on in the front of the fatally wounded "Rugged Buggy." Stories like yours are what Will Lundy calls "the gravy" that blends together the meat and potatoes, or the facts and statistics of a combat unit history. What I'm saying here is that you have made my day!

Many thanks,
Roy





Beating the Bushes

By Art Hand & Will Lundy

June, 1997

CLINTON G. FAUST: 12533 Butler Road, Crocker, MO 65435. Clinton served with the 44th at Barksdale Field in 1943. 66th Squadron.

JEFFREY DIETFRING: 11916 Lakeside Drive, #160, Overland Park, KS 66213. Jeffrey is grandson of Donald Maule.

HOWARD S. GEISELMAN, JR.: 708 Prospect Avenue, Waynesboro, PA 17268. Howard was with the 44th BG at Barksdale, but was transferred to the 98th BG when that Group was formed out of the 44th.

RALEIGH A. GLASSOCK: RR #8, Mocksville, NC 27028. Raleigh served with the 44th BG at Barksdale Field.

CLYDE F. GORDON: 2528 Sink Street, Winston Salem NC 27107. Clyde was a radio operator, joined the 68th Squadron on October 5, 1943.

WILLIAM A. LUNDQUIST: 4003 South Greystone Lane, Spokane, WA 99223. William joined the 68th Squadron on 2/19/45. He was a pilot, flew with Robert's crew. Flew back to the states in A/C #44-49425.



Progress on the Savannah Museum Display

By Roy Owen

All of the membership should, by now, be aware that the plan for the 44th Bomb Group display case at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum at Savannah is to be a small scale replica of the 44th Lead Element attacking Target White 5, Columbia Aquila Refinery at Ploesti.

We commissioned Kieth St. Aubin, a free-lance professional model maker for the movie industry, to produce four 27 inch wing span B-24 D models with the appropriate serial numbers, name, Flying 8-Ball logo, and nose art of Suzy Q, Horse Fly, Buzzin' Bear and the borrowed 376th plane which went over the target in the #3 position on Col. Johnsons left wing. Kieth notified me that the models were completed and I made a one day flying trip to his home in Canoga Park on Sunday, April 13 to inspect and accept the models prior to shipment to our display Project Officer, Tom Parsons in Atlanta.

I must say, there is nothing like doing business with a real professional! Just inspecting the models made me anxious to see the finished display we envision. Each of the models is complete in every authentic detail and will be shipped in its individual custom built container.

As I write this, Tom has received the models and has delivered them to Savannah. He will now go out for bids for a professional firm to construct a scale model replica of the target area as it looked just before bomb release by the lead element; flames, smoke and all. The model aircraft will be suspended from the glass top of the display case by monofilament fishing line to position each in its proper position during the attack. It is our intent to produce a replica of this most historic moment for the 44th which we intend will be the defining display of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. We will keep you posted on the progress our project team of Tom Parsons and John McClain are making as they go along.

WILL SEZ

What do I say - where can I start? We have just returned from an extra week in England, following the GRAND TOUR by some 44thers through England, France, Belgium - and am really suffering from jet lag, fatigue and so many emotional highs! So many great things happened in so short a time that I can't get them in order, or get them from my head. IT WAS SUPER! Just like the postcards from vacationing friends, "Having a great time - wish you were here" is most appropriate.

Surely Roy Owen, our Tour Coordinator and Leader, will tell you all about the Tour, but I can't refrain from adding my viewpoints. So, forgive me for duplicating many experiences. I am sure that it will be difficult for Roy to condense all of these emotional events into one issue of the "Tails."

London is still London, loaded with history and so many famous places to visit. But this time, Irene and I were pleased to have our younger son, Kevin and his lovely wife, Diana, along to share nine of those days with us. During the one day "on our own," we four visited the Tower of London, enjoying the words from our guide, and seeing the sights. Naturally the exhibits of the many heavily jeweled crowns were well packed with tourists like us, but what jewels! The real McCoy! On to St. Pauls Cathedral which withstood the bombings of the war, and where a Roll of Honor book displays the names of Americans killed in action; and finally, the Westminster Abbey in all its grandeur. We nearly got lost when trying to exit that ancient building. Of course, we utilized the "Tube" to get from one place to the other, and did not miss Harrods on the way back to the hotel.

I am sure that the good folks of Shipdham have not been the same after the afternoon and evening at Arrow-Air Centre. Over 50 guests were invited to join us there in a free bar and a barbecue, but it seemed there were larger numbers than that. Too, Kevin Watson and George Dixon arrived from Eastbourne to help us celebrate the reunion. Earlier in the day, our coach took us to the various old sites on the base, stopped at the 14th CBW site to enjoy a lunch and drinks, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Doubleday. He is converting that site to a nursery (plants) and is making great progress in clearing the

overgrowth of brambles, cleaning out the buildings and making many repairs. He hopes to restore more building, save the wall art and perhaps add a mini-museum (if all goes well). Bless him!

A short visit was made to Maddingly on the way up to Norwich, and another few hours stop at Duxford on the way back. Thanks to the efforts of Steve Adams, not only for our stay in Norwich, but for the special attention we got at Duxford. We were given a tour of the new 8th AF building, which will be officially opened by the Queen in August. It is an impressive, unique building, full of interesting aircraft and hopefully will some day include a B-24.

Two years ago, Kevin Watson managed to honor our "Ruthless" plane and the ten men from the Bolin crew which died in the crash near Eastbourne. Mainly by Kevin's efforts, a large memorial stone was placed at the crash site and a very moving ceremony conducted at that site. The Mayor of Eastbourne honored the few of us who were there by inviting us to the famous city hall and a reception.

Just two years later, Kevin again was the planner and leader of another wonderful two days in his fair city. And this time our reception was even more memorable, like we were long missing family returning home. The city opened their arms to us - we were family. Once again our Lt. Bolin crew were honored with a larger memorial service up on Butts Brow high above the city. The view from there is extraordinary with a wide view of the city, the Channel, the green fields and rolling hills. One could not have picked a more suitable site for a memorial marker and a service. It was beautiful in all ways.

Our last evening was capped with a Gala Banquet, and that truly is what it was. The meal was super, many local honored guests were there to join us, toasts were made by many, wine and champagne flowed freely. Another emotional night.

Our son, Kevin and Diane, along with Dick and Betty Haft, returned to London and home, while the rest of us joined Kevin Watson and his father-in-law Tony for the remainder of the tour. We caught an early ferry over to Dieppe, France. As soon as we drove off the ramp in our nice new coach, we were flagged down by our new French

friends, JP Marie and Joel Huard. We were late due to a late departure from Newhaven, and the French had many great plans in store for us. They wanted to take a detour, even before we reached our hotel in Rouen to visit a crash site at Villers Ecalles.

In the months preceding this tour, Roy had been contacted by JP Marie (through Joel who acted as an interpreter) to obtain data on the 44th BG plane which had been shot down on 8 March 1943 during an attack on the railway yards in Rouen. Roy deferred the request on to me, and as it turned out, quite appropriately so. The plane was flown by Capt. C.E. Price. The aircraft's name was Miss Dianne. Price and seven of his crew were KIA, including Roy E. Goaline, a ground crewman who volunteered for combat. Roy was a personal friend. Miss Dianne was "my" plane, one I had lovingly cared for since its arrival at Shipdham on 10 October 1942. The three survivors included Kenny Erhard and Deane Devars, both of whom were volunteers from ground crews. So I had a deep, vested interest in all of this, and was very happy to share all of my information with JP and Joel, who also was an air war historian.

We were late arriving in the village of Villers Ecalles, but there, patiently waiting for us was quite a crowd, many in uniforms, and a lot of French being spoken. Most of us were understanding very little of what was being said, wishing we had listened better in our French classes in school, but managed to get the message by hand motions and a few words from Joel that we were to follow the large procession along a road often filled with many cars.

About a block away from the parking area, we came to a halt, spilling out through an intersection and facing an American flag draped large stone monument. Here a ceremony was to take place, with at least 200 of us packed in, trying to keep a lane clear to permit the road traffic to pass on through. Several speeches were made, with Joel reading aloud in English. But with the noise of the traffic, my hearing aid failed to get but a just a few words into my head. I wasn't "with it" as to what had been said.

Roy and I were called front, got the idea that we should take the wreath to the flag-draped memorial stone and lay it at the base, much as had some French dignitaries. When we turned

away, I could see one man gesturing to us, pointing back to the memorial, but had no idea what was expected of us. A light finally dawned that they wanted the American flag removed from the memorial, so we both managed to loosen it, and put to one side. That was the time that the light really dawned on me - instead of the large memorial stone being uncovered, there in all its glory was a large plaque inscribed with the names of the crew members!

I knew that this memorial stone had been installed there many years ago and that ceremonies were held here annually on their memorial day, but they had no plaque. I had sent the crew data to them less than two months earlier and was sure that insufficient time remained for them to get a plaque made. It never entered my head that we were there to honor the plaque which they had somehow managed to fabricate and install in such a short time. I could not have been happier at that moment.

Before we managed to get to our hotel that evening, we were to twice more attend ceremonies and receptions at both Villers Ecalles and Rouen. Those French people were making it quite obvious that we were more than welcome. Again, what a day!

On our coach trip to the Invasion Beaches, we were scheduled for a stop in Bayeux to view the Bayeux Tapestry. I was not all that interested, not knowing exactly what that was or why I'd want to view it. Ignorance is bliss. It proved to be an amazing piece of work that appears to be one of a kind, dating back to the time of William The Conqueror - 1066. Here is a tapestry nearly 900 years old, still in good shape, telling pictorially, by threads, of the invasion of England by the French. The events are told all along the entire length of this tapestry for a distance which seems at least 100 feet, perhaps more. It seemed a bit appropriate to have visited here, see the invasion of England so long ago, and then go to the invasion beaches to see the results of another invasion, this time in the opposite direction, from England to France.

Both JP Marie and Joel Huard accompanied us in the coach on this day to the beaches, so we had a great chance to learn a bit more about each other, have their help while at the beaches, and while visiting the huge and beautiful American

cemetery at Omaha beach - Normandy. The 44th BG has 26 men buried here, three more on the Wall of Missing.

Within the past few months, Joel and I have shared information about 44th BG planes which had crashed in France. I having specific data about planes and crewmen, and he having data about the crash sites. Joel requested data about five planes which were shot down on 21 January 1944, four of which were 68th Sq. One of the four was Lt. Sobotka's, the plane on which Clair Shaeffer was killed, body unidentified. Joel's records gave us the location of this crash, and he contacted the Mayor of the closest village and asked if we could visit the site. Upon leaving Rouen the next morning, both Joel and JP Marie again rode with us to this village. They arranged for our coach to drive us near it, where several cars from the village offered transportation back into the woods - but many of us preferred to walk.

Upon arriving at the site, we found that the French citizens of that area had many years ago placed a memorial marker there, and erected borders to make the appearance of a burial plot. In the middle of the plot, they had placed a portion of the crashed plane - a heavy glass "window" from either the tail or ball turret.

A solemn ceremony was performed by the local mayor and priest. Then one of the local men who spoke English very well told us about his father who had visited the crash shortly after it happened. He said that he had a gift for Mrs. Lois Cianci, something which his father had found and saved all these years. Upon opening the small container, she found a "dog tag." Upon closer inspection, discovered that it was her father's. At long last, she now had one of her father's personal possessions. What an unbelievable set of circumstances; so heavily charged with emotions. We were all in tears of joy for her. Finally, she had something real with which to remember her father. What an almost impossible event to happen!

After two great days - the weather had been sunny and warm every day - we departed Paris and headed for Belgium via Reims and Bastogne. We were behind schedule when we stopped at the Ardennes American Cemetery, 5 pm and normal closing time. However, our good friends Luc Dewez and Sophie were there waiting for us

along with the Superintendent, Horace Thompson. A wreath had been placed on the name of Clair P. Shaeffer which was engraved in the Wall of Missing in honor of Lois' visit. Later I spoke with Mr. Thompson about the procedures involved with MIAs, especially those found in crashed airplanes, but unable to identify a body. For several years I have sought this information in general, and specifically for another 44th who, like Clair Shaeffer, went down on 21 January, an engineer, and body not identified. Never was the subject fully addressed by any source contacted - until this day when Mr. Thompson gave me an answer.

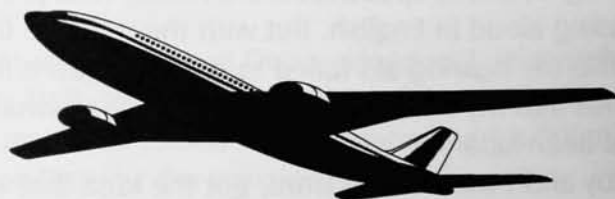
He stated that this cemetery had well over 700 "Unknown" people whose remains were unidentifiable after the final processing that took place in 1949 and 1950. Their remains were buried here in separate graves, marked as Unknown, and their names are listed on their Wall of Missing. Of course there remains a shadow of doubt in specific instances, but the odds are quite high that those men whose names on the Wall of Missing might also have their remains buried there in Unknown graves. So again, finally, we now have an answer to this important question. Next of kin can now have grounds for accepting the possibility that this cemetery may be the final resting place for their loved one.

Incidentally, this Ardennes American Cemetery should remain dear to our 44thers. We have 74 of our airmen buried there, with another 28 shown on the Wall of Missing. We should include this in our itinerary, if at all possible, anytime we are in Belgium.

Again and again, what a wonderful tour. Kevin Watson, Tony and our drivers couldn't have done more for us. They were super.

Anyone want to go again?

Will Lundy



FOLDED WINGS

JUNE, 1997



Dr. George Beckerman	4/7/97	HQ
Adam J. Borkowski	1994	Unknown
Warren L. Brock	2/11/97	Motor Pool
Lee E. Davis	Unknown	66th Squadron Cook. To Shipdham with ground echelon 9/5/42.
Dante P. DiGiacnito	Unknown	Unknown
Edmund H. Donnelly	2/17/97	506th Squadron. POW. Shot down on 23rd Mission. Retired as Lt. Col. USAFR.
William Dorrisey	6/11/97	67th Harris Waist Gunner
Frederick A. DuBose	12/15/93	506th Squadron. Fred was a Radio Operator on G. Wescott's crew when shot down on 29 June 1944. Was a POW.
Henry C. Gay	Unknown	Unknown
Lewis German	7/15/96	Unknown
Curtis D. Gerrard	1986	Unknown
John W. Griffin	1993	68th Squadron. Co-pilot for Parke H. Jones. Shot down 16 December 1943. Became a POW.
John E. Gunnell	8/10/96	506th, Co-Pilot Maynor Crew, POW
Jerome (Bob) Hary	1/4/96	Worked in communications.
Harold P. (Jack) Harmon	6/90	67th Gunner, R.C. Griffin, interned Switz. 4/44
Herbert A. Hedinger	9/28/95	68th and 506th Squadrons. Ground crew. To England 9/5/42 on Queen Mary. Transferred to 506th Sqdn. 4/12/43.
Harvey (Gene) Holmes	1/8/97	68th Operations NCO
Adolph J. Hrebar	5/5/97	66th Radio on Muldoon Crew
Gerald N. Jenniges	8/4/97	66th Gunner on J.N. Williams Crew
Charles K. Jones	6/97	506th. Flight Engineer on Edkins crew.
Oscar L. Leonard	9/19/96	506th Pilot
Charles Marks	2/7/96	464 Sub-Depot
Major Albert A. Martin	4/4/97	506th Bombardier on Purdy's and Waines Crew 10/43 to 2/44. Transferred to 15 AF 449 BG, first B-24 crew to finish combat tour in 15th AF.
William McFadden	3/16/96	506th
William Middlebrooks	2/13/97	506/67th
Melvin Novotny	1/20/97	Unknown
Alan F. Oberlin	6/22/96	67th Ground Echelon, Radio Maintenance
William H. Parkins	6/17/97	68th Co-Pilot on Erickson Crew
Lewis Robinson	4/3/97	Gunner on Ciesielski Crew
Otis V. Rogers	3/6/95	68th Flt. Eng. on Zerman Crew
Fred G. Rowe	4/9/96	66th Gunner on Hammer Crew, crew flew PFF Lead on D-Day.
Warren B. Williamson	Unknown	Unknown

FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

Your Board of Directors voted for the '98 Reunion to be held in:

New Orleans



44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BOARD

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U.K. Representative: Steve Adams
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Norwich, England NR3 2QT
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ASSOCIATION MAILING ADDRESS

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P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367

AUTHOR'S CORNER



April 12, 1997

This is relative to the note on Page 5 of the Spring, 1997 Tails, about where to find books written by members. My *ELUSIVE HORIZONS*, which came out in hard cover by A. S. Barnes & Co. in 1969, and later in paperback, and again in paperback by Avon, January, 1992, is now completely out of print. Sorry about those who still try to order it; perhaps this will save us both postage since I have been unable to fill over 50 additional requests.

Thanks for your multiple efforts to hold the 44th together.

Regards,
Keith C. Schuyler
Pilot/67th Squadron
Cedar Lane
Box 3094 - R.D. #3
Berwick, PA 18603



Your "cottage industry" publisher sincerely apologizes to those who received your Spring, 1997, Vol. 2, Issue 2 8-Ball Tails having pages missing and pages misplaced. If you received such an issue, please contact Jerry Folsom @
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367
and he will replace it, so you can read on...

Lana Kopecky
Sandy, Utah



1996 REUNION PICTURE BOOK

The Reunion Picture Book has been shipped to all that signed for them at the Reunion. It is a real professional memory book, something to be enjoyed for a long time.

Unfortunately, the printers are unable to make additional copies at a later date. As there may be those that were not present when orders were taken, we have purchased a few additional copies.

These are available on a "first come" basis.

To order, mail check for \$12 made out to the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association to:

Be sure to note on your check
"Reunion '96 Book."

Jim Clements
4124 Calculus Avenue
Dallas, TX 75244

FOR SALE

8-BALL PATCHES

The beautiful four inch felt Flying 8-Ball patches with appropriate Squadron colors on the nose are still available from Art Hand. They go for \$15. Send your check to:
Art Hand, 517 Elm Street
Paris, IL 61944-1417
Mark on your check 8-Ball Patch
Color
(Red, Yellow, White or Green).



NEW 44TH BGVA SHIRTS!!

We had a debut of the new white collared shirts on the England trip, so look through the pictures. They are a high quality 50% cotton, 50% polyester with the group logo in embroidery. We will have them for sale at the Reunion for \$30, or you can order one by mail from Treasurer Jerry Folsom for an additional \$3 postage.

Sizes:
Small

(good for little wives & grand kids)

Medium

Large

X-Large

XX-Large

and a few

XXX-Large.



8-BALL CAPS

The new solid crown 44th Bomb Group caps will be available at the Reunion. The caps are solid white with the Flying 8-Ball logo embroidered with a multi-colored nose and cord over the bill denoting the Squadron color.
Priced at \$15.



44TH BOMB GROUP

Flying Eightballs

HISTORY BOOK

THIS IS A
LIMITED EDITION

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CONTENTS

- General history of the 44th Bomb Group
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- Protective, plastic book cover: \$3.00 each

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MEMORY LANE

With this issue, we are inaugurating a new feature in the "Tails" called "MEMORY LANE." The impetus for this is someplace to put the many photos that somehow accumulate that are not associated with a particular story, but the pictures came along with names, places and, sometimes dates. These snapshots will stir a lot of memories, and I'm sure, will generate a lot of fun letters, and that folks is what this publication is all about. So look through your memorabilia and pick out those pictures that you have names and a caption to accompany the snap and send it (them) along to your Editor.

We'll start off with a picture of a part of Norwich that should be etched in the memory bank of every Red-Blooded American who served in East Anglia, The Sampson and Hercules Ball Room and the Maids Head Hotel.



There were a myriad of places where the socialization between the young female population of the Norwich area and the American airmen and their Support guys was inevitable, but none so famous as "The Muscle Palace."



20 January 1944, Lord Mayor William J. Finch of Norwich visits Shipdham. Here Col. Fred Dent is showing the LM and his party through the Red Cross Arrow Club. Can anyone name the Red Cross lady?



MAIL CALL



This comes from:
H. J. Besarick
54 Nobby Lane
West Yarmouth, MA 02673
2/13/97

Dear Art:

First - my apologies for being so slow to thank you for all the good stuff you sent me. (A lot of things got out of hand, including an operation on my knee.)

Looking at the issues of '8 Ball Tails,' I want to congratulate you and the others that have taken it from a letter#, to a historical masterpiece.

Keep up the good work! Please call me.

Sincerely,
Bez



This comes from:
Don Ukens
Box 95
Hooker, OK 73945
12/8/96

Dear Mr. Folsom,

I apologize for my late response to your mailing in May of last year. I was never sure what happened to the 44th HMG. I am a U.S. Navy veteran, (1967-74) and always enjoyed reading the publications from that group.

My Dad, Emil Ukens was in the 68th. While he was living, he and my Mother Madge, always enjoyed attending the reunions whenever they could. The 44th HMG had started a scholarship for descendants of the 44th and my daughter Ashley

was honored to receive a \$1,000 scholarship over four consecutive years. I believe, the only four years of the program. My Dad had already passed away by that time, but he would have been mighty proud of her and his old comrades for their support.

Ashley has since graduated from the University of Oklahoma with an Honors Degree in Chemical Engineering. She is now married to 2nd Lt. Matthew Ylitalo of the Marine Corps 2nd Division Artillery. They are currently stationed at Camp Lejune, N.C.

To be a doctor has been Ashley's life long dream. Last month she was notified that she has been accepted to the Oklahoma University School of Medicine. I'm not sure how that would have happened without the 44th HMG Scholarships. We would somehow like to extend our thanks to those individuals.

I was stationed with the Navy in Scotland and was able to make the trip to Shipdham where Dad was stationed on a couple of occasions. When Mom and Dad came to visit, we loaded them up and took them down there as well. Needless to say, Day really enjoyed that.

We live near Liberal, KS which, I am sure you are aware, was a B-24 training base. They have a tremendous air museum and historical library. They have a section in the museum on the B-24's and the raid on Ploesti. I have donated several publications in my Dad's name.

I am sending \$30. Please send me one membership and send the other to the:

Liberal Air Museum
2000 W 2nd
Liberal, KS 67901

(Mark it in Memory of Emil Ukens, 68th Squadron, 44th Bomb Group.)

Sincerely,



This comes from:
William C. Stewart
Alamo, TN
44th Bomb Group
7/10/96

Dear Will:

You probably think by now that you have wasted your time and money by writing to me. When I began looking for the "shoe box" I told Tommy (Shepherd) that I had, it had vanished!!

I pulled our drawers and all likely places searching, but to no avail!! But at last my wife came to the rescue when she ran across the material in a most unlikely place. It was not even in a shoe box. As my daughter was looking for pictures for Ruth's and my 50th wedding anniversary celebration, she came across these.

After that, I needed to get with Tommy for help in getting it packaged and on to you. My daughter lives in Memphis, near Tommy, and as we are no longer able to drive, it took even longer for her to get us there. But enough of that.

When Tommy saw them he was ecstatic! He wanted to make copies for keep for himself. He is also making some copies for me of pictures and material. I talked to him last night by phone, and he is still working on them! When we return to Memphis again, hopefully we can get it all together and its way to you. *(Already received.)*

I can't tell you how much I appreciated you reminding me of the seating arrangement on the Queen Mary. I can recall looking out the port hole and I was practically level with the ocean. I, as well as you, sure remember the double occupancy. My mates and I huddled up by the smoke stacks for warmth during our 24 hours on deck.

I am also glad to get a listing of the 66th Squadron (on the Queen Mary), even though I was later changed from it to Group Headquarters. The time of arrival in Scotland had also gotten away from me. Thanks MANY TIMES. I am making copies also for my daughter and grandchildren.

I hope that when you receive what I've held onto for over 50 years, it will meet your needs. I apologize for my writing - I am now 87 years of age and my hands don't seem to work right anymore.

Sincerely,

P.S. You may wonder how I came in possession of this material *(yes, I did)*. After R&R and re-assembling at Sioux Falls, I was sent to Great Bend, Kansas Air Base. The 44th BG had also gone there. And, as you can guess, I knew nobody! I was assigned to Military Intelligence, as I had previously been in England. This "material" was dumped on me. I didn't know what to do with it, but those in charge didn't know what else to do with it. So I brought it all home with me, and even here I

was in the same shape -- what to do with it. Now I am glad it has, in some way, found a HOME. *(It has indeed!)*



This comes from:
Portia S. Ackerman
(Wife of Don Ackerman 506th Sqdn. Deceased)
1371 East Coast Drive
Atlantic Beach, Florida 32233-5521
May 14, 1997

Dear Roy:

Imagine! Opening the Winter 8-Ball Tails and seeing Don's name as pilot of two missions aboard "Down De Hatch."

When I recovered from the excitement, I got his log and read his entries for these two dates. Here is what he wrote:

"17 Jan '45. Whole crew on a mission to Harburg, Germany just south of Hamburg. Plenty tough target as it's another oil factory. Over Auxhaven lost an engine and had to abort. Had old -Z and it was in pretty bad condition. Couldn't stay with the formation altho I was pulling 45" and over 2550 RPM. Really sweated out that North Sea with only 3 engines. Hit a lot of flak, accurate too, over the Eastern Frisian Island. We dropped our bombs close to the island and that woke them up. Expected fighters to attack us but none came. We prayed plenty."

"6 Feb '45. Mission to Magdeburg. Flew #6. The weather was fairly good going over and we had a complete undercast. Flew -Z, one awful hardship on the controls. It was plenty of work keeping in formation. As we started to climb we couldn't stay with the leader and the whole formation was strung out for two or more miles. Finally caught them but #3 engine was plenty hot. Encountered a little flak but we didn't get any holes. Coming back we ran into some bad weather and the contrails were terrific. Tried as much as I could to stay with the formation but could not, so we came home alone. Flew instruments for a while and over the field made an instrument letdown and broke out of the stuff about 1500! Other ships were landing and to avoid running in to any on the approach, went around two times. Visibility was very poor and in the rain P poor."

Felt this would be of interest to your Association. I do look forward to each issue. Many thanks for your efforts.

Sincerely,

P.S. We lived at 201 Talbot Avenue, Santa Rosa for only a bit, while Don was training.

This was early 1944.

1997 Reunion

Salt Lake City, Utah

October 9 - 12, 1997

VITAL INFORMATION

Please note: The 1997 Reunion will commence on October 9th and end on October 12th.
Mark your calendar and make your reservations now!

The old adage "nothing is certain in this life but taxes and death" has been amended to include "inflation." So don't be too surprised if you find the cost of this reunion slightly higher than the last two. However, we will be in one of the prime hotels in the middle of Salt Lake. Moreover, we will guarantee a super reunion.

It is absolutely imperative that registration be received by September 29th. Registrations received after that date will not be processed. If there is a question about being able to attend, send your registration in anyway, as all no shows will be refunded. If however, you have sent your registration in earlier and it becomes apparent you will not be able to attend, please notify us so we can effect a refund and adjust our records.

The same options as last year will be available to those unable to attend the entire reunion. They will be able to attend all functions scheduled for the days they are there. The options listed on the Reunion Registration are designed to make your schedule more suitable and equitable. There can be no deviations.

The program for our meetings and dinners will follow the one we had at our very successful reunion in St. Louis last year. Those registered for the entire complete reunion will attend the Reception Thursday afternoon, the Squadron Dinner Friday night, the General Business Saturday morning, and the Gala Banquet that night. Sunday morning they attend the Mormon Tabernacle Choir concert and on to Hill AFB for lunch and a tour of the Museum. That night there will be a Buffet Dinner with entertainment to follow.

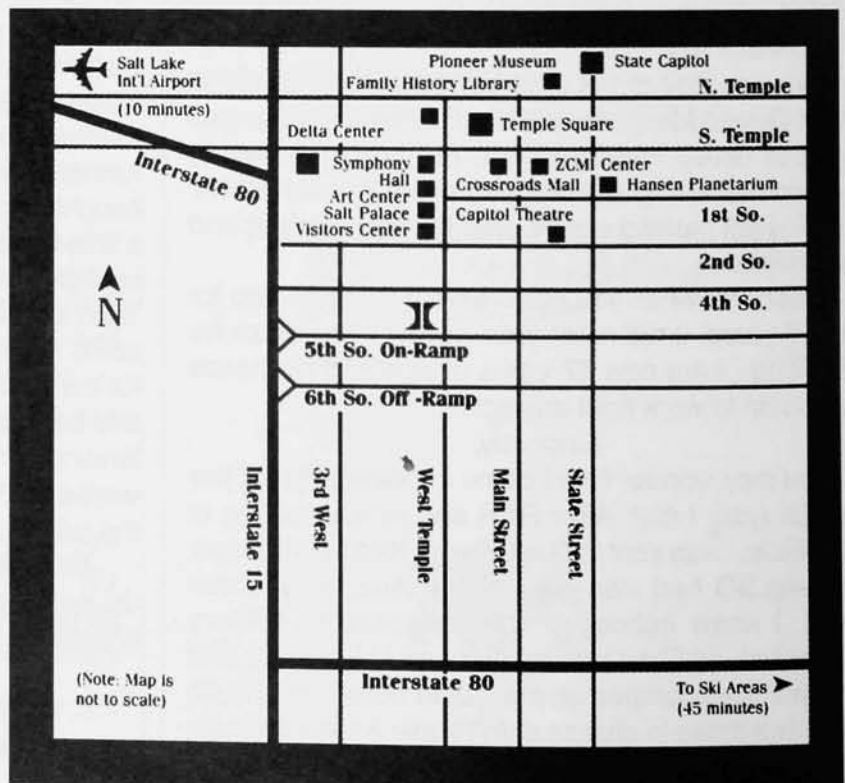
We will have our traditional Hospitality Room up and running every day.

A Bulletin Board in the Hotel lobby will have complete information of all events.

Dress code is informal, except for the Banquet Saturday night, which is to be jacket and tie.

There will be some very interesting tours for Friday and Saturday afternoon offered as optional.

To the right is a map showing the Salt Lake Hilton and some attractions nearby.



1997 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association Reunion

Salt Lake Hilton Hotel - Salt Lake City, Utah

What's Going to Happen!!



Thursday, October 9th:

- Registration all day.
- A reception will be held at 4:00 in the Ballroom.
- The Hospitality Room will open at 12:00
- Dinner on your own.

Note: The Registration Desk will be open on Friday and Saturday at times noted on the bulletin board in the lobby.

Friday, October 10th:

Tour No. 1: Park City Silver Mine Adventure

- We will leave the Salt Lake Hilton Hotel for the fabulous Park City Silver Mine Adventure.
- Don a hard hat and a yellow slicker and descend 1500 feet via the Ontario Mine shaft. Ride a mine train through fascinating tunnels into an actual turn-of-the-century silver mine. Visit rooms carved out of solid rock and experience a simulated mining blast. See actual mining samples and mining equipment. Learn the folk lore of the Tommy Knockers, the Lady in White and more.
- The temperature averages in the low 50s and can be wet at times, so wear a jacket and sturdy shoes. The underground tour lasts about two hours. The Tour is wheel chair accessible.
- The tour above ground includes a museum, country store for shopping, a multi-media theater and restaurants. So there is plenty to do and see while waiting your turn to descend in the thirty-two person elevator that leaves approximately every 20 minutes.
- To accommodate every one in the time available, and because of the limited space of the buses reserved, we will have to limit the number to the first 180 to register.
- For those not going on the Silver Mine Tour, there is plenty to see and do in and around Salt Lake City Historic Temple Square, lunch at the Brigham Youth Beehive House, Genealogy Research Center, museums and shopping are all easily accessible by walking, city buses, taxis or rental cars.
- The Hospitality Room will be open all day for you to meet and visit with old and new friends.

Saturday, October 11th:

In the morning, we will have a General Business Meeting in the Ballroom. It will be held from 9:30 until 12:00.

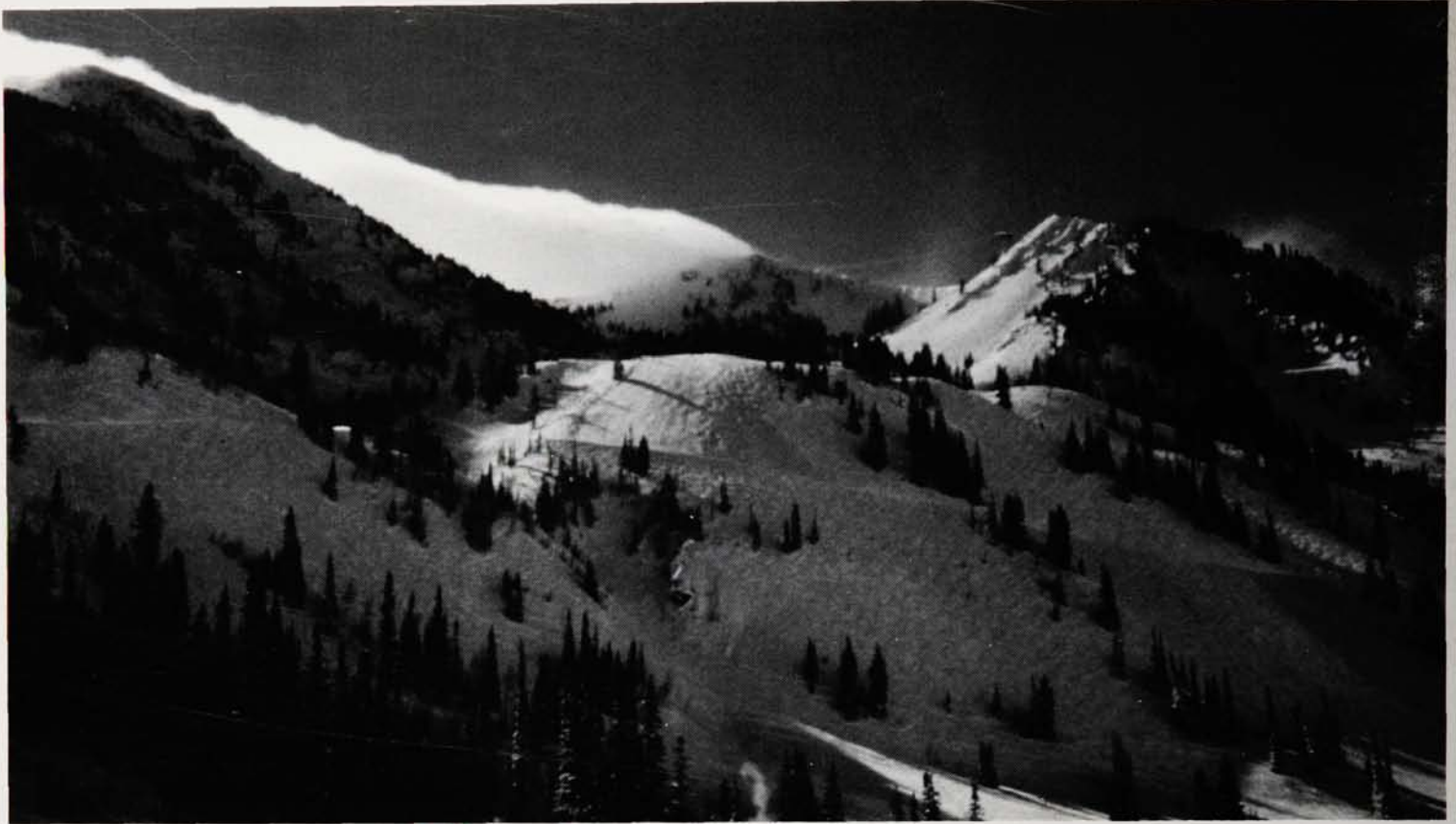
Tour No. 2: Snowbird Tram.

- Leaving at 12:30, the tour will travel through majestic Wasatch mountains and the scenic Cottonwood Canyon up to the heights of the Snowbird Ski Resort. Upon arriving, you will board one of the world's most powerful tramways and ride to the summit of Hidden Peak. From there you can savor the panoramic view of Salt Lake City, Heber Valley and the Uintah and Oquirrh mountain ranges.
- There are shops to explore and restaurants for lunch or snacks.
- The tour will return to the hotel at 5:00 in time for a quick refreshment in the Hospitality Room and dress for the Banquet.
- The Hospitality Room will be open all afternoon.
- At 6:30 we have our Gala Banquet with the traditional Candle Lighting Service. At 8:30 the Bud Richardson Band will furnish the music for dancing.

Sunday, October 12th:

- Buses will be furnished for all that would like to attend the choir concert at the Mormon Tabernacle. Buses will leave the hotel promptly at 8:30.
- At 12:00 buses will leave for Hill Air Force Base. We will have lunch served as soon as we arrive. Following lunch, there will be a short memorial service for those wishing to attend at the Museum's replica of a chapel used during the war.
- After inspecting to Museum, the buses will return to the hotel by 5:30.
- The Hospitality Room will be opened at 12:00.
- At 6:30 a Buffet Dinner will be served with entertainment to follow.

Salt Lake City, Utah



October 9 - 12, 1997

**44th Bomb Group
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2367



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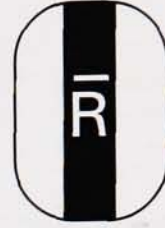
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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH



OCTOBER 9 - 12, 1997

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 2 - Issue #7

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Winter, 1998

Non Profit Veterans Organization

EIN #68-0351397

Forget The Wesel Mission? No Way! Bob Vance and Louis DeBlasio as told to Ruth W. Davis-Morse

Louis DeBlasio and Bob Vance shared a unique WWII experience. After miraculously surviving the crash of their aircraft, as POW's in a German hospital, peering through bloody bandages, they witnessed the last days of Germany's downfall.



**FRONT COVER PHOTO: AT FAR RIGHT, 44th A/C Call
LETTER BAR R 42-50896, LT. MAX E. CHANDLER'S B-24.
(Louis & Bob's plane.)**

**CAPTION FROM ALBUM PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM:
"THIS B-24 WENT ON INTO THE GROUND + EXPLODED.
CAUSE WAS MACHINE GUN FIRE."**

It all happened as a part of Operation Varsity, the airborne assault planned to help the Allied ground troops establish and hold a bridgehead across the Rhine River around the town of Wesel, Germany.

"The forces under General George Patton were scheduled to make the river crossing assault at 9:00 p.m. on March 23, 1945 in his anxiety to beat his arch rival Ally, British General Bernard Montgomery, to the crossing, General Patton launched his attack early and made the crossing at 10:00 p.m. on March 22. Nonetheless, Operation Varsity was executed on time in the early morning of March 24.



MARCH 24, 1945 - Low level supply drop.

This was the last and biggest one-day airborne operation of the war. The enormous forces involved included 3,044 transport planes and gliders; more than 3,000 fighter sorties and 21,680 troops of the U.S. 17th and British 6th Airborne Divisions. One hundred artillery pieces, along with 109 tons of ammunition and 695 vehicles made the flight with the troops. Following them by about one hour were 240 B-24 Liberators with another 582 tons of air dropped supplies. By 2:00 p.m. they had taken every objective and linked up with the Allied ground troops a few miles

South of Wesel. It was a successful, but costly operation with 500 men killed and 1,250 wounded. The 2nd Air Division lost fourteen of the nineteen bombers lost that day.

The Lt. Max E. Chandler crew of the 506th Bomb Squadron, 44th Bomb Group, flying B-24J, Bar R SOUTHERN COMFORT III, with DeBlasio and Vance in the Waist Gunners positions, were assigned to salvo the drop bundles out of the opening of the removed Ball Turret Guns. They were flying the left wing of the left element of the second of three nine-ship squadrons at approximately 200 feet. The 44th dropped 60 tons of supplies, while battling through an intense storm of 20mm cannons, machine gun and small weapons fire. Upon reaching the drop area, Sgt. Thomas Clark opened the bulkhead that accessed the bomb bay and released his supply bundles. Lou and Bob shoved theirs through the Sperry ball opening. The plane was banking to get out of the area when suddenly the entire ship seemed to stall in midair and shudder. They had been hit!

Clark was the first to see the flames coming up through the bomb bay. Louis, right waist gunner, saw the flames and shouted, "We've had it." Then he and Bob assumed the 'ditching position' — flat on the floor of the waist section on top of the unused flak suits, hands behind their heads and feet against the Sperry ball platform bulkhead. As it happened, unlike other members of the crew, neither had removed their flak suits. "That is what saved us," Louis declared. "We were protected from the impact of the crash."

From 200 feet above, Richard Lynch, nose gunner in Lt. Lee's aircraft, saw the crash, and described it as follows: "...I noticed number four engine on Lt. Chandler's ship begin to smoke and then noticed the plane hit the ground with its belly and bottom part of the rudders, and then bounce up into the air and maintain level controlled flight at approximately 100 feet for about a minute and a half. The plane then, apparently out of control, bunched sharply to the right, with the right wing hitting the ground and continued to revolve to the right in a clockwise direction,

pivoting on the right wing tip and ending up skidding along the ground on its belly, 180 degrees to our path of flight."

Fate intervened in a strange way. The plane split at the waist, and Louis and Bob found themselves partially thrown clear. Louis' arm was badly injured and his left eye was bloody and beginning to swell. Bob had a deep head laceration, a fractured clavicle, and had lost one tooth. Bleeding and in semi-shock, they crawled away from the plane, minutes before it exploded. The crash took the life of Max E. Chandler, Pilot; Hugh O'Donnell, Co-Pilot; Engineer Sakis Nedder; Left Waist Gunner Thomas Clark; Radio Gunner Eugene Elliott; Nose Gunner Thomas Cordes and Navigator Robert T. Dantzler. A second ship, AC #42-100314, piloted by Lt. Leonard J. Crandell, went down also, exploding near the SOUTHERN COMFORT III. There were no survivors.

"Knowing the Germans would be watching to see if anyone got out of the plane, we crawled across a field, and hid under a wagon," Louis remembered. "I bandaged Bob's bleeding head and he bandaged my eye. I never lost consciousness, but due to his head wound, Bob was "incoherent for some time." They tried to take off their parachute harness, but weren't able. Bob's right clavicle was fractured, and Louis' left arm was practically non-functional. Neither had the strength nor coordination to open the buckle.

German soldiers were hiding in the woods nearby, but they would not come out for fear of being strafed by our fighters. Instead they sent civilians to find the survivors.

"Immediately they took our guns. One ordered me to take mine apart. I took out the clip and field stripped it," Louis said. "Then they told me to put it back together. I pretended that I didn't know how. I decided that if they were going to shoot me, it would not be with my own weapon. They carefully wrapped the parts in a handkerchief, creating a little sack. They studied our Escape Kits, taking the pain pills, chocolate and other candy. I had five English Pound notes, which they took out. To my amazement they returned them to me.

"Actually, they were surprised to learn that we were Americans. They kept asking us if we were Canadians, knowing that the British were operating in that area."

A German officer who had been hiding in the woods, took command of the two, along with a pilot from a P-47 that had crashed nearby. The officer spoke a little English, and was able to provide some first aid to their wounds. The fighter pilot had managed to bail out of his upward spiraling craft, but had a badly injured leg. The three prisoners were kept hidden in the woods, presumably to avoid the continuous strafing. When night fell, they were put on a horse drawn wagon to be transported to where? They had no idea. Both recall the driver's commands to his horse, shouted out in the darkness, "Hoooh hot."

They woke up the next morning on the kitchen floor of a farmhouse, with German guards standing by. Louis' strongest memory was of suffering from overwhelming thirst; and with his multiple contusions, could hardly walk. From there, they were moved to a First Aid Station where a German doctor ordered a tetanus shot for both. Because they were wearing so many clothes, the injection was placed in the pectoral muscle in their chests. Louis had a grossly abnormal reaction, tremendous swelling at the needle site and a case of hives that lasted five days. The misery of the itch kept him awake for five nights without relief. Next they were marched across a field and into the woods to an artillery unit. Fully expecting to be shot, they were relieved that their luck continued to hold. Once again darkness brought another move. The next morning they woke up on the straw covered floor of a dance hall, along with other wounded soldiers, German and Allied side by side. Bob's memory upon waking up was seeing a Coca-Cola sign on the wall. It took him a minute to remember he was a POW.

With the fuel shortage, Germans were using ambulances to pull other ambulances. Only later did the two airmen realize that it was because of the rapid speed of American tanks, that their captors kept moving them further inland.

The Germans became increasingly kind. Apparently they were aware that the war was nearly lost; and saw that they, themselves, might become prisoners. Repeatedly, they reminded Louis and Bob that they were being well treated, and they should tell that to other Americans.

"Once when we were being hidden in a wooded area, we saw B-24's," Louis recalled, "which I assumed were enroute to Berlin." Looking up and seeing so many in formation, I said to my guard, "Why do you continue? Can't you see that you are losing?" His answer, "We have to keep doing this until we get other orders."

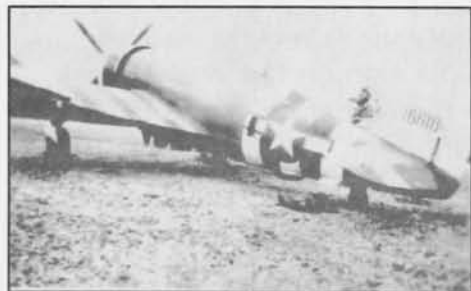
Their next stop was a large brick hospital, where both Louis and Bob got badly needed medical attention.

"Don't get nervous," the physician counseled Louis, when he asked for relief from his hives. "A nun will give you a shot, and you will have a strange sensation." That was quite an understatement. "I felt like my feet were on fire and the rest of me promptly followed," Louis remembered. "But then I could finally get some sleep."

The German doctor trimmed and redressed Bob's head wound. Across the room he watched other doctors amputate the leg of a British prisoner, tossing it into a basket. Later, when the Brit awoke in his ward, he was furious that they had taken his leg.

The journey ended at a town called Ahlen, where they were moved to one of several hospitals housing wounded of many nationalities—German, French, English and Americans.

There was a B-24 pilot who was very badly burned. He was really in misery. Bob and Louis were assigned to different wards. P-47's were



A P-47.

strafing the town, and every time they were overhead, the French patients ran to the window and cheered.

"Later on we could freely walk around the wards," Bob remembered, "Once I ran into a German patient who had been my guard when I was first captured. Strange that a man who had been my captor was now lying in the same hospital. We also encountered a British soldier whose trousers were totally in shreds. I took off my flight pants and gave them to him."

Much of the care was given by nuns, who were considerate and kind. The Nazi nurses had no compassion for the wounded Americans. One nurse took little care in removing the dressing from Bob's head wound. He was forced to lower his head to his knees, to keep from passing out.

"They wanted to put me to work, but I was so weak, they had to give up on that," Louis said. "They ordered me to peel potatoes. With only one eye, I had no depth perception, and I took off too much of the potato. With the scarcity of food, they promptly gave up on that idea. They were running out of everything—no running water, no heat. The only food was potato soup and black bread, which they covered with lard. It was horrible. We had to put on the lard to get the bread down. However, we could see that the German guards weren't eating any better."

On the eighth day of their capture, they heard the welcome rumble of American Sherman tanks. The Germans in the ward said, "Tiger Tanks." We knew better.

On April 1st Louis noticed that the Chaplain was pulling guns from under the beds of the German patients and carrying them out of the ward. Then he saw them hanging white sheets up to the windows.

"Something's happening," Louis observed. "Let's walk to the front door and see if anyone stops us." Nobody did.

Next they walked out the door. Still nobody paid attention. The three airmen, Louis, Bob and the P-47 pilot, walked down the street a short distance and encountered the Americans roaring into town. The three airmen's uniforms were so dirty and blood-stained, the driver could not recognize that they were Americans until they started to speak English. They quickly learned that

Ahlen had been declared an 'Open City,' in recognition that it was an area that housed many wounded. Hostilities within the city had been discontinued.

"What a wonderful sight it was, seeing American Forces roaring into town in jeeps, tanks, armored cars and trucks," Bob remembered. "Those guys looked tough and battle hardened.

They tossed us K-Rations, cigarettes and candy. I was proud to be an American."

An ambulance picked up the three airmen and transported them to an



AMERICAN G.I.s, HOLLAND CIVILIANS & JEEPS.

American hospital at Munchen-Gladbach, where their wounds were attended. Here they got their first decent meal in eight days. The wounded from the Allied Forces were pouring in so rapidly, doctors could not take time away from the freshly wounded, whose conditions were more critical.

For the three of them, the war was over. At this point they were separated. Bob was sent to a field hospital in Liege for the night. The next day he was taken to an airfield where he boarded a C-47 and was flown to Cheltenham, England, then to the 4153 U.S. Hospital in Gloucester. From there he was given a pass to go back to his base at Shipdham for interrogation.

Being assigned to an Ex-POW detachment in London, he happened to be at Picadilly Circus on May 8, 1945, V.E. Day. He described it as a 'madhouse.' He remembered people climbing light poles and bus tops in their celebration. From there he went to Southampton to board a transport ship that sailed in a convoy to Boston, Mass.

Louis was sent to a hospital in Paris. From behind hospital windows on V.E. Day, he watched Paris celebrate the largest party ever in its history. The professional staff considered it unsafe for patients to join the throng. More wounded filled the wards in

Paris; and before long, Louis was enroute to the States. Doctors predicted he would never be able to straighten his left arm, but with grit, exercise and daily weight lifting, the arm became functional.

The whereabouts of the fighter pilot is still unknown. As the documentation of WWII unfolded, Bob and Louis learned that their crash, and that of the Lt. Crandell's plane were photographed by Capt. U.P. Harvell, Intelligence and Photo Officer of the 44th Bomb Group. Harvell's pictures are considered unique in the film record of WWII air battles. The daring low level flights which supplied the airborne troops on Rhine Day are regarded as one of the U.S. Air Force's greatest accomplishments, second only to the Ploesti Mission in losses for a low level mission.

About a year after they were back in the states, Bob and Louis met again in Ohio. Then Bob moved to California, and it was nearly forty years until their next reunion. Through time and space, their friendship has never waned.

When they are together, the years fall away, and they are again, the two buddies who shared an awesome experience in American history.



LOUIS DEBLASIO & ROBERT VANCE
AT 1997 BOMB GROUP REUNION
IN SALT LAKE CITY.



The 1998 REUNION, SAVANNAH GEORGIA



DORIS McCLANE WITH THE
GEN. LEON W. JOHNSON PORTRAIT.

It was a BIG BLOW OUT! How else could you describe it? The hotel was sold out, the lobby was too small; from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, it was a mad house with early arrivals and folks who had not made their reservations in time to assure a

room; the registration/hospitality room was too small, the 48 seat restaurant was a joke, service was so slow you would have been served best if you had placed your order when you sent in your hotel reservations! We were forced to cram our annual general membership meeting into a restaurant across the street with no P/A system and the Sunday reception, although in a larger hospitality room was still so crowded and hot we had two people faint, yet, would you believe we had more on-the-spot compliments and follow-on letters telling us what a wonderful reunion it was from beginning to end. Financially we had less hassle and made more than enough to pay the bills and put some money in the treasury. You just never know.

Because the hotel did not have a banquet room, we had our Ploesti display dedication luncheon and Squadron night dinners out at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum. We had our banquet at the Savannah Convention Center and our closing night, we had a great Southern Barbecue dinner and show out on the banks of the Savannah River at the Old Fort Jackson which protected the City of Savannah during the Civil War. We were protected that evening by a company of Confederate soldiers and entertained with Southern banjo music. The dinner was catered

by Johnny Harris', one of the great barbecue rib houses in the country.

At our Banquet we were honored with some descriptions of the Ploesti Raid by Tommy Holmes who wears the first Purple Heart medal awarded in the 44th Bomb Group. We were then entertained by Mr. Cornell Iliescu, a Romanian native now living in Costa Mesa, CA. Cornell was a six year old boy who lived in Ploesti and witnessed the raid from his yard. It was a unique experience for the Ploesti veterans present to hear a story from someone in their bombing target area.

The highlight of the reunion, of course, was the dedication and profferance of the 44th Bomb Group display depicting the "Tidal Wave" 44th Bomb Group lead element over the White IV target at the instant before bombs away. Brig. Gen. Jack Gibson was scheduled to make the dedication, but was hospitalized in Dallas with severe neck pains, thus the presentation was made by President Roy Owen. For the benefit of those unable to attend, the presentation is repeated in part here:

44th Bomb Group Display Dedication Program

Welcome and Introductions: Col. Roy W. Owen, President, 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association.

Pledge of Allegiance (remain standing).

Invocation

Introduction of Brigadier General Jack Gibson, last living Commander of the WWII 44th Bomb Group by President Owen

Good Morning, may I add my welcome to that of President Owen.

It is indeed my great honor to be standing here in what I feel are rightfully the footsteps of General Leon Johnson who led the 44th through its shining hour in the holocaust over the blazing oil refineries of Ploesti on August 1, 1943.

General Johnson folded his wings the 10th of November last year. I know as surely as I stand here in his footsteps that the gentle, brave and modest leader we loved is proudly watching his Eightballs commemorate one of the proudest days in aviation history.

Our purpose here in Savannah is threefold: first to unveil and dedicate this magnificent display to the everlasting glory of every man who flew or supported the Tidal Wave mission with a special prayer of thanks to those who paid the ultimate price for our victory. Second, to proffer the ownership and care of this display to this beautiful Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum that it will add to the public understanding of the immense contribution made by the men and women of the 8th Air Force to our American way of life.

Lastly, we are once again gathered in a reunion to enable us to see, and enjoy one another in the spirit of comradeship, love and respect that comes to those who have bonded in selfless service to our country.

Before the unveiling, let me give you some brief background. Some two years ago, the museum issued an invitation to all of the current and former assigned 8th Air Force units to place a display in the museum. This is a simplification, of course, but the concept of a display emblematic of the Ploesti raid was developed when Roy Owen was visiting the Aviation Art Gallery of Virginia Bader in Costa Mesa, California. His conversation with Ms. Bader was overheard by a young artist who introduced himself as Keith St. Aubin, free-lance model maker for the movie industry. He inquired if Roy was a member of the 44th. He then opened a large brief case which stored a beautiful model of Suzy Q. From that, the idea of depicting the four ship lead element over the target the instant before bombs away as being representative of the entire group crystallized. Roy briefed the Executive Board which approved the concept with this admonition: The 44th must be the pre-imminent group display in the museum. In a very few minutes you will be the judge. Tom Parsons was appointed project

manager. While Keith St. Aubin was completing the models, Tom commissioned the International Plastic Modelers Society, Atlanta Chapter to design and create the scale model of the Columbia Aquila refinery complex. Historians Will Lundy and Ed Dobson, Jr. were responsible for checking all facets of the display for authenticity.

I am going to ask this group to unveil the display. Tom Parsons, Keith St. Aubin, Jim Elmore, President Of the International Plastic Modelers Society, Atlanta Chapter and Director of the overall diorama fabrication, and our Historians Will Lundy and Ed Dobson, Jr.; but before this long awaited ceremony, a very few words about this event we commemorate today. To this gathering there is no need to repeat so much that has been written and filmed about the most vicious air battle in aviation history which took place over Ploesti, Romania on 1 August 1943. It seemed to me that the poetic verse inspired by the Ploesti experience of Technical Sergeant Delores R. Brumagin, Radioman on the Lt. Ed Mitchell crew captures the enormity and terror of the raid.

Equally fitting to the occasion is that it be read for us by two members of our 44th family who are widows of two valorous Ploesti veterans. May I introduce Fritzie Selasky, wife of Charles J. "Jim" Selasky, Lead Navigator on Colonel Johnson's aircraft "Suzy Q," and June Carpenter, wife of Reginald "Rege" Carpenter, Pilot of "Bewitching Witch" flying on Colonel Johnson's left wing.

JUNE
CARPENTER
AND FRITZI
SELASKY
READING
THE
BRUMAGIN
POEM
"PLOESTI ON
THE DECK."



Normally these two men were crewmates, but for this mission Col. Johnson chose Jim Selasky as his lead navigator. As fate would have it. "Rege" and "Jim" folded their wings in October, 1996 just 17 days apart.

It is with great honor that I introduce these two lovely ladies: Fritzie Selasky and June Carpenter who will alternate reading the gripping verses of the Brumagin poem "Ploesti on the Deck." The Poem is repeated following this report of the presentation. Thank you ladies, we are in your debt for that touching reading.

Please be seated.

The profference

General Shuler, will you please join me at the podium.



ROY OWEN INTRODUCES LT. GEN. "BUCK" SCHULER, CHAIRMAN OF THE MIGHTY 8TH AF MUSEUM.

General Shuler, on behalf of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, it is my great honor to proffer to The mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum this display depicting the lead element of the 44th Bomb Group attacking Target White V of the Ploesti, Romania refinery complex on the August 1943 "Tidal Wave" low level strike. The display is representative of not only the 44th Bomb Group, but additionally the entire "Tidal Wave" task force which overcame the worst that the North African desert and the Ploesti air and ground defenses had to offer to complete their assigned mission.

We know of no more fitting and beautiful edifice to entrust the keeping of the glorious heritage this display represents.

General Shuler's acceptance noted that it was with great pride he accepted on behalf of the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum this magnificent emblematic display of one of the most momentous events in the annals of Air Warfare. He also pointed out that in the few days the display had been on the floor in preparation for this ceremony, it already had become one of the most attended displays in the museum.

Blessing ~ Closing thanks by Col. Owen

Bagpipes play Amazing Grace

PLOESTI ON THE DECK



BOB LEHNHAUSEN TELLS IT LIKE IT IS TO THE 68TH FOLKS.



GLASS ENCLOSED DISPLAY AT MUSEUM.



"This task will be accomplished,
with an 'on the deck' attack,
with every Lib around Benghazi
that'll fly to there and back."

The night before the mission, the
Chaplains blessing gave, and
The message made things brighter
For the soul that God can save.

It was early in the morning
August first was then the date.
Every man and plane was ready
Just to shake the hand of fate.

The sun was shining brightly
As we flew across the Med;
With the words of General Brereton
Still droning through head.

The minutes grew to hours
And we crossed the mountains high
Where Yugoslav Guerillas
Were watching us go by.

Then we streaked across the valley
Rousing peaceful peasants there;
And the roaring of the engines
seemed like thunder cracked the air.

There was Rumania's golden wheat
fields,
but their beauty soon was lost,
with oil fields in the distance and
the Blue Danube as we crossed.

The river will be remembered,
The loveliest in the land.
But we used it for a landmark
to know the target was at hand.

Then every heart was heavy,
Every eye was open wide,
as we asked the Lord, our maker,
to be our strength and guide.

Our mind's eyes saw a picture of
loved ones we hold dear.
God placed it there to aid us
through all the strife and fear.

In the distance the target,
And to us a gruesome sight
we lost our thoughts of reverence,
in preparing for the fight.

We could see the flaming debris.
Some group had marked it so.
By mistake they'd left their bombs
there.
Why? No man will ever know.

The time bombs were exploding
And oil fires were raging high.
We could see their guns a'blazin'.
It was for us to do or die.

Our leader knew his duty,
Disregarding fear for life,
Holding course without hesitation,
He led his "Eightballs" to Aquila
And left behind devastation.

Turning off target from out of
the flame,
they must now fight their way out
on the route which they came.

We saw many things distinctly,
As swiftly we flew.
We saw German gunners.
We could see them dying too.

The battle was a nightmare,
unreal in every thought, but
be needn't be reminded
how fiercely it was fought.

Of the tempest o'er the target,
no man can tell.
There was shooting, burning, dying,
It was a pure living Hell.

Though the action minutes,
'twas a lifetime to us all.
As we watched the big guns
blasting,
And our planes and comrades fall.

As the target flew behind us
and through the thickest of the fight
every plane of ours was damaged
and their holes a ghastly sight.

There were many started homeward
But failing to return.
They had crashed up in the
mountains
And were left up there to bum.

Some fell out with engine trouble
To the "cause" their lives they gave.
When their fuel had been
exhausted
And crashed into the waves.

There were several airmen
wounded,
But their will surpassed the cost.
They knew they had the vengeance
For the blood that they had lost.

Now in tribute to those heroes
Who died but not in vain,
Their deeds will be remembered,
Nor forgotten be their names.

They had answered the duty call so
bravely.
Yes, every loving mother's son.
We thank God for all our airmen
and the victory they had won.

There was training in the Desert,
There were Twenty-Fours galore;
And flying o'er the sand dunes,
Had sometimes proved a bore.

Now we had a practice target,
Built to scale and bombed for fun;
But we knew the day was coming,
When we'd use it on the "Hun."

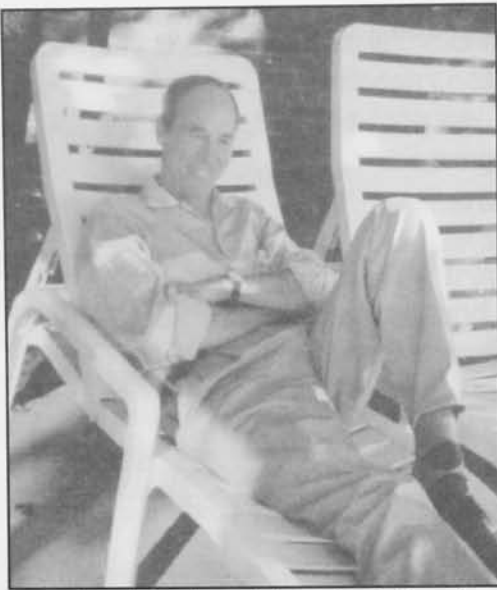
We'd been assigned a target,
Ploesti was the name,
General Brereton was commanding
The raid that was to come to fame.

He called his group commanders,
All leaders for the "Day."
And with words that have since
made history,
so proudly did he say,

"It's the most important mission,
Any force has been assigned;
And with quick, complete
destruction,
A victory we will find."

"They need that oil so badly,
the problem here is clear;
we'll bomb it from existence,
though the price we'll pay is dear."





Did we have beautiful weather? Here is Ralph Becker relaxing by the pool.



Betty Lynch and Cornell Iliescu give us an international pair of smiles.



Perry Morse and Jerry Folsom 506th Squadron crewmates sharing a laugh.



Left: Phyllis DuBois, former 2nd AD Memorial Librarian, now freelance research librarian (and friend of the 44th) still residing in Norwich.



Left: Perry Morse, Mike Yuspeh and Dick Lynch at the bar.



Bob Lehnhausen, Pete Frezzel, Janice & Steve Adams, Roy Owen and Mike Mikoloski

Below: Cornell and Elena Iliescu (formerly of Rumania) take a rest during the museum tour.



Right: Trying to capture the display on film.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Well, here we are again! This was to be an introduction of your new president, and his first President's Corner, or whatever he chooses to call this part of the "Tails," where he shares with you the "inside stuff" that's going on in your Association. However, for several reasons, here I am, doing business at the same old stand, newly re-elected and thinking maybe I do need a little psychiatric attention.



Now let me tell you what really happened. The first thing was Ed Mikoloski who had agreed to accept a nomination for the presidency, did so conditionally, because for the last 10 months or so he has concentrated his attention to assisting his daughter who is fighting for her life in a battle with cancer. The added responsibilities of the 44th BGVA presidency to his consuming concerns for his daughter have been a nagging worry for us both. To make matters worse, we could find no one (and the nominating committee was searching) willing to take on the presidency.

The next thing was, about two months ago, an insubordinate board member (who shall remain unnamed) wrote a letter (postmarked Collierville, TN) to the other members of the board in which he threatened physical harm to any board member who would accept my refusal of nomination for a third term. While I did not take this threat seriously, it did prompt me to review the projects already underway and the agenda for the new year, then call Mike to discuss the coming year and the demands on

his time versus his daughter's state of health and his family concerns. He said: "Roy, I will not fail the 44th, I love it too much. I can and I will do the job, my mind tells me so. On the other hand, my friend, my heart tells me I want to be with my daughter and I will be much more comfortable if you will continue to serve and see me through this thing. So here we are, we are going to hang tough, hold the course and keep Mike and family in our prayers.

I did make a stipulation in accepting the nomination, and that was that I could no longer wear both the president's hat and that of Editor and publisher of the 8-Ball Tails. Ruth Morse, aka Mrs. Perry Morse (506th) of York, PA, a professional writer (see, already more prestige), has graciously accepted the challenge to keep our journal alive. She will have her own ideas and there must be some changes. As we struggle to bring the other 44th eras into our association, we must produce a journal which will have news and stories that will be of interest to all. We will still have our own "war stories" to tell, but we can't just remain a bunch of old WWII Liberator Lovers. Give Ruth your support, she is taking this responsibility in a time of change and that's always tough.

For the benefit of you who did not attend the Savannah reunion (Boy! Did you miss a BLOW OUT!), here are the changes in the Board:

Vice President, Edw. "Mike" Mikoloski* (66)
Secretary, Nancy Van Epps* (Hq, Sqdn.)

*Indicates an officer who will represent his/her squadron along with performing the duties of the office he/she holds. The Board acted upon a recommendation by President Owen and Director Mikoloski to allow officers to serve in the office they hold and at the same time, represent the squadron to which they belong. This board structure will allow a reduction in total board members plus make room for the addition of a Board seat for the 44th SMW. In our four years experience, we have not had an occasion that required a vote by unit. Should this occur, those officers with dual representation will cast their unit vote only. The Board voted to phase in this board structure starting with this term. The first term Squadron Directors elected last year will

either become a dual representative officer/unit representative or be dropped from the board next election. This restructuring and reduction in the size of the board resulted in the retirement of Ed Dobson, Jr. from the Board. We are grateful to Ed for the fine job he has done as our Secretary in the two terms he has served. I'm sure he will see more service in the Association future.

Other board actions will be covered in another article elsewhere in this issue. One very important item is the announcement of the 1999 New Orleans Reunion to take place at the New Orleans Airport Hilton Hotel September 2 - 6, 1999. Remember the mob scene at the Savannah Days Inn/Suites from Friday night through Sunday noon as all the folks who had delayed making reservations were being shuffled off to other hotels for one or two nights. Don't let it happen to you in New Orleans! Send off the reservation form provided in this issue. Put it on your credit card then your room is assured. If it becomes necessary, you can cancel.

WE WISH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU WILL FIND YOUR HOLIDAY STOCKING CHOCK FULL OF GOOD CHEER AND HAPPINESS!

ROY AND LOLLY OWEN

Roy W. Owen



44TH BCVA 1999 TRAVEL

IT LOOKS LIKE A GO FOR THE SPRING 1999 TRIP TO ENGLAND.

From the show of hands at the General Membership meeting in Savannah, it looks like we can plan on a **ONE BUS LOAD TOUR**. So here is the deal: We will plan a trip for two weeks (approximate) to leave on **May 21** and return on **June 2** (these are plus or minus a day at this point).

WE WILL TAKE THE FIRST 44 PEOPLE WHO CALL JERRY FOLSOM (801-733-7371)

AND MAKE A RESERVATION, FOLLOWED BY A DEPOSIT FOR THE GROUND PACKAGE (YOU WILL BE INSTRUCTED HOW THE DEPOSIT IS TO BE MADE WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS).

The itinerary we are planning will be (approximately):

- Arrive London leave by bus to hotel for a day and nights rest.
- Then the tour will proceed up the West side of England through Stratford-upon-Avon, Chester, and Liverpool (lunch at Penny Lane), Blackpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh.
- Then South to York, Lincoln to arrive in Norwich and Shipdham for the Memorial Day weekend (Airfield tour, picnic and barbecue party).
- And finish up in London for two nights.

Our Ground package will be handled by Waterhouse Tours, who handled our 1997 tour so successfully. Our Air travel will be handled by Four Star Travel of San Jose, Calif.

For those who have Frequent Flyer mileage, or Airline Employee privileges, you may arrange your own travel to arrive and meet the group in London. Both agencies are working on costs and finalizing dates as we go to press, but you can be certain the trip will be reasonably priced and will include breakfast and dinner every day. You will be on your own for lunches.

THE OWENS' PASSPORTS ARE CURRENT, CHECK YOURS!

One Step Closer- A Visit With The Missileers

By Roy Owen

We took a small, but very important step toward the realization of our hope to bring all the eras of the 44th back into a single family when, at the invitation of Colonel Charlie Simpson (Member of our Board), CEO of the Association of Air Force Missileers, Lolly and I attended their biennial reunion in Cocoa Beach, Florida, October 21- 24 just preceding our reunion in Savannah.

While the AAFM is an organization parallel to the 2nd Air Division in that its membership includes Missileers from all of the USAF missile units, Charlie was a member of the 44th Strategic Missile Wing at Ellsworth AFB in his active duty years, and shares with me, not only his allegiance to the 44th, but the desire to see the Bomb Group, the Bomb Wing and the Strategic Missile Wing all together keeping the heritage and history of the legendary 44th alive for the generations to come.

With the next AAFM reunion not to take place in Colorado Springs until sometime (dates to be announced) in 2000, and the close proximity of our respective reunions this year, it seemed an opportunity not to be missed for me to attend this gathering of missileers and to extend the hand of welcome to the 44th SMW members to join with us to bring the 44th family together.

Lolly and I, under the wings of Charlie and Carol Simpson, were most warmly welcomed and positively treated as if I was wearing a Missile Badge. I met and got acquainted with Lt. Gen. Jay Kelley (Ret) the new AAFM president, and while there were only ten 44th SMW members present, I met them, including B/Gen. Jim Crouch of Austin, TX. Each responded enthusiastically to my welcome to join with us. "Send me the membership information" was the word I got. Additionally, Charlie has since sent me two requests for membership applications from 44th SMW members who were not present at the reunion. They were responding to a Mighty 8th AF Ass'n. recommendation that all Missileers contact and join their predecessors in the Bomb Groups and Wings, so it looks like we are starting to move toward an overarching 44th Heritage Group.

Charlie has provided me with a printout of the 165 Missileers in the AAFM who are former 44th SMW members and the first thing on my agenda for the new year will be a personal letter to each of those 44th'ers to COME ON IN!

At this point, I want to say some more about Charlie Simpson and his lovely wife Carol. Charlie was Commander of the 68th Strategic Missile Squadron and held other senior staff positions while with the 44th. He joined us in the first year of our rebirth, attended our first reunion in San Antonio

and hasn't missed a reunion or a Squadron Dinner since. He has just been elected as the SMW member of our Executive Board, and a worthy member he will be. He, long ago, volunteered to assist me in enticing the former 44th SMW veterans to join us and with his help, I'm certain we will be seeing a lot of new and very welcome faces in our midst. Oh Yes! We are going to need some help, so don't be surprised if you get 'volunteered' to do some telephone work in the recruiting area.

Lolly and I had a great time with the AAFM. We had to leave on Saturday to get on up to our own reunion, but we got to see one launch to put up a satellite and we got to see the pad all prepared for the John Glenn launch when we were on an escorted tour of the Kennedy Space Center. The most awesome feature was an entire Apollo system in the giant Apollo Memorial Center. The size of the First Stage fuel cell and rocket engine boggles ones mind!



Lolly standing beneath stage #1 of an Apollo Moon Orbital Vehicle.

MASTER DATABASE PROJECT

The program we have been pumping you up for so much is up and running!

I have appointed Tom Shepherd as the head of an implementation team with Tony Mastradone and Will Lundy to support him in seeing this great program brought to life as the living history of the 44th. This is Tom's first report. Read it carefully and you will understand the dimensions of this great undertaking we have embarked upon.

Dear Fellow 44th BGVA Members:

Reference our MASTER DATABASE PROJECT. Considerable progress has been made since our Savannah reunion, and it continues. Here are the highlights:

President Roy Owen has approved an Ops Plan, covering Three Phases for the Management and Operation of the Master Database Project (MDP). He assigned me the role of Principal. We will undertake each phase as we can manage it effectively in terms of time, talent and finances. An outline of that plan follows:

Phase One: (a) Input of all available mission interrogation reports (sortie by sortie), (b) Input all available biography material furnished by a member, (c) Input of all collectable biography material of the deceased, and, (d) The Lundy Roll of Honor and other similar documents. As time provides, we will recirculate each of the sub-phases and enter new and updated data. NB - this same recirculating operation applies to Phases Two and Three.

Phase Two: (a) Input all available mission summaries, and (b) Statistics: Group, Squadron, Support Units (Statistics is a broad title).

Phase Three: (a) Major Events (VIP Visits, Stand downs, etc), (b) Awards and Decorations - Group, (c) Enemy attacks on Shipdham AF, (d) Photographs (of all types/slides), and (e) Potpourri.

Computer Generated Data (CGD), Arlo Bartsch's company, will directly input hardcopy data furnished them by Will Lundy; and, import electronic data furnished by the "volunteer cadre." This centralized operation is designed to ensure that the very minimum of duplication will ever occur, and the highest level of competence is achieved. The end product will be a Classic and a model for other 8th AF units to record their history. It will be a product you will wish to have of your very own - once it has become available.

The "volunteer cadre" will perform the first-line of input for all biography material. Whenever the bio material exceeds maximum limits of data length - the volunteer member will return the bio material requesting its originator to furnish a shorter version and kindly resubmit. In simple/minor situations where the volunteer feels comfortable in accomplishing required editing he/she will do so - and - send a copy of the edited version we (I) will do what can be done to resolve the matter.

The "volunteer cadre" will use the Internet (operation) to Upload their inputs to a dedicated computer within the CGD operation. CGD will review the bio material with the Personnel data (already entered in the database) - thus the highly technical aspects of data input will be effected with the minimum of duplication and error.

CGD Invoices for work accomplished will be forwarded to the President for review and approval processes.

To give us - one and all - a sense of the enormous magnitude of the MDP (as described above) and what has been accomplished since the Savannah reunion -- the MDP demonstration model included only 200 sorties. Currently that figure has doubled; 400 plus. Remember if you will, there are 344 missions flown by the 44th. Then consider how many individual sorties were flown on those 344 missions. It is believed that we have close to 7,000 of these type entries - ALONE! Thanks to a lot of you and in particular to Will Lundy and Tony Mastradone for accumulating all that hardcopy material. To Art Hand for organizing the collection of biography material on our deceased. I am thankful to Arlo Barsch (CGD) in demonstrating his MDP software program, and working with us on this immense project of recording "electronically" our WWII history. We have begun what for so many of us a few months ago was still just a dream! What is it said about dreams and invention?

The 44th BGP is still Out-Front and Leading. Let us keep it that way! Get your biography in today! Also - if you have any additional information, photographs, etc., write me a letter, or an e-mail: sheep@wspice.com/ and let's see how we might put it to use to "better record the 44BGP History."

Tom Shepherd • 10597 Cambrooke Cove • Collierville, TN
38017-3600.



When you have completed this form, if you have no pictures, mail it with \$10; if you have two photos or one photo and an extra page of text (single spaced in 12 point font), mail the form with \$15 to:
44th BQVA, P.O. Box 712287, Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287.



8th Air Force Military Heritage Database

Personal Biographical Data -- Your "Living Monument"

It is our goal to assemble a complete record of all personnel who at one time served with the 8th Air Force during World War II. The records of those who were on flying status will be obtained from declassified group mission reports which have been stored in the National Archives. From this, a matrix has been developed which will allow for the search and retrieval of the following information: who flew on what mission, with whom, in what plane, to what target, on what date, enemy opposition, aircraft and personnel losses, and hundreds of cross referenced bits of detailed information.

To make this database come "Alive," your stories, memories, photos and voice recordings are essential.

Cassette recordings of your memories should be limited to 2 minutes or less per each incident.

Please provide a "Then and Now" photo of yourself and a Crew photo, if available.

A Master Copy of this multi-media database is now a part of the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA. Other copies will be available to Museums, Libraries, Universities, Schools and on the World Wide Web Internet. You may also have your own copy of the full database, on a CD, to run on a home computer.

Last Name: _____ First: _____ Initial: _____

Address # 1: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phones ~ Home: _____ Other: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Nickname: _____

Date Deceased: _____ Date Enlisted: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Spouse: _____ 8th Air Force Group/s: _____ Squadron/s: _____

Special Military Training: _____

Graduating Class: _____ Location: _____ State: _____

Group Rank: _____ Group Duties: _____ Ret. Rank: _____

Your ASN (Serial Number/s): _____

Occupation Prior to Military: _____

Occupation After Military and/or Continued Military Service: _____

Arrival at ETO base: _____ Arrived From: _____

Arrived How (Any Details): _____

Personal Memories, Experiences & Stories: _____



Specific Mission Comments: _____

Date Departed ETO: _____ How: _____ Destination: _____

Trip Details: _____

Military Honors & Decorations:	Stars or Clusters		Stars or Clusters
Congressional Medal Of Honor:	_____	Air Medal:	_____
Distinguished Service Cross:	_____	Purple Heart:	_____
Distinguished Service Medal:	_____	Presidential Unit Citation:	_____
Silver Star:	_____	Prisoner of War:	_____
Legion of Merit:	_____	Good Conduct Medal:	_____
Distinguished Flying Cross:	_____	Victory WWII:	_____
Soldiers Medal:	_____	European Theater Ribbon:	_____
Bronze Star:	_____		

Other Awards: _____



Special Status: Shot Down: POW: Evaded: MIA: KIA: Ditched: Crashed: Interned:

Escaped: Parachuted: Wounded: Hospitalized: Disabled: Other:

Details: _____

Ground Crew: Crew Chief: Assistant CC: A&E Mechanic: Armorer: Radio: Radar:
Instruments: Sheet Metals: Refueling: Bombsight: Hydraulics: Other: _____

Duties: _____

Aircraft You Crewed: (Names and Numbers): _____

Aircraft Lost or Damaged: _____

Memories: _____

Base Operations: Administration: Clerical: Communication: Medical: Security: Photo Lab:
Engineering: Mess Hall: Supply: Intelligence: Other Duties or Assignments: _____

Your Contributions Must Not Be Forgotten, Please Provide Details: _____

WILL SEZ

Reunions are always great events. It is wonderful to meet old friends, as well as to meet new ones. Great, too, in that I as a historian, often have members bring me data about our distinguished history -- everything from photos, Orders, diaries, even a jigsaw puzzle of a B-24 in flight. This reunion was, once again, all of the above and I got to see and experience the relatively new Mighty 8th Air Force Museum. It was disappointing that evidence of the B-24's history was so difficult to find. Hopefully, the Ploesti diorama will help lessen this void.

At the Monday night banquet honoring our many Ploesti veterans, Mary and Ray McNamara, Irene and I were among the last bussed there, so we were poorly situated far to the rear. There we shared a table with three couples - Robert Seevers, a pilot from the 68th Sq., along with two of his crewmen, none of whom I had had the pleasure of meeting. Shortly, we were old friends.

During the evening Robert casually told me that he had kept a diary of his 30 missions and that he also had taken many photos of friends and airplanes with his personal camera. Better still, he had managed to obtain several rolls of color film, used them to take shots from his plane during flights and missions! Here was a treasure that I had been searching for during the past few years since Roger Freeman, author, had contacted me, requesting color photos of our airplanes. He was compiling a new book, was requesting color photos of planes from all 8th AF Groups. Unhappily I could not provide any.

So I suggested to Bob that I would dearly love to borrow his color slides in order to get copies made for our history. Too, if he would be so kind, also permit me to copy his mission experiences from his diary. He indicated that he would check when he got home.

About two weeks later, the mail person delivered a medium-sized box to our door, so I hurriedly opened it. True to his word, Bob had not only sent his diary with his color slides, but he also included much more, but better than Christmas. It included his navigator's diary, a photo album of black and white full pictures of the 68th Sq. site, cities like London and Edinburgh, "flak" house, airplanes in flight, etc. etc. Still more was a portable slide viewer, a video, "B-24 A View From The Cockpit." One more jewel was his copy of every mission he flew showing his crew position in each mission, as well as the dispersal number of each aircraft that participated in the mission.

Why would such information be important to me? Because long ago I had created an 8 x 13 inch map of the flight line showing the exact layout of all dispersal areas, properly numbered. By using Bob's mission sheets, I could prepare a

daily mission sheet showing all of the aircraft that took part, as well as the pilots that flew them. By adding the names of the planes, I had a pictorial view of the location of each dispersal where each plane was based, but these sheets even show the layout of how each plane took its position in line for take off. It is a view of how the base had produced our attacking forces for that day. It takes a bit of effort, but does tell an interesting story for the viewer.

These color slides are very rare jewels, must be handled with great care. One must somehow get copies made, but I've not done this in many years. I suspect that with the recent development of technology, especially in the PC area, there could be some new method to make and store copies. So, could I ask you readers if you have had any experience with color slides to reasonably get copies made other than the traditional way? If you know of any, would you please contact me? This is truly precious history. Seeing our own B-24s flying, in full color is a rare treat. I suspect that a few of these would make great wall photos, etc.

I should mention one other rare find during the reunion -- that of newly located combat photographer, Robert L. Hooper, who was attending his first reunion. S/Sgt. Hooper, 66th Sq. was a member of 1st Lt. Ray Hilliard's crew that was interned in Spain on 17 May, 1944. Just prior to that mission, 14 May, "Bob" flew our other famous citation mission to Kiel, as a "well gunner-photographer" aboard 1st Lt. Robert Kolliner's plane 4-Q-2. Bob brought along proof that the famous photo taken of the 44th formation over Kiel was taken by him, NOT a B-17 formation above them. Proof in a citation dated 12 June, 1943, G.O #74 where Robert L. Hooper risked his life to take the photos in an open bomb bay, awarded the Air Medal. He also had a letter of commendation from General Hodges and his famous photo signed by the General. Time was short, so I never did get to view all of his black and white photos in his album or to get copies.

Another activity that seldom gets the attention of most of us in the concerted efforts which John McClane makes at all of our reunions. John always brings along his video camera, records most of the activities when he foregoes his own dinners, catches flash shots all during the reunions, supplies his own film. Then he always donates a copy of the entire reunion activities, sends it to me for our archives. All of this is at his own expense. We owe John and Doris a very big thanks - it would be nice to tell him so next time you meet him or write. In the meantime, from all of us, John and Doris...

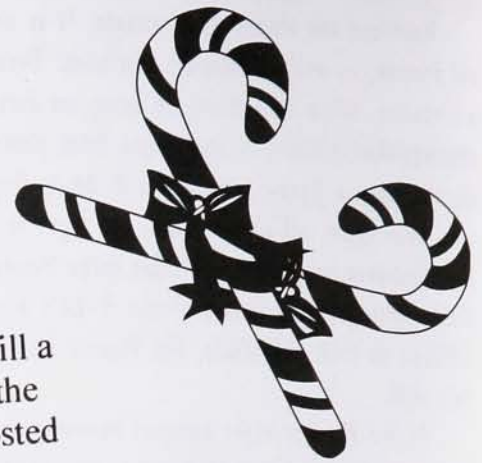
MANY THANKS FOR A GREAT JOB VERY WELL DONE!

Will Lundy



November, 20, 1998

To All of Our Dear 44th Family Friends,



We have just been home for two weeks and we can still barely comprehend how we could be so fortunate to have such wonderful, loving friends caring enough to host us on a magnificent trip to the Savannah reunion. Then to go on to fulfill a lifetime dream of visiting both The San Francisco Bay area in the hospitality of Roy and Lolly Owen and Southern California hosted by Will and Irene Lundy was something we shall never forget.

When we look back over the some 12 years since our relationship with the "Eightballers" began, we try to weigh the joy, happiness, love and respect we have been given by you magnificent people against what seems to us to be routine courtesies done as the labor of love and no way comparable to the wonderful things you have made happen in our lives.

As your United Kingdom representative, and Shipdham Airfield contact, I have come to realize that I am the point of contact between the English people of Norfolk and the best organized and most respected World War II Bomb Group in the Second Air Division. Your trust, respect and funding, which allows me to represent you, has brought Jan and me great pride and recognition among the community of WW II historians in the region. We feel these things alone more than compensate us for what we do, and now this wonderful trip has simply taken our breath away. All we can say is we will be forever grateful for God giving us you to call our friends. We love you all.

With deepest sincerity,

Steve and Janice Adams



JANICE AND STEVE ADAMS
FROM THE MOTHER
COUNTRY VISITING THE
COLONIES.



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Phone/Fax: (309) 685-2490



*Dual Representative



Wishing you the best in 1999!

Happy Holidays!

THE AFA BRONZE MODEL B-24 DEDICATION

On September 24 and 25 some 250 people gathered in Colorado Springs, CO to attend the September 25 Dedication of the Robert Henderson 1/6th scale bronze model sculpture of a B-24J Liberator which is the sixth and last model to complete the "Bronze Squadron" of World War II combat aircraft. These model aircraft are permanently displayed in the Air Force Academy Court of Honor, a large concrete and marble paved area adjacent to the beautiful AFA Chapel. The other aircraft comprising the "Bronze Squadron" are the P-51 Mustang; P-38 Lightning; P-47 Thunderbolt; P-40 Warhawk; and B-17 Flying Fortress.

The support pedestal of each aircraft contains a bronze plaque enumerating by user group the individuals who contributed to (in the case of the B-24) the \$175,000 cost of the model. Those 44th contributors are:



*Johnson, Leon W. Gen. USAF
Bethel, Raymond W. Lt. USAAF
Butler, Richard D. Col. USAF
Clements, James H. LTC USAFR
Ertz, Julian
Fremstad, Clifford L. Lt. USAAF
Gunton, Robert J. Capt. USAAF
Henry, Howard C. Capt. USAAF
*Houston, Rowland B. Capt. USAAF
*Lawson, Robert Col. USAFR
Lipczynski, Stanley F. SSgt USAAF
Mastradone, Anthony SSgt USAAF
Owen, Roy W. Col USAF
Schuler, William M. Lt. USAAF
Tilton, Charles W. Lt. USAAF
Yuspeh, Michel (Mike)

Gibson, John H. Bgen. USAF *44th BG Assn.
Brown, Dellas A. Col. USAF
Cameron, William R. Col. USAF
Dubowsky, Robert
Folsom, Gerald W. Lt. USAAF
Griffith, Rockford C. Lt. USAAF
Hawkins, William F. PFC USAAF
Hewlett, James A. Lt. USAAF
Hughes, Charles E. Col. USAF *Betty Seal, Sister
Lundy, C. Will SSgt USAAF *Ruth Lawson
Mansir, Everette W. SSgt USAAF
Murrack, Melvin C. SSgt USAAF
Rosen, Eugene D. Capt. USAAF
Tillner, Norman N. SSgt. USAAF
Wells, Donald L. Lt. USAAF

PART OF THOSE ATTENDING THE DEDICATION:

L TO R, BOB VANCE, LOY VANCE, RUTH MORSE, PERRY MORSE, JERRY FOLSOM, BILL SEAL, BETTY SEAL, ARDITH BUTLER, MARIA JORDAN (with CHARLIE HUGHES TAKING THE PICTURE), THE PREZ AND DICK BUTLER.

OTHERS ATTENDING:

JACK GIBSON, LOY & ARLENE NEEPER, MEL & MARILYN MURRACK, AND MARK MORRIS.



On Saturday the 25th, the Prez and Jerry Folsom drove down to Pueblo, Colorado to visit the International B-24 Museum and to visit the birthplace of our 506th Bomb Squadron. The activation of the 506th is well documented there by Mark Morris. He is in the process of building an entire display on the 506th. For a town no bigger than Pueblo, the Museum has a remarkable amount of B-24 artifacts, parts and history. It is only an hours drive down from Colorado Springs.

1999 REUNION



*September 2-6
New Orleans,
Louisiana*

*Friends, Tours • Fine Food • Fun
Entertainment*

REUNION SAVANNAH:

It was the best of times-it was the best of times!

Savannah provided us with picture - perfect weather for our 44th Bomb Group Reunion this year. Three hundred and sixty strong, we invaded Georgia, and the results were very rewarding. Honoring the Plaesti raiders, we also were visiting the new Mighty Eight Air Force Museum, recently opened in Savannah. The combination made for a stunning four days of fellowship and remembrance.

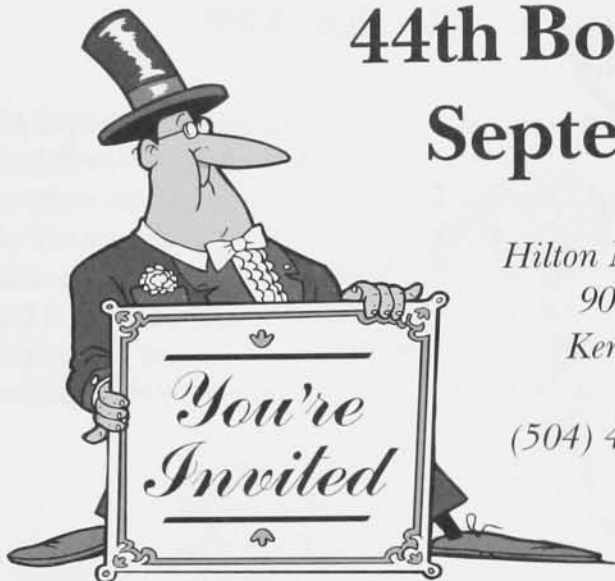
Mark your calendar for September 2-5 of 1999 when we will gather once again- this time in my home town, New Orleans. New Orleans doesn't need a convention to define it. It has so much to offer that I'm sure you'll find that four days are not enough to fully enjoy this exciting city.

I want to thank all of you for making my job easy. Your cooperation and enthusiasm were hallmarks of this reunion, and I look forward to hosting you once again in the great city of New Orleans.

Mike Yurpek

44th Bomb Group Reunion

September 2-6, 1999



Hilton New Orleans Airport
901 Airline Drive
Kenner, LA 70062

(504) 469-5000 / Reservations Department (9am-5pm)
or 1-800-HILTONS (24 Hours)

Hotel Policies:

- Hotel accepts all major credit cards.
 - Check-in time is 3:00 pm and Check-out time is 12:00 pm.
 - Early Departure Fee: A \$50 early check-out fee will apply to any guest who checks out of the hotel before their stated departure date. Guests will have the opportunity to change their departure date at check-in without being assessed the \$50 fee. Any changes in the departure date after check-in will result in the fee being assessed.
 - Parking is complimentary.
 - Complimentary Airport Shuttle service available 24-Hours
 - Group Rate is \$80 and tax is 11.75 %
 - Cut Off Date for reservations is August 1, 1999.
- A credit card guarantee is required to secure a reservation for late arrival (after 4 pm).
- Group rate is available up to 3 days before and after Convention dates.

**44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS
ASSOCIATION**
SEPTEMBER 2-6, 1999

I'd like to make reservations at the New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Hwy., Kenner, LA 70062. (504) 469-5000:

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Firm _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Guaranteed by Credit Card # _____

Credit Card _____ Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

SHARING WITH

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Reservations must be received by: **8/1/99**

Arrival Date: _____ Time (Circle One)
2-4 p.m. 4-6 p.m. 6-8 p.m. 8-10 p.m.
10 p.m. - midnight after midnight

Departure Date: _____ Time (Circle One)
Before 7 a.m. 7-9 a.m. 9-11 a.m. 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Early Checkout Fee:

A \$50.00 Fee will be applied to your account if you depart before your stated departure date. Revisions can be made up to time of check-in without penalty. Any changes after check-in will result in the Fee Assessment.

Please circle Type of Room and Rate Requested:

KING \$80

DBL/DBL \$80

NON-SMK OR SMK



MISCELLANEA

THE 8TH AF MUSEUM NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The 8th Air Force Museum at Savannah (remember them?) would like to have some volunteers to come to Savannah and work in the museum for one week (any week). If you are interested, call Mary Beth Barnard at 1-800-421-9428, Ext. 112 or Jack Prescott, Director of Volunteers, at 1-912-748-4699. Wives are included. Ideally, you might combine it with some vacation time in and around Savannah which is a great place to visit.



ANGELS CORNER

After the appeal for funds we made at the Savannah general membership meeting to get the 8th Air Force Data Base program adopted and off to a start, there was a rustle of checks that would warm the heart of even a most cynical treasurer (which ours is certainly not). When out of the ranks stepped our newest ANGEL in the person of Raymond Shirley, 67th Bomb Sqdn. member and resident of Crosby, Texas with a check for \$1,000 in his hand (they still do things BIG in Texas!).

You have our thanks, admiration and a big tip of the Stetson, Ray, for your very generous addition to this wonderful program.

For those of you who were not with us in Savannah to witness the demonstration of the 8th Air Force Heritage Database program. The information is repeated in this issue, along with the Personal Data entry form which you are to fill out with your own personal data. Follow the instructions carefully. ALSO, THERE IS STILL NEED FOR FUNDS TO CARRY ON WITH THE PROGRAM AFTER WE GET ALL THE LIVING AND RECENTLY DECEASED MEMBERS IN THE DATABASE. WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO

SEARCH OUT THE INFORMATION ON THOSE 44TH'ERS WE LOST IN COMBAT AND THROUGH THE YEARS BETWEEN. There's lots of work ahead. Send what you can afford to our Treasurer, 44TH BGVA, P.O. Box 712287, Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287. Many thanks.

The 8-Ball Tails ©

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc. ©



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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.

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.



FOLDED WINGS

December, 1998



Most unfortunately, the July reporting of Folded Wings included two serious errors. Happily, one of these men is still "flying."

Shook, Carl Curtis 506th Squadron. Carl attended the reunion in Savannah and was very much alive. It seems that he sent a change of address to us, but somehow he was included in the Folded Wings listing. My sincere apology for this huge error Carl.

Pendleton, Hal Ltc. (USAF Ret) 67th Sq. Date 04/06/98. Hal was born in Munday, Texas on October 15, 1920. He graduated from Texas A&M. He joined the E.P. Reynolds crew just as they were finishing their training in Autumn, 1944. He was a Capt. at that time, a Navigator. At Shipdham, Hal flew with many crews. At war's end, Hal chose to remain on active duty and served in the Korean War. After retiring from the Air Force, he worked for the Internal Revenue Service.

The July Folded Wings reported him as Richard H. Pendleton, also a Navigator, also in the 67th Squadron; but Richard returned home in October of 44, the same period that Hal arrived. It was assumed Hal was Richard H.

Richard H. Pendleton was a navigator on E.H. Reinhart's crew. Was shot down on the Ploesti mission and was a POW/Internee in Romania until released in Sept. 1944. He was killed in an accident in Odessa, TX 1953. 0-661022 ASN.

Addis, Jack L. 6/8/98 35915660 506th Sq. Nose Gunner flying with F.B. Mack crew. This crew departed from U.S. on 4 July, arriving in England on 8 July, was assigned to the 506th Sq. First mission was flown 11 August 1944 and their 30th was completed on 25 April 1945. In their position as lead plane, 15 missions were rated as "Excellent" and three rated "good." On their 1 March 1945 mission, they were forced to make an emergency landing at Chievies, Belgium, where the nose wheel collapsed. Crew returned home on 5 June 1945.

Brown, Norman 1998 0-768430 67th Sq. Lt. Brown flew his first missions as a co-pilot for Lt. E. G. Holmer during the period from September, 1944 to early 1945. Lt. Brown then became a 1st pilot with his own crew, completed his tour on 14 April; flew A/C #44-48821 back to the U.S. Exact date of death not known.

Coddington, James W. 5/9/98 Date of birth 12 January 1924. He served on the C.E. Phillips crew as Radio Operator. This crew flew a total of 35 missions from 5 August, 1944 to 3 January, 1945. Returning to the U.S., he married Margaret F. Wood on 3 July 1945. After graduating from the University of Iowa law school, he practiced law for 35 years.

Dovey, Arnold J. 10/98 0-808009 Arnold enlisted in 1942 as an Aviation Cadet. He finished training as a Navigator; arrived at Shipdham on 5 May 1944, transferring into the 66th Squadron from the 466th BG. Three days later, while on a PFF training mission with the F.M. Musgrave crew, unnamed, they were shot down by an enemy aircraft, crew bailing out. Arnold was seriously injured, but continued on as a special PFF Navigator after recovering. He participated in 22 major PFF/H2X Group Leads, 13 of which were with the 14th C.B.W. and six leading



the 2nd Division. During the latter period, he was based at the 14th CB Wing at Shipdham. He was awarded two D.F.C. medals - for exceptional bombing results on Hamburg and Bremen targets. He returned to the U.S. in May, 1945, remained in the Reserves until 1962. He married in 1946, had two sons, Lee and Douglas. After retirement, Arnold remained very active in his endeavors to make known the very special place PFF bombing had in winning the war in Europe.

Harmonoski, John J. 11/17/98 0-734906 John was a Bombardier on Lt. J.Y. Reeds crew, 66th Sq. when they went on D.S. to North Africa on 23 June 1943. But John flew with the J.E. Flaberty crew on all of the missions flown there, including the famous low-level attack on the Ploesti Oil Fields in Rumania. In recent years John attended most of the 44th BG reunions including this year at Savannah where he was honored for being a Ploesti Veteran. John insisted upon attending although he was in poor health, but had to use a wheel chair. Shortly after returning home, he suffered a massive heart attack.

Leitzel, William I. 06/28/98 13028187 67th Sq. Williams was trained as a Radio Operator, was with the Ground Echelon that went over to England on the Queen Mary in September, 1942. He had joined the AAF on 18 June 1941 and attended school prior to this date. He faithfully served in this capacity for 31 months and returned to the U.S. again on the Queen Mary in May, 1945. After the service, he worked for the Cresline Plastic Company until retirement and was active with the Amateur Ham Radio Operators of Harrisburg, PA.

Russell, John E. 1998 36377085. John was an original crew member of the J.E. Hill crew, 67th Sq, having been assigned shortly before the 23 June 1943 departure for North Africa. This crew participated in most of the missions assigned to the 44th from Benina Airdrome, including Ploesti, and twice was the only 67th Sq. plane returning to base from a mission! They also returned to Africa in September for a second D.S., was again the only 67th plane to return to base from the 1 Oct. 43 attack on Wiener Neustadt. The Hill crew completed their tour in February, 1944.

Spencer, Edgar J. 7/4/98 0-693321 "Jay" was a 1st pilot in the 67th Sq. flew his first mission on 3 August 1944. The crew completed their 35th mission on 12 December 1944, a mission to Koblenz, Germany. Jay and Estelle attended many of the reunions of both the 44th BG and 2nd ADA in recent years even though Jay was restricted to a wheel chair. They were a courageous couple.



An e-mail with good advice from Larry Herpel:

"...Will, I would like to ask the new editor of the Tails to do something for all of us. I am talking to several young persons whose fathers served in the 44th. One may be contacting you. I am encouraging them to join the BGVA as associate members. I believe the Tails needs to have a running article, say down in one of the corners, about joining the BGVA. What the life dues and yearly dues are and where to send them. Mention needs to be made that if vets have loved ones that are interested in joining, then this is how to go about it. This should run in every issue.

We Agree! See Back Cover...

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 2 - Issue #5

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Spring, 1998

Non Profit Veterans Organization

EIN #68-0351397

A SALUTE TO THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Again we depart from featuring an airplane for this issue. Instead we go back to the Summer, 1997 issue of the "Tails" when we initiated the "Memory Lane" page with a photo of our Red Cross lady escorting Col. Fred Dent and Norwich Lord Mayor William Finch on a tour of the Red Cross Club. We asked if anyone could identify the Red Cross lady and give us her home. We were successful in our search for our Shipdham Red Cross lady. It turned out to be a sad journey, for we found that Helen Hoback had died on April 20, 1949 at age 32 in a Baltimore, MD hospital following an operation to remove a brain tumor. Inside we will finish the Helen Hoback story, and in her memory we dedicate this issue of 8-Ball Tails to all of those dedicated Red Cross workers who so tirelessly worked to bring a little bit of home to wherever we were serving. We will always be thankful to them.



Miss Helen H. Hoback of Roanoke, VA, with her Red Cross Staff, greets Captain Eddie Rickenbacker during his visit with the 44th Bomb Group at Shipdham AB, Norfolk, England in early 1944.

OUR RED CROSS LADY

This all began when we started a new feature in the 8-Ball Tails we call "Memory Lane" (Vol. 2, Issue #3) and used a picture taken in Shipdham at the Red Cross club on the occasion of a visit to the base by Lord Mayor William Finch of Norwich. We asked the membership if anyone could recall the name of our Red Cross lady. FRANK BATA of the 66th Bomb Sqdn. came forth with her name, along with the story of what a great help she had been keeping him in touch with his younger brother stationed at another English base. He also recollected that she was from Roanoke, VA. With that to go on, we started on what turned out to be a sad search. I first asked Art HAND, our membership search expert, to give me a computer run on any members we have in Roanoke. He came up with JACK RUSSELL, 68th Sqdn. who responded to my request that he would see what he could find out about HELEN HOBACK. In no time at all he sent me a copy of the 4-21-49 Roanoke Times Obituary page which noted Helen's death. The notice also listed a surviving brother named SAMUEL HOBACK living in Baltimore. Once again a request to ART HAND quickly got me an address and telephone number. I called and first got his wife, and after telling her who I was and of my search for information about Helen, I was able to make a return call later. We made contact that evening and after talking with her brother Sam, the story began to brighten somewhat. I found in our search to see where life had led our pretty 44th Red Cross lady that, in the few post-war years of her life, she was happily fulfilling her dream to be an actress.

She had moved to Baltimore, found work in a publishing company which financed her continued studies in Shakespearean Theatre and was broadening her acting experience doing summer stock. In the pursuit of her dream, she never married. Her most successful theatrical venture was the development of an evening's program of her adaptations of Shakespeare's heroines in his most famous plays. With authentic Elizabethan costumes, she formed a small company of three which included her brother Sam and another stage hand. They travelled, giving her solo performances in Boston, New York and New Jersey, in what must have been a most happy time for our blossoming actress. Tragedy struck in the winter of 1947-8 when she slipped on an icy sidewalk and took a severe blow to her head. A year later she did not survive surgery undertaken to remove a brain tumor. So the curtain came down before the career of this developing actress could reach full bloom. So, as she served her country and fellow man keeping them in touch with home and what they were fighting for, so she must have brought the vitality of her persona to her audiences. The 44th Bomb Group honors her and is thankful for the precious time in her short life that she gave to us.



Helen Hoback

IN HER ADAPTATIONS

SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES

Designed and Directed by PERCIVAL VIVIAN



Rosalind and Lady Macbeth

Comments

Here indeed is the Art of the Forgotten Language. Miss Hoback's every inflection is perfect and her scanning of the lines leaving nothing to be desired. She simply holds you entranced with her magic charm. I can imagine no more pleasant way of spending an evening than to watch Miss Helen Hoback in her characterization of "Shakespeare's Heroines."

Percival Vivian,
Well-Known New York Director

Miss Helen Hoback shows remarkable ability in action. She has a charming personality and a large general ability.

Binney Gunnison
Dean Emeritus Curry School

Miss Helen Hoback, in "shakespeare's Heroines," gave us a delightful evening of entertainment. Her pleasing costumes and fine acting added much to the enjoyment of the scenes. All students and lovers of Shakespeare should especially enjoy her delineation of the various characters.

Ruth K. Coddington

Helen Hoback is an artist of unusual ability. She vividly presents her Shakespearean portraits in costume. Each personality steps straight from the story onto the stage. A delightful club program.

Mrs. George a. Layman
Past President, Roanoke Woman's Club

I have heard and seen Miss Hoback in her Shakespearean program. It was artistically done with much skill and effectiveness and well received by the audience. It gives me a good deal of pleasure to commend her program to anyone desiring a splendid evening of entertainment. She is a young woman of rare beauty and accomplishment and I predict for her a brilliant future.

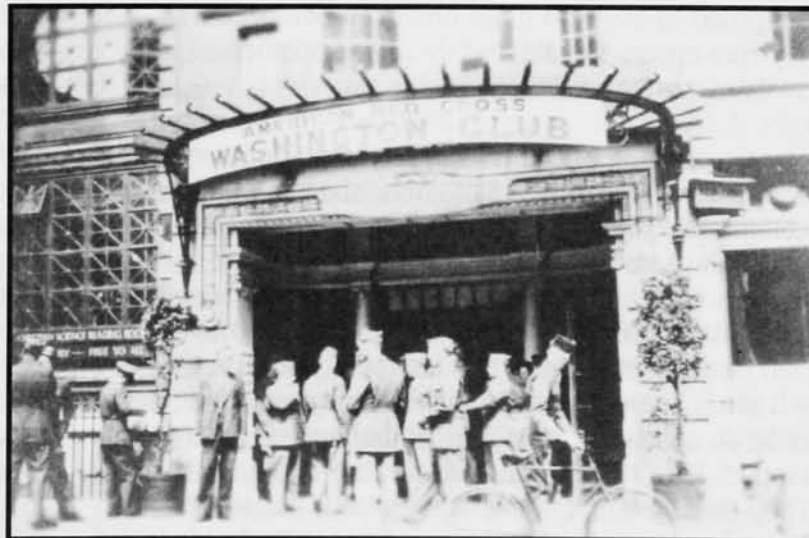
G.A. Layman, President
Roanoke City Education Association



Helen H. Hoback, above, American Red Cross staff assistant, whose safe arrival in England was announced today, is the daughter of Floyd G. Hoback, 29 Riverland Road, Roanoke. She is a graduate of Jefferson high school, Roanoke, and attended Roanoke college and Curry school of Expression, Boston. She conducted a dramatic studio in Roanoke and appeared as reader in programs for colleges and schools throughout the State. Miss Hoback joined the Red Cross forces in Washington early in February.



Below: Early 1944 London, The Busiest Red Cross Club on The Planet.



More on Rouen, March 8, 1943

Editor:You've often read my comments about having a story or letter from one person tickle the memory of another who will then come in with more to tell about the mission or incident which gives another view of the same subject. These different subjective views, put together, combine to give us an objective view of history. In this case we go back to the last issue of "The Tails" and our story about our visit to Villers-Ecalles, France. While there, we were honored to participate in the memorial ceremonies commemorating the 67th Squadron crew of Lt. Clyde Price, flying "Miss Dianne," who were shot down on the March 8, 1943 raid on the Rouen, France railway marshalling yard and crashed at the site of the memorial marker where we were assembled.

This first piece is co-authored by Jean Pierre Marie and Joel Huard, both members of the Non-Commissioned Officers of the French Army Air Force Reserve (l'ANSORAA). One of their organizational charters is to carry on research and documentation of the air wars over France in both World Wars. Our connection and correspondence with them began with an inquiry they made to us seeking information on the 44th Bomb Group losses on the March 8, 1943 raid.

Though much of their article has its basis from the Missing Aircrew Reports in the Will Lundy Roll of Honor records, it also offers us a view of the raid from the view of the German fighters defending that vital rail center. (Stele translated means monument or memorial marker). This article appeared in their l'ANSORAA JOURNAL.



**"Stele to the allied aviators of Villiers-Ecalles
note about the destruction of two bombers B24 "LIBERATOR"
Mars 8, 1943**

On March 8, 1943, at 12h 03, 9 bombers B24 "Liberator" of the 44th Bomber Group, (67th squadron) of the 8th Air Force, took off from their base of SHIPDHAM, very near NORWICH. They were to meet 7 other B24's coming from the 93rd Bomber Group (329th Squadron), at BEACHY-HEAD, on the southern coast of England near EASTBOURNE.

The objective assigned to them was the switchyard of SOTTEVILLE LES ROUEN. This mission, important because of the switchyard's strategic position, consisted of a manoeuvre of diversion which was supposed to allow 54 other American bombers, B17 Fly Fortress, to simultaneously attack another switchyard, that of RENNES.

The Captain James O'BRIEN of the 68th Squadron with major POSEY, 66th Squadron, aboard, who was commanding the whole of the American formation, were constrained to interrupt their mission.

John HUSSELTON, one of the members of their team, had passed out because of a lack of oxygen. They left the formation, notified their base by radio in order to obtain the help of an ambulance and landed. John HUSSELTON was taken off the plane. They took off again immediately with the number of crew members reduced and caught up with the formation just above the English Channel.

When captain O'BRIEN was forced to land, captain Clyde PRICE of the 44th Bomber Group took the place of the leader of the formation, lieutenant Robert BLAINE moved up to the second place.

The crew members of lieutenant BLAINE, having had two wounded during a previous mission, was not supposed to take part in the mission, but after the briefing, they succeeded to put together a complete crew and received authorization to participate. Sergeant Kenneth L. ERHART, of the weaponry section, and Roy E. GOSLINE, of the mechanics section, volunteered willingly. They occupied, one and the other, a machine gun position aboard the B24 number 41 - 23784 to which the crew members had given the name of "MISS DIANNE." It was one of the 9 first B24 "Liberator" to arrive in England on October 10 1942. Will LUNDY was responsible for the maintenance on the ground of this plane. Today (May 10 1997) he has become the historian of the 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

The 16 bombers crossed the coast of France at 13h 53 at ST VALERY EN CAUX. A few minutes later, between YERVILLE and PAVILLY, the pilots were looking for their fighter planes: some P47 "THUNDERBOLT," expected to replace the 25 "SPITFIRE" of the R.A.F. who were stopping their coverage. This was supposed to be the first



participation of these American fighter planes on an escort mission since the beginning of the hostilities. However, delayed by the first attack of the objective at the north of France, they encountered severe opposition and were delayed too long by these combats, they were prevented from coming to ensure the protection of the "Liberators."

The crew members of the bombers, for whom the objective was to last no longer than a few minutes, were preparing themselves for the attack.

It was at this moment that 30 FW 190, of the JG 26 "SHLAGETER," of the Luftwaffe, were arriving at 14h. With the sun behind them, they made a surprise attack on the American pilots who thought they were seeing their own fighter planes arrive.

Wutz GALLAND, who was leading the patrol of the FW 190 German fighters, launched his attack on the bombers: from the front and on the right flanks of the formation with the help of major Pips PRILLER.

The "oberlieutenant" Peter CRUMP fired a long round from his machine guns at one of the airplanes. He was able to see clearly a good number of impacts around the pilot's position. As he distanced himself in a long nose dive, he saw with horror that he was in line with the deballasting of the bombs of a "liberator." He escaped by a very tight bend... The plane that he just hid crashed in the part of a wooded valley to the north of the Seine...

Their attack was devastating, the leading B24 caught fire, followed by the second bomber. The other crews were forced to break up the formation.

The leader, captain PRICE and the lieutenant BLAINE, his second man, were hit by the shot of numerous German fighter planes. These planes who were commanding the mission, now out of combat, left the other crews without information needed for the planned attack.

Without the protection of allied fighters, the crews had to resolve to set out for the North and rejoin the fixed rallying point at NEUFCHATEL EN BRAY, then set themselves out towards the point of passage on the coast, chosen for the return to BIVILLE SUR MER in between LE TREPORT and DIEPPE.

The plane number 2, piloted by lieutenant Robert W. BLAINE, crashed into French ground at SIERVELLE. The sole survivor, lieutenant Leo O. FRAZIER

succeeded in jumping from the plane with a parachute. A prisoner of the German troops, he had the chance, a few days later, to return to the crash site. The plane had not exploded, the bombs were still on board.

Leo FRAZIER finished the war at the Stalag LUFT III.



Lt. LEO FRAZIER, 1997

He was the victim of a heart attack in 1995 which left him in fragile health and he decided not to participate in the trip of the 44th Bomber-Group Veterans Association organized to go to Europe from May 27 to June 7 1997...

It is only on February 2, 1997 that the point of impact of this was able to be confirmed thanks to the help of M. Yves LOISEL, mayor of SIERVILLE who, responding to the request of the author of the present note, addressed to him a death certificate, which reads thus: "The 12 Mars 1943, at 18h, Monsieur Gustave NEMERY, farmer at SIERVILLE, discovered on the plane, hamlet of Plix, the body of a male individual of which the particulars are the following: decapitated body, dressed in a khaki military uniform, possibility wounded by a bullet just about the ankle. The collar of the jacket had this inscription: KREISSIG - M C ATOR - MAC - DILI - FIELD. An identity plate belonged to the deceased and turned over to the mayor March 20 1943 by a

member of the occupation army at the moment of the burial. The plate carried the following information - OSCAR F. KREISSIG 110 105 44... According to every probability, the deceased was the radio operator on the BLAINE crew fallen at SIERVILLE, 400 meters from the place where the body was found at the time of an aerial combat taking place March 8 1943..."

The plane of the leader, "Miss Dianne" that captain Clyde E. PRICE was flying, was hit by the enemy fighter planes and by the Flak, seriously hit at the front and at the fuselage center, the oxygen and hydraulic circuits destroyed... The plane having immediately caught fire, the signal to escape was given ...It is sergeant Kenneth L. ERHART, one of the two replacement machine gunners who gave this information in the report that he made to the military authorities after his return to the United States.

Because of the frontal attack, the personnel at the piloting position could not evacuate. Kenneth ERHART helped sergeants Iris WYER and Deane DEVARS to jump from the machine gun posts of the right flank. He observed that sergeant FLESHMAN was already dead, after which, he was also able, he himself, to get out from the right flank.

Upon touching the ground, he saw lieutenant GROSS arrive. His abdomen was gashed open. He died in the arms of Kenneth ERHART under the regard of the Germans.

"He had asked me to take his watch and to give it to his mother, but the Germans seized it..." he declared.

Deane DEVARS and Iris WYER, wounded by the Flak and burned, were captured one or two days later, not having succeeded in getting themselves away from the occupants who were looking for them.

As for Kenneth ERHART, once that he became a prisoner and that lieutenant GROSS was dead, the German soldiers turned them over to the troops of the LUFTWAFFE and he was taken to a hospital. He never learned of what kind of medicine they used to treat his burns, but the burns left no scars. He was taken care of by French doctors and watched over by German doctors, then he was taken by train to Stalag-Luft to be interrogated and taken to Stalag VII, in MOOSBERG in Baviere.

Kenneth ERHARD was a close friend to Will LUNDY, who was responsible for the maintenance on the ground of the B24 "Miss Dianne" during the war. He later became the historian of the 44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION. The most part of this report succeeded in being established with his very helpful collaboration.

"MISS DIANNE" had exploded above BARENTIN, a section of the plane in flames fell upon the housing development of the BADIN Establishments and destroyed some houses. The greatest portion of the plane and the bodies of the 8 victims ended their fall at VILLERS ECALLES where a stèle was erected in remembrance of the allied aviators of whom the identity was only able to be established by the confirmation of the points of impact that each of the two B24 of the 44th Bomber Group. This confirmation would only come February 2 1997.

The stèle was inaugurated August 22 1948 by Maitre Andre MARIE, president of the Council (First Minister) and the mayor of BARENTIN, in the presence of Monsieur the Consul of the United States of America. A formal speech was given by Monsieur RICHARD, author and the one who brought the monument to fruition, adjunct of the mayor of VILLERS ECALLES, then a moving exaltation of the spirit of sacrifice by M. Andre MARIE preceded the deposit of a wreath of flowers while a plane of the Aeroclub of Normandy dropped flowers over the crowd.

Monsieur LEBLOND, the mayor then received the honored guests at the town hall. Among the spectators, a young boy of 11 years who dreamed of becoming an aviator... he became one... and since May 8 1983, a group of non-commissioned officers of the reserve, members of their national association (L'ANSORAA) participate each year, at the outskirts of the municipality, of the former combatants and of the inhabitants of VILLERS ECALLES at the commemoration of the remembrance of the allied aviators whose names appear ever since on the monument.



This next piece is a letter sent in by Jim O'Brien in which he relates the mixed emotions of having to relinquish the lead of the group to save the life of a crew member, then, upon rejoining the group, witness the simultaneous loss of both the Price crew, who had assumed the lead, then the Blaine crew who had taken #2 position.

2921 South Estrella Circle
Mesa, AZ 85202-7842

December 29, 1997

Dear Roy,

I wrote a letter to Will Lundy and mentioned how much I enjoyed the story of "The Trip" in the Winter Issue of the "8 Ball Tails." The visit to Rouen, the site of the memorial to the two 67th aircrews and the account of Lois Cianci receiving her dad's dog tag from Guy Cressant were real drama.

I thought I would add this postscript to the story of the two 67th Squadron crews that were shot down on the Rouen mission of 8 March 1943. I knew Lt. Clyde Price and Lt. Robert Blaine and some of their crew members very well. Clyde Price was a devoted family man who always talked about the day when he could complete his missions and return to his wife. We had many conversations together at the Officers club. We were not connoisseurs of the bar, but we found satisfaction in the side chairs listening to the music and news of the BBC broadcasts,

Major Jim Posey, Group Exec, and I were the designated Group Leaders for the Rouen mission flying in my aircraft "The Rugged Buggy" of the 68th Sq. We had taken off and assembled the Group over Shipdham when S/Sgt John Husselton, one of our waist gunners, was reported to have fainted at his gun position. Jim Posey and I concluded that we would have to give up the lead position and return Husselton to the base. Price and Blaine then took over as deputy leads and we quickly returned Husselton to a waiting ambulance at Shipdham and then took off again with nine crewmen to catch the 44th just as they were crossing the Channel.

One of the memorable quotes of the day was, "Are Those Spitfires?" from bombardier, Norius Crisan when we saw a bunch of fighters about 4000 ft. above us and to the left. The Polish Spitfire Squadron was to be our escort. They were not Spitfires and soon, from the typical head-on position, about 35-40 German ME109s and FW190s came in at us. The Price and Blaine aircraft quickly went down under the withering fire. Very few in that formation thought they were going to survive that German attack, but fortunately the Polish Spitfires showed up in time to chase them away. The Germans had achieved their purpose because in all of the confusion very few of our bombs hit the railroad yards.

I had many experiences in my 21 missions with the so called "fickle finger of fate," but I always felt that I owed John Husselton something for taking us out of that lead position on the 8th of March 1943, although there was no joy in the loss of the two 67th crews. As well stated by John Muirhead in his book, *Those Who Fall*, "it was kind of a Russian roulette that we played and we pulled the trigger as many times as we could." Another irony was that when John Husselton returned from his prescribed "R&R", his first mission was the Kiel raid of 5/14/43 when we were shot down in the "Rugged Buggy." He was one of our eight crew members who survived as POWs for two years. I have never been able to reach him after the war.

Sincerely,

Jim O'Brien

The last piece of these views comes to us by letter from Gloria Erhard, widow of S/Sgt. Kenneth I. Erhard, Waist Gunner on the Capt. Price crew. S/Sgt. Erhard was one of three gunners in the rear of the airplane who were able to bail out and survived the crash to become POW'S. The story, taken from his diary and recollections passed on to his wife prior to his death, give us a view of the tragic end of a tough mission. May I add that this mission took place at the height of those early days when the 67th was suffering terrible aircrew losses and the ground support personnel were asked to volunteer for aircrew duty. S/Sgt. Erhard from the Armament Section and S/Sgt. Roy E. Gosline from the Engineering Section were two of those valorous men who took that step forward. S/Sgt. Gosline did not survive the crash.

SLIGHTLY CONDENSED LETTER FROM GLORIA ERHARD

AFTER VIEWING SOME OF THE PHOTOS TAKEN AT THE CEREMONIES AT VILLERS ECALLES, FRANCE, JUNE 1997, THE MONUMENT, THE FLOWERS, THE CEREMONIES MUST HAVE BEEN AWESOMELY BEAUTIFUL TO HAVE BEEN SEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND SO DEDICATED TO YOUNG, HANDSOME AMERICAN FLYERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES AND FREEDOM BECAUSE OF THE WHIMS OF A STRANGE LITTLE MAN WHOM WE KNEW AS HITLER. IT MAKES ONE ANGRY, SAD, PROUD OF OUR YOUNG MEN WHO WILLINGLY LAY DOWN THEIR LIVES, THEIR FREEDOM TO SAVE OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD FROM ONE OF THE "ISMS" WITHIN AN "ISM" OF OUR OWN WHICH IS CALLED PATRIOTISM.

I WAS TRYING TO LOOK BEYOND THE PHOTOS TO WHERE KEN AND THE LIEUT. FROM DENVER (MORTON P. GROSS) MAY HAVE LANDED. KEN NEVER SPOKE OF THE FIERY CRASH. PERHAPS HE DID NOT SEE IT. THEY LANDED NOT TOO FAR FROM A ROAD WHERE GERMAN SOLDIERS WAITED IN A PARKED TRUCK. IT TOOK SEVERAL MINUTES TO COME DOWN IN THEIR PARACHUTES AS THE ENEMY PLANES "TOYED" WITH THE TWO "CHUTISTS," CAUSING THEM TO GO UP AS WELL AS DOWN, SHOOTING AT THEM ALL THE WHILE. WHEN THEY LANDED, THE LIEUTENANT CALLED, "KENNY BOY! KENNY BOY!"

KEN WAS TRYING TO DISENGAGE HIS HARNESS AND FIGHT OFF THE SOLDIERS WHO WERE GATHERING AROUND HIM AT THAT TIME. "HANG ON! I'M TRYING TO GET OVER THERE," KEN YELLED OUT. HE PUSHED AND SHOVED HIS WAY TO LT. GROSS BUT FOUND HIM FATALLY WOUNDED, ALMOST SHOT IN HALF. SO HE GATHERED THE LT. IN HIS ARMS WHILE BEING TOLD, "TAKE MY WATCH AND GIVE IT TO MY MOTHER. TELL HER I LOVE HER." HOWEVER, THE WATCH WAS SNATCHED AWAY BEFORE THE EXCHANGE COULD BE MADE, TAKEN AWAY BY AN ENEMY SOLDIER. KEN DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BODY OF THE LT. BUT HE

WAS MARCHED TO A BARN WHICH WAS NEARBY. WHILE RESTING THERE IN SOME HAY, KEN EXAMINED HIMSELF TO DISCOVER WOUNDS TO HIS LEGS, FLAK WOUNDS IN HIS NECK. HIS FACE AND HIS HANDS WERE BURNED WHEN HIS OXYGEN MASK HAD CAUGHT FIRE. TOO, HIS TORSO RECEIVED SOME BURNS AND A FEW FLAK WOUNDS, AND HE WAS HAVING A HARD TIME BREATHING.

LATER HE WAS LOADED ONTO A TRUCK AND TAKEN TO A SMALL HOSPITAL WITH FRENCH DOCTORS - BUT SUPERVISED BY A GERMAN DOCTOR. THE FRENCH DOCTOR WHISPERED, "WATCH YOUR BOOTS —" BUT WAS INTERRUPTED WHEN THE GERMAN YELLED, "NO TALKING". A SALVE WAS APPLIED TO HIS BURNS, WHICH AMAZINGLY HALTED THE PAIN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. THE WORST FLAK WOUNDS WERE TREATED, BUT THE REST OF THEM WERE LEFT UNTREATED.

HE WAS THEN TAKEN TO A TRAIN DEPOT AMPLY COVERED BY SEVERAL GUARDS, THEN ON TO AN INTERROGATION CENTER WHERE HE WAS HELD FOR 10 DAYS IN ISOLATION. THERE KEN WAS QUESTIONED EACH DAY BY THE HAUPTMANN AND HIS SERGEANTS. HE WAS SHOCKED THAT THE GERMAN SPY SYSTEM WAS SO GOOD THAT THEY HAD KEN'S COMPLETE 201 FILE!! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT! THEY EVEN HAD HIS MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME, FATHER'S NAME, KEN'S PREVIOUS OCCUPATION, CHURCH, ETC.

SIGN THIS PAPER OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE YOUR FAMILY AGAIN! AND "JOIN US - WE'LL DO BIG THINGS FOR YOU. DO NOT GIVE YOUR NAME, RANK, SERIAL NUMBER! WE ALREADY HAVE IT ALL! SIGN IT, OR YOU WON'T GET YOUR MAIL" ETC.

ONE SERGEANT PUT HIS FACE NEXT TO KEN'S AND THREATENED HIM. KEN SPAT IN HIS FACE, SO OF COURSE, THE GERMAN HIT HIM IN THE JAW WITH

HIS RIFLE BUTT AND KEN FOUND HIMSELF ON THE FLOOR. ONE DAY KEN DECIDED HE HAD HAD ENOUGH INTERROGATION AND REFUSED TO GET OFF HIS COT. HE PUT HIS ARM OVER HIS EYES, HEARD THE GUARD LEAVE, HEARD OTHER FOOTSTEPS AND NEXT CAME BRUTAL PAIN, NEARLY THE WORST HE'D EVER FELT. THE HAUPTMANN WAS BEATING HIS BARE FEET WITH A RIDING CROP! HIS BOOTS, BY THE WAY, WERE HIDDEN UNDER HIS COT.

BUT AFTER THE 10th DAY, KEN WAS SENT TO STALAG VII-A, MOOSEBURG, GERMANY WHERE HE MET OTHER AMERICAN AIRMEN, SOME OF WHOM REMAINED FRIENDS UNTIL HIS DEATH.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1943, THEY WERE SHIPPED TO STALAG XVII-B, KREMS, AUSTRIA. HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST AMERICAN CONTINGENT THERE, WHERE THEIR NUMBERS GREW FROM LESS THAN A THOUSAND TO OVER 4300 IN 1945.

AS THE WAR PROGRESSED, SUPPLIES BECAME MORE RARE. RED CROSS PARCELS WERE FEW BECAUSE THE GUARDS STARTED HELPING THEMSELVES. WHEN THE REGULAR GUARDS WERE REPLACED BY HOME GUARDS, CONDITIONS BECAME WORSE. MANY POWs BECAME ILL, BUT THE HOSPITAL HAD LITTLE MEDICINES FOR TREATMENT. IT HAD AN X-RAY MACHINE BUT LITTLE ELSE. THERE WAS AN AMERICAN DOCTOR, MAJOR BEAUMONT, BUT KEN KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT HIM, AND TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT HIM AFTER THE WAR.

KEN WAS NEVER FURNISHED WITH A UNIFORM OR SIMILAR CLOTHES, SO HE WAS FORCED TO WEAR THAT POOR OLD FLIGHT SUIT AND WHATEVER ELSE HE COULD SCROUNGE. TO KEEP REASONABLY CLEAN HE'D USE HIS THIN BLANKET, WASH HIS CLOTHES WHEN WATER WAS AVAILABLE, SHOWER WHEN HE COULD. FOOD CONSISTED OF SAWDUST BREAD, GRUEL, ACORN COFFEE AND WHATEVER ELSE THE RED CROSS PARCELS OFFERED.

IN APRIL, 1945, THE RUSSIANS WERE ADVANCING, SO THE GERMANS STARTED MARCHING THE POWs TOWARD THE ALLIED FRONT. THERE WERE ABOUT 4100 POWs WENDING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE ALPS IN ALL SORTS OF WEATHER. GENERALLY, KEN WAS IN FRONT, AS THERE WAS SO LITTLE TO EAT THAT HE WANTED A CHANCE TO FIND ANYTHING. THEY ATE TREE BARK, ANY LEFTOVER BERRIES, FIELD MICE, SMALL CHUNKS OF STALE BREAD.

ONE TIME, AFTER JUST CROSSING A BRIDGE AT LINZ, GERMANY, THEY WATCHED ALLIED PLANES STRAFE AND BOMB THAT BRIDGE! ALL IN ALL, THEY MARCHED 281 MILES TO BRANAU WOODS, AUSTRIA (HITLER'S BIRTHPLACE) TO REST AND AWAIT THEIR FATE. A FEW DAYS LATER, THEY WERE ALLOWED TO SCROUNGE FOR FOOD, THEN AT NIGHT LIE AWAKE LISTENING TO CREAKING NOISES WHICH THEY HOPED WOULD BE TANKS MOVING IN THE VALLEY BELOW.

IT WAS ON 2 MAY, 1945 WHEN AN ARMY JEEP DROVE UP TO THEIR ENCAMPMENT WITH A CAPTAIN AND A CORPORAL ON BOARD, LOADED TO THE HILT WITH WEAPONS. THE CAPTAIN STOOD UP AND SHOUTED, "YOU ARE NOW FREE! CONSIDER YOURSELF ON ACTIVE DUTY" OR WORDS CLOSE TO THAT MEANING.

KEN STAYED IN THE SERVICE FOR AWHILE, EARNED A PRESIDENTIAL CITATION AWARD (UNIT) FOR PARTICIPATION IN A B-29 FLY-OVER AT MANILA, CELEBRATING ITS INDEPENDENCE IN 1947. ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE BERLIN AIRLIFT WHEN RUSSIA CLOSED THAT CITY DOWN IN 1948(?). ALSO WAS IN A NON-STOP SITUATION THAT BROKE ALL RECORDS. THROUGHOUT ALL OF THIS, HE KEPT ASKING HIMSELF THE AGE-OLD QUESTION, "WHY ME? WHY WAS I SPARED WHEN MISS DIANNE'S CREW PERISHED?"

I AM POSITIVE GOD HAS SET KEN'S MIND AT REST WITH A SUITABLE ANSWER. KEN IS AT REST NOW, BUT HE LIVES IN MY HEART.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I can't believe it's 8-Ball Tails time again. The months are falling off the calendar and we will be heading for Savannah before we know it! There are all the preliminary registration forms in the centerfold of this issue, so be sure to get them filled out and on the way.

To bring you briefly up to date on the reunion, Mike Yuspeh, our Reunion Chairman, is up and running and busy making final arrangements for all the dinners, tours, transportation, etc. And it all looks great. You all will recall the centerpiece of this reunion will be the unveiling and dedication of our 44th Bomb Group display in the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. The display replicates the four ship lead element, Suzy Q, Horsefly, Buzzin' Bear and the borrowed 376th aircraft, at the instant before bombs away over the target at Ploesti. We will be commemorating all of the veterans of the Ploesti attack, additionally, we will be honoring those still living. In January, I sent a personal letter to each known living Ploesti veteran inviting them to the reunion and unveiling and telling each that we will be specifically honoring the living Ploesti veterans. Since this will, most probably, be the last gathering of this heroic group under one roof, we expect it will be an event of national news media interest and we don't want you to miss this historic event. The response from the Ploesti raiders has been terrific and we will have some of the raider widows joining us as well. If you have not yet visited the Mighty 8th AF Museum, this reunion is really a must. I placed a notice of our reunion in the Air Force Times inviting 44th veterans from the Bomb Wing, the Strategic Missile Wing and the Air Refueling Squadron to attend, let's hope we get some response.

Looking to the future; when my term expires and I move to the now vacant Board

seat of Immediate Past President, it is my intent to make the job description one of "Recruiter at Large" working to bring the 44th elements back together under the umbrella of a federation wherein each element maintains its identity and we share a common journal and meet annually at a joint reunion and pay dues to the parent organization. I am convinced that if we wish to avoid watching each of the 44th elements wither and die, we must reach out and join hands, younger with older, to maintain the strength to sustain this proud organization into the next millennium.

Our Bronze B-24 contributions were very good. Our members contributed approximately \$2,250. (A few sent their contribution direct to 2nd AD so we don't have an exact total) and we matched that from our treasury, so we made a respectable contribution to the USAFA Court of Honor presence of our great old warbird.

With the cancellation of our England/France trip, I see some room on the schedule for attendance to the 50th 2nd AD bash at Oak Hills Resort outside of Chicago May 22-25. My golf tournament winner's trophy from the 48th reunion is getting dusty; maybe I had better get back there and see if I can get a new one!

Lolly sends her best wishes. She loves Savannah and is looking forward to seeing ya'll (that's a Southern You All) there in October. I can hardly wait to get back to Johnny Harris' rib house!

See you in Savannah
Your Prez.

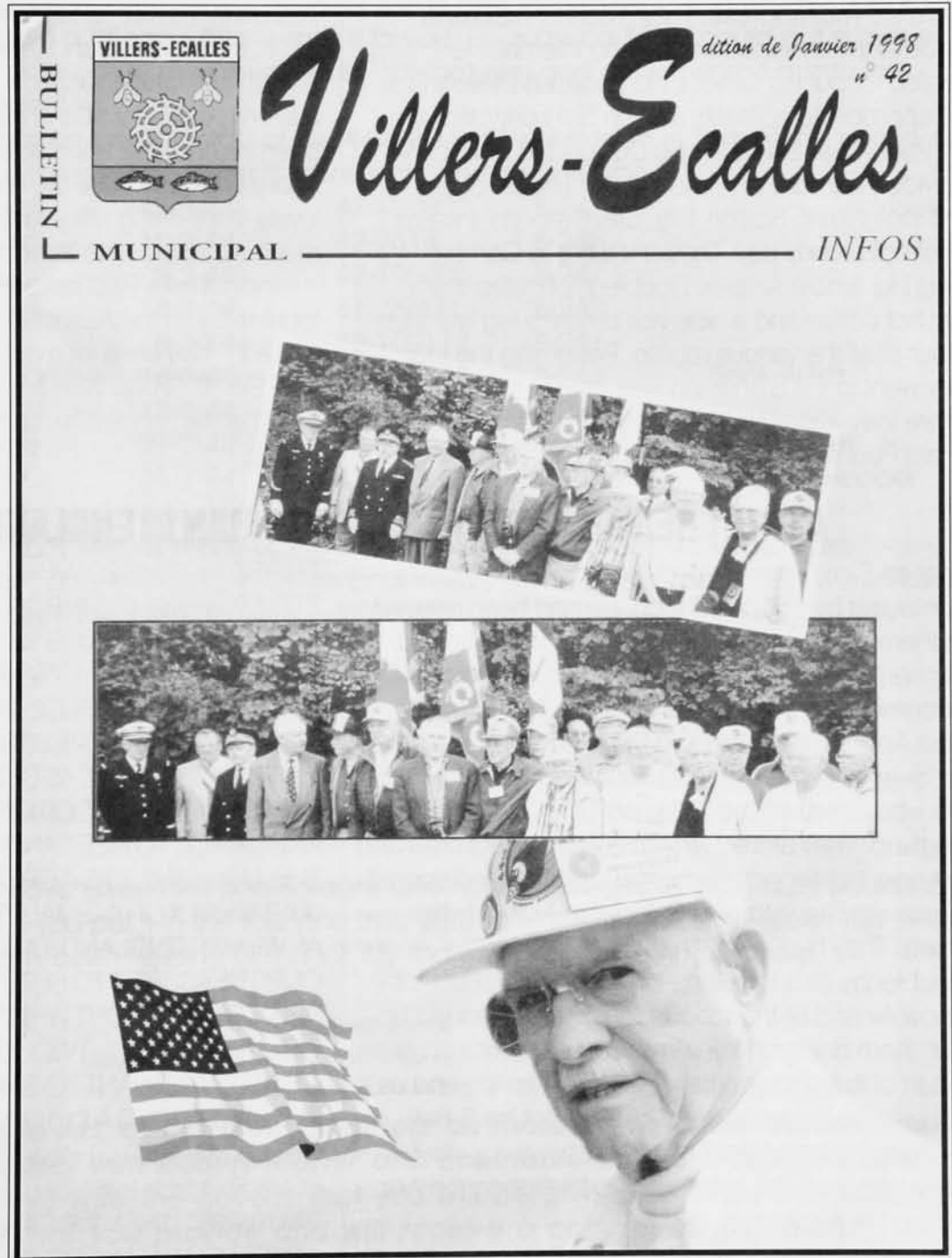


Miscellanea

1998 England-France Trip has been cancelled.

Regrettably, every once in awhile, we all make a bad call. It appeared from the survey we conducted at the General Membership Meeting that we had more than enough to fill a bus. A strange thing happened on the way to the Forum. When it came time to sign up, we barely came up with a dozen adventuresome travellers. Perhaps concern over the World Cup Soccer matches in Paris while we would have been there, or our own big Reunion this year in Savannah and the 50th Anniversary of 2nd Air Division Reunion May 23-26 in Oak Brook Hills, Illinois affected the sign-ups. Whatever, we are sorry to tell those who did make reservations of our cancellation. You should have been notified by Waterhouse Tours by now. It is too bad! We had some wonderful arrangements made with both our English and French friends.

As an example of the excitement displayed by the French at the prospects of our return, I have copied the cover of the January edition of the Villers Ecalles Municipal bulletin with photos of our '97 visit and an inside story about the plans for a '98 visit. Well, perhaps in '99 we will have occasion to travel to England to dedicate the new Arrow Air Centre, then go on to France for the occasion of meeting our friends by those who missed the last trip.



Our Hard Working U.K. Representative

In early January, Steve Adams, our always on-the-job representative in Norwich, got a call from Paul Wiatr, a U.S. Navy Reserve member living in the Chicago area. Paul is the son of, now deceased, Sgt. Rudolph Wiatr, Tail gunner on the Lt. Leonard Louik crew which joined the 67th Squadron in December, 1944. Paul was soon to arrive in England on a two week temporary duty tour. He made contact with the Memorial Library and obtained Steve's e-mail address. They made contact and made all the arrangements on the Internet. He wanted to tour his father's old base, so Steve made the appropriate contacts and on Saturday, January 17, accompanied by Phyllis DuBois (no doubt she provided the car), they met Paul at Thorpe Station and took him to Station 115. Steve reports it was a bitter cold windy day. They first went to Combat Wing Hq. where Andrew Doubleday hosted them with hot coffee and a nice visit before a log fire, then a tour of all the various rooms. Resuming the tour, they went to the 67th living site, then to the flight line where they walked to the end of the main runway where Paul stood in silence for several minutes. He

then stated that he felt close to his father while he stood at the very spot his father had started the take off roll on his combat missions. On with the tour it was down to the Tower and then to Arrow Air where Nigel Wright hosted lunch and gave Paul some 8-Ball Stickers. They lingered, visiting too long and were late for Paul's train so they had an additional hour of visit.

I wanted to relay this account of a "routine" visit by even a non-member such as Paul who has an interest in the 44th and is made to feel so welcome by "our Man in England." He does this year round, sometimes taking vacation days from work to see that 44th visitors visit and leave feeling they have been treated very special. Steve's address is in the Board Directory. Take the time to drop him and his lovely, supporting wife, Janice a note telling him how much we appreciate all he does for our proud 44th.

Incidentally, Paul asked Steve if it was permissible for him to join the Association, to which Steve replied: "You are a lot more entitled to belong to the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association than I am. With this, he handed him a membership application. Editor.

A LATE BREAKING STORY ABOUT OUR MAN IN ENGLAND

I got an E-mail from Steve telling me he had been contacted by CBS in London. He had been referred to them by the Memorial Library (does that sound familiar) when they called saying they wanted to do a documentary piece on the wartime 2nd AD bases in East Anglia. They were told Steve had the best photo archives and was the most knowledgeable man in the whole area on the B-24s and their bases in England. They arrived with an entire camera crew and not one, but two very attractive reporters and spent 5 hours with Steve touring Shipdham Airfield (what else!). They had a visit and coffee with Mr. Doubleday (this is getting to be a regular tour stop), Arrow Air and all the various sites. This all ended up with them doing an interview with Steve, which will be a part of the documentary. He promises to send us a copy of the tape and also not to forget his 8-Ball friends who knew him before he became a star of television. Isn't this great, our guy is putting the 44th right in the public eye.

THIS BRINGS ME TO WHAT CAN WE DO FOR STEVE? I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE HIM ATTEND OUR SAVANNAH REUNION TO SEE AND TAKE PART IN THE UNVEILING OF OUR PLOESTI DISPLAY. REMEMBER, HE IS THE 66TH SQDN. HISTORIAN AS WELL AS BEING OUR UK REPRESENTATIVE. ADDITIONALLY, I WANT HIM AND JANICE TO MEET AND FEEL A PART OF THE 44TH FAMILY AS A GROUP AND NOT JUST SINGLY OR IN SMALL TRAVEL GROUPS AS WE VISIT ENGLAND. I AM GOING TO ASK OUR TREASURER TO SET UP AN ADAMS REUNION ACCOUNT WHICH I WILL OPEN WITH A \$20 CHECK. I WOULD LIKE THOSE OF YOU WHO WANT TO SAY THANKS, STEVE, TO SEND ALONG A \$10 OR \$20 BILL OR CHECK MARKED "THANKS STEVE" TO: 44TH BGVA, P.O. BOX 2367, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84110-2367. THEN WE CAN THANK HIM AND JAN PERSONALLY FOR ALL HE DOES AND ALL THE SUPPORT SHE GIVES HIM. YOUR
PREZ THANKS YOU.

44th BOMB GROUP Swiss Internees—We Need Some Help!

This E-Mail from Steve Adams tells the story:

Subject:

Date: Tuc, 24 Mar 98 19:57:37 GMT

From: Stephen Adams <S.P.Adams@btinternet.com>

To: Roy Owen <rowen@sonic.net>

Hi Boss,

I have been helping an English boy with his research. He is interested in the aircraft from the 8th that were interned in Switzerland. I scanned his letter to me and tried to send it to you but it was too big, so I have condensed it a little so I can e-mail it to you. He is asking if you could put a request in the Tails asking if any of the crew members would contact him and answer some questions about their time being interned.

I have enclosed the info on the 9 aircraft of the 44th BG who went down in Switzerland during 43-45. I have listed them by pilots name, aircraft serial, date and aircraft type.

1. 2nd Lt. Eugene N. Dyer	18-3-44	42-109800	B-24J	
2. 1st Lt. George D. Telford	18-3-44	42-7618	B-24H	
3. 1st Lt. Robert R. Lucas	18-3-44	42-100400	B-24J	
4. 2nd Lt. Winston C. Irwin	18-3-44	41- 29431	B-24H	
5. 1st Lt. Hollis R. Nichols	18-3-44	42-100112	B-24J	
6. 1st Lt. Raymond J. Lacombe	18-3-44	42-100643	B-24J	Sack Artists
7. 1st Lt. Rockford C. Griffith	13-4-44	42-100330	B-24J	
8. 1st Lt. John R. Anderson	21-7-44	42-110049	B-24J	Mary Harriet
9. FIO Donald F. Toffe	21-7-44	42-95226	B-24H	Channel Hopper

I would like to get in contact with as many of the men on these nine crews, so I could ask questions about their flight and their time in Switzerland. I have some photos and info. I would be willing to swap or pay for anything sent to me.

Robert Martyr
120 Brendon, Laindon,
Basildon, Essex
SS15 5XN
England

Roy: He is a good kid. I have given him photographs and helped him where I can, but I would not give out any addresses. If you put it in the tails and they write to him that would be great. The Swiss Internees Association have been helping him a lot. My thanks to anyone who can help.

Steve

Editor: This request is to ALL of the crew members on those crews listed. Please take the time to make contact with Robert Martyr and contribute copies, I repeat COPIES of anything you might have with the caveat that you will be given credit for the material (diaries, photos, etc.) that you provide and will receive a copy of his research document when completed. This could be a very valuable addition to our own archives.



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WILL SEZ

Back in March, 1995, Lt. Gen. F.G. "Buck" Shuler, Jr. Chairman and CEO of The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center wrote to all organizations connected with the 8th Air Force of WW #2. His message was that this new organization had a goal to create and maintain an electronic data base of individuals who served in the Eighth Air Force.

Shortly after that, your Prez Roy Owen and I met briefly with Buck at the annual reunion of the 2nd ADA in Kentucky to discuss his goals and means to accomplish this Herculean task. Later, we also talked with Mary Beth Barnard, Director of History and Archives at The Heritage Center who was involved with development of software with which to record that vast amount of data. Naturally, both Roy and I were pleased to cooperate with them, being aware of the large amount of data which we in the 44th BG already had accumulated and the pressing need to organize it for better usage.

With this goal in mind, we invited Tony Mastradone into the picture, as he had been instrumental in working with me for several years visiting the archives in Suitland to obtain many documents which I needed for our history. Happily, Tony agreed, so we decided to begin a project to copy the interrogation forms stored in our mission folders.

An Interrogation Report form had been prepared for each crew participating on each mission for every mission during our Operational period in England and Africa, so this was the obvious way to obtain the data required for the goal of The Heritage Center - Data Base for Individuals. These forms would provide most of the data required for our combat crewman, but would entail considerable expenditures to copy and handle many thousands of forms.

Happily, Tony and I had worked to obtain many of these forms in order to establish and confirm many facts regarding our Operational activities - Roll of Honor, missions flown, aircraft data and general history of the Group. We decided to start with the end of the war in England, last mission flown of 25 April, 1945 and work back to the first in 1942. This was done because we had relatively few I.R. previously copied and we could pick up more data for other purposes.

Tony has done an excellent job working with the staff, fighting his way through the massive tangle of government when they moved all of the archival documents in the Washington, D.C. to the new, huge complex building closer to his home. He recently advised me that his records show that overall, he has copied over 9,000 forms! His work has taken him into the records of early 1944, so he still has quite large numbers yet to complete. In order to hold down the expense, he plans his work as efficiently as possible, telephones ahead, asks his Archivist friends to "pull" the mission folders he will need, so that he can begin work on them immediately upon his arrival. This will lessen the number of trips which will ultimately be required. It costs 10 cents per copy for each form we need, and expensive to mail, so money has become a problem so far as our budgets are concerned. So he has cut back on this work for the present.

As one can imagine, it also becomes a problem for me to organize, separate and file these forms after I get them. I've been forced to purchase plastic filing containers, and now have to store them in my garage as there is no longer filing space in my war room. They must be kept in a safe place until we can begin the task of data entry.

Recently, it was learned that the software being developed by Mary Beth Barnard at The Heritage Center failed to handle the job requirements, so they have adopted a new

program. Procite, which was developed for use by libraries, and are utilizing it to compile listings of names only at this time.

Consequently, with precious time slipping away, it seems necessary that we take positive steps to do more than that with all of this precious store of records. Tennessee Tommy Shepherd has offered to develop some recording forms utilizing the common software which several of us already are using to be able to make data entry now. These "golden" years will not last forever, so bit in teeth, we plan to forge ahead, recording what we feel is essential and important. Hopefully, we can make it work well enough so that other members of the 2nd ADA Groups will join us so that what is developed can be shared with these other groups. In that manner, at least the 2nd Division records will be compatible among us all, for whatever purposes.

Thanks to all of these efforts, I am now able to utilize these papers for a multitude of purposes including the ability to verify missions for our combat men and to answer so many questions regarding missions, who flew them, on which planes they flew, etc. They have been a great boon to my ability to answer questions sent in by next of kin, crew mates, etc. I can serve you all so much better than in the past in answering your questions.

Hopefully our budget and treasury will be able to withstand these expenditures. We will keep you posted with developments. Too, if there are others willing to assist us in any way with this project, please don't be bashful. Drop a note and tell us what you think you can do to help. We will listen very carefully!

Will Lundy



The 8-Ball Tails ©

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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.

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.

Savannah Reunion - 44th Bomb Group

Early arrival Saturday, October 24th

- Registration
- Tour Historic Savannah City Tour - Gray Line 1 1/2 hour (Cost \$16)
- #1 - Leave Hotel 1:00 p.m. - Return 2:30 p.m.
- #2 - Leave Hotel 3:00 p.m. - Return 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 25th

- Registration 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Historic Savannah City Tour with Admission and tour on one of Savannah's Mansions.
Leave Hotel 1:00 p.m. - Return 3:00 p.m. (Cost \$20)
- Reception - Days Inn: Cash Bar 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Dinner on your own.

Monday, October 26th

- Registration 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- First shuttle bus leaves Hotel at 9:00 a.m. for Mighty 8th Museum.
- Visit Mighty 8th Museum.
- Buffet lunch at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Program to dedicate Ploesti Exhibit - 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Shuttle bus returns to Days Inn at 2:45 p.m.
- Shuttle bus leaves at 5:00 p.m. for Convention Center.
- Banquet at Savannah Convention Center - Buffet and open bar.
~Ceremony
~Bag Pipes and Disk Jockey will provide entertainment.
- Shuttle bus returns to Days Inn 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 27th

Tours

- 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting for 44th Bomb Group Association (Hospitality Room)
- Low Country Tour (plantation site) - Cost \$25 - Leaves at 9:00 a.m., returns 12:00 noon.
or Leaves at 1:00 p.m., returns 4:00 p.m.
- Squadron Dinners - Mighty 8th Museum.
Shuttles to begin at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner served at 7:00 p.m.
Shuttles to return at 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 28th

- Annual Meeting 9:00 am. (Whereabouts to be announced)
- Tour on Savannah River Queen. Dock at 1:30 p.m., return at 3:00 p.m. (Cost \$17.50)
- Visit to Old Fort Jackson
Shuttles to leave at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:45 p.m.
Shuttle returns at 9:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 29th

- Leave for home.



44th Bomb Group Reunion October 25 - 29, 1998

Days Inn/ Days Suites • 201 West Bay Street
Savannah, Georgia



(912) 236-4440/Reservations Dept. (9 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Please print or type only. All information must be completed.

Name: _____

Daytime Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zipcode: _____

Spouse or Guest's Name: _____

Reservation - Accommodation: Send (the 1st Night's Deposit)

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Smoking: Non-Smoking: Room Type: Standard Double: 1 Bdrm Suite:

Cost + 12% tax - Total *or current tax rate.

1) Standard \$62 + 12% tax = \$69.44/night

2) Suites \$82 + 12% tax = \$91.84/night

★ 1st night deposit should be sent to hotel with reservation

prior to 9/25/98!

★DISCOUNT NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH 1-800 NUMBER!

You may send a check or indicate your credit card number and expiration date.

Hotel Policies

- ★ The hotel accepts credit cards and cash at check-in.
- ★ Check-in time is 3 p.m. Check-out time is 11 a.m.
- ★ Cancellation is no later than 48 hours prior to arrival.

We offer a cafe on property, open 6:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. , re-opens at 5:30 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. the next day.

If you are driving to the hotel, complimentary garage parking is available. Should you require taxi service from the airport or Amtrak, the following telephone number may be helpful: Coastal Shuttle ~ (912) 964-5999.

★Please send one copy with payment to the hotel and keep on copy for your records or call (912) 234-0841 Ext. #147 and identify your group for the discounted rate (Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) ☎

We look forward to seeing you in OCTOBER, 1998!!!



44th Bomb Group Reunion

October 25 - 29, 1998

Savannah, Georgia



Registration Form

Please print or type only. All information must be completed.

Last Name: _____ First (Name Tag) _____

Spouse: _____ Squadron: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Phone (____) _____

Guests & Relation: _____

Total to Attend: _____

REUNION COST: \$140 PER PERSON

Tour #1 October 24 - Historic Savannah City Tour \$16 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
Time: o 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. o 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 pm.

Tour #2 - October 25 - Historic Savannah City Tour \$20 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
w/Mansion admission 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tour #3 - October 27 - Low Country Tour \$25 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
Time: o 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon o 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tour #4 - October 28 - Narrated River Tour \$17.50 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____
Time: 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Total Amount: \$ _____

Registration must be received by October 11, 1998. No Registration will be processed after that date.

Mail To: Mike Yuspeh • 7214 Sardonyx Street • New Orleans, LA 70124-3509

Phone: (504) 283-3424 • Fax: (504) 283-3425 (6 rings to pick up.)

NOTE: If you have sent in previous information, please fill out this form and mail with check.





COST OF REUNION - REGISTRATION

Complete Reunion - \$140

This price includes:

Registration

Reception Days Inn

Transportation to Mighty 8th Museum

Admission to Museum, Lunch at museum

Transportation to Banquet, Convention Center, buffet, open bar (45 min.).

Transportation & Squadron Dinner.

Transportation & Old Fort Jackson admission and buffet.

All tours subject to number of people who sign up.

If not enough interest, tour will be cancelled.



THE REUNION



Autumn leaves rustling, together
to the appointed place the old warriors come.
Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.
Where they meet is not so important anymore...They meet
and that's enough for now.

Greetings echo across a lobby.
Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces,
that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give,
too shy to accept so lovingly.

But deep, within these Indian Summer days they have reached
a greater understanding of life and love.

The shells holding their souls are weaker now,
but hearts and minds grow vigorous remembering.

On a table someone spreads old photographs; a test of recollection.
And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone.

The rugged, slender bodies lost forever.

Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.

Some are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles",
and even in this fact they manage to find humor.

The women, all those who waited, all those who love them,
have watched the changes take place. Now, they observe and listen,
and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.

Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again,
reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.

Mending one more time the banner of their youth.

They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as propellers whine and whirl,
and planes come to life.

These birds with fractured wings can see beyond the mist of clouds,
and they are in the air again, chasing the wind,
feeling the exhilaration of flight, close to the heavens;
the wild and blue yonder of their anthem.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit,
move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.

Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent another year.

The room grows quiet for a time.

Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.

The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility. So this is how it goes.

The past is so much the present.

In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches, and the prayers, one cannot help but
hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.

Finally it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but
the past cannot be held too long for it is fragile.

They say, "Farewell...see you next year, God willing", breathing silent prayers for one another.

Each keeping a little of the others with him forever.

Rachel Firth

From the DAEDALUS FLYER, Spring 1997



FOLDED WINGS

February, 1998



- Claudie E. Anglin* 11/11/94 *Not data located. Notified by son, Gary*
- George Bakantic, Jr.* 4/16/88 506th *Sq. Pilot assigned on 20 Dec 44. Crash landed on 23 Feb 45 on the continent at A-64, St. Dizier, France. Plane was salvaged. Last mission flown was 20 April 45. Return to U.S.*
- Harold A. Barnes* 1/97 68th *S/Sgt. Barnes was a gunner on Lt. Robert C. Koablein's crew. Assigned to the 68th Sq. on 29 May 44. Harold completed his tour on 8 Sept 44.*
- Norman E. Bartlett* 11/26/96 67th *Lt. Bartlett was a 1st pilot in the 67th Squadron, assigned with his crown in June 44, and flew his first mission on 7 July. He was promoted to 1st Lt. on 1 Aug, and to Capt. on 24 Nov 44. In his later missions he was flying as a Lead Crew, completing his tour with 32 missions on 12 Dec, and on 19 Dec he was assigned to the 70th RCD for return to the U.S.*
- Herman D. Bowman* 3/27/97 *Served with the 1132 Quartermaster Corps as a Sgt.*
- Samuel Bryan, Jr.* 12/16/90 66th *S/Sgt. Bryan was a tail gunner on the Charles Craven crew. This crew transferred into the 66th Sq. in Aug 44 from the 492nd BG, flew their first mission 1 Sept 44. They concluded their tour on 29 Dec 44.*
- James M. Burton* 2/14/97 506th *S/Sgt. Burton was a tail gunner on Paul Durett's crew. Assigned to the 506th Sq. in July 44 and flew first mission on 12 Aug 44. Crew completed their tour in Jan 45 with 35 missions.*
- John M. Butler* 10/30/92 67th *Tail Turret gunner on Lt. Harold F. Hess crew. On their 6th mission to Mont de Marson, France, 27 March 44, their plane was badly damaged, forcing them to bail out over Spain. Crew eventually transferred to the 9th AF where they all completed 50 missions.*
- James B. Caulfield, Cpl.* 1/7/98 *Arrived Shipdham March 43. Assigned to 506th as communications specialist transferred to 492nd in March 44 returned to U.S. on 8 July 45.*
- Carlisle Crutcher* 1983 HQ,67,506 *50th Station Complement, ASN 0-905334 1st Lt. Crutcher sailed to England on the Queen Mary in Sept 42. At Cheddington he was the Group's S-2 Officer. Was promoted to Captain Dec 42. Capt. Crutcher was Group Public Relations Officer in April 44, was 67th Sq. Public Relations Officer in Aug 44 and Oct 44 was transferred to the 50th Station Compl. Squadron in the same capacity.*

- Roy C. Cunningham 1994 67th T/Sgt. Cunningham was the engineer on Lt. Fred P. Hildebrand's crew. They were assigned to the squadron on 24 Jan 45, flew their first mission on 16 Feb 45, completed 23 more before the end of hostilities.
- George B. Davis, LTC 7/97 He was assigned to the 506th Sq. on 1 Dec 43. Davis served as a co-pilot in the 506th Sq. for both Lts. Dean Miller and John W. Grow, Jr. His first mission was 14 Jan 44 and nine more with Lt. Miller, then 10 more with Lt. Grow. They transferred to the 66th Squadron in April 44 to fly as a lead crew, finishing up with 31 total missions on 21 June 44. Stayed in the Air Force and retired as Lt. Col.
- Roy M. Devlin 1/21/97 66/68th Devlin joined the John W. Grow's crew as a navigator in April 44 when that crew transferred into the 66th Sq. On Sept 1 he transferred to the 68th Squadron to join Lt. Torrell's crew. On 5 Oct 44 he was on DS to Ketteringham until 14 Jan 45 when he was permanently transferred to HQ.
- William M. Duffy, Jr. 9/24/97 Lt. Duffy was 1st pilot in the 506th Sq. from Dec 43 to March 44. On 29 Jan 44 he made an outstanding landing returning from a mission, badly damaged with wounded aboard, and a ball turret which would not retract, he successfully completed a tricycle landing without any further damage to the plane or the turret. His last few missions he flew as Group lead for the 44th BG.
- Robert E. Gjestrum 11/26/97 68th T/Sgt. Gjestrum served as the engineer for the Richard Donald crew, which was assigned on 2 June 44. Robert completed his tour in Sept 44 and transferred to the 12th RCD on 16 Sept 44 to return to the U.S. We last saw Bob at the San Antonio reunion.
- Robert G. Godwin 10/97 66th S/Sgt. Godwin was a gunner on Norm Nutt's crew after being transferred from Leo Crooks crew. He completed the war with Norm's crew and flew home on 29 May 45 in the famous aircraft, Glory Bee. Robert was an active member of the 44th BGVA, attended the Salt Lake City reunion in October and suffered a fatal heart attack a day after returning home.
- Gonzales Gomez 1972 67th Death was confirmed by Arthur Hand when searching for this man in Superior, Arizona.
- Frank T. Goosen 11/19/74 Unknown Death confirmed by Arthur Hand when searching for this man in Michigan.
- Herbert A. Hastings 1/30/98 67th T/Sgt. Hastings served as a Radio Operator on the Capt. Edward Reynold's crew. This crew flew its first mission in Nov 44 and flew missions until the end of the war in 45. They returned to the States in U-Bar, 42-50539.
- Earle V. Hawkins Date Unknown Lt. Hawkins joined the 68th Sq. in June 43, served as a co-pilot for George Martin in Africa including the Ploesti mission 44 and flew missions until the end of the war in 45. They returned to the States in U-Bar, 42-50539.



- Lee E. Howell, Sr.* 7/28/94 1132 QM *Lee's rank was Pfc.*
- Howard Lewis Hinman* 12/97 67th *Lt. Hinman was a 1st pilot in the 67th Squadron in Dec 44. On 16 Jan 45, while flying on left wing of Col. Snavely, both airplanes were severely damaged by flak, causing both planes to be abandoned just inside Allied territory. Lt. Hinman was badly injured and taken off flying status. He was replaced by Raymond Maynard.*
- John R. Jaquis* Unknown 68th *Lt. Jaquis was a navigator on the F/O Donald F. Tofte crew which joined the 68th Sq. 8 July 44. Their first mission was on 18 July and on their third mission, 21 July 44, Channel Hopper was severely damaged by flak Leaking fuel, he landed in Switzerland. Lt. Jaquis was interned, but returned to the Group on 31 Oct 44.*
- Albert Ed Jones, Sgt.* Unknown 66/340th *He served from Sept 42 to June 45. Sgt. Jones was very active out on the line, assisting the Tower personnel in handling operations, meeting and directing visiting aircraft, and helping with emergencies.*
- John Robert Kilgore* 2/16/98 66th *Lt. Kilgore served as a navigator for Capt. Louis Mazure in a lead crew. On 5 June 44, Capt. Mazure was killed, his aircraft badly damaged, but limped back to southern England where the crew bailed out. Lt. Kilgore broke both bones in his left leg, spent 8 months in hospital for treatment for his severe injuries. The Command Pilot, Col. Vance, 489th BG, was awarded the Medal of Honor for ditching this aircraft, as it had a live bomb on board.*
- Stephen Kincaid* Unknown *Still Researching.*
- Roy E. Kirkland* Unknown *Still Researching.*
- James R. Lewis, Lt.* 1995 506th *Lt. Lewis was co-pilot for Lt. Fred Rawson's crew. They were assigned to the 506th Sq. on 4 Feb 44, flew their first mission on 20 Feb. Their plane was badly damaged, had to be abandoned over enemy territory. Tail gunner RA Wapensky's chute was damaged and partially burned, so Lt. Lewis hoisted him onto his back, jumped while both hanging on tightly, but the opening of the chute caused the Sgt. to pull lose, falling to his death. Lt. Lewis was a POW until war's end, was recommended for a Silver Star.*
- Dixon C. McEver, Jr.* 5/20/91 67th *Lt. McEver flew as a co-pilot for the Capt. Joseph Herrmann crew. He was assigned the end of May, first mission flown on D-Day, 6 June 44. Many of their missions were aboard Fearless Fosdick. Completed tour of 31 missions on 15 Aug 44.*
- James H. McEver* 5/6/77 506th *Lt. James McEver was a brother of Dixon, flew his missions prior to Dixon's. James was a co-pilot for Lt. Jack M. Winn's crew, which was assigned in April 44. His first mission was 8 May 44, but a collision with a German fighter brought them down. Luckily, all crewmen survived to become POWs.*



- Howard A. Moore Unknown 67th Lt. Moore arrived at the 67th Sq as a navigator for the Gerald C. Grell crew in Oct 43. They had transferred from the 6th Anti-Sub Squadron at Gander. Lt. Moore and his pilot were injured in a crash, with Lt. Grell being returned to the States and the crew broken up. Later (Aug 44) Lt. Moore became Assistant S-3 and Gunnery Officer. He returned as a Major in 1972.
- Anthony P. Mitchell 12/97 506th Sgt. Mitchell was a propeller specialist in the 506th Sq.
- Joel Parker, Jr. 12/97 506th S/Sgt. Parker was the tail gunner on Lt. William M. Maynor's crew. They were assigned to the squadron in early Aug 43, then sent to Africa via ATC, flew on mission on 16 Aug. After a second trip to Africa in Sept and return to Shipdham, they were on their 11th mission, 20 Dec 43 when they were shot down. Sgt. Parker and seven of his crew mates survived to become POWs.
- Hoyt D. Parsons Unknown 68th S/Sgt. Parsons was a gunner-armorer on the F/O Donald Tofte crew, assigned to the 68th Sq. on 8 July 44. This crew was on its third mission, 21 July 44, made an emergency landing in Switzerland due to leading fuel and other damages. S/Sgt. Parsons was interned for the duration.
- Dr. Myron F. Sesit 4/25/97 68th Capt. Sesit served as the 68th Sq. Flight Surgeon for most of the war. He was among the ground echelon that went to England on the Queen Mary Sept 42. He travelled to Africa with the combat crews for the second DS in Sept 43. On 16 July 44 he transferred to the 93rd BG for one month, then returned to Shipdham till war's end.
- Keith Sprenger Unknown 68th Letter of 1/30/98 returned to Jerry Folsom. S/Sgt. Sprenger served with the Lt. W.W. Warner crew as a gunner. This crew arrived in the 68th Sq on 4 Jan 45. They made an emergency landing 1/2 mile short of the Anthis-sous-Laon Airfield, France on 25 Feb 45 - no serious injuries. This crew flew a/c #44-50536 "One Weakness." Home on 22 May 45.
- Gale B. Strank 12/14/88 No records at all for this man.
- Col. Daniel C. Valenti 1/24/88 68th Lt. Valenti, Navigator, arrived in the 68th Sq. with the Lt. Thomas C. Kay crew on 23 June 44. Their first mission was 13 July and completed 35 for their tour on 21 Nov 44. Lt. Valenti flew one mission with C. Hill on 16 July and again on 18 July 44, and his own tour on 5 Dec 44. During his tour he also flew with other crews, including Lts. Keeler and Sterling Dobbs, while assigned as 68th Sq. Navigator. We last saw Dan at the Salt Lake City reunion.
- James K. Warvell 6/18/97 T/Sgt. Warvell served as a Radio Operator on Lt. Frank L. Albert's crew which was assigned to the 506th Sq. in Sept 43, flew their first mission in Oct 43. On 18 March 44, Lt. Albert and crew were one of the 506th crews that were lost attacking Friedrickshaven, Germany. Badly damaged by flak approaching the target, Lt. Albert chose to continue to the target and bomb rather than to divert to nearby Switzerland. Shortly thereafter, the crew bailed out, but only Sgt. Warvell and three



others parachuted safely to become POWs.

James O. Wessinger, Jr. Unknown 68th Lt. Wessinger was co-pilot for the F/O Donald Tofte crew assigned to the 68th Sq. on 8 July 44. While on their third mission their aircraft was badly damaged by flak and fuel leaking, landed in Switzerland. Lt. Wessinger was interned. He returned to Shipdham on 27 Oct 44.

NOTE: The three F/O Tofte crew members listed above were confirmed deceased by their crew mate, Albert Browning. Exact dates could not be established.



I WISH I WAS 18 AGAIN

~George Burns~



At a bar down in Dallas
An old man chimed in...
and I thought he was out of his head...
Just being a young man, I first laughed it off,
when I heard what this old man said.



He said "I'll never again turn the young ladies head...
or go running of into the wind...
I'm three-quarters home, from the start to the end...
and I wish I was eighteen again.

I wish I was eighteen again, and going where I've never been...
But old oaks and old folks...
standing tall, just pretend,
I wish I was eighteen again.

Now time turns the pages, and life goes so fast...
The years turn the black hairs all gray. I talk to some young folks,
but they don't understand the words
this old man's got to say.

I wish I was eighteen again...and going where I've never been,
but old folks and old oaks, standing tall, just pretend,
I wish I was eighteen again....
Lord, I wish I was eighteen again.

January 10, 1998

Gerald Folsom
P.O. Box 2365
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102-3620

I appreciate the tremendous amount of work and effort you and Art Hand and others must have put into producing the 44th Veterans Association Roster. I feel that the least I can do is to provide some of the bits and pieces that I am aware of and let you fill in the big picture.

Dixon and James McEver from Waco, Texas, were both pilots and both served in the 44th. James didn't serve for very long. On April 8, 1944, on the way to Brunswick, and on his one and only mission, he met an FW190. The result was a mid air collision and both planes blew up. Miraculously all crew members survived and became POWs. (Pages 219-220 Lundys ROLL OF HONOR).

I did not meet James until after the war when we were both students at the University of Houston. James had saved his money while in the POW camps (actually, what else could he have done?) On the other hand, being in the 8th Air Force, I had very little incentive to save money. However, I did have a great time exploring London. After the war, things changed again. James was now affluent and sowing his pent up wild oats, and I was now broke and also had a pregnant wife. So, while I secretly admired his new life-style, I knew I could not keep up with him, so we kind of drifted apart. The last I heard of him was that he had accidentally drowned one Saturday afternoon at a swank private party. The date was June 5, 1977 in Houston, Texas.

Dixon McEver I knew well. In different planes, we sort of skipped along together from Casper, Wyoming in March, 1944 to Topeka, Kansas, and the 44th in England. When we arrived at Topeka, our crews were given brand spanking new B-24s and sent on our way. We went north by way of Lake Erie, New England, New Foundland and Iceland, and then on to the 44th in England. We did get an eight day layover in Iceland because of the horrible weather. We utilized the time mainly trying to thaw out. When McEver's crew left Topeka, they headed leisurely for England by way of the Caribbean and Africa before dropping in on us at Shipdham. We were proud of the way they managed to handle their rum and coca-cola on their way over.

You can believe that all the way over we had heard about what had happened to James. At that time we had no idea that we were also headed to the 44th. When we finally settled down in the 44th, we heard the details of what had happened to James. That is when we realized that the fun and games were over and the war was about to begin for us -- for real.

Dixon is listed in the deceased directory, but James is not. I think we should correct that.

Recently I received a new copy of the 44th Bomb Group's Roster and while checking it out to see if my name was spelled right, I discovered another John Butler listed in San Carlos, California. I was getting ready to visit my daughter who lives down the road in Cupertino, so I called the phone number that was listed. I was thinking in terms of having a cup of coffee and comparing notes. Mrs. Butler answered the phone and told me he had been deceased for over four years. When I explained who I was (another John Butler) and who I had called, she insisted that I come over and look at his collection of mementos. So my daughter and I went over to visit. We had a very pleasant and enjoyable visit. Their home is on a large hilltop with a spectacular view of San Francisco Bay. Now the part that I am sure will interest Art Hand, John Butler was on the Ploesti Raid. I saw his records of his trips from Shipdham to Africa and his records of Ploesti. Apparently he was one of the few that made it all the way back to Africa. Also, at some point he was transferred to the 15th Air Force in Italy.

Best regards,
John E. Butler
5931 Reamer
Houston, Texas 77074





Beating the Bushes

By Art Hand & Will Lundy

ISAAC ABEYTA: 1107 Harvest Rd, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Isaac was in the 66th Squadron, was on Lt. J.E. Flaherty's crew, served as a tail gunner, flew the Ploesti mission and many others.

THEODORE H. DOWALO: 127 West Richardson Ave., Langhorne, PA 19047-2827. 67th Sq. Gunner on Lt. Craig's crew.

MICHELE ANDERSON: 6363 South Fairwind Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84084 (801) 963-1387. She is Jerry Folsom's daughter.

BERNARD A. GREENFIELD: 322 State Street, Apt. 1, Carthage, NY 13619-1441 (315) 493-2317. Bernard was assigned to the 67th Sq. He worked with the DF Station out on "the line."

THERESA MURPHY McKENNEY: 308 Goodwin Road, Eliot, ME 03903 (207) 439-2866. Theresa is the daughter of Lt. William t. Murphy, Lt. Houle's crew, lost at sea on 18 Nov 43. See Page 33 herein.

MID AMERICAN AIR MUSEAUM: Liberal, Kansas.

DANI SU STRANGE: 9307 Gary, Lubbock, TX 79423. She is the daughter of Fritz Selasky.

JEAN B. ROBBINS: 9145 Ahmann Ave. Whittier, CA 90603 (562) 696-4638. Sgt. Robbins served as a nose turret gunner in the 506th Sq. flew with the Bakanic crew Dec 44 to April 45.

LINDA WESTON: 10 Sydenham Court, Berkshire Close, Portsmouth P01-1RE. Linda and her husband lived in the farmhouse next to Site 2. She was "mum" to the 506th.

LT. MATT YLITALO, USMC: 176 Glenwood Drive, Hubert, NC 28539. Sent in by Don Ukens.

"New" members, people who had previously been members who dropped out for various reasons, but have again "seen the light" and have again joined us, or been located.

WILLIAM BRADY, JR.: 3139 Sam Houston, Forest Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611. 67th Sq. Ploesti, flew on Suzy Q with Brandon.

CLIFFORD H. BAUER: 833 South Eliseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904 (415) 461-2936. 66th Sq. Wife Mildred.

DOUGLAS S. EDEN: Route 4, Box 4452 Lot 8 Donna, TX (956) 464-2571.

PAUL JAMES: 287 Starview Drive, Rutherfordton, NC 28139 (704) 287-7513. 66th Sq. Al Graham's crew.

HAROLD A. KRAMER: 7016 North Tahoma Ave., Chicago, IL 60646-1134 (773) 763-7128. 464th SD. Wife Beverly.

ADRIN LANCASTER: 6218 Anglewood Lane, Cottondale, AL 35453 (205) 556-1309.

HARRY H. POWERS: 12400 Oak Leaf Court, Auburn, CA 95603 (916) 823-0610. 68th Squadron.

DOYLE V. SHARRETT: 19301 West Desert Forest Dr., Sun City, AZ 85351 (602) 933-2047. 806th Chemical.

ARCHIE M. THOMAS: RR #7, Box 7080, Palestine, TX 75801-9111 (903) 729-6779. 67th Squadron. Wife - Novella.

MEMORY LANE



A FARM JUST OFF THE BASE. ANYONE RECOGNIZE THE PYRAMID ROOF?



EXCUSE ME, IS THIS THE TRAIN TO BENGHAZI?



L to R 1st Lt. Bob Hook, Navigator, Capt. Bill McCoy, pilot (66th), and Lt. Col. Eugene Snavely, Group DO, this photo was taken about 15 Feb. '43. A few days later on 20 February, the entire McCoy crew were killed when, on a training flight, they mysteriously crashed near Watton.



A SUMMER bike ("borrowed?") ride NEAR THE BASE. Anybody you know?



MAIL CALL



Editor: This comes from Sue Johnson Vandenberg. After Gen. Johnson passed away, I sent some biographical material to Steve Adams and asked him to see that the English Press, especially in Norfolk, got the material and would "do right" by our General with a nice article. Steve turned it over to Steve Snelling, veteran reporter of the Eastern Daily Press, and between the extensive photo archives Steve Adams has and the intimate knowledge Steve Snelling has of the General, both during and post-war, he authored a "farewell to a legend" which was a magnificent tribute to him and was given a full page in the Eastern Daily Press published in Norwich. Steve sent me a copy to pass on to Sue. We got calls from all over England from English friends who knew or knew of General Johnson. It was so wonderful to see how revered our boss was in our beloved England.

Dear Roy,

Thank you so very much for the wonderful clipping! Steve Adams wrote and told me it was a wonderful tribute and I was going to ask you to make me a copy. It was so thoughtful of you to send me an original. I have one problem with the article—I wonder who told the author that Dad was "small"!!! That must have surprised you too! Oh well, I guess it made a better story!

We missed you at the funeral, but you certainly couldn't leave such a fine birthday celebration!

I want to thank the members of the 44th BGVA for the donation in Dad's name to the Air Force Aid Society. Barrett Taylor, who was such a great help to me, told me Dad had set up the program at the behest of General Arnold after WWII.

It was such an honor to have so many members of the 44th at the funeral. I wish I could have had hours and hours to talk to everyone. I heard so many wonderful stories.

My husband, Sandy, and I are in the process of nominating Dad to the National Aviation Hall of Fame. I am the portrait artist for the NAHF and I want to draw his portrait for posterity! I have already done the one for Sandy's father.

The farewell to Dad in the 8-Ball Tails was beautiful. You all knew him the best and really wrote the very best article.

Thank you again for the news clipping.

Very Sincerely,
Sue

THE HONORARY PALL BEARERS FOR GENERAL JOHNSON, left to right: Col. Ed. "Mike" Mikoloski (66th), Nancy Von Epps (14th CBW), Anthony Mastradone (67th), Col. Richard D. Butler (506th), Col. William Barrett Taylor (14th CBW), Col. William R. Cameron (67th/Hq. 44th BG), Brig. Gen. Jack Gibson (Hq. 44th).



THE USAF HONOR GUARD prepared to lower the casket of General Leon Johnson into his Arlington National Cemetery final resting place.



To follow Sue's thank you letter, we have these photos and report on the funeral Service for General Johnson from TONY MASTRADONE.

The previous photo is of those 44th Veterans who were close to the General and who were present to serve as Honorary Pall Bearers for him. The next photo was taken as the USAF Honor Guard began to lower the casket. The Honorary Pall Bearers can be seen to the right.

The service was attended by many dignitaries of high Government and military rank which included GENERAL DAVID JONES, USAF (Ret) former Air Force Chief of Staff. COL. WILLIAM BARRETT TAYLOR made all of the arrangements for a post burial reception gathering with food and refreshments, which allowed the attendees an opportunity to pay their respects and visit with other friends present. COLONEL EDWARD "MIKE" MIKOLOSKI delivered a beautiful eulogy for General Johnson which brought many laudatory comments from those in attendance.



GUESS WHAT? THE "PING BOMBER" IS BACK!

Dear Will, 23 February, 1998

Putting things off is what I seem to do best. But three years? That is about how long ago this event occurred and I should have gotten it on paper and in the mail then. It involves a welcome phone call just about three years ago.

You may recall a story I wrote about those infamous "PING" candy bars that seemed to endure on our PX shelves at Shipdham long after all other items of any value had been sold. That tale appeared in the Spring 1995 issue of the 8 Ball Tails.

If you recall, I bought out the PX's supply of PINGS, (two 24 bar cartons) and dropped them over Germany on our next mission. Probably did more harm than our bombs on that trip.

The story, although entirely true, was written with tongue-in-cheek. As I recall, a couple of other Navigators took up the cause and also dropped PINGS over the Reich on their later missions. (Often wondered what the manager of that PX thought of the sudden 'popularity' of that item, especially if he had ever actually tried to eat one.)

Well, about a month or two, after the letter and it's PING story appeared in the 8 Ball Tails, I received a long distant phone call one evening. It was from Bob Lawson, former commanding Officer of the 1132nd Quartermaster Company, in the 14th Combat Wing. Apparently, the PX in our area was one of his responsibilities.

Lawson had just read that story and was calling to apologize to me for the shortages at the PX those many years ago. Said he wished he had known of the problem at the time.

Heck, I told him, if he had known about it and changed the conditions, he would have ruined one of the few good 'war stories' I still remember and can pass on in any memoirs I may leave with kin.

Sorry I didn't know the then Captain Lawson at the time. He sounds like a thoroughly great guy, and I wish him well at this very late date.

Funny how those incidents of almost a lifetime ago still keep flowing back, sometimes with a new slant added just to keep the events alive in our minds.

Anyway Will, I just thought you might care to hear just this one more crackle out of this old navigator.

With sincere best wishes,
Rob Fisk (Nav. Hinshaw's Crew)
562 Buckingham Ave.
Syracuse, NY 13210

Editor: p.s. Rob, I am saddened to report that COLONEL ROBERT S. "BOB" LAWSON, USAFR (Ret), Commander, 1132nd QM Company, passed away January 8, 1997. We last saw Bob and Ruthie at the 1996 St. Louis reunion. We miss our "Ping" supplier, he was a fine officer.



Editor: This is a blend of two letters from Al Cataldo, who married Peg, the sister of Shipdham's ambassador of goodwill, Don Dodd. Al worked at the Sub-Depot. The aircraft he talks about became named "The Flying Log." You have heard me say before "the craft of fighting a war is making do with what you've got!" For the Sub-Dept G.I.'s this was simple; you've got a B-24 with a back problem, you put in a splint and fly it to the B-24 Hospital, no sweat! Yankee ingenuity was a dimension in the American Citizen Soldier that the Germans never did get onto. Don't you love those stories like the "Flying Log?" Will, we'll have to do that complete story.

Dear Will:

Don't know if you could use this picture and story for publication in one of the Journal publications. Also, whom would I contact and what would the cost be to post a copy of our 44th BGVA Journal to Don Dodd. I brought my Summer, 97 copy over and three guys borrowed it. Yes...I keep all of my issues!

I have also enclosed a couple clippings from the Dereham and Fakenham times. One regarding Remembrance Day placing of the wreath. The other is



about a short talk I gave at the January meeting of the British Legion. They were interested in the amount of battle damage we had to contend with and did we have any crash landings. The one I did talk about---but don't remember the name---was the plane which came in---think a landing gear gave way and hanger #3 (464th sub-dept) replaced the bombay walkway (temporarily) with a telephone pole. Then it was flown to the Wattan Depot for the actual walkway.

There is an article on this but don't have time to look it up. I know I had some kind of a job on that plane the night it was in---they used to put me on de-icers or fuel cell replacement.

Oh...I did get an opportunity to make an entry into my log as the weather cleared one morning and I took up Piper Cherokee.

While visiting my in-laws in Shipdham, I had the privilege of placing a wreath on the 44th BG memorial located in All Saints church yard. The occasion was "Remembrance Day" Nov. 11th (celebrated on Sunday, 9 Nov 97). The British Legion conducted their poppy drive prior to this holiday. At their service, they remember all their veterans who sacrificed their lives in WWI, WWII, Lorea and Falkland wars. The names of the servicemen from the village who never returned are read and then a prayer is recited.

Regardless of the many years which have passed since WWII, members of the Shipdham British Legion never forget the airmen from the 44th BG who gave their lives for their country, as in the past, I went along that afternoon, with a contingent of the Shipdham British Legion to place a poppy wreath on the memorials in Watton, Deophas Green and at Arrow Air on the Shipdham Base.

Simple as these ceremonies are, it still gives one time to think and remember our friends who gave so much for us.

Sincerely,
Al C.

Alfred Cataldo
45 Wianno Rd.
Yarmouth Port, CA
02675-2178



This touching letter comes from Theresa Murphy McKenney, daughter of 2nd Lt. William T. Murphy, Navigator on the 1st Lt. Joseph L. Houle 67th Sqdn. Crew which, after suffering heavy battle damage over Kjellar Airfield, Oslo Norway, on the 18 November 1943 raid, were forced to ditch approximately 50 miles short of England landfall. The entire crew perished in the ditched aircraft.



Theresa Murphy McKenney at the Memorial Marker in Arlington National Cemetery for her father, 2nd Lt. William T. Murphy. She is accompanied by her son, Rick McKenney and grandson, Matthew William McKenney after the Memorial Service in his honor on October 10, 1997.

Dear Mr. Owen:

A memorial service was held at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia on October 10, 1997 for 2nd Lt. William T. Murphy, a native of Highland Falls, NY. He served in the 8th Air Force 67th Squadron 44th Bomb Group in WWII as a navigator, B-24 Liberator, and was awarded the Purple Heart and Air Force Cross. I am grateful to Will Lundy, Historian for the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Assn., for sharing information from his Roll of Honor. To quote from Mr. Lundy's report of November 18, 1943

Target: the Motor Works at Kjellar airfield, Oslo Norway: "Enemy aircraft made attacks both before

the target and again on the return. Many ships were damaged by an unexpected attack out of the sun on the return, and were lost due to these attacks and by running out of fuel and having to ditch. The 67th Squadron lost three ships and 68th lost two..."

Some would say "Why have a memorial service now?" Two years ago, during the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, my grandmother's niece, whom I had never met, contacted me. She had read an article in National Geographic about the World War II Cambridge Cemetery in Cambridge, England where the names of 5,126 Americans who gave their lives in the service of their country but whose remains were not recovered, are inscribed on a 472 foot wall, the Tablets of the Missing. The government must have attempted to let my mother know of this memorial when it was dedicated in 1956 but she had moved from the last known address which they had on file as I'm sure was the case with many WWII widows. Only someone who has been through a loss where there is no tangible place to go to pay homage can understand how moving this discovery was.

April 1996, this same relative, Kathryn Schoch, sent me information that the next of kin could request a memorial marker be placed at Arlington National Cemetery for WWII veterans whose remains were not recovered.

18 November 1997 There were months of phone calls and sending for forms. When I took the completed application to the post office. I sent it Certified Mail to be sure of its receipt. When they stamped the date, it was notable that the date was November 18th, the day he was reported missing in action August 1997

The last flying B-24 Liberator flew into the former Grenier Air Base Manchester, NH (where he had been stationed). My Mom read about it after the fact, but I was able to bring the picture of this plane that he was so proud of to show everyone when we assembled before the ceremony at Arlington. Next year I'll find out ahead about the tour and go aboard.

September 1997. Invitations to the memorial service went out and in the process, I heard from so many people who had known my Dad in so many different ways. To quote from a letter I received from someone in his 67th squadron: "November of 1943 was a deadly time in WWII and I salute Lt. Murphy and all who flew with him on those perilous days. I know because I was there also. They indeed "signed the skies with their honor."

10 October There was a room in the Administration Building for us to gather and the chaplain came in to meet us. I had brought his pictures and medals and documents and the rubbing of his

inscription from Cambridge Cemetery. We followed in motor procession to the site and 6 young airmen met us. The pace at which they moved, and the regard shown for the flag as they removed it from the car, unfolded it for the prayers then refolded it to give to me, was so calming and beautiful and full of respect. There was a 21 gun salute and seeing the men in uniform high on the ridge with the sun outlining each one was a powerful tribute, as was the playing of Taps. The day was perfect—warm, sunny, with a gentle breeze blowing the golden leaves from the trees. It was like nothing else and we were privileged to be there to remember him and pay tribute to him at last.

Many members of the family were able to attend, while others, unable to travel because of poor health, sent warm letters with information about my Dad. One, whom I had never met had saved a scrapbook of clippings which mean so much to me now. In a way, it makes not having known him more tragic, but I've learned so much more about him which I can share with my children and grandchildren. His great grandson, Matthew William, was among those present at the memorial service and will be able, like the rest of us, to return to pay homage to his great grandfather in the years to come...to remember him, to say a prayer and to give thanks for the sacrifice he made for us all.

Theresa Murphy McKenney
308 Goodwin Road
Eliot, ME 03903
(207) 439-2866

Editor: Thank you so much, Theresa, for sharing with your 44th family, the emotional experience of finally, after 54 years, being able to honor and bid a loving farewell to your heroic father with your family at your side.

It is only lately, with witnessing situations like yours and that of Lois Cianci, where, time notwithstanding, the loss of a dearly loved one in a far away conflict in circumstances that prevent personal involvement in seeing to a final place of rest, we are coming to understand that the loved ones left behind will bear the feeling of an unfulfilled need. This is a need to have some sort of opportunity to bid a personal farewell which will be an assurance that the life of their loved one is truly over. When one comes to understand that feeling, we need not ask, "Why have a memorial service now?"

Theresa, we are very proud that you have chosen to remain a part of the 44th family. We will save a membership for both Rick and Matthew.



Dear, Mr. Lundy,

I received your letter a short time ago but have been to busy at work to reply at length. So I wanted to take a few minutes to tell you that I am grateful for your help. I am a coworker of Mr. Norman Greenberg, Albert's younger brother. He was troubled by the lack of knowledge about the part his family played in that time when the world was at war. Eventually I asked him what he did know, and all he had was a photo. Albert it seems, took most all his experience to his grave. I recognized the "Eight-Ball" patch, and told Norm that there must be more to tell. I mentioned that to have flown with the "Mighty Eighth" and survived those early years when combat aircrew losses were so high was in itself a story.

You, by your fine work have given Norman back a piece that is missing in the continuity of his family's life. I can tell you first hand that he beamed when I mentioned his address and Albert's ASN. I would like to know more about how I can continue to aid Norm in his quest. Perhaps you can forward some organization literature for us to peruse. I can only wonder if a crew photo exists. I am also curious to know if I can still find a color picture of the "Eight Ball" patch. I know the Greenberg family would find those wonderful.

As for myself, I continue to write my own family history, for whom the losses in WWII were keenly felt. I again thank you for your help, not only for what you have done today, but also for what you did in youth when the world was dark with war. Keep in touch.

Forever Free,
Terry Smith

Roy, - A nice letter.

Albert Greenberg was a member of Lt. Comey's crew, in the 66th Sq., arrived shortly before the crews went to Africa mid June. Albert Greenberg was moved to Lt. J. Reed's crew and flew several missions with them in July and August, but not Ploesti. He was a gunner and radio operator. Albert returned to Africa in Sept. back with his Comey crew and flew two missions, last one there was the infamous Weiner-Neuatrai, Austria when we

took another bad beating. I have sent more data to Terry and a photo to give to Al's younger brother and his family. It seems that Al related nothing about WWII to his brother.

DON'T WORRY

Do you know who in 1923 was:

- 1) President of the largest steel company?
- 2) President of the largest gas company?
- 3) President of the New York Stock Exchange?
- 4) The greatest wheat speculator?
- 5) President of the Bank of International Settlement?
- 6) The Great Bear of Wall Street?

These men should have been considered some of the worlds most successful men. At least they found the secret of making money. Do you know what became of these men?

- 1) The President of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab, died penniless.
- 2) The President of the largest gas company, Edward Hopson, became insane and died in a mental institution.
- 3) The President of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was released from prison to die at home.
- 4) The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cooper, died abroad, penniless.
- 5) The President of the Bank of International Settlement shot himself.
- 6) The Great Bear of Wall Street also was a suicide.

The same year, 1923, Gene Sarazen won the U.S. Open and PGA championships. Today he is wealthy and still playing golf.

Conclusion: STOP WORRYING ABOUT BUSINESS AND START PLAYING GOLF!



1998 Reunion



Savannah, Georgia

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8 BALL TAILS

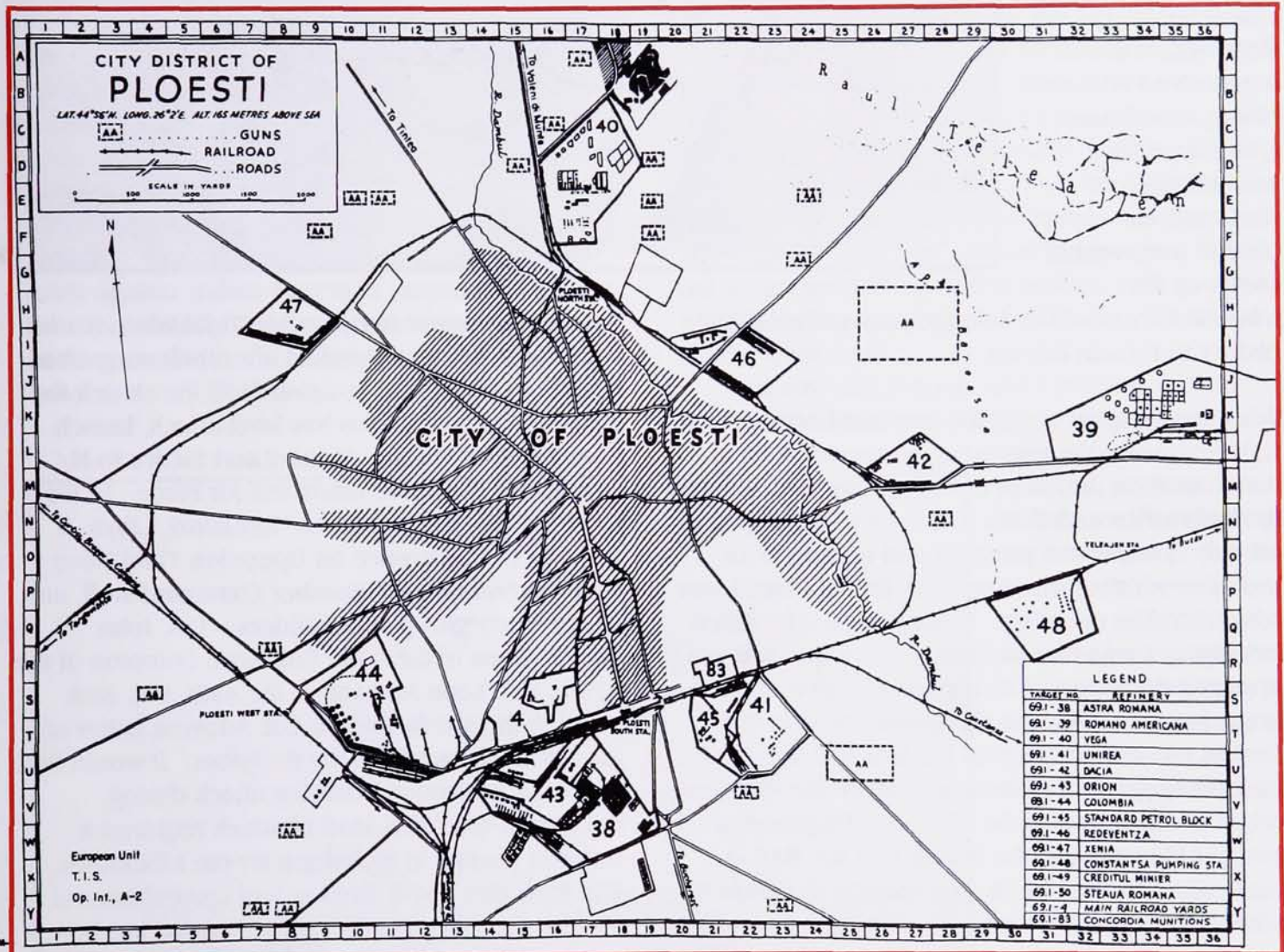
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Summer, 1998

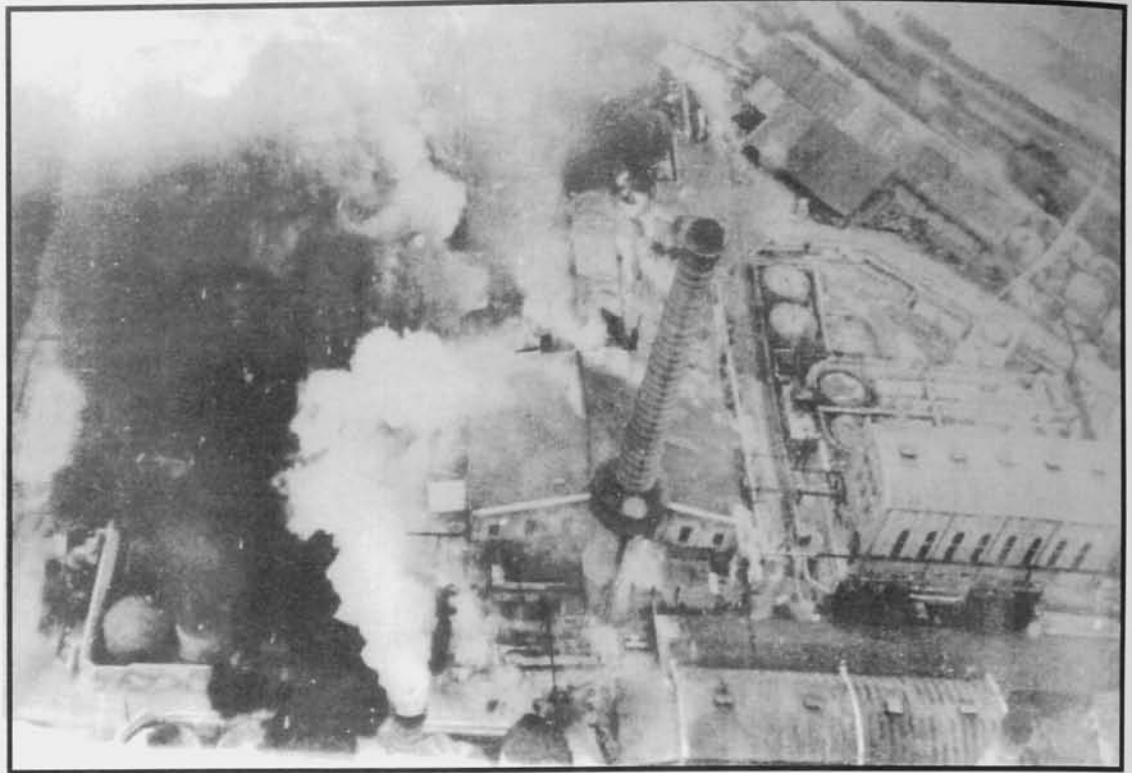
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August 1, 1998, fifty-five years ago today, thirty-six B-24s of the 44th Bomb Group led by its commander, Colonel Leon W. Johnson took off from Benina Main Airfield, Libya to join one hundred forty-two Liberators from the 93rd, 98th, 376th, and 389th Bomb Groups on a daring low-level attack on the Nazi held oil refinery and storage facilities at Ploesti, Rumania, some 1,250 miles from their Libyan take-off bases. This, the longest combat mission ever attempted in the B-24, was to rank forever with the Doolittle B-25 low level attack on Tokyo, Japan as the two most hazardous missions in the history of modern air combat. It is to the ever lasting glory of the men who flew and survived and those who did not return as well as the support element who miraculously sustained the crews and aircraft in terrible daytime heat, cold nights and interminable sand, yet enabled them to launch on time to fly this fateful mission that we dedicate this issue of the 8-Ball Tails.

So much has been written about the Ploesti mission from many points of view, it is not our intent to mark this 55th anniversary of the mission with another rehash of that legendary operation. Our purpose is to briefly examine the character, determination and ingenuity of all those young Americans who supported, maintained and launched the aircraft and combat crews on the mission they would fly into the pages of aviation history to remain forever.



From the onset of WWII, the fact that Germany and Italy both were dependent upon imported oil to carry out their dream of conquest from Scandinavia to North Africa and that a major percentage of the oil they needed was pumped and refined in an area surrounding the Rumanian City of Ploesti was recognized by the Allies. Misunderstood by Allied Intelligence was that Rumanian oil output was approximately 50% of its capability which distorted importance of Ploesti in the priority of strategic targets. Added to this was the fear that a breakthrough on the Eastern front by the Russians might result in loss of the oil fields. Opposed to striking Ploesti were the British and the RAF in particular who had been, and wanted to continue, with defensive attacks on aircraft production which was the root of Goering's air blitzkrieg of England. While the RAF scoffed at the AAF doctrine of daylight strategic bombing, they were outspoken in their opposition to pulling three full B-24 Groups out of the 8th AF daylight raids notwithstanding Winston Churchill's support of the Ploesti raid decision which came out of the Summit Conference in Washington D.C. in late May, 1943. The decision to destruct the Ploesti oil production was passed to Eisenhower who approved the application of five B-

24D Bomb groups to Operation Tidal Wave, (code word for the Ploesti mission) after their support of Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. He left the decisions of high versus low level attack, launch from Libya or Tunisia, training and tactics to M/Gen. Lewis Brereton, Cmdr, 9th Air Force. In his Brereton Diaries, he states: "Benghazi, Libya, 6 July 1943. Conference on Operation Tidal Wave with General Ent, the Bomber Command staff, and all the heavy group commanders -- Col. John "Killer" Kane of the 98th, Col. Keith Compton of the 376th, Col. Leon Johnson of the 44th, Col. Jack Wood of the 389th, and Lt. Col. Addison Baker of the 93rd. I announced my decisions. It would be a low-level, horizontal bombing attack during daylight hours. This kind of attack required a decided change in technique for the Liberators. The 98th and 397th Groups had carried several low-level attacks against Italian targets, but here they were faced with an entirely different problem. *I knew that the liberator was definitely not suited for a low-level attack, but I felt that the surprise element would weigh heavily in our favor.* It was necessary to assure the heaviest possible damage in the first attack. Because of the distance involved, over 2,000 miles (averaged 2250), and the danger of bad weather, I felt that our formations might get dispersed and not hit the target so effectively from a high altitude as they

would in a low-level attack. After receiving the target folders, I studied them for two weeks before making up my mind on the low-level attack. *I invited no discussion whatsoever among the Group Commanders. While I do not believe there was a single commander who would have not preferred a high altitude attack, the decision was accepted by all.*"

So the scene is set, the cast is filled and the script is undergoing final adjustments for a production which is the brainchild of a bright colonel assistant to General Arnold. Over 200 B-24D Liberator aircraft and crews, with skeleton ground crew and specialist maintenance personnel were assembled at airfields near Benghazi, Libya. Augmented by 1100 cooks, bakers, clerks, medics, engineers, MP's and various other support personnel from 9th AF resources, they set up tent cities at the various airfields. They then began to train and carry out raids against Italian targets in preparation for the invasion of Sicily and another mission of which nothing certain could be said except it would be flown at a very low level.

Command already in North Africa. Even, at that point, without the rationale for the low-level training, they were gaining new piloting, navigation and bombing skills at low level.

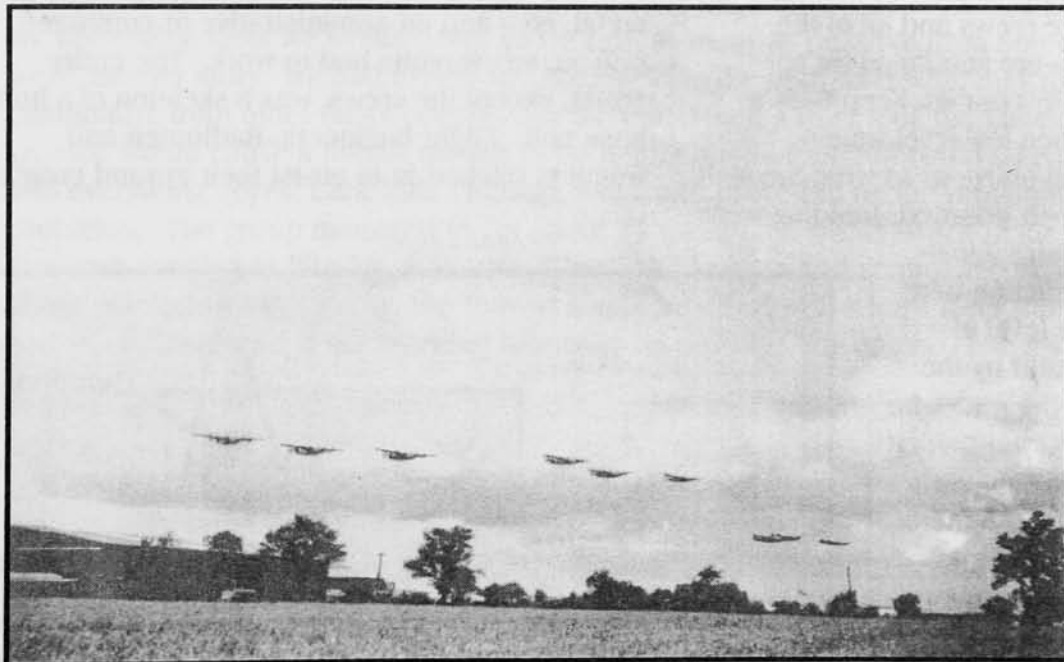
Like everyone, no matter the crew position, when the shock of being assigned to B-24's subsided, a real hatred set in. Lt. Keith Schuyler, 67th Sqdn., in his book "Elusive Horizons" describes these emotions perfectly "I hated her guts; I hated everything about this pot-bellied bitch of an airplane --- If it had to be heavies, why the B-24? The hate I had developed for big airplanes squeezed over to admit fear the first time I looked at a Liberator on the ramp. They never were a pretty sight at best-those four huge engines tacked onto a slip of a wing, belly nearly dragging the concrete, and hognose stuck way too far forward. And, like pregnant hippopotamuses, they bucked and snorted their way around the hangars, letting out an occasional squeak of rubber, their constant bloat seeming to substantiate the foul odors that drifted from them.

But now she is gone, and I swallow a lump every time I hear one of the heavies going over (his

POW camp). For, in between the time I came to hate and fear her and the time I jumped from her flaming bowels (over enemy territory) I had come to love and respect the beast." {Schuyler's first B-24 Instructor Pilot prophesied that in 90 hours of flying time he will have come to love the Lib.)"

So with what turned out to be a period of just over two months before execution; we find the entire IX Bomber

Command in a serious operational contradiction. On the Command and Planning Staff side of the operation, we have a commander and staff planning to commit 178 Liberators and crews to a mission which will require tactics completely alien to the purpose for which the aircraft was designed



Low-level formation training prior to Africa deployment. Flight passing over Shipdham, notice the hangars to the left.

All of the groups involved had been flying low-level training sorties; the 44th, 93rd and 389th in England prior to deployment for detached service with 9th AF; and the 98th and 397th of IX Bomber

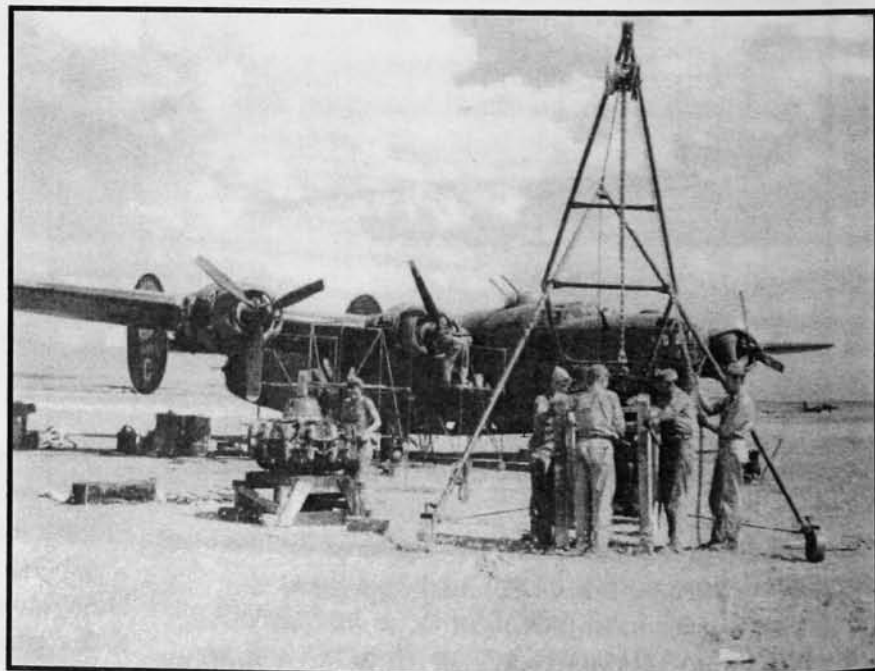
and the crews trained. A few three aircraft low altitude sorties against weakly defended Italian targets flown by the 376th and a "cowboy" like raid which launched 13 B-24's on 11 June 1942 from Fayid, Egypt, and after flying all night, struck the Ploesti oil refineries at dawn from ten to twelve thousand feet altitude was the only unorthodox bombing experience known to the B-24. This early raid was made by a small provisional bomb group led by Col. Harry Halvorsen. The purpose, more than damaging the oil supply, was a morale builder in the fashion of the Doolittle raid. Although largely ineffectual, there were no losses to enemy action; no doubt because of the complete surprise of an attack from the south. This, however, bode danger for the IX Command bombers to come, because the following year saw a great strengthening of fighter and anti-aircraft defenses in that southern sector. So the decision to commit the B-24 to this untested theory of attack was based upon its range, bomb load capability, and, in the minds of the planners, its ability, in formation, to defend itself and fly into enemy territory unescorted.

On the other hand, we had the "troops" (small t), the guys who were the cast in this production; the combat and maintenance crews and all of the support personnel who were settling-in for an unknown period to live, fly combat, keep B-24's flying, have some fun when low-level training sorties were resumed; all oblivious to what the staff in the Secret green, heavily guarded, building were planning that would require a low-level attack. The contradiction here was the difference in the level of confidence in the B-24 held by the planners as opposed to the men who flew and maintained this "pot-bellied bitch of an airplane." You see, the prophesy of Lt. Schuyler's Instructor Pilot had come to pass. The air and ground crews had come to love and respect that tough old slab-sided airplane with those four dependable Pratt & Whitney R-1830-43 engines hung on that "slip of a wing."

68TH SQUADRON
"MARQUERITE ANN"
GETS AN ENGINE
CHANGE.

The word "live" in the previous paragraph should be struck and replaced with "survive." Life in the Libyan Desert in the summer is not Life, it is an exercise in survival. What the "troops" accomplished in that hell of red sand, daytime heat, nighttime chill, lousy chow and lousier water, dysentery, crickets, dust and sand, dust and sand, and more dust and sand was nothing short of miraculous. The indignities of standing buck naked in a line with a towel over a shoulder waiting for a turn to stand under a salvaged aircraft fuel cell to take a Mediterranean Sea water shower. And worse, to answer to "Crap Call" and sit on half of a cut-out 55 gal. drum dug into the sand, trying to defecate while looking aloof and unconcerned, while others are waiting their turn.

The abhorrent living conditions notwithstanding, everyone worked. The cadre of personnel that came to Benghazi were limited to the crew members and the number of support personnel that the B-24 oxygen system could support in-flight. This usually meant an extra four people; Crew Chief, Assistant Crew Chief, a Maintenance Specialist (Prop., Electrician, Hydraulic, Sheet metal, etc.) and an administrative or command person, so everyone had to work. The entire group, except the crews, was a skeleton of a home base unit. Flight Engineers, Radiomen and Gunners pitched in to assist their ground crew on



engine and tire changes. There were not enough maintenance specialists, so they were always in demand and worked tirelessly; instead of complaints, one was more likely to hear "What the hell, there ain't nothin' else to do around this stinkin' place!"

Mike Curtain, 67th Sqdn. Crew chief talks about the life in Africa: "We were welcomed by dust, sand, Arabs, kids and very hot weather. The toughest thing was the sand, it was terrible. It wouldn't be unusual to have at least two engine changes after a day of practice flights. We would trade parts with the 98th BG as needed - propeller frames, carburetors, etc.



67th Sqdn.
Mike CURTAIN in
the "ENGINE
Shop."

Daytime temperatures were extremely hot, making the handling of tools and equipment rather difficult. We knew what tools we would need, so we took as many as possible from Shipdham. Replacement parts were another story. We had to beg and borrow from the 98th, and what they didn't have, we would cannibalize from other out-of-commission aircraft. When a B-24 took off, the clouds of dust and sand created would cause a twenty minute delay before another aircraft could take the runway. That dust got into everything...eyes, ears, hair, clothing, tents, and proved to be the principal cause for our engine problems. The group managed to get about 25 water tank trucks which made a trip to the Mediterranean Sea each evening to fill with sea water. They would return and commence to water down the runway about midnight. By morning, the runway would be dried with a hard layer that resembled plaster of paris and would last through the morning take-offs. To our glee, the engine changes became less frequently required.



67th
SQUADRON
GEORGE
BACCASH
AND DICK
WARD in
THE
"HANGAR."



68th Sqdn. "WING AND A PRAYER" THE "PARTS BIN."

To get a cool drink we would send up our filled canteens in our planes. When they landed, we would bury the frozen canteens in the sand in our tent for a cool drink later. We also used to hoard our ration of one can of beer per day until we had a few, then send them up on a test hop like the canteens.

The four squadrons were fairly widely dispersed. We had a Weapons Truck to travel to each squadron. We all worked as a team; all four squadrons worked together where it was needed. This was especially true immediately before Ploesti. We were up day and night right up to take-off. The claim is true, the work never ended. For that mission especially, every plane possible had either new engines (as did Suzy Q) or was completely checked over as "Ready."

One of the great under estimates Hitler made was his contempt for the young men of America being able to transition from what he perceived as pampered school boys and pool hall hang-outs to soldiers and airmen that could ever hope to match the disciplined young men of Germany. However while the Hitler youth were goose-stepping to the blind hysteria of the Third Reich, the young men of America were being raised in a society that loves individual performance, but loves it best in a team effort. "Let's get one for the Gipper." And they were, and always will be, tinkers, ingenious, curious tinkers. They were out on the farm always fixing and running farm equipment or if they were town kids, they were tinkering with some fifty dollar Model T. They knew all about blown dual Stromberg Carburetors and Ruxtel rear ends, and they could drive, man how they could drive. For many, the yearning to fly was swelling in their chests. When the war came, they answered. And yes, they were chock-full with patriotism, freedom and love of country, but deep down in every heart was not the fear of war, it was the fear that your buddies were going off to fight and you might be left behind. So these school boy, farm boy, pool hall loafer, tinkerer, team player cream of America's young men were turned into soldiers and airmen. All across Europe they beat the German Tiger Tanks with an inferior Sherman tank because they could drive 'em and tinker, making do with what

they had to keep 'em running and firing. When their Sherman tanks were unable to move in the hedgerows of France, they kicked the Germans out with platoons and squads of infantry who were raised on team work. Each individual doing his job and his biggest concern being not to let his squad buddies down.

Whether it is an infantryman slogging in the mud; a tail gunner lifting himself through the aft hatch preparing to launch on a mission; the crew chief who has completed his preflight and is waiting for the "cranking #3" signal from the cockpit; there is that haunting fear that you will do or have not done something that will let your buddies down.

One last thing about the Hitler misconceptions; ingenuity. The Nazi German mind of that era (especially) was in lockstep with Nazi fanaticism. There were hopes but no imagination. Thus Hitler again underestimated the American fighting man. Imagine, if you will, the July 31 initial briefing for the Ploesti raid when General Brereton visited each of the groups and introduced the low-level attack mission. In the mind of every pilot was the thought: given what I've learned in our low-level training and given the minimum amount of maneuvering space I will have in the target area, what can I do to bring my crew through this mess alive? Bill Cameron, Pilot of "Buzzin' Bear," and full of American ingenuity, had already faced that question:

"When other aircraft were practicing low level formations, we (he and his Co-Pilot, Bill Dabney) would visit with the British anti-aircraft gunners that provided protection around Benghazi. We would ask them, "What aircraft would you shoot at (in a low-level formation)? They would invariably say "the highest aircraft." Therefore when we came out of the smoke of the Ploesti oil refineries flying at the assigned altitude of 250 feet, I dove so sharply that the boys in the rear of the "Bear" were thrown off their feet. We leveled off low enough to see clearly the faces of a number of anti-aircraft gunners. We skidded around in our turn to keep our wings level and just above the ground. We stayed at that level until at least 30 minutes out from the target. Ground gunners could not easily

aim at us and fighters could not dive on us.” So that small town (Hanford, Calif) young college (UC, Berkeley) man took “Buzzin’ Bear” through the holocaust following his ingenious plan and landed at Benghazi, right behind “Suzy Q” with four engines running and not a crew member scratched!

Now we know how Cameron got his crew and aircraft through that mess, which supports our contention about American ingenuity, we must now ask why. We must see if his presence on the mission supports the theorem of bravery performed, not through fear of death, but fear of being left behind and letting your crew buddies down. In his personal diary, Bill commenting on the Ploesti raid, says this: “After the Rome raid, we started extensive practice bombing and flying in larger formations of aircraft at low, very low, level. I had actually completed my combat tour of duty with the Rome raid and I don’t believe that Howard (Moore, Cmdr. 67th Sq.) or Col. Johnson really expected me to fly it. I don’t know why I did. However, it was ‘high adventure’ and although I didn’t know where we were going, I hated to miss out on it. Furthermore, the crew of ‘Buzzin’ Bear’ didn’t want to go with a new pilot, and as an additional incentive, I was enjoying the low level flying! — Bill Dabney was ill before, and during the entire mission, but wouldn’t be left behind.” *

So the curtain comes down on this fateful production, the raid, of course, was the play. It had a perilous script with a new role for the B-24 and the probability of failure was high. In the beginning of this feature story we stated our intention to avoid covering again the attack itself, which so much has been previously written. We will however, to the memory of our comrades who lost their lives in the attack, say that even with the terrible blunders made by the two lead groups, the 44th led by Col. Johnson was the last wave in and although finding their White V target had already been struck by some other part of the force, never faltered from the planned attack on their assigned target. For the 44th, it was a day when uncommon valor was common. For Adolf Hitler, it was a harbinger of what the spoiled young men of America had in store for the Third Reich!

*A tragic note: After the Ploesti mission, Major Howard Moore departed for the U.S. and Bill Cameron took command of the 67th Sqdn. Bill Dabney was sent to the hospital with asthma and then returned to the U.S. On 16 August, the 67th was tasked to put up eight aircraft on a mission to Foggia, Italy. (Cameron’s first mission as its Commander.) The 67th lost five of the eight launched. “Buzzin’ Bear” went down with its crew on the first mission they had flown without Cameron. “Suzy Q” also went down with a new crew on its first combat mission.



1998 REUNION

October 25 - 29

**Savannah,
Georgia**

*Friends, Tours,
Museum,
Dedication,
Fun
Entertainment*

ONE RECOLLECTION OF THE PLOESTI MISSION

By Dick Butler

We were in "Earthquake McGoon" and flying as the lead ship in the second element, second flight. Our aiming point was the distillation plant of the Blue Target, Creditul Minier refinery at Brazi. Walt Bunker was pilot and I was co-pilot. We encountered light flak and machine gun fire continuously from about half way between the IP and the target. Off to our right a train was travelling in the same direction we were. We saw the side of a freight car lower and guns on the car start firing at us. We flew over a building that had a red cross painted on the top of it. We received fire from there also. As we approached the target, our bombardier, Henry Zwicker was calling "left, left, left," so Walt was skidding our plane to the left. Henry released our bombs and we saw them skip into the still. Just then we took a hit in the left wing close to the fuselage. We either hit a barrage balloon cable or received close to a direct flak burst. Number three engine stopped so I pulled the feathering button to feather that prop. The blast had also damaged some electrical lines, so we lost instrument readings for both number three and four engines. Walt saw the RPM go to zero on number four, so he hollered "feather four." I looked out and number four looked ok to me, so I didn't pull that feathering button. Walt hollered again and then reached up and pulled it himself. Now we were in really serious trouble. Two engines feathered or feathering on the same side at an altitude of about one hundred feet. Walt and I had both hands on the wheel trying to keep the right wing up. Other crew members said later that the wing tip came within about twenty feet of hitting the ground. At this time either Loy Neeper, our flight engineer or I managed to push the number four feathering button in and the feathering stopped and we regained use of that engine.

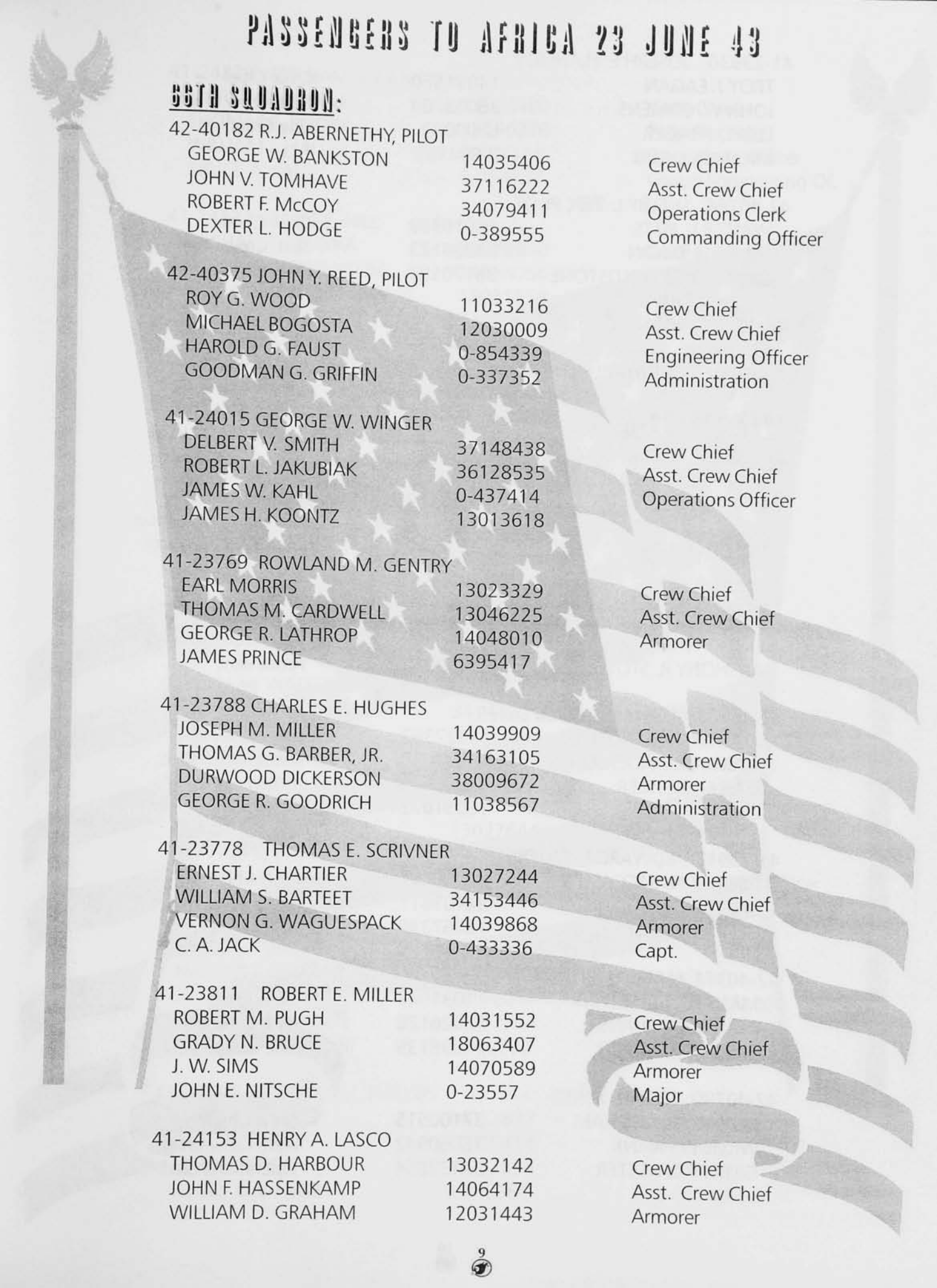
George Jansen, who was one of the best pilots I ever knew, was flying "Margaret Ann II" on our left wing. He said that when we got hit, we slowed down real fast, like we were dragging an anchor. He said he put down some flaps and lowered the gear momentarily in an effort to stay with us and still couldn't. He did all this while we were receiving intense fighter attacks as we left the target. This took great effort and skill by George. No wonder he went on to a career as a test pilot at Douglas Aircraft Company. We made it back to Benina on three engines and a shot up hydraulic system, which necessitated a landing without brakes.

We are proud of the fact that our target was completely destroyed and was not rebuilt for the duration of the war. Of those of us in "Earthquake" on that day, only four of us still survive. We are: Bill Newbold, navigator; Loy Neeper, flight engineer; Warren Kooken, waist gunner; and myself, co-pilot. Henry Zwicker was killed on the 1 October 1943 Wiener Neustadt mission. Our other crew members all survived the war but have since passed on.

Editor: After reading Dick's story the thought came to me, it could be titled "As If Things Weren't Bad Enough!" Also I was struck by the heroic determination of George Jansen to maintain the integrity of the formation to the point where "Margaret Ann II" was about to fall out of the sky when Dick and Loy got #4 going again and both aircraft could regain some airspeed. I asked Dick to tell me something about the attack on the Blue Target. I appreciate his candor. I'm sure in all the confusion, excitement and stress of smoke, flames, flak and fighter attacks, there were many more "close calls" which occurred as a result of some cockpit confusion and a wrong switch being turned on or off requiring a hairy recovery from a narrow scrape with death. Come on guys, sit down and write 'em down and send them to me so we can add them to the lore of the 44th.

PASSENGERS TO AFRICA 23 JUNE 43

56TH SQUADRON:



42-40182 R.J. ABERNETHY, PILOT		
GEORGE W. BANKSTON	14035406	Crew Chief
JOHN V. TOMHAVE	37116222	Asst. Crew Chief
ROBERT F. McCOY	34079411	Operations Clerk
DEXTER L. HODGE	0-389555	Commanding Officer
42-40375 JOHN Y. REED, PILOT		
ROY G. WOOD	11033216	Crew Chief
MICHAEL BOGOSTA	12030009	Asst. Crew Chief
HAROLD G. FAUST	0-854339	Engineering Officer
GOODMAN G. GRIFFIN	0-337352	Administration
41-24015 GEORGE W. WINGER		
DELBERT V. SMITH	37148438	Crew Chief
ROBERT L. JAKUBIAK	36128535	Asst. Crew Chief
JAMES W. KAHL	0-437414	Operations Officer
JAMES H. KOONTZ	13013618	
41-23769 ROWLAND M. GENTRY		
EARL MORRIS	13023329	Crew Chief
THOMAS M. CARDWELL	13046225	Asst. Crew Chief
GEORGE R. LATHROP	14048010	Armorer
JAMES PRINCE	6395417	
41-23788 CHARLES E. HUGHES		
JOSEPH M. MILLER	14039909	Crew Chief
THOMAS G. BARBER, JR.	34163105	Asst. Crew Chief
DURWOOD DICKERSON	38009672	Armorer
GEORGE R. GOODRICH	11038567	Administration
41-23778 THOMAS E. SCRIVNER		
ERNEST J. CHARTIER	13027244	Crew Chief
WILLIAM S. BARTEET	34153446	Asst. Crew Chief
VERNON G. WAGUESPACK	14039868	Armorer
C. A. JACK	0-433336	Capt.
41-23811 ROBERT E. MILLER		
ROBERT M. PUGH	14031552	Crew Chief
GRADY N. BRUCE	18063407	Asst. Crew Chief
J. W. SIMS	14070589	Armorer
JOHN E. NITSCHKE	0-23557	Major
41-24153 HENRY A. LASCO		
THOMAS D. HARBOUR	13032142	Crew Chief
JOHN F. HASSENKAMP	14064174	Asst. Crew Chief
WILLIAM D. GRAHAM	12031443	Armorer

41-23936 JOSEPH E. FLAHERTY
 TROY J. EAGAN 14031560 Crew Chief
 JOHN W. COMENS 36048709 Asst. Crew Chief
 LLOYD KRAGER 6899083 Line Chief
 MICHAEL J. NERI 0-854195 1 Lt.

42-40764 SHELBY L. IRBY, PILOT
 WALTER L. PITTS 16019369 Crew Chief
 JAMES H. DIXON 36308123 Asst. Crew Chief
 EDWARD G? GOLDSTONE 36170187 Radio Operator

42-40777 ROBERT E. FELBER
 CHARLES S. ALBA 7021772 Crew Chief
 CHARLES W. WHIPPLE 11046226 Asst. Crew Chief

67TH SQUADRON:

41-23817 ROBERT E. KOLLINER
 MICHAEL ULOSOVICH 36047434 Crew Chief
 LEO J. THUOTTE 31067664 Instrument Spec.
 HOWARD W. MOORE 0-402027 Commanding Officer
 ROSE F. HAGER 0-954344 Engineering Officer

42-63761 WORDEN WEAVER
 KUN D. GONG 34132946 Crew Chief
 ELBERT H. GALLATIN 18060293 Asst. Crew Chief
 ANTHONY R. STOWE 13030028 Armament

42-40267 REGINALD L. CARPENTER
 FRANCIS J. NAMIOTKA 13027363 Crew Chief
 MARTIN R. ANDERSON 39837655 Sheet Metal spec.
 JEAN F. BRESSLER 13031072 Armament
 CARL J. WAND 16031072 Armament

41-23918 EDWARD R. MITCHELL
 GEORGE N. BACCASH 16013811 Crew Chief
 MILO C. STRICKLAND 34103811. Asst. Crew Chief
 GEORGE R. HILL 16067339 Radio Maint.

42-40371 ELMER H. REINHART
 MALCOLM C. ARTHUR 11031947 Crew Chief
 DONALD A. EVANS 13026126 Asst. Crew Chief
 RICHARD C. WARD 14038135 Line Chief

42-40780 FRED H. JONES
 HORACE H. GRISHAM 37100515 Crew Chief
 WILLIE L. SWANK 18060942 Asst. Crew Chief
 GILBERT C. HESTER 37132854 Operations Clerk

41-24229 WILLIAM R. CAMERON
 MARION W. BAGLEY 13024480 Crew Chief
 THOMAS E. ROORK 32186276 Propeller Spec.
 WILLIAM J. HALL 0-401119 Operations Officer
 BRUCE A. PAULY 0-434434 Group Engineering Of.

41-24232 JAMES E. HILL
 MICHAEL F. CHAYKA 32028950 Crew Chief
 JOHN H. CHRISTENSON 14064056 Electrical Spec.
 HERMAN WAGENFUHR, JR. 18031358 Turret Spec.
 EMERIC J. MICHALIK 33076905 Medical

41-23779 CHARLIE P. HENDERSON, PILOT
 JOSEPH E. BAILEY 28044687 Crew Chief
 EDWARD P. HANLEY 6981417 Aircraft Inspector
 LEO L. McCREERY 37139406 Armament
 NUMA C. HERO, JR. 0-437691 Weather Officer

42-63763 CURTIS S. GRIFFIN
 MICHAEL A. CURTIN 19076732 Crew Chief
 BENJAMIN G. MARTIN 18063342 Asst. Crew Chief
 HOWARD D. COX 35275530 Turret Specialist

63TH SQUADRON:

41-23813 WALTER T. HOLMES, JR.
 GEORGE W. BRYANT 34146071 Crew Chief
 EUGENE H. SNAVELY 0-22364 Gp. Oper. Officer
 HARVEY G. HOLMES 37139906 Operations Clerk

41-23816 ROWLAND B. HOUSTON
 ALFRED A. BAGDONAS 13027644 Crew Chief
 FRANCIS E. BALZ 6949175 Flight Chief
 ROBERT L. DEAN 0-431615 Gp. Armament Officer
 MILLARD F. SAWYER 14004151 Ordnance

42-40094 WILMER J. GARRETT
 HAROLD L. HILL 17037076 Crew Chief
 JOSEPH F. MOONEY 32178047 Instrument Spec.
 MILTON FELDMAN 12057764 Armament
 JAMES F. PATTERSON 0-440002 Chaplain

41-23699 REGINALD H. PHILLIPS
 CHARLES C. PIGG 14052877 Crew Chief
 HARRY J. SINGER 12029414 Electrical Spec.
 JOHN L. KOCH 35257034 Sheet Metal
 HENRY G.V. HART 0-468561 Group Intelligence

41-24225 DAVID W. ALEXANDER
 RICHARD D. WILLIAMS 14044294 Crew Chief
 YBUR G. CAMPBELL 6265900 Line Chief
 MAX E. GOUCHER 15083422 Armament
 NELSON T. HOLDEN W2104151 Group Operations

41-23112 WILLIAM D. HUGHES
 BARTON D. CRAMER 18089242 Crew Chief
 HERBERT J. RUSSELL 33119603 Inspector
 LOUGHRIDGE C. MURRELL 18030353 Armament

42-40071 GEORGE R. JANSEN
 CLAUDE E. LEE 14043005 Crew Chief
 CHRIS SAND 0-366917 Engineering Officer
 RUSSELL HRYNIAK 32173830 Asst. Crew Chief
 AUGUST L. BLASCHKE 18101868 Personnel Clerk

42-40373 EUNICE M. SHANNON, PILOT
 FRANCIS M. WOOD 34133012 Crew Chief
 GEORGE T. CRUMP 14061955 Asst. Crew Chief
 IRVIN E. ROSCHER 37143003 Armament

41-24211 ROBERT E. PETERSON
 HAROLD J. FOLEY 36022088 Crew Chief
 CECIL A. JOHNSON 18030038 Propeller Spec.
 NORMAN L. HALE 6897324 Radio Maint.
 THOMAS R. CRAMER 0-23923 Commanding Officer

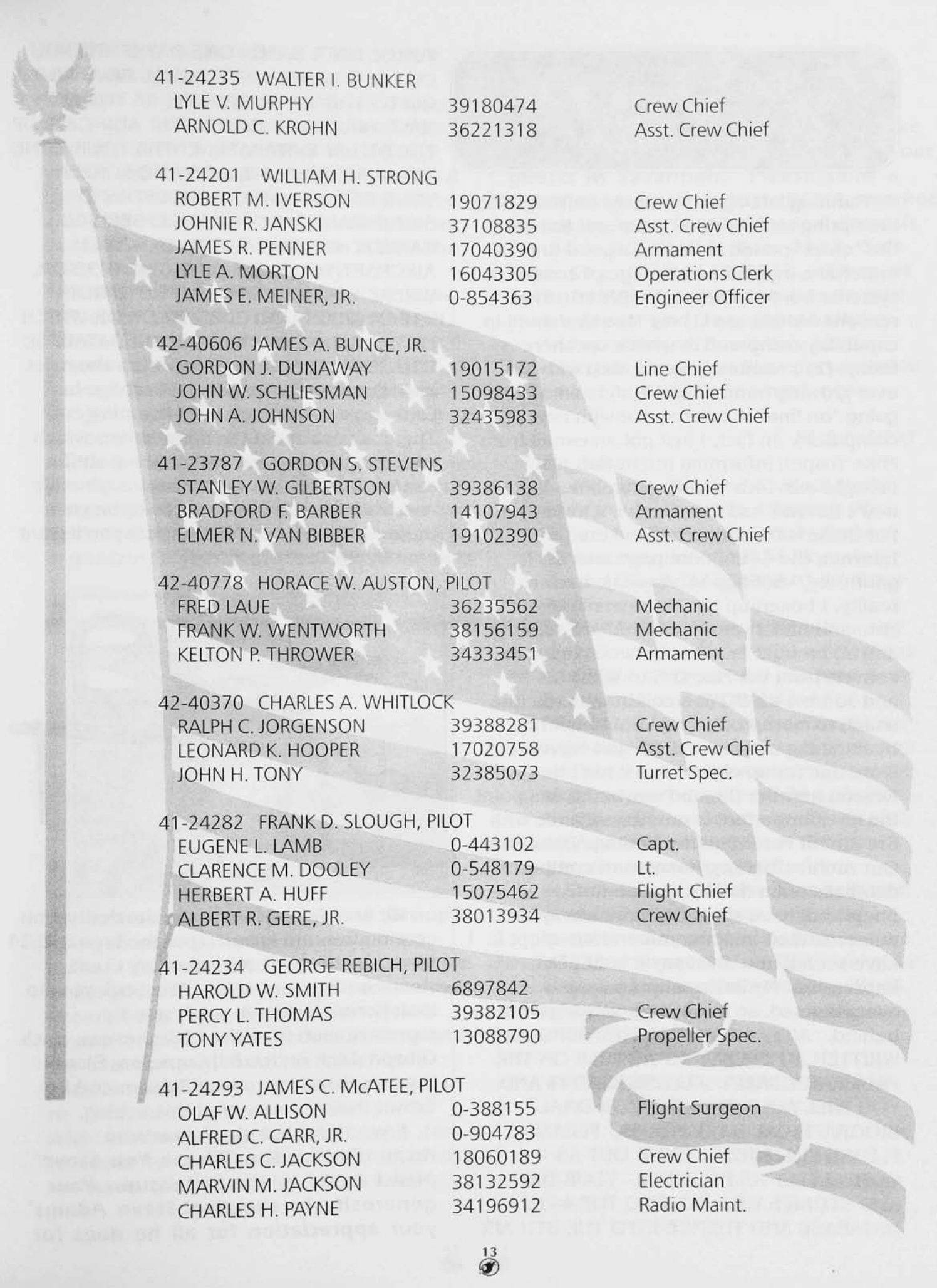
42-40731 GEORGE P. MARTIN
 FREDDY SCHEIDEGGER 16046001 Crew Chief
 JOHN W. ZARNOSKY 7021651 Flight Chief
 HOWARD F. DART 38009511 Armament
 JOHN H. DIEHL, JR. 0-427313 Operations Officer

506TH SQUADRON:

COLONEL LEON W. JOHNSON'S AIRCRAFT:

WILLARD L. MICHAELS 0-730568 Asst. Engineering
 HERMAN J. SEIGFELDT 6890587
 ALBERT G. KERNS, JR. 39310090
 LONNIE L. ACKERMAN 39094739

42-40172 WILLIAM N. ANDERSON
 JAMES C. BEAM 0-406217 Sqdn. Commanding Officer
 AUGUST T. GOODMAN 19074334 Crew Chief
 RUSSELL A. WOLD 39606205 Asst. Crew Chief

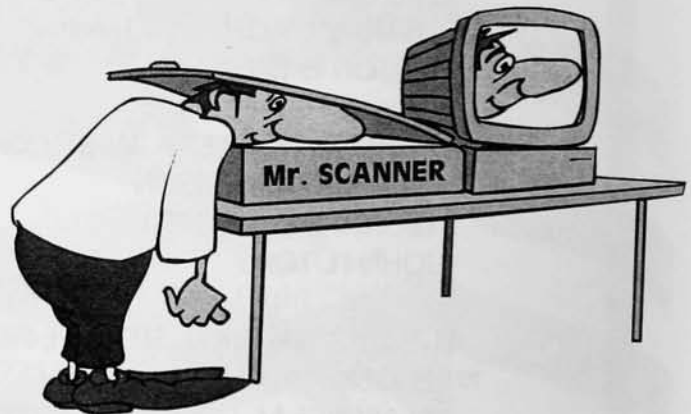


41-24235	WALTER I. BUNKER		
	LYLE V. MURPHY	39180474	Crew Chief
	ARNOLD C. KROHN	36221318	Asst. Crew Chief
41-24201	WILLIAM H. STRONG		
	ROBERT M. IVERSON	19071829	Crew Chief
	JOHNIE R. JANSKI	37108835	Asst. Crew Chief
	JAMES R. PENNER	17040390	Armament
	LYLE A. MORTON	16043305	Operations Clerk
	JAMES E. MEINER, JR.	0-854363	Engineer Officer
42-40606	JAMES A. BUNCE, JR.		
	GORDON J. DUNAWAY	19015172	Line Chief
	JOHN W. SCHLIESMAN	15098433	Crew Chief
	JOHN A. JOHNSON	32435983	Asst. Crew Chief
41-23787	GORDON S. STEVENS		
	STANLEY W. GILBERTSON	39386138	Crew Chief
	BRADFORD F. BARBER	14107943	Armament
	ELMER N. VAN BIBBER	19102390	Asst. Crew Chief
42-40778	HORACE W. AUSTON, PILOT		
	FRED LAUE	36235562	Mechanic
	FRANK W. WENTWORTH	38156159	Mechanic
	KELTON P. THROWER	34333451	Armament
42-40370	CHARLES A. WHITLOCK		
	RALPH C. JORGENSON	39388281	Crew Chief
	LEONARD K. HOOPER	17020758	Asst. Crew Chief
	JOHN H. TONY	32385073	Turret Spec.
41-24282	FRANK D. SLOUGH, PILOT		
	EUGENE L. LAMB	0-443102	Capt.
	CLARENCE M. DOOLEY	0-548179	Lt.
	HERBERT A. HUFF	15075462	Flight Chief
	ALBERT R. GERE, JR.	38013934	Crew Chief
41-24234	GEORGE REBICH, PILOT		
	HAROLD W. SMITH	6897842	
	PERCY L. THOMAS	39382105	Crew Chief
	TONY YATES	13088790	Propeller Spec.
41-24293	JAMES C. McATEE, PILOT		
	OLAF W. ALLISON	0-388155	Flight Surgeon
	ALFRED C. CARR, JR.	0-904783	
	CHARLES C. JACKSON	18060189	Crew Chief
	MARVIN M. JACKSON	38132592	Electrician
	CHARLES H. PAYNE	34196912	Radio Maint.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Running late again! I thought after getting the Spring issue of "The Tails" out the door, the "quiet" period would be a good time to undertake my planned change of computer systems from Macintosh to IBM PC. The reasons for this are (1) my Mac was small in capability compared to what's out there today; (2) I wanted to get in step with the ever growing number of 44th'ers who are going "on line" in cyberspace with new PC computers. In fact, I just got an e-mail from Mike Yuspeh informing me he has just brought our 44th Web Page on line. It is so new I haven't had time to give it a visit yet. For those with computers and are on Internet, the 44th home page address is: gnofn.org/~506bgp44. Anyway, back to reality, I boxed up the Mac, gave it to our son, and had a whole new system, scanner and all brought in. Now between trying to convert from the Mac O/S to Windows 95 and some 44th BGVA small brush fires (the usual) to stomp out, Lolly and I both have been taking classes in W-95 and Microsoft Word and for an old soldier, it ain't that easy! Reason number (3), and maybe, at this point, the most important is our new alliance with the 8th Air Force Military Heritage Database. Our Archive/History/Roster and computer database team (Lundy, Mastradone, Shepherd) have seen this database system demonstrated and recommend we adopt it. I have seen it and must say it is REALLY impressive. My little computer was overwhelmed, so it was upgrade or get left behind. ANYWAY, TOMMY SHEPHERD HAS WRITTEN AN EXCELLENT ARTICLE ON THE PROGRAM HEREIN. PLEASE READ IT AND YOU WILL ALSO FIND THE PERSONAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORMS. PLEASE, PLEASE FILL THESE FORMS OUT AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE. YOUR DATA AND STORIES WILL GO INTO THE 44TH DATABASE AND THENCE INTO THE 8TH AIR

FORCE DATA BASE. ONE DAY SOON YOU OR YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE ABLE TO GO TO THE LOCAL LIBRARY (IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR OWN COMPUTER) AND CALL UP THE 8TH AF DATABASE, ENTER YOUR NAME AND HAVE DISPLAYED ON THE SCREEN YOUR ENTIRE COMBAT RECORD AND SIGNIFICANT PARTS OF YOUR SERVICE CAREER. COMBAT MISSIONS, WHICH AIRCRAFT YOU FLEW ON EVERY MISSION, WHERE YOU WERE IN THE FORMATION, WHICH AIRCRAFT YOU CREWED OR WHICH MESS HALL YOU STAFFED. THE DATABASE WILL HAVE IT ALL! But remember the most important computer adage "Garbage in - Garbage out!" Or, nothing in-nothing out! There is a lot of data in the archives which we are retrieving, but the personal stuff, stories, family, combat memories, your life and work after the war, all has to be your input, so do a job on it, one that you'll want your family to read with pride!



We are looking forward to the dedication ceremonies and unveiling of the bronze B-24 model in the Air Force Academy Court of Honor on September 24. It is beginning to look like we will have pretty good representation from the 44th present. Jack Gibson, Dick Butler, Bill Cameron, Charlie Hughes, Roy Owen, Jerry Folsom and Del Brown that we know of at this writing.

I want to thank those who responded to the "Thank You Steve" plea I made in the last issue. Your generosity in showing Steve Adams your appreciation for all he does for

and in the name of the 44th in the U.K. was great. But there weren't enough of you! Maybe this is because the page in my Presidents Corner that had my plea was printed so lightly. Whatever, the fund stands at about a third of what we need to bring Steve and Jan Adams over to be with us at Savannah, and this just isn't like the 44th when it comes to saying THANKS for a job well done. It is so difficult, with the distance involved, for us to personally express our gratitude for the many days of his earned vacation time he takes from his job and devotes to representing us at local memorial functions and making trips to Cambridge to place the 44th BG Memorial Day wreath he annually designs for the American Cemetery Remembrance. Also the organizing and preparations he makes



for visitations by 44th Travel Groups or by individual and small family visits. As our U.K. representative, he keeps the 44th BG recognized as the preeminent 2nd Air Division Bomb Group organization active in England all without pay, and I'm sure, at considerable personal expense which he refuses to reveal or discuss. So with an invitation for Steve and Jan to come to our reunion from all of us, we have the means by which we can

express our individual thanks by making a small contribution to make it possible for Steve and Jan to be our guests in Savannah. Please send a check made out to 44th BGVA, marked in the memo "Thanks Steve." Send it to: 44th BGVA, P.O. Box 2367, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367. Then at Savannah you can shake hands and thank Steve and Jan personally!

And speaking of Thank You; I just received this e-mail that Steve forwarded to me. Read it, you will see what I mean.

14 July 1998

Mr. Adams,

My name is Robert C. (Bob) Drake and I live in Centralia, Missouri. My father was Frederick J. (Bob) Drake. He was the pilot of a B-24 Liberator named "Bachelor's Delight," 8th Army Air Force.

I understand from my nephew and my father's grandson, Michael Anthony of Atlanta, Georgia, that you have been a tremendous help and a load of inspiration in his quest for information regarding his grandfather. He was very excited when you answered his note that was posted on the B-24 website.

Later this month my family will visit Michael and his parents in Georgia. We plan to go through all of the information that Michael has gathered at that time. I am sure I will have questions for you later, but at this time all I want to say is THANK YOU for your help, interest and information. We all really appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Bob Drake

617 Porter St., Centralia, MO 65240

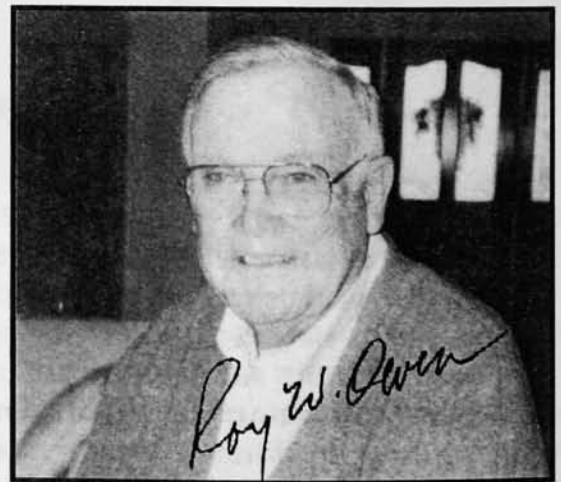
e-mail: rcdnd@socket.net

Man O Man! The time is running down on my Presidency; this is my next to last President's Corner! Talk about mixed emotions. On the one hand, I'm really looking forward to reclaiming my wonderful retired life with Lolly, playing golf just about whenever the course beckons (my handicap has gone from 8 to 15 in these five years since we rose to battle those who would have our organization fold its wings). The lack of physical activity sitting at this computer has resulted in an insidious gain of forty pounds to my once slender and handsome physique. On the other hand, I want you all to know, it has been the labor of love. I have always felt extremely fortunate for whatever fate it was that placed me in the 44th Bomb Group to serve my country in WWII. Before I ever arrived at Shipdham, the 44th had become legend, and many of those who had written the pages of that legend with their valorous deeds were still there as Squadron Commanders and Group Staff to lead and teach us the ways of combat. The Bills, Cameron and Strong, and names like Lehnhausen, Hughes and of course Johnson. At wars end, I left the AAF with the sense that I had mingled and fought with true heroes, and for the experience I was indelibly marked as a lifetime 44th man. It was that intrinsic pride as an 8-Baller that refused to allow me to sit idly by and see the demise of our group; again, perhaps, the same fate that placed me at Shipdham, saw me to become the first president of our resurrected Association. Still travelling on my WWII inspired pride in the 44th, I was honored to take the lead. I soon, to my wonderment, found that I barely knew the 44th from my six months of combat experience. With all the history, heritage and archives which documented the real life of the 44th from the peaks of glory to the depths of despair open to me from the advantage of my office, I truly began to recognize the fabric of my pride in being a member of the 44th. I have had the opportunity to associate with you, read your letters, write stories for your 8-Ball Tails that you have told me first hand. I've seen the

humor and the humility that comes with heroes and I know the heartbreak when one of us folds his wings. It was a wonderful experience for me, truly a labor of love and learning why I am so deeply proud of my country and to have served her with you under the colors of the 44th. I don't know what got me off on this, but in the words of Forrest Gump "That's all I'm going to say about that!"

Few, if any of you, probably ever read the disclaimer we are always obliged to print in every issue of this journal. It's the part in the box that says "The 8-Ball Tails" Official Journal of the 44th, etc., etc., and you would otherwise pass it up in this issue, but I want you to look at it this time and take note of the ©which means The 8-Ball Tails is now under copyright and for anyone to use our material, they must request our permission. I hope you like the material in our "Tails." It appears there are others out there who like it enough to plagiarize it without as much as giving credit to our Journal, thus we decided to apply for copyright, which has been granted by the U.S. Patent Office.

Signing off now,
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU IN SAVANNAH,
Your Prez,



THE 44th GOES FULL ELECTRONICS

By Tom Shepherd

The 44th BGVA has been invited to connect with the 379th Bomb Group (1st Adiv/B-17) and the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum (M8AFHM) in a Multi-Media Format to record electronically (personal computer) our history.

This effort actually began several years ago in a letter from Lt. Gen. Shuler, Chairman, of the Museum to the 44th BGVA and other similar organizations. General Shuler noted that the 379th BGP, by the energies and talent of one of its WWII members, had designed and developed a multi-media software capability specifically designed to store an 8th AF-wide history. Arlo Bartsch (Lt., Pilot) now of Milwaukee, WI, holder of this copyrighted software, has volunteered to attend our Savannah reunion and demonstrate his program. A number of 44th'ers attending the recent ZADA Reunion in Chicago were given a demonstration by Arlo of his program. All have reported strong support and enthusiasm for its adoption by our Association. We are doing this and, as reported in the "Will Sez" column last issue, Will and our Archivist/67th Director Tony Mastradone have been busy copying the combat mission folder data at the National Archives for several months.

It is expected that by the time October arrives and we convene our reunion, you will be able to "see" for yourselves what a marvelous program this is -and- better yet, understand the excitement it has generated in terms of recording our history in such a modern day media open to everyone all over the world to see and read and marvel as we "know" it. A lot of work still remains to be done. It will take hours upon hours and attendant expense to complete; but oh, what a marvelous, accessible history we will have! Even those who do not own a computer will be able to go to their public library, enter the Internet address and the individual name, and in an instant, the personal combat history of that individual will appear on the monitor screen! Even pictures and a voice recording. An unbelievable amount of cross referenced data; number of missions, aircraft names and numbers flown, crew members flown with, targets flown against for combat crews, for support personnel, jobs, promotions, decorations, personal stories, whatever you put into your data.

For those with World Wide Web capability, you may visit this program at: <http://www.8thairforce.com> and begin to "feel" the excitement of what it will be when we are connected as one of the active in the program. This is History's time to become dynamic. Now and into the ions of the future.

The COMBINED(!) inputs from all known written records, documents, and squadron/bomb group books will be a major source of data and written text for inclusion in this super multi-media program. To give this effort the strength of the human quality that it deserves, there is one major program element exclusively titled: BIOGRAPHY. Your personal input!

Within this issue is included the key element of the 44th History: YOUR PERSONAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM. Allow some time to complete this form as accurately as you can. Get out whatever records you have to substantiate dates and places. OUR TEAM WILL RESEARCH YOUR COMBAT RECORD. The rest is yours.

The National Archives research and copying has already made a serious dent in our budget (at 10 cents per copy) and there are many boxes and thousands of pages of data to go, and we cannot and must not falter or even think of stopping. The archives at age 53 to 58 are becoming brittle and faded after so many years and being handled. They must be copied and put in storage electronically while there is still time. You will be pleased to know, once again, your 44th has taken the Division lead in this project. We are the only Group in the 2nd AD undertaking this project to-date. Arlo Bartsch, when looking at the amount of archival material we have recovered, was amazed at the effort. We have our brave and tireless Historian Will Lundy and his Archivist sidekick, Tony "Bulldog" Mastradone to thank for this.

Now, how do we plan to finish the project without breaking the bank? Since this is to be an all encompassing history to include everyone whom we can find a record of 44th service, and many are gone, we once again must turn to the living. While the plan is to recruit volunteers among us who possess an IBM compatible computer to do the data entry and hold

down costs, we still have the data collection costs past and remaining estimated at \$6,000 to \$8,000. To spread these costs with equanimity, there will be a \$10 data collection and entry fee to accompany the Personal Biographical Data Form without photos and of average length (without extra pages of text), and \$15 for two photos or one photo and one extra page of text done in #12 type single spaced. Follow the instructions on the Data Form.

We can and we will do this. It is something we have wanted to do for a long time. It is something we will give to our families and the World. Yes - it is about us and by us -- In a living and dynamic form available in our homes, libraries, and museums all over the world!

We are the #1 B-24 Bomb Group on the planet.
Let's keep showing 'em our Tail Turret!



Tommy Shepherd's workshop!

Volunteers - We need some Volunteers

When the members respond to our historical database program by sending in the completed biographical forms, we need some of you who are IBM compatible and equipped to help us enter the data on the member's mailed-in personal data forms into the program. We cannot afford to have this data entry done commercially, and we cannot afford to let this opportunity to lead the 2nd AD into the 21st Century slip by us. If we share the task, we can do it at minimum cost. You will be thoroughly trained for the task and it will be something you can sit down to do whenever you have some time to spare. Here is what it takes to do the job:

Personal skills:

- Average competence with any two of the Microsoft Word Processing systems.
- Average typing skills are essential.

Computer Hardware should be a minimum of:

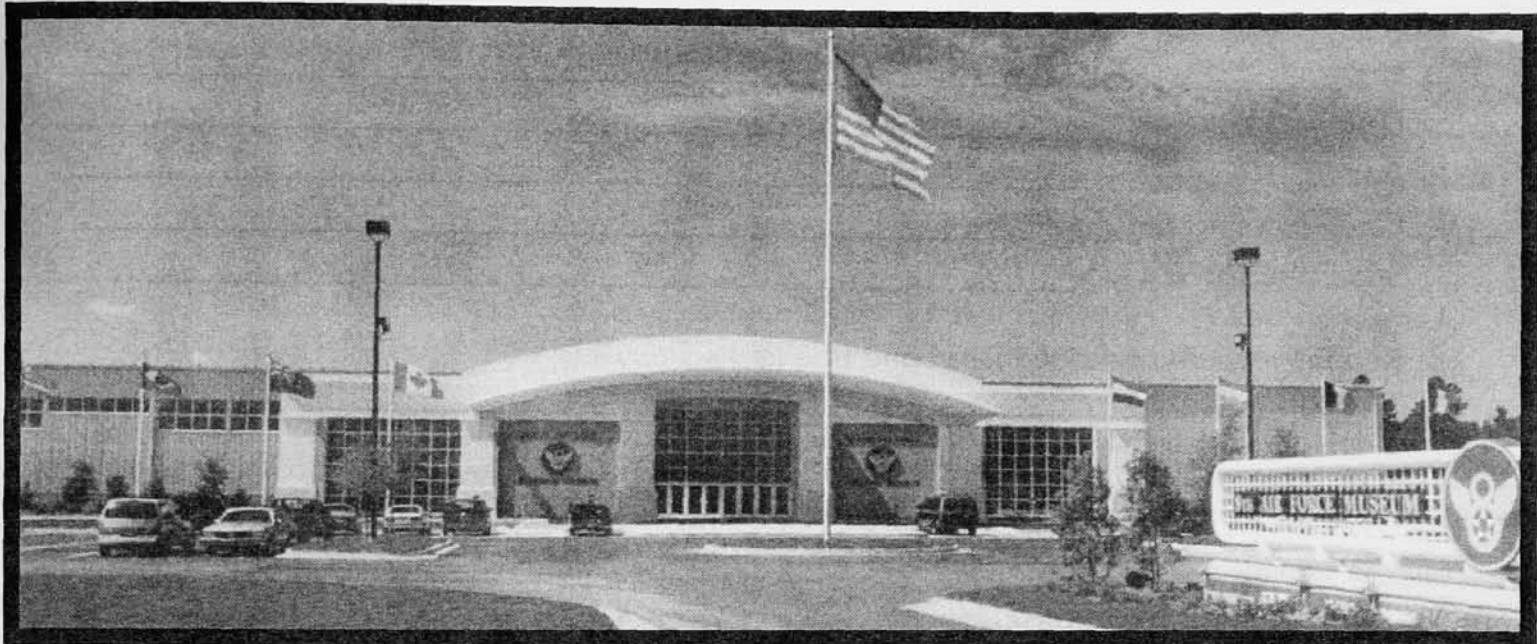
- Windows 95
- 120 MHz Pentium processor
- 16 MB Ram
- 2 GB Hard Drive
- 3.5 Floppy Drive
- 28.8K Modem
- Internet and E-Mail capabilities.
- 150 MB of available Hard Drive space
- CD ROM Drive



You will be provided with step by step procedural instructions and a program disk to slip into your floppy drive to load the program. Please contact Tom Shepherd at this e-mail address: sheep@wspice.com. This will be a great way to make a contribution to your Bomb Group heritage!

October 25-29, 1998

Savannah, Georgia



COST OF REUNION - REGISTRATION

Complete Reunion - \$140

This price includes:

Registration

Reception Days Inn

Transportation to Mighty 8th Museum

Admission to Museum, Lunch at museum

Transportation to Banquet, Convention Center, buffet, open bar (45 min.).

Transportation & Squadron Dinner.

Transportation & Old Fort Jackson admission and buffet.

All tours subject to number of people who sign up.

If not enough interest, tour will be cancelled.

Registration must be received by October 11, 1998. No Registration will be taken after that date. We would like to firm up our reservations as soon as possible. Please send this Registration form with your check right away to:

Mail To: Mike Yuspeh • 7214 Sardonyx Street • New Orleans, LA 70124-3509

44th Bomb Group Reunion October 25 - 29, 1998

Days Inn/ Days Suites • 201 West Bay Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401



(912) 236-4440/Reservations Dept. (9 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Please print or type only. All information must be completed.

Name: _____

Daytime Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zipcode: _____

Spouse or Guest's Name: _____

Reservation - Accommodation: Send (the 1st Night's Deposit)

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Smoking: Non-Smoking: Room Type: Standard Double: 1 Bdrm Suite:

Cost + 12% tax - Total *or current tax rate.

1) Standard \$62 + 12% tax = \$69.44/night

2) Suites \$82 + 12% tax = \$91.84/night

★ 1st night deposit should be sent to hotel with reservation
prior to 9/25/98!

★DISCOUNT NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH 1-800 NUMBER!

You may send a check or indicate your credit card number and expiration date.

Hotel Policies

★ The hotel accepts credit cards and cash at check-in.

★ Check-in time is 3 p.m. Check-out time is 11 a.m.

★ Cancellation is no later than 48 hours prior to arrival.

We offer a cafe on property, open 6:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. , re-opens at 5:30 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. the next day.

If you are driving to the hotel, complimentary garage parking is available. Should you require taxi service from the airport or Amtrak, the following telephone number may be helpful: Coastal Shuttle ~ (912) 964-5999.

★Please send one copy with payment to the hotel and keep on copy for your records or call (912) 234-0841 Ext. #147 and identify your group for the discounted rate (Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) ☎

We look forward to seeing you in OCTOBER, 1998!!!



44th Bomb Group Reunion

October 25 - 29, 1998

Savannah, Georgia

Registration Form

Please print or type only. All information must be completed.

Last Name: _____ First (Name Tag) _____

Spouse: _____ Squadron: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Phone (____) _____

Guests & Relation: _____

Total to Attend: _____

REUNION COST: \$140 PER PERSON

Tour #1 - October 24 - Historic Savannah City Tour \$16 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____

Time: o 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

o 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 pm.

Tour #2 - October 25 - Historic Savannah City Tour \$20 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____

w/Mansion admission 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tour #3 - October 27 - Low Country Tour \$25 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____

Time: o 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon

o 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tour #4 - October 28 - Narrated River Tour \$17.50 # Attending: _____ Amount \$ _____

Time: 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Total Amount: \$ _____

Registration must be received by October 11, 1998. No Registration will be taken after that date. We would like to firm up our reservations as soon as possible. Please send this Registration form with your check right away to:

Mail To: Mike Yuspeh • 7214 Sardonyx Street • New Orleans, LA 70124-3509

Phone: (504) 283-3424 • Fax: (504) 283-3425 (6 rings to pick up.)

NOTE: If you have sent in previous information, please fill out this form and mail with check.

Savannah Reunion - 44th Bomb Group

Early arrival Saturday, October 24th

- Registration
- Tour Historic Savannah City Tour - Gray Line 1 1/2 hour (Cost \$16)
- #1 - Leave Hotel 1:00 p.m. - Return 2:30 p.m.
- #2 - Leave Hotel 3:00 p.m. - Return 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 25th

- Registration 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Historic Savannah City Tour with Admission and tour on one of Savannah's Mansions. Leave Hotel 1:00 p.m. - Return 3:00 p.m. (Cost \$20)
- Reception - Days Inn: Cash Bar 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Dinner on your own.

Monday, October 26th

- Registration 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- First shuttle bus leaves Hotel at 9:00 a.m. for Mighty 8th Museum.
- Visit Mighty 8th Museum.
- Buffet lunch at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Program to dedicate Ploesti Exhibit - 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Shuttle bus returns to Days Inn at 2:45 p.m.
- Shuttle bus leaves at 5:00 p.m. for Convention Center.
- Banquet at Savannah Convention Center - Buffet and open bar.
 - ~Ceremony
 - ~Bag Pipes and Disk Jockey will provide entertainment.
- Shuttle bus returns to Days Inn 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 27th

Tours

- 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting for 44th Bomb Group Association (Hospitality Room)
- Low Country Tour (plantation site) - Cost \$25 - Leaves at 9:00 a.m., returns 12:00 noon.
or Leaves at 1:00 p.m., returns 4:00 p.m.
- Squadron Dinners - Mighty 8th Museum.
Shuttles to begin at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner served at 7:00 p.m.
Shuttles to return at 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 28th

- Annual Meeting 9:00 am. (Whereabouts to be announced)
- Tour on Savannah River Queen. Dock at 1:30 p.m., return at 3:00 p.m. (Cost \$17.50)
- Visit to Old Fort Jackson
Shuttles to leave at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:45 p.m.
Shuttle returns at 9:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 29th

- Leave for home.



When you have completed this form, if you have no pictures, mail it with \$10; if you have two photos or one photo and an extra page of text (single spaced in 12 point font), mail the form with \$15 to:
44th BQVA, P.O. Box 2367, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367.



8th Air Force Military Heritage Database

Personal Biographical Data -- Your "Living Monument"

It is our goal to assemble a complete record of all personnel who at one time served with the 8th Air Force during World War II. The records of those who were on flying status will be obtained from declassified group mission reports which have been stored in the National Archives. From this, a matrix has been developed which will allow for the search and retrieval of the following information: who flew on what mission, with whom, in what plane, to what target, on what date, enemy opposition, aircraft and personnel losses, and hundreds of cross referenced bits of detailed information.

To make this database come "Alive," your stories, memories, photos and voice recordings are essential.

Cassette recordings of your memories should be limited to 2 minutes or less per each incident.

Please provide a "Then and Now" photo of yourself and a Crew photo, if available.

A Master Copy of this multi-media database is now a part of the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA. Other copies will be available to Museums, Libraries, Universities, Schools and on the World Wide Web Internet. You may also have your own copy of the full database, on a CD, to run on a home computer.

Last Name: _____ First: _____ Initial: _____

Address # 1: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phones ~ Home: _____ Other: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Nickname: _____

Date Deceased: _____ Date Enlisted: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Spouse: _____ 8th Air Force Group/s: _____ Squadron/s: _____

Special Military Training: _____

Graduating Class: _____ Location: _____ State: _____

Group Rank: _____ Group Duties: _____ Ret. Rank: _____

Your ASN (Serial Number/s): _____

Occupation Prior to Military: _____

Occupation After Military and/or Continued Military Service: _____

Arrival at ETO base: _____ Arrived From: _____

Arrived How (Any Details): _____

Personal Memories, Experiences & Stories: _____

Specific Mission Comments: _____

Date Departed ETO: _____ How: _____ Destination: _____

Trip Details: _____

Military Honors & Decorations:	Stars or Clusters	Stars or Clusters
Congressional Medal Of Honor:	____	____
Distinguished Service Cross:	____	____
Distinguished Service Medal:	____	____
Silver Star:	____	____
Legion of Merit:	____	____
Distinguished Flying Cross:	____	____
Soldiers Medal:	____	____
Bronze Star:	____	____
Air Medal:	____	____
Purple Heart:	____	____
Presidential Unit Citation:	____	____
Prisoner of War:	____	____
Good Conduct Medal:	____	____
Victory WWII:	____	____
European Theater Ribbon:	____	____

Other Awards: _____

Special Status: Shot Down: POW: Evaded: MIA: KIA: Ditched: Crashed: Interned:
Escaped: Parachuted: Wounded: Hospitalized: Disabled: Other:

Details: _____

Ground Crew: Crew Chief: Assistant CC: A&E Mechanic: Armorer: Radio: Radar:
Instruments: Sheet Metals: Refueling: Bombsight: Hydraulics: Other: _____

Duties: _____

Aircraft You Crewed: (Names and Numbers): _____

Aircraft Lost or Damaged: _____

Memories: _____

Base Operations: Administration: Clerical: Communication: Medical: Security: Photo Lab:
Engineering: Mess Hall: Supply: Intelligence: Other Duties or Assignments: _____

Your Contributions Must Not Be Forgotten, Please Provide Details: _____

WILL SEZ

In the last issue of 8 Ball Tails (Spring '98), I tried to advise everyone about the efforts being taken to collect all of the Interrogation Reports held in the mission folders in Washington, D.C. and about our efforts to develop a system to make all of this information readily available for our members and the general public.

Tommy Shepherd conducted a search for a software program which could be adapted to perform this type of recording. In short order, Tommy made contact with Arlo Bartsch, a computer expert who had developed such a system which he had used to record his own B-17 Bomb Group, the 379th, 8th AF during WW#2. Arlo had served as a B-17 pilot, so used his own experiences to help pave the way for usage in a very flexible program. A demonstration model is available on the Internet address:
<http://www.8thairforce.com>.

As Arlo and his company is based in Milwaukee, Tommy arranged for him to bring his program to the 2nd Air Division Association reunion in Chicago for we 44thers who were attending to view it. Dick Butler, 44th BG's VP representative on the 2nd ADA's board, announced in their board meeting that Arlo was making this presentation and invited everyone to view it with us. It would be a golden opportunity to observe and make an appraisal of the quality of this program for use by the entire 2nd Division.

Arlo made arrangements for a single viewing of his program on Saturday, but it proved so popular that he stayed two more days and made several presentations. The general consensus of those attending ranged from quite good to absolutely SUPER, with most of us 44thers at the top end of that scale. Personally, I was ecstatic! Here and available was a program so powerful and flexible that it could be utilized to record

(data entry) most if not all of the material which I have been collecting for nearly 25 years. It will also handle photos and audio - such as personal and crew photos, airplanes and personal accounts - both written and spoken. Better still, the program has been so designed as to have the capability to retrieve data in most any format. It is so flexible that one can access the data bank and have a complete history printed out in book form about a person's combat records, etc.

Arlo has agreed to work with us this summer to take one month's operational data (January, 1944) and build it into a sample presentation at our own reunion down in Savannah this October. This will be a great opportunity to demonstrate to our members how our entire history could look if we can make a complete data entry of our history. Hopefully, we will have a large number in attendance so that our members can see first hand what a treasure this program will be.

Although I've written only about combat records above, this program will handle equally well data about all other phases of our activities. However, for the most part, all too little has been preserved in our microfilm records. To improve this situation, efforts are being made to provide a worksheet to be included in this issue of "Tails" so that each of you can fill in and return to us, giving us as much personal information about yourself and your time in service as practical. The form will be self-explanatory and will help us develop more information about each of us individually to be used in this program's data bank. Please, all of you, do your best to fill in the blanks and return it to us so that we can have the best and most complete database of all bomber groups.

Hope to see you all in Savannah in October.

Will Lundy

*See Pages 17 and 18 for Program Description.
Pages 19 through 22 for Database Form.*

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BOARD

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e-mail: mikeyuspeh@worldnet.att.net

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e-mail: butch@tigerpaw.com

Membership Co-Chair: Roster
Tom Shepherd (66/67)
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Collierville, TN 38017
Phone: (901) 854-6558 Fax: (901) 853-4229
e-mail: sheep@wspice.com

Director (67) Archivist
Anthony "Tony" Mastradone
9111 Tuckerman Street
Lanham, MD 20706-2709
Phone/Fax: (301) 577-1487
e-mail: mast@clres.com

U.K. Representative: Steve Adams
28 Bassingham Rd.
Norwich, England NR3 2QT
Phone/Fax: 011-44-1603-400221
e-mail: s.p.adams@btinternet.com

ASSOCIATION MAILING ADDRESS:
44th BGVA
P.O. Box 2367
Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367



MISCELLANEA



ANGELS CORNER

Our newest Angels are Robert and Kay Eddings of Westmoreland, TN. "Bob" served in the 67th Squadron as Aircraft Mechanic for over three dedicated years out on the "line" helping to keep the planes flying. He did take time off to find his Scottish bride, Catherine (Kay), and they have been very staunch supporters of the 67th Squadron and the 44th BG. They have contributed generously at every opportunity over the years and recently donated \$500. More to help cover the cost of completing the copying of our historical records at the National Archives in Washington D.C. WE OWE BOB AND KAY A TIP OF THE HAT AND A MIGHTY BIG THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS. We love you guys!

Gem of the Day (credit Chicago columnist Zay N. Smith): A T-Shirt spotted in ancient Rome:
"Tatre Troiae X Annos Proeliato Nihil Mihi Datum Nisi Haec Tunicula Pedicuiosa."
Which means, My Father Fought 10 Years at Troy, and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt."



The Mailing Address Problem Still Goes On



Snowbirds and others who fail to let us know when you move. This last issue we had 11 returns which, counting original production, mailing, return and remailing costs us about \$4.50 a piece. Please, send a USPS change of address card to our Association mailing address well in advance of your move so we can change our records and you will receive your 8-Ball Tails on the original mailing. We are also going to cut costs by mailing only one copy to a household where both husband and wife are paid-up members. We hate to deny these couples the luxury of sitting down and each having a personal copy of the "Tails" to read, but to help cut costs, I'm sure these faithful members will be understanding.

44th BGVA, P.O. Box 2367, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-2367



Another "Cal" Coolidge Vignette (You may recall "Cal" was the President who, when being briefed on the need to expand the Army Air Corps, asked: "Can't we just buy one airplane and have the pilots take turns flying it?")

More "Cal" President Calvin Coolidge invited some Vermont friends to dine at the White House. They were worried about their table manners and decided to do everything the President did. The meal passed smoothly until coffee was served. Coolidge poured his coffee into a saucer. The guests followed suit. He added sugar and cream. The visitors did likewise. Then Coolidge leaned over and gave his to the cat.



The 44th is on the Internet!

Mike Yuspeh has succeeded in creating and placing a 44th Web Page on the Internet. For those of you who are computer equipped and Modem equipped, the address is: <http://www.gnofn.org/~506bgp44>. Try it, it is a great start. For the time being, and properly so, Mike is giving some hoopla to our reunion. Later on we will use the Web page to tell the story of the 44th. Another site you might wish to take a look at is the Ellsworth AFB Web Page. It is at: <http://www.ellsworth.af.mil/~history/44mw.htm>.

Our list of members who now have computers is growing. If you are one of these and are on the Internet, by all means send your e-mail address to Tom Shepherd, the keeper of our 44th Roster so it can be included in our next revision of the 44th Directory. Come on in! The water is fine.



Reunion Notice



Tom Parsons (68th), Vice President of the 8th Air Force Historical Society urges all 44th BGVA Members who also belong to the Society to mark your calendar to attend their annual reunion October 13 - 18, 1998 at the Hilton Hotel, Cherry Hill, New Jersey. All necessary forms and details appear in the May and August issues of your 8th Air Force News.



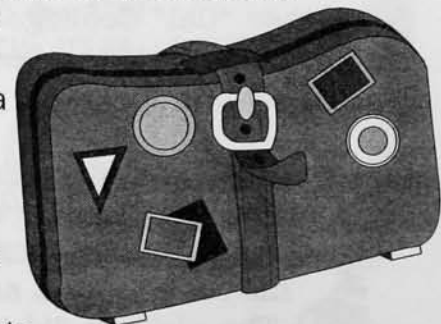
1999 TRAVEL WITH ROY & LOLLY OWEN

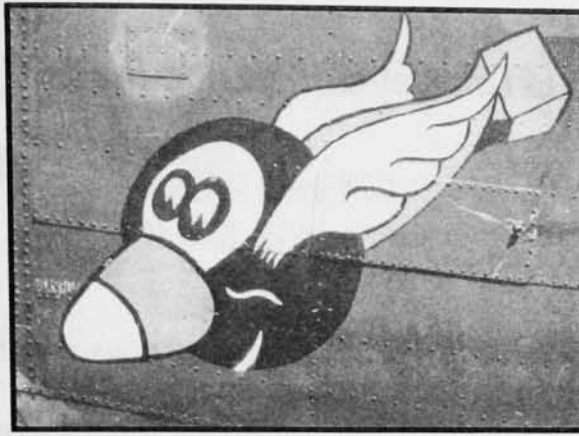
Before I go to a lot of work planning a trip for the late spring of next year, I would like to get a feel for how many would like to make a nice visit to the Norwich/Shipdham area with some day trips out of Norwich, then either North to York and Edinburgh or West to Bath and Wales or South to Eastbourne and the 1066 country.

I have in mind at least one nice 55 passenger bus load of 8-Ball'ers on a pretty laid-back tour that will include your breakfast and dinner every day and lunch on your own wherever we may be. A general itinerary that will allow us to swing off and see something or place that interests us along the way, and when we make a major stop, you will be free to do whatever interests you in the area. My tour man says, for a little extra, we can make a day trip over to Dieppe for some big time shopping.

We will handle the finances through our own treasury and I've got a good connection that will arrange the hotels and transportation, so the cost will be quite reasonable.

If this sounds good to you, drop me a card, letter, e-mail or fax (all that is in the Board Directory herein) and let me know if you'd like to go, how many of you, and which direction you would like to go from Norwich. This will be a two week trip with add-on, if some would like to stay over for a few days.





THE EIGHT BALL NEARLY GOT THE PURPLE HEART!



44th Bomb Group Veterans Association

6304 Meadowridge Drive • Santa Rosa CA 95409 • 707 538-4726 • Fax 707 538-1212 • rowen@sonic.net

Last May we asked Steve Adams to present a copy of our 44th Bomb Group History to the Shipdham Village Heritage Centre for their display. The letter of profferance below accompanied the History. Mr. Harold Pyne, Shipdham leader, sends word the letter has been framed and is on display in the Centre.

May 7, 1998

To Our Friends of Shipdham,

The reason the 44th Bomb Group "Flying Eightballs" were assigned to Shipdham notwithstanding, it was our great fortune the fate of our wartime assignment brought us to your community to be nestled into the Patterson Farm which had been transformed into AAF Station 115. From Shipdham Airfield, not only did we fight the war, we also found ourselves embraced by your community in a friendship that has endured to this day.

With our combat and support elements living areas dispersed over the airfield area, it placed our people literally in the back yards, or just over the back fence from a neighboring farm family. Through the first months of getting acquainted and into the early days of the terrible air war that raged over Europe, the relationship between our "Yankee" airmen and our Shipdham hosts grew from reluctant acceptance to admiration to family-like love. With the deprivations of war, your community had so little in the way of material things to share, but share you did. Not only the meager necessities of life, but the sharing of your homes and family lives with our young Americans far from home and engaged in a terrifying quest that held the likelihood they would not survive. In the early dawn of mission days our Shipdham neighbors would grimly watch the heavily loaded bombers roll thundering down the runway and struggle to become airborne to carry the battle to the enemy. Then came the uneasy wait while they went about their work, worrying and wondering if that young, friendly American face they had come to love would be knocking on the door to ask if he might take your daughter for a stroll.

Thus was life for three and a half years; loneliness, love, laughter and joy all blended into a bond of friendship forged and tempered in the crucible of a terrible war in which our freedom was at stake. We survivors of both the Shipdham community and the 44th Bomb Group, to this day, carry on with that love and friendship that has not waned in the many years that have past since we went home in 1945. It is our hope that by placing our 44th Bomb Group History in the Village Heritage Centre your progeny and the generations to come will read the history and feel great pride in the generosity and love bestowed upon their American visitors by their forbears.

Sincerely,
Ray W. Owen
Col. Ray W. Owen, USAF (Ret)
President

Tail End Charley and the Little Black Clouds

By Forrest S. Clark
October, 1943 - April, 1944
67th Squadron

It was my first mission, 5 Nov. 1943 and the target was the dreaded German munitions town of Munster, said to have 400 flak guns around it. I didn't know this at the time of takeoff. Somehow that information hadn't reached me from briefing.

We got off all right in the 44th BG formation and rendezvous without major incident.

The 44th BG that day was relatively far up front in the formation, so when I took up my position in the tail turret, I had an excellent view of the rest of the entire formation stacked up behind us. It was a sight to behold indeed and gave me a momentary elation and a shot of confidence. But that was not to last very long.

We crossed the North Sea headed for the Dutch coast. The sky was a china blue as far as I could see and not a cloud. I marveled at the elements of our bombers flying in what looked like a perfect rather close formation. I tried my guns and cracked the turret controls to check if everything was working.

At long last I saw the thin ribbon of beach and knew it must be the Dutch coastline. We were at medium altitude and all systems had checked out okay. I knew Munster was still a couple of hundred miles inland near the Ruhr Valley. What I didn't know is that bombers had gone to Munster two weeks before and got the hell shot out of them.

But In my Innocence I even began to enjoy the ride a little. Then I began to notice small black clouds forming off to both sides of the plane. "What do you see back there," came the call over the intercom from the pilot up front. "Oh nothing much, sir, I replied," confidently. "Are you sure?" came the reply. "Nothing but a few small clouds," I said this time into the intercom pressing the button against my throat. "Small black clouds," came the answer. "Damn it that's FLAK." The last word, FLAK, had an immediate sharp bite to it and from then on we had plenty of it on all sides, sometimes shaking the aircraft. It seemed like we were flying through a sky pock-marked with black clouds. I saw many close ones.

Luckily we got our bombs away and headed for home, but I had learned my lesson which stayed with me for the rest of my missions. For the sake of privacy, I won't reveal the name of the pilot; but I knew why he looked at me rather strangely as we made our way to interrogation.

FOLDED WINGS

July, 1998



- Vadis K. Akers 07/22/76 35447356 Waist Gunner for the
Usser J. Mustapa crew. 66th Squad-
ron. This crew was given overseas orders on 5 November 1943,
tour began in May, 1944, ended September, 1944. In May, 1944
this crew was on D.S. to 93rd BG for Pathfinder work for ten
days. They flew many missions as a Group Lead crew. Last mis-
sion to complete tour was 18 September 1944, the low level
supply mission to Best, Holland.
- Harold A. Barnes 01/28/97 31283540 68th Squadron. Harold was a Waist Gunner on the
R.C. Knablein crew. This crew joined the 68th Sq. on 29 May
1944 and rapidly completed their tour on 8 September 1944.
- Lt. Homer W. Crump 0-678179 Lt. Crump was killed in an airplane accident in Alaska
in the early 1960s. Lt. Crump and his crew were assigned to the
68th Sq. on 4 February 1945. They flew missions until 25 April
1945 and then brought their aircraft #42-51704 back to the
States on 21 May 1945. His bombardier, Charles D. Henry, folded
his wings in 1992. (See below.)
- Charlie D. Crutcher 11/18/97 Unable to identify any data concerning this member.
- Calvin W. Day 11/09/95 Per wife, Vivian J. Day. Very limited data suggests that Calvin
served with the bomb Wing at Lake Charles in the 1950s.
- Charles D. Henry 08/92 0-929136 68th Squadron. The Homer W. Crump crew was as-
signed to the 68th Squadron on 4 February 1945. Many of their
missions were flown in A/C #42-51704 J, and it also brought the
crew home on 21 May 1945.
- Ray M. Higgins 02/20/98 Ray served with the 806th Chemical section, working mostly with
the armament crews. He is survived by his wife, Josephine, a son,
Robert and two daughters, Joanne & Maureen.
- Charles Huntz Intensive search has not revealed any data about this member.
- Edmond R. Ingram 01/06/93 67th Squadron. Sgt. Ingram was the engineer on the A.J.
Helfenbein crew (as was Lt. Nadaud listed below in this report).
This pilot originally flew from Kansas to England via Gander
Lake, Iceland, Nutts Corner and to Shipdham as part of the
Vicker's Provisional Group, was co-pilot to L.J. Parks. When he
became first pilot, his crew was formed in December, 1943. They
flew 27 missions to successfully complete their tour.

- John Willard Jones, Jr.* 0-764327 506th Squadron. Died in early 1990s. Lt. Jones flew his first mission as co-pilot with his own crew. On his seventh mission, Kassel, Germany, he was seriously wounded by flak, necessitating an emergency landing in Belgium for immediate medical attention. Co-pilot C. Holcomb, who also was wounded in his left shoulder and back, was instrumental in making a successful emergency landing, thereby saving Lt. Jones' life, as his leg required amputation.
- Ronald L. Kerry* 01/12/96 36861716 S/Sgt. Kerry was a gunner on Fred P. Hildebrand's crew. This crew was assigned to the 67th Squadron on 24 January 1945, flew their first mission on 16 February 1945. On 25 Feb. their aircraft was hit by flak, lost considerable fuel, and was forced to make an emergency landing at Verdun, France. Last mission was on 18 April 1945, making it a total of 24. They flew their aircraft, #42-50795 N-Bar back to the U.S. the latter part of May. The unofficial name for their plane was "Cowtown Cat" named after a crew member's girl friend.
- Stanley Lipczynski* 06/18/98 66th Squadron. Sgt. apparently arrived in the 66th Squadron late in 1943, but cannot establish which crew or crews assigned. He was promoted to T/Sgt. on 16 January 1944. He flew one mission with the K.G. Jewell crew on 21 February 1944. On 9 March 1944 he was given a four day furlough, and upon returning on the 13th was notified that he had been transferred to another bomb group, possibly the 93rd. Stan moved to Carson City, NV, then returned mail indicated he was deceased.
- Lee A. MacGregor* 1983 68th Squadron 36421814 T/Sgt. Died approximately 1983. Lee, along with Lt. Henry (see Charles Henry), were members of the Lt. Homer W. Crump crew. He served as their Engineer and Top Turret gunner. He, with the other crew member, flew home in late May, 1945.
- Clarence R. Miller* 02/19/98 66/68th Squadrons 35272861 Sgt. Miller served with the 66th Squadron, being one of their ground echelon who went to England in September, 1942 aboard the Queen Mary. After training, he was assigned duty as a Medic. Then on 18 August 1944, was transferred to the 68th Squadron in the same capacity. Apparently he returned home, again on the Queen Mary in June, 1945.
- Melvin L. Nadaud* 02/23/98 0-746542 67th Squadron. Served as Bombardier for Lt. Helfenbein's crew. This crew was assigned to the 67th Squadron on 28 December 1943. Rather unusual for a bombardier, Lt. Nadaud was credited with destroying an Me-109. He also flew with other crews during his tour, including Lts. J.P. Thames, Jefferson, and Howard Metts. He completed 30 combat missions, returned home; served again in Korea and Vietnam; retired in 1968 as a Lt. Col. Lived in Granby, MA, was an antique dealer until his death.
- James Otto* 03/31/98 36316852 67/506th. James worked in Communications Section, 67th Squadron, departed U.S. 6 September 1942 aboard the Queen Mary with the Ground Echelon. Later, he transferred to the 506th Squadron. He was a Life Member of the 44th BGVA.



Richard Hal Pendleton, Lt. 04/06/98 0-661022 67th Squadron.
(USAF Retired)

"Hal" graduated from Texas A&M in 1941, joined the Air Corps, became a Bombardier, joined Elmer Reinhart's crew and on 1 April 1943 was enroute to the 44th BG. This crew flew to Africa on 23 June 1943 with the Group and flew seven missions before the fateful mission to the Ploesti Oil Fields on 1 August 1943. This crew was shoe down returning from the target, eight men parachuted successfully. They were POWs of the Romanians for over one year, returned to Shipdham on 8 September 1944. Hal chose to remain on active duty, continued to fly missions, some with Lt. E.P. Reynolds. He also served in the Korean War; retired from the Air Force and later Internal Revenue Service.

M/Sgt. John R. Penner 03/30/98 506th Squadron 17040390. Assigned to Armament Section. John was a member of the ground echelon which flew to Africa on 23 June 1943 on Lt. William Strong's plane. He again made the trip to Africa in September, 1943 returned to ATC to Shipdham on 3 October 1943. John was one of the original members of the 506th Squadron.

William D. Peoples 11/26/96 66th Squadron. Sgt. Peoples was a later arrival in the 66th squadron being transferred from the 70th Reinforcement Depot on 8 April 1945. Cannot confirm that he was assigned to a combat crew in time to fly any missions.

Lt. Arthur T. Sakowski 08/29/97 66th Squadron. 0-683323. Arthur was a Navigator for the Kenneth Jewell crew when that crew was transferred from the 392nd BG on 6 October 1943. He flew most of his missions with the Jewell crew, but also flew with the S.L. Irby's crew on 6 March 1944. On 16 November 1943 this crew was one of just a few 44th BG planes which managed to get airborne due to severe other bombers of the 2nd Division, very successfully bombed a target of opportunity near Rjukan, Norway.

S/Sgt. Kenneth Scholljergerde 10/19/97 17036153. Kenneth was a member of the ground echelon that made the trip to England in September, 1942 on the Queen Mary. And again with the Group when they returned to the U.S. on 16 June 1945, on the same Queen Mary. Kenneth was an assistant chief as well as a crew chief.

Carl Curtiss Shook Unknown 506th Squadron. He is survived by his wife, Clara. No further data has been located relative to his time with the 44th BG.

Thomas E. Shuffelbarger.. 04/06/98 506th Squadron 0-731233. Lt. Shuffelbarger served in the 506th Squadron in several different capacities: Ordnance Officer, Sq. Supply Officer and Watch Officer.

Donald E. Stroh 66th Squadron 36822565 Armor/Gunner (waist gunner) on the James V. Derrick's which was assigned to the 44th BG on 15 December 1944 crew. On their 8th mission, their aircraft was hit by flak, loss the fuel forced them to bail out over Belgium. Several crewmen were injured upon landing; two did not fly again. On their last mission, 25 April 1945, this crew made an emergency landing in Luxembourg.



T/Sgt. Robert D. Taylor..... 08/15/97 6919417 Sgt. Taylor was one of the early members of the 68th Squadron, was with the ground echelon when they went to England on the Queen Mary in September, 1942. He served as Aircraft Inspector; made both trips to Africa in 1943. In September, 1944, he attended AM School. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen and their daughter.

S/Sgt. Oliver J. Thomsen .. 08/15/97 17164976 66th Squadron. "O.J." was born on August 17, 1924 and folded his wings on 9 March 1998. Sgt. Thomsen was an armorer-waist gunner for Lt. E.B. Hendrick's crew; was assigned to the 66th Squadron in November, 1944. Their first mission was on 30 November, and their tour was completed on 20 April 1945, with 20 credited missions. On the crew's last mission, O.J. calmly released a smoke bomb that was hung up in the bomb bay, lessening greatly the threat of a fire there. As O.J. and John Walker were the only married men on the crew, they became close friends while training at Pueblo, and remained close during their time in England in training.



The 8-Ball Tails ©

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc. ©



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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.

YOUR 1998 REUNION

Savannah, Georgia

It's coming up fast -- Registration forms are right here and we still have hotel rooms and suites available. The programs and dinners have been arranged and it looks like we are going to have a reunion to remember!

It is time to make your reservations and send a check to your hard working Reunion Chair. This will put him at ease; he worries a lot that you will miss all of the fun he has planned for you!

Tom Parsons, Chairman of the Ploesti display has seen the first trial assembly of the diorama and reports that it is magnificent! We want you all to be present at the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum when we dedicate and turn the display over to the Museum in honor of our Ploesti veterans living and deceased. You will be mighty proud that you are a Flying Eight Ball 44th'er!



The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum

P.O. Box 1992 Savannah, Georgia 31402-1992 (912) 748-8888 1-800-421-9428

10 March 1998

Col. Roy W. Owen, USAF, Ret.
President
44th BG Veterans Association
6304 Meadowridge Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Dear Roy:

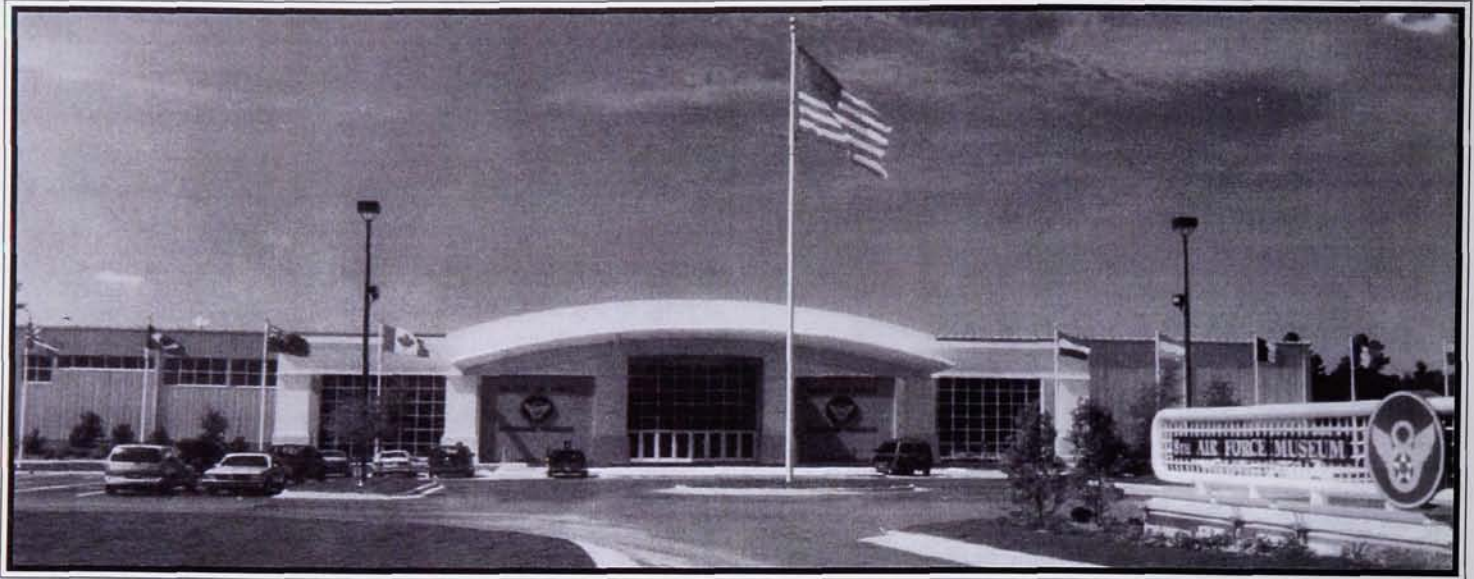
I received and very much appreciated your letter of 5 March covering the plans on the reunion and exhibit update. A copy of your letter was passed to the key staff so that everyone is aware of your plans and desires. Rest assured that the "Red Carpet" will be out for the "Eight-Balls" and Ploesti veterans in October. This get together should certainly draw National interest and Wayne Corbett will work with you to make that happen. It will be wonderful if Sue Vandenberg is able to attend.

Keep us posted as you proceed and let us know of any additional requirements. We look forward to having you folks visit the museum. Thanks for writing.

With kind regards,

Lt. Gen. E.G. Shuler, Jr., USAF, Ret.
Chairman and CEO

1998 Reunion



Savannah, Georgia

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VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

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8 BALL TAILS

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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

(GP-7-98-44)(27-1-44)(CAPT. R. J. LEHNHAUSEN & CREW)

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/SQT. DOUGLAS R. RATLEDGE, ASST. ENGINEER; T/SQT. WILLIAM G. MORTON, ENGINEER;
S/SQT. MICHAEL J. BALAZOVICH, ASST. RADIO; T/SQT. THOMAS A. LASKOWSKI, RADIO; S/SQT. 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.

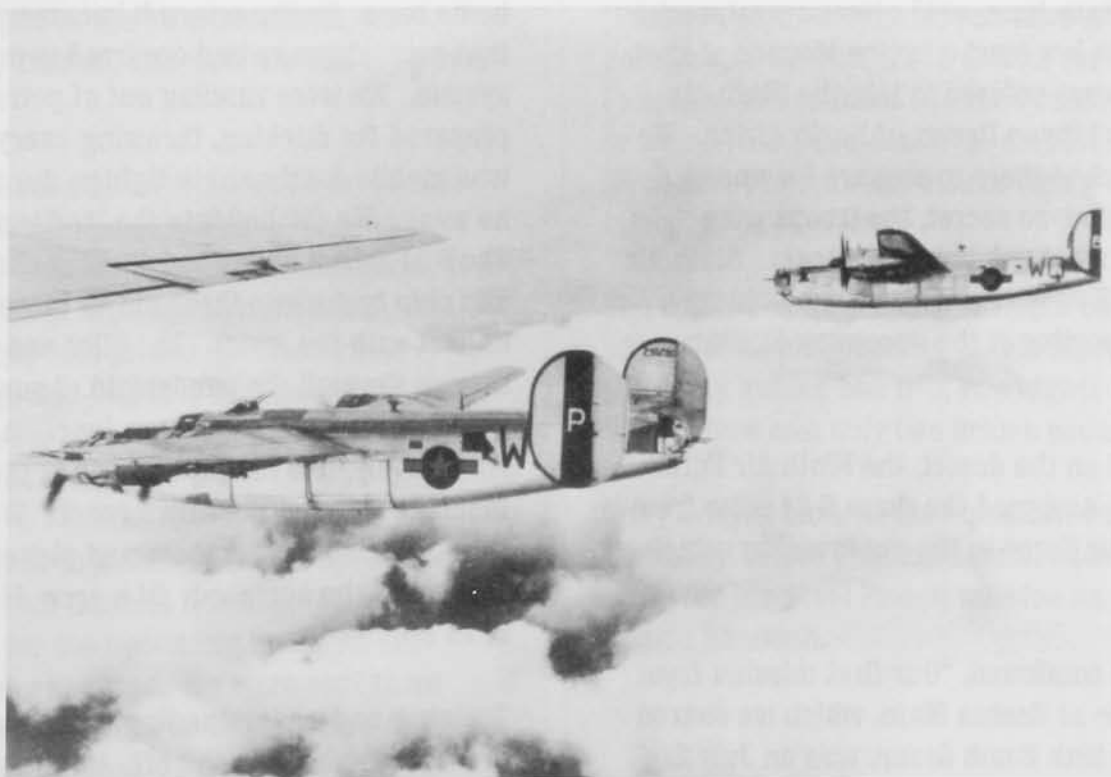
Crew training for eventual combat went very well, he recalled. Upon completion of this phase, they went to Salina, Kansas and were issued a

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.

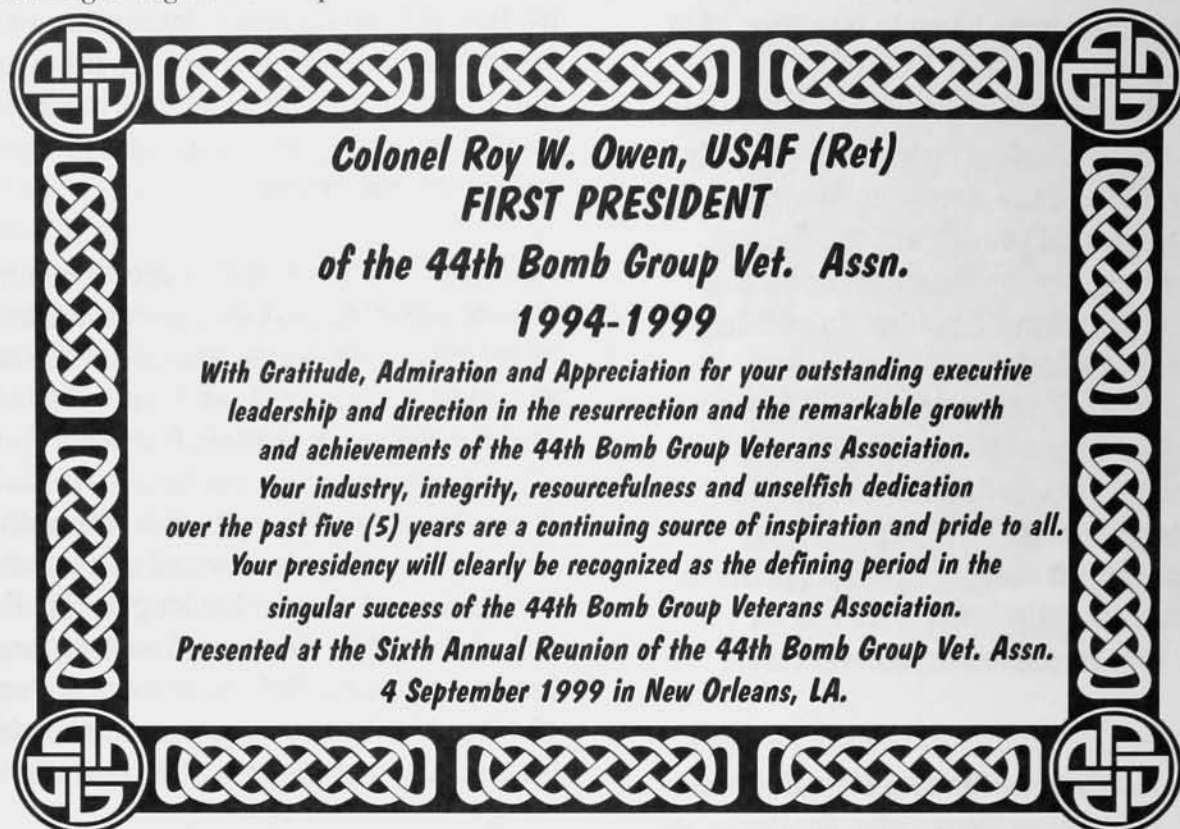


Bob and Liz Lehnhausen.



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:



BEV AND JERRY FOLSOM



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."



November 4, 1999

Dear Members of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association,

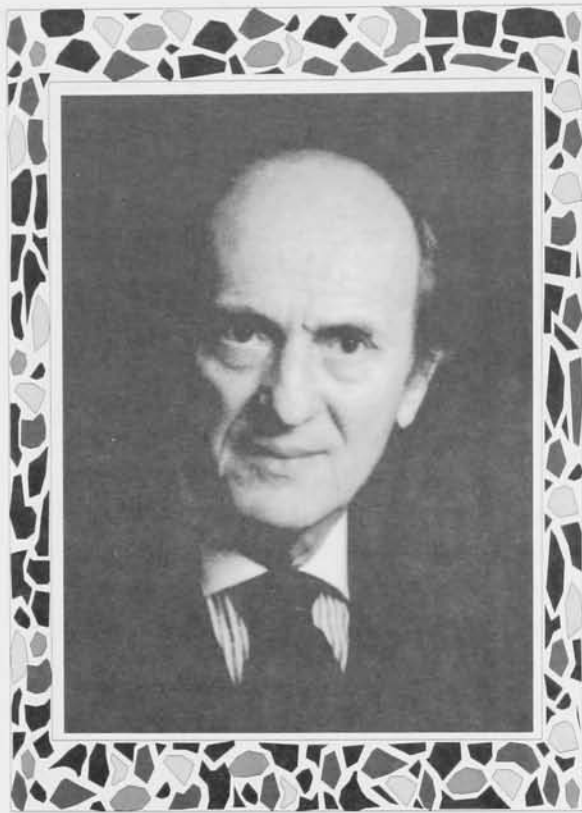
Were it possible, Lolly and I would prefer that we could see each and every one of you, first to express our profound thanks for giving us the great honor of serving as your President and First Lady over the past five years. Next, to thank you all for honoring us with the beautiful World Time Clock and 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:

8-Ball Tails Editor:

Ruth Davis-Morse

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e-mail: rewdm@blazenet.net

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.

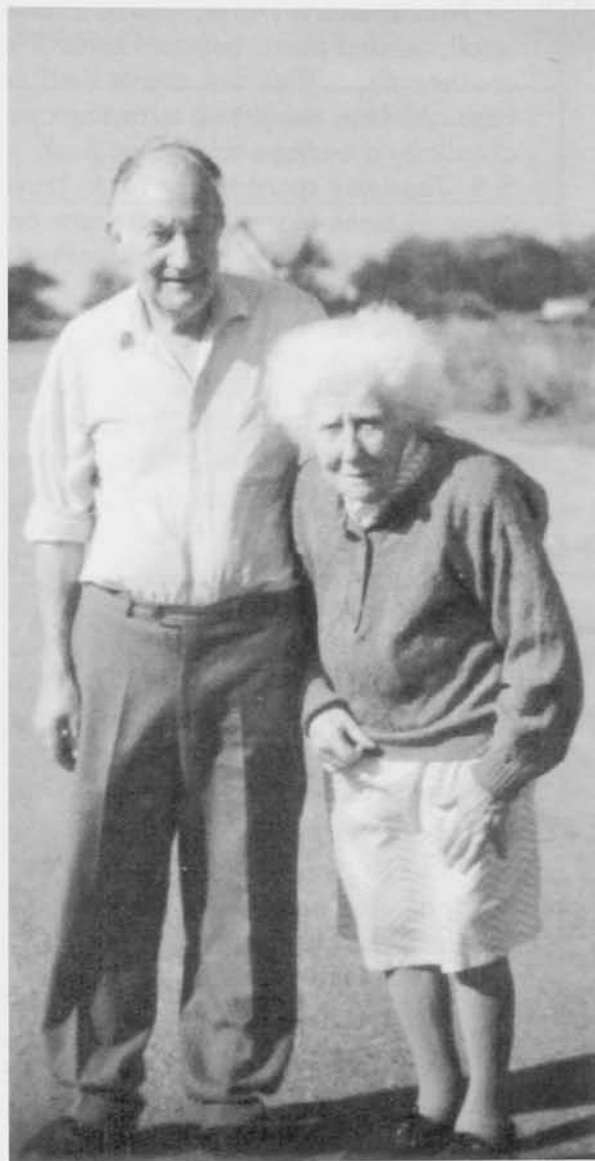
Word from England:

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. Mokoloski to the Presidency of the 44th BQUA.

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.

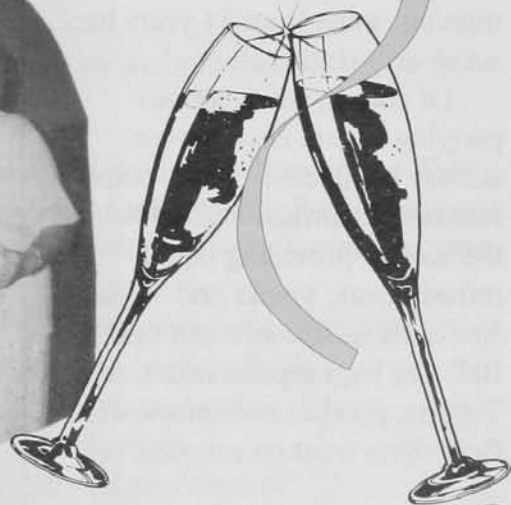
Larry & Georgia Ann Herpel, 44th BGVA



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.

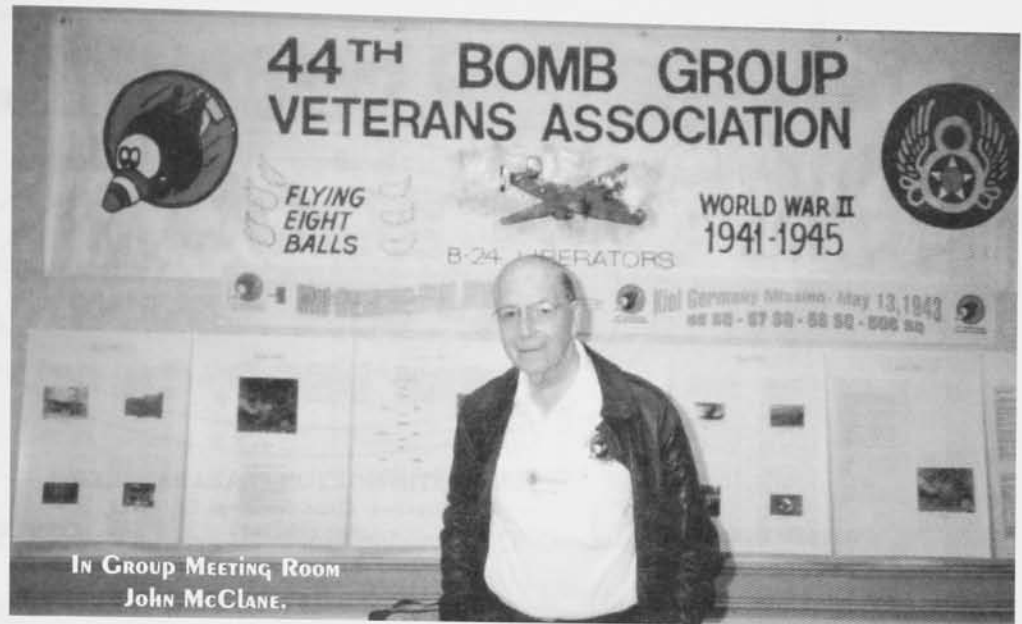
Mikoloski named one of the BG's most popular and admired gentleman, General Gibson, President Emeritus of the BG. With his usual enthusiasm and vigor, 'Jack' and his wife Ruth came to the Reunion to share the joy of reminiscing with old buddies.

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.





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.

- _____ 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 _____

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):

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION BOARD

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e-mail: AFMISSILEERS@compuserve.com

U.K. Representative: Steve Adams
28 Bassingham Rd.
Norwich, England NR3 2QT
Phone/Fax: 011-44-1603-400221
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.

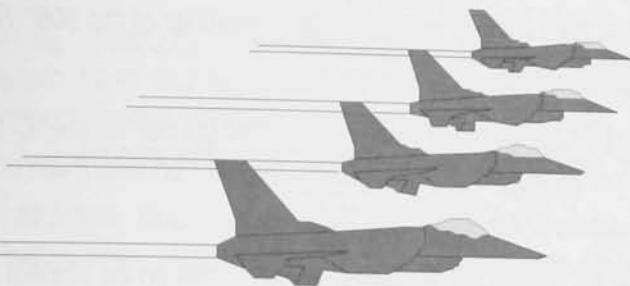
One thing that we have done lately is to adopt Arlo Bartsch’s computer program and have entered nearly all of our 8500 individual sortie reports. Here is an excellent source of missions flown, wounded,

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.

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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.



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.

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.

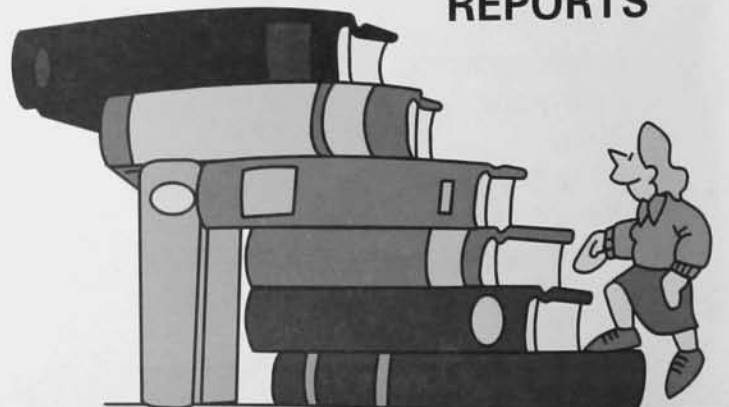
Among his treasured memories was 'his shortest sermon.' After the stress of many missions, seeing planes go down around him, with frazzled nerves, he answered a bunkmate's question with some strong profanity. Hours later a crew member unexpectedly landed a powerful punch in the face, telling him never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



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.

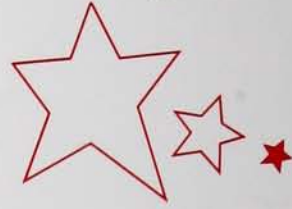
"WE NEED YOUR PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS AND MILITARY HISTORY WITH THE 44th FOR FUTURE POSTERITY."

Larry Herpel, Master Database Team Chief



Happy Holidays!

*Flying
Eight Ballers
into the new
Millennium*



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8 BALL TAILS



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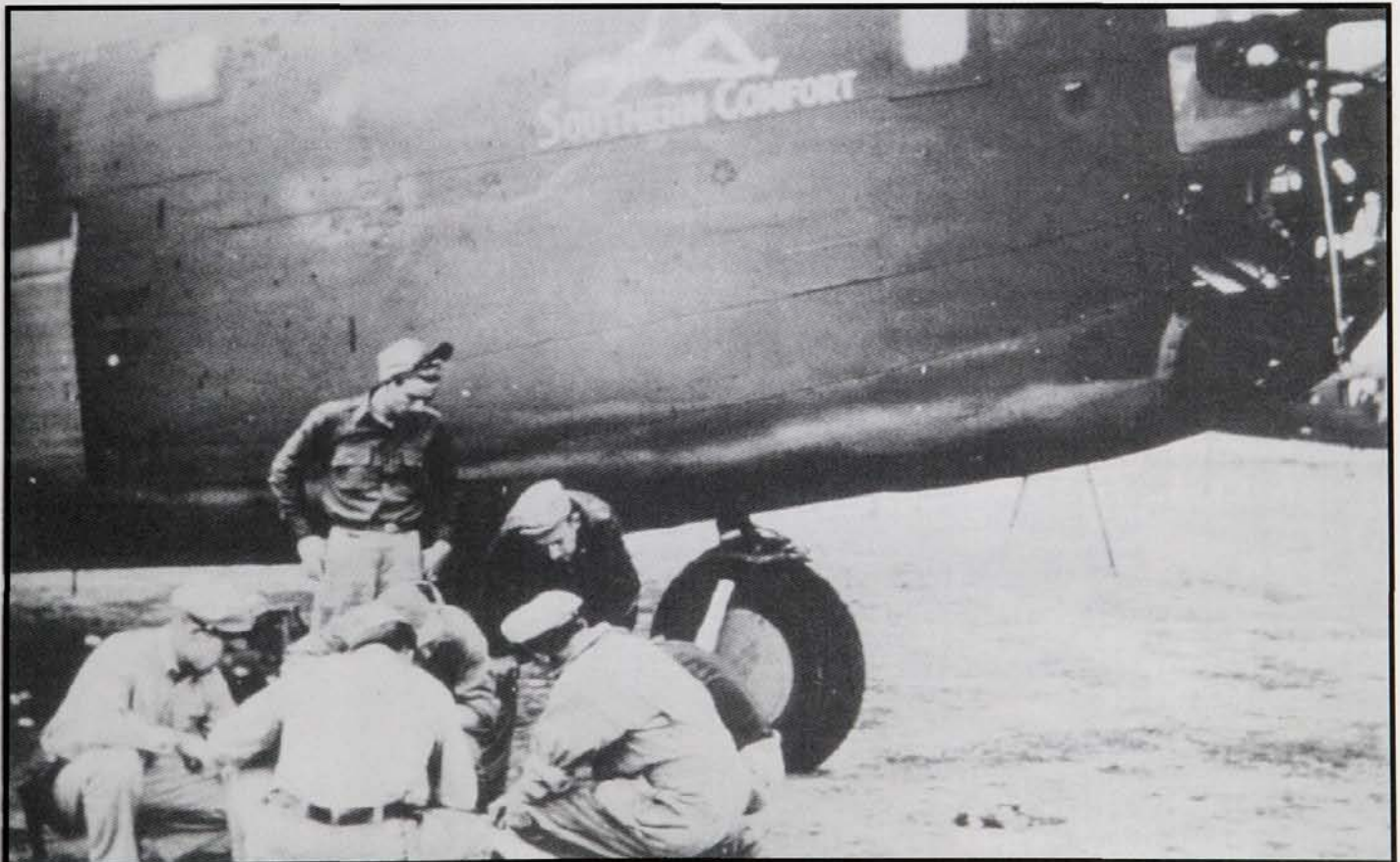
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Spring, 1999

Non Profit Veterans Organization

EIN #68-0351397

B-24J-5-FO 42=50896 Bar R "Southern Comfort III" 506th Bomb Squadron, 24 March 1945, with the crew of 2nd Lt. Max E. Chandler aboard departing the English coast on the low-level supply drop mission to Wesel, Germany in support of the Allied Forces Rhine River Crossing. Shot down by ground fire in the drop area, she was never to return. She was the last of four 506th Liberators bearing this name, all lost in the WWII Air War over Europe. The cost was terrible: 17 gallant crew KIA, 21 more taken POW and four aircraft, but never did the enemy turn these men back from their assigned mission.



ONE OF THE FEW PICTURES OF THE ORIGINAL SOUTHERN COMFORT.

BELIEVED TO BE MEMBERS OF THE AUSTIN CREW DOING A LITTLE PRE-MISSION REVIEW BEFORE A TRAINING MISSION AT BENGHAZI.

The Saga of Southern Comfort

By Roy Owen

In our last issue the cover story featured the March 24, 1945 low-level supply mission to Wesel, Germany in support of the Rhine River crossing. The heartbeat of that story was the ground fire shoot-down of the 506th Squadron B-24J-5-CO #42-50896 Bar R named "Southern Comfort III" and the miraculous survival of Waist Gunners Louis DeBlasio and Bob Vance in the fiery crash. Since their aircraft was the last of four 506th aircraft which bore the name Southern Comfort, it seemed appropriate to bring closure to that story with some background on their airplane and a fill-in accounting for the three Southern Comfort predecessors of SC III.

B-24D-95-CO 41-40778, was one of the first replacement Liberators assigned to the 506th Bomb Squadron. At deployment from Lincoln, Nebraska, she was assigned to the 1st Lt. Horace W. Austin crew, who in deference to their pilot who hailed from Virginia Beach, Virginia, promptly named her Southern Comfort (a revered Southern liquor) and ferried her to Shipdham, arriving to join the 44th on 14 March 1943. The Austin crew was one of the first augmentation crews to the 506th. #778 was sent to Langford Lodge for combat modifications; they rejoined the 506th prior to the North Africa deployment. We find no evidence of any combat mission activity until after deployment to North Africa. Presumably the Austin crew flew some low-level training missions in preparation for the Benghazi deployment. On 6 July 1943, the Austin crew flew the combat debut of

#778, Southern Comfort, in support of the Sicily invasion. They flew her again on July 13 in support of the Sicily invasion; against the Marshalling yards at Naples July 17; the Littori M/yards at Rome July 19; Ploesti August 1 and Weiner Neustadt, Austria August 13. The war ended for the Lt. Austin crew and the original Southern Comfort on the 16 August 1943 raid on North Airfield at Foggia, Italy when, after a previous raid had experienced light flak and little in the way of fighter defenses, the Germans had quickly deployed substantial numbers of FW 190 and Me 109 fighters. The 44th ran into a fury of fighter defense which resulted in the loss of seven aircraft which included Suzy Q, Buzzin' Bear and Southern Comfort. All of the crew except Lts. Paul S. Singer, Navigator and Sheldon Finder, Bombardier successfully bailed out. Although both Singer and Finder escaped the aircraft, apparently their parachutes were too badly shot up to deploy and both were found dead at the point of impact. All of the remaining crew were held as prisoners but later made successful escapes and returned to England.



B-24H-1-FO 42-7522S

Bar R Southern Comfort (2)

B-24H-1-FO 42-7522S was transferred from the 392nd BG but had flown no combat missions prior to arrival at Shipdham on 9 October 1943. Assigned to the 506th, she was named Southern Comfort without a suffix #II, although she was the second 506th aircraft so named. The 39 combat missions flown by this *Southern Comfort (2)* ranked her second among her SC sister ships. The crew of 1st Lt. John D. Money flew 19 of those missions and were aboard on their 20th on 4 Nov. 1944 when on the bomb run against the fiercely defended Junkers assembly plant at Bernburg, Germany. The bomb bay doors were solidly iced and could not be opened, so they attempted to drop their load of fragmentation bombs through the doors. The bombs did not penetrate the doors and apparently detonated, causing a raging fire in the bomb bay. As the aircraft rolled over before break-up, four crew members were seen to bail out; however, only Lt. Money and the two Waist Gunners, S/Sgts. Don Young and Wallace Kirschner survived and were taken prisoner.



THE SECOND SOUTHERN COMFORT, CALL LETTER S. THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN AFTER A LANDING AT THURLEIGH, A B-17 BASE NEAR BEDFORD, PROBABLY COMING OFF A MISSION WITH BAD WEATHER AT AF 115.

B-24J-125-CO 42-110034 Bar R

Southern Comfort 11 (3)

The third aircraft to bear the Southern Comfort name, as a result of some confusion, had Roman numeral two (II) added to her name. She arrived at Shipdham about 1 April 1944. The Lt. Jack J. Wind crew took her over and flew 19 of her 31 missions. In her combat record she struck such important targets as the Pas de Calais V-I sites in France; the Oil Plants at Politz, Germany twice; Berlin, the Krupp Aircraft factory at Magdeburg and the Junkers Aircraft factory at Bernburg. SC 11 met her demise on 21 July 1944 with the Lt. John W. Allen crew aboard. The 44th had just attacked the armaments factory at Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany in the Munich area and were withdrawing; at this point the Missing Air Crew Report becomes confusing. One report says SC II was under attack by a twin engine German fighter, while Lt. Dan Healy stated the aircraft was shot down by an AA Battery despite strong evasive action by Lt. Allen. At any rate, the aircraft was mortally damaged and all hands except Radio Operator John J. Kempowicz, Jr. successfully bailed out and were taken prisoner.

B-24J-5-CO 42-50896 R

Southern Comfort III (4)

The last of the SC's arrived at Shipdham in August, 1944. She was flown by a number of different 506th crews in amassing a total of 47 combat missions to lead the SC derby by 10. Among them the Lt. William M. Smith crew, your author as Co-Pilot flew her twice - once on 2 February 1945 briefed to strike Nuremberg, Germany which was recalled; and the other on 23 February 1945 (the 300th mission for the 44th) against the rail center at Weimar, Germany. The targets in the latter stages of the war were synthetic oil plants, railway marshalling yards and rail centers, and junctions to cut off the supply routes supporting the German counterattack in the Ardennes, and finally, for Southern Comfort III, the low-level

supply mission to the site of the Allied forces crossing of the Rhine River into the German homeland at Wesel. Badly struck by ground fire in the drop area SC III went out of control and crashed. The miraculous survival of Louis DeBlasio and Bob Vance allowed them the opportunity from their hospital beds to watch their German captors become American captives.



**THE LAST OF THE SOUTHERN COMFORT NAMED LIBERATORS
M/Sgt. RALPH C. JORGENSEN WAS CREW CHIEF ON ALL.**



**SOUTHERN COMFORT III ENGINES RUNNING,
READY TO TAXI.**



**THE SOUTHERN COMFORT GROUND CREW. L TO R
S/Sgt. ALEX JANUSZYK, Sgt. DON POWELL, Sgt. DON SWEM
PRESUMABLY, M/Sgt. JORGENSEN TOOK THE PICTURE.**

In all of the stories we have related in the past five years that dealt with our combat missions, we have lauded our brave combat crews and those magnificent maintenance men I call "Knucklebusters," (did you ever see one without a skinned knuckle or two?). We've talked about the deeds of valor by our aircrews fighting a vicious high altitude air war and watching in terror and anguish at seeing comrades being shot out of the formation and praying for the bailout and counting the chutes. We've also talked about those lonely hours after mission launch that our ground crews go through the vigil of waiting for the mission return; then the anxiety of the returning airplane count, looking for their own. We've talked some about the relief of seeing their own ship coming down finally, but we haven't talked much about the terrible anguish of the wait and the gut wrenching mixed emotions of hope after the main force has landed, that she is limping in late, and fear that she is not coming home, and you will never again see that beautiful young crew. In my conversations over the years with the Ground Crews that have been through the combat experience of losing an aircrew and plane, all have told me once is enough.

When the same pilot or crew is assigned to one's airplane, a natural bonding takes place which is a fertile pot for friendship to blossom and grow. The first loss, however, changes that friendly comradeship and a guarded, impersonal relationship takes its place. Fear of the anguish, should another loss of a pilot or crew you have come to care for occur, brings down a curtain of professional relationship and respect but no display of emotion. The hurt is too great to take the risk. "Yes, Sir" and "No, Sir" or "How about this, Chief, or Sarge" gets the job done and makes it easier to keep what might be taken for tender feelings of friendship down deep where they won't flare up if the going gets scary. I've also talked to some pilots who have never figured this out. You'll hear them say something like: Have you flown Sgt. Brown's airplane? Man, he is some kind of grouch! Unless it is something about the airplane, he will hardly give me the time of day! It is a strange human phenomena, but if the pilot or crewman understands it, then all it takes is a warm thank you for an aircraft that performed for you. You can then believe there is a big grin inside that inner protective shell that is saying thanks, I appreciate that, but I just have trouble showing it. After four losses, I'm sure M/Sgt. Jorgenson and his ground crew would know what we're talking about here.

FROM THE NEWLY APPOINTED EDITOR

Ruth W. Davis-Morse

Roy Owen's desk is overflowing, so please start forwarding your information to me. Besides, he has more projects going than the CIA. Everybody has a story worth telling and worth publishing. Send it!

I am holding a beautiful picture of the Queen Mary when she steamed into New York Harbor in 1945 carrying the victorious veterans home from the War. Can anyone who went over on the Queen Mary or anyone who came home on her, give me a little information about how he/she felt on those awesome and glorious days?

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Well, in the language of the Military, I must say:

"Pay attention, this is no drill!"

In the Winter issue President's Corner, I explained how it

was that I came to be still occupying the seat of the president. It is with mixed emotions that I now tell



you the time has come to pass the gavel. I know you all join me in my sorrow for Mike Mikoloski and his family because his daughter Peggy lost her courageous battle with cancer last November 30. The outcome of her struggle, if you will recall, was to determine the length of my extended service as your president.

In mid-January I talked with Mike to see how he was managing with the sorrow of his loss. After talking through the emotions, he seemed relieved and I opened the dialogue of when he might feel ready to assume the responsibilities of the president. The reason I call him "Iron Mike" came shining through when he replied: "Roy, I think it is exactly what I need to direct my focus away from the tragedy of my personal loss and toward the good of the 44th BGVA, which I love!" Little else can be said except that I feel confident with Mike taking the lead. While I have some sad feelings about stepping down, it has been a great ride, guiding our association from near extinction to the strongest Bomb Group in 2nd Air Division and perhaps in 8th Air Force.

We have agreed on June 1 as the effective date for my resignation and his ascendancy to the president's chair. This will be confirmed by the Board in a meeting to be held in conjunction with the 2nd AD Convention in Austin, Texas May 29-June 1.

I am obliged, in passing the gavel, to discuss the highlights of our current and near-term past projects and financial condition relating to those projects. This summary has been provided in an earlier report to your Executive Board as my closing report.

Starting with the longest on-going project we called the "Arrow Air," in which we entered into an agreement with the Shipdham Airfield operator to match-fund the construction of an addition to their facility, which would be a combination Pilot's lounge/44th Bomb Group Museum. Under the agreement we were obligated to grant \$6k to the project. After almost two years of vague planning and futile attempts to get outside grant financing, the facts came to light that Arrow Air was only a step ahead of bankruptcy (they have since filed) and the owner of the airfield intended to deny extension of the airfield lease. In December, 1998, Arrow went out of business. Forewarned, in October, I directed our Treasurer to withdraw our funds from the English bank holding the account and transfer the funds to our U.S. account in Salt Lake City. That project is history.

In 1997 we received a letter from the Shipdham chapter of the British Legion that there was a local project afoot to finance and install a stained glass window in the Shipdham church. The British Legion offered to raise the funds for the window if the window theme would be to memorialize Shipdham Veterans killed in WWI & II. It was then that the 44th BGVA was approached to participate. In response, the 44th volunteered to assume 10% of the cost (\$640.) We were recently informed that Shipdham has a new, young Vicar who opposes any suggestion of war in the church, thus the Window project is history, and the allocated \$640 awaits in our treasury for re-allocation to a future project.

In early 1997, a 44th delegation went to Barksdale AFB, LA for the dedication of a memorial plaque in the 8th Air Force Memorial Park. While there, we were invited to take part in a re-paint of the B-24J 'Laden Maiden' to mark the aircraft in 44th identity. After almost two years of inactivity, our project officer Clem Haulman visited Barksdale and found no progress had been made on the re-paint and additionally, two engine cowlings were beyond repair and needed replacement. One side of the horizontal stabilizer was sagging and was propped up with a wooden timber. Col. Haulman also obtained correspondence from the 8th Air Force Vice Commander which stated that Air Force budget constraints would not allow re-hab maintenance on museum aircraft. He urged the Museum Director to encourage the donation of repair funds from 'interested agencies' which, (as concerns the B-24J we intend to re-name 'Louisiana Belle,") is the 44th BGVA. The estimate of \$7,000 for repairs is two years old. I have recommended to the Board that we undertake the repair.

We covered the successful completion and dedication of the Ploesti display in the Mighty 8th AF Museum, Savannah, GA in the last issue of the "Tails." Financially, we had a \$640 overrun on the \$3000 estimate for the diorama, and to our great surprise, a \$4600 bill for the display case, which we were told there would be no cost. Both amounts have been paid by some very skillful re-allocation of budgeted funds by our Treasurer. Immediately after the dedication in Savannah, we listened to a recommendation by the museum staff that we put up a guard rail around the display and provide text panels on opposite sides of the display which would give an overview and some statistics on the Ploesti Raid for the visiting public to better understand the mission. The museum staff has completed plans for this addition with a cost of \$2,000, and we have instructed the museum to proceed with that addition. Except for some thoughts for a future addition of a voice overlay giving the details of the mission, that project is complete. The museum staff tells us that already, our Ploesti display is the most popular one in the museum.

Help us here folks, this is our last chance to leave our mark on the pages of World History.

The biggest and, what has become the most important of our current projects, is the 8th Air Force Heritage Database we have written extensively about in the last two issues of the "Tails." I am happy to report that our Database Team headed by Tom Shepherd is underway.

One of our early concerns is that our members have been very slow submitting their personal biographies. This data is being entered into the program by our own member volunteers. The archival data (missions, aircraft numbers, etc.) has been extracted from the National Archives by Tony Mastradone and transmitted via Will Lundy to the contractor for data entry.

As you should rightfully expect, the 44th is once again the leader of the 2nd AD in becoming its first group to adopt and undertake this magnificent 'living history' of 8th Air Force. While we felt certain that between the individual donations so far made by the members, coupled with the funds retrieved from the "Arrow Air" project, we had money in the treasury allocated to fully meet the original estimate for completing the entry of the archival data. We are, like most projects, experiencing overruns which are being funded from our treasury reserves and will be addressed by the Board.

As to funding for the living and recently deceased 44th Veterans for whom we have records, we are covering by collection of a small fee from each member as he submits his or her Personal Biography. Future search for 44th Veterans with whom we have had no contact will, no doubt, require additional future funding. Again we ask our living membership to not forget those who have gone before us. We must do our level best to see that EVERY 44th Veteran dead or alive takes their rightful place in the "living history" database. We need whatever you can give. For those contributing \$100 or more, you will receive your own compact disk containing the 8th Air Force Military Heritage Database.



At the very least, when you complete your own Personal Biographical Data and send it in with the applicable \$10 or \$15 data entry fee, send along an additional \$30 to cover a couple of Biographical forms for those who are no longer with us or those who can't afford the fee.

Remember, in the historical sense, we in the 44th, will never knowingly leave our dead on the battlefield. They will always belong to us! The future search for the records of those deceased or we have otherwise lost contact will, no doubt, require VA, Social Security, Air Force, Army and family records search, which will involve telephone calls and correspondence, which all means more future funding. Help us here folks, this is our last chance to leave our mark on the pages of World History.

In closing, I am very pleased to report that our financial condition has (in our resurrected life) come from the empty cash drawer legacy of the HMG to the best bank balance in our four and a half year history. We just emerged from a very successful reunion to the credit of our Reunion Chairman, Mike Yuspeh. Gratefully, we are headed for another great reunion under his stewardship in his home town, New Orleans.

I will continue to serve our Association from the seat of the Immediate Past President. I have promised my help, advice and counsel to Mike and to Ruth Morse, your editor of this, her first issue of your Association journal.

Lolly and I thank you for allowing us the honor of serving you as your President and First Lady. We love you and will see you in New Orleans.

Roy W. Owen

Please note: Hairs are getting grayer and ranks are getting thinner.

The 44th Bomb Group needs new members.

You've been telling stories to your children and grandchildren for years; and when you are gone, the memories will dim. Right now the unbelievable experiences of WWII are a fascination for all generations.

Sign up family members to the Bomb Group, and keep the memories alive.

44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



DUES FOR 1999

•Dues are \$20. •Outside U.S. \$25

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Join now so you don't miss the next issue of the 8-Ball Tails!

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Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287

Thank you!



H.C. "Pete" Henry
Pilot, 44th Bomb Group

For his many years of dedicated service to the 2nd Air Division Association and to other members of his Bomb Group.

This letter to Dick from the Trust Librarian speaks for the success of the "Pete Henry" Endowment fund and its perpetual tribute to the remarkable man we honor with it.



Paul R. King. OBE. DL. Chairman
1 Lime Tree Road,
Norwich,
Norfolk NR2 2NF
Tel: (01603) 451957

The Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division U.S.A.A.F.
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The 2nd Air Division USAAF Memorial Room is situated at the Temporary Central Lending Library, Old Glasswells building, 71 Ber Street, Norwich, NR1 3AD

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9 March 1999

DH/PAS

Richard D Butler
16494 Wagon Wheel Drive
Riverside
CA 92506-5850
USA

Dear Mr Butler

I enclose details of books purchased on behalf of The 44th Bomb Group in honor of Pete Henry under the 1997/98 endowment programme.

Reis, Claire R. – Composers in America: Biographical Sketches of Contemporary Composers with a Record of their Work

Dale, Nelson W – Who Speaks for the President? : The White House Press Secretary from Cleveland to Clinton

Eisenhower, John S D – Agent of Destiny: The Life and Times of General Winfield Scott

Finler, Joel W. – Hollywood Movie Stills: The Golden Age

McNeese, Tim – Illustrated Myths of Native America: The Northeast, Southeast, Great Lakes and Great Plains

Although this allocation was made some time ago I have yet to receive specific instructions re wording for the bookplates.

If you would kindly provide me with the required wording I will send you a copy of the bookplate as soon as possible.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Derek Hills
Trust Librarian



Remembering the "Yanks"

Roy Owen



My first experience with a British post-war demonstration of the admiration and gratitude they hold for the American armed forces was when Lolly and I went over for the 40th Anniversary of "D" Day, June 6, 1984.

Our tour was planned, insofar as possible, to follow the invasion path of the Americans, so we were scheduled to depart Weymouth on route to our "invasion" point at Cherbourg. As our tour bus got in the bus line to board the ferry, looking over to the automobile and truck line, I couldn't believe my eyes seeing the assembly of almost every type of vintage WWII U.S. Army vehicles I had ever seen. Personnel carriers, weapons carriers, jeeps, six-by-trucks, ambulances, staff cars, and motorcycles with side-cars. Except for tanks, you name it and there seemed to be at least one of everything. Amazing also was the great shape they were in; almost every one of them looked like it had just left the motor pool! Equally amazing was almost to the vehicle, they were occupied with Brits dressed in authentic U.S. Army Uniforms. On the ambulances were English women in U.S. Army Nurses uniforms. Also there were Army WACs and WAFS. It truly looked like an invasion force.

We all had an incredible party on the four hour crossing and admittedly a rather shaky invasion, as all were debarked and true to form. There were some vehicle breakdowns on the highway climbing the palisade out of Cherbourg causing a realistic invasion bog-down.

This spirit is still alive and well, Dick Butler found out during his November attendance at the 2nd AD Executive Board meeting in Norwich. Not only do they love Americans and their war relics, but they love the 44th Bomb Group and its 68th Bomb Squadron, as illustrated by the photo of Dick and this wonderfully maintained jeep owned by Keith Thomas, active member of The Friends of 8th Air Force. One can be certain it is a proud Brit who owns one of these cherished vehicles and the uniform to go with it.



WILL SEZ

Compiling a listing of Folded Wings three times a year is difficult in more ways than one. Obviously, time marches on and more of us "fold" our wings. But it is often times very hard to locate any data within the records that I possess to find suitable material to do justice to any person on the new listings. Surely there must be some means to build up our records to permit anyone to learn more about those that served with us.

With the initiation of our recent efforts to computerize our history, utilizing the Computer Generated Data Program, we will be able to have immediate access to our operational history. That is a huge step in the right direction, but we still have only the names of our members, with little personal data. True, the program has the capacity to accept and produce personal experiences, both by written and spoken words. But again, we still will know very little about the man himself (or woman).

What we really need from each of you is data about yourself - and how do we get that? Why, the Bios form that has been included in this newsletter in the last two issues. Hopefully, we will have the space to once again make it available to you, and this time please do not put it aside and forget it. Remove it from the newsletter and put with our bill paying drawer or envelope, etc. **THAT'S RIGHT, DO IT NOW!!** And I hope that later you will come back to read why it is so important. It may appear to be complicated and/or extensive, but it really is not. There is ample space provided for a more complete response to the question, but often you can utilize more paper to fully complete a story or experience. Get your family or friends to help you if necessary. **BUT, please get it done!**

Why is this so important? Because in our records you are only a name, not a person.

Your bios will make your records come alive. That is, you will be a person not just for the present, but for as long as our history is available for future generations to read and appreciate what you accomplished before, during WWII and afterwards.

One more thought too, before you finish this column. As evidenced in the Folded Wings, we are losing members, many of them were combat crew members. These men are gone and consequently cannot prepare a bio for themselves, so we must find some way to get it done for them. If you have ideas how to obtain them, please advise us. Until then, I'd like to suggest to you remaining crew members (or to any other person who has lost 44th friends or buddies) to check your old addresses and try to contact the widows or their children, even other crew members, to have them help prepare a form as completely as possible. They could have photos, diaries, orders, form 5, etc. with which to obtain many answers. Each of you crewmen could offer to help them, too, to help with answers.

The form need not be complete to be submitted. Those of us on the Bios team can attempt to get more answers that may be in our Official Records. We will do as much research as our records permit. Many crewmen have submitted diaries and stories to me in the past, so these are also available. If you have, please remind us, so that they will not be overlooked. Let us make this a complete team effort -- let us all get involved so that our 44th Bomb Group can be set up as a shining example for all to see and admire. We have a big job to do, so let us once more pull together and get it done right.

THANK YOU!

Will Lundy



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**STATUS REPORT ON BGVA MEMBERSHIP
and
MASTER HERITAGE DATABASE PROJECT
By Tommy Shepherd**

This report is being presented in a questionnaire format, for it is - YOU - the membership that can best respond to the core question: Just how much do you really want posterity to know about the men and women of the 44th Bombardment Group during World War II?

Do you know of the thousands upon thousands of hours that over the past FIFTY-SEVEN (57) years such 44thers as: Will Lundy, Art Hand, Tony Mastradone, Webb Todd, Norm Keifer, Jerry Folsom, Arlo Bartsch, Roy Owen, Steve Adams, Bob Lehnhausen, Bill Cameron, Ursula P. Harvell, and many others, have contributed to recording in book form YOUR history?

Do you know that because of the efforts of these fellow members that all data from the sorties flown by OUR groups from 1942 to 1944, inclusive, is already entered in the NM? Do you know that only sorties for 1945 have not yet been entered? BUT - do you know that this data is only the IMPERSONAL data and text of our total history?

Do you know at this point that we are still waiting for a great many biographies, all of which are important. Do you know, included in the 8BT edition is, again, the Biography Form awaiting YOUR completion? Certainly you are not waiting for someone else to complete YOUR biography. Are you? Can anyone else complete as well as you "Personal Memories, Experiences and Stories", or the other section, "Specific Mission Comments"?

For you attending the New Orleans Reunion there will be special times for your viewing the most up-to-date version of the @. Do you want to see what some of your fellow members said about our 44th? How about the ground support member that said, "My crew busted our butts hour upon hour in the cold and wet Jolly Ole' because we wanted our airplane to do its BEST for the BEST combat crew buddies; and by God, they did their BEST - even in North Africa in all that damn sand and wind." Then what Combat Air Crew Pilot said, "I thank God for the opportunity to fly with some of the bravest people on earth ... I feel lucky too, to have made it through without any serious problems." Do those 'memories' sound like some of yours?

Please note: Art Hand and Norm Nutt are currently working on securing all possible biographies from family members of those deceased. If you know of a former member, now deceased, and would like to assist Art and Norm, why don't you pass that information along to them? Let us all pitch in and help this super fine effort.

Don't you feel that all of us have yet One More Duty to Perform, and that is to record for posterity all of our experiences and memories for generations yet to come, and do it in a form and manner that all can see and read about our 44th BGP? Well, how about it?

What are you waiting for?



When you have completed this form, if you have no pictures, mail it with \$10; if you have two photos or one photo and an extra page of text (single spaced in 12 point font), mail the form with \$15 to:
44th BGVA, P.O. Box 712287, Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287.



8th Air Force Military Heritage Database

Personal Biographical Data — Your “Living Monument”

It is our goal to assemble a complete record of all personnel who at one time served with the 8th Air Force during World War II. The records of those who were on flying status will be obtained from declassified group mission reports which have been stored in the National Archives. From this, a matrix has been developed which will allow for the search and retrieval of the following information: who flew on what mission, with whom, in what plane, to what target, on what date, enemy opposition, aircraft and personnel losses, and hundreds of cross referenced bits of detailed information.

To make this database come “Alive,” your stories, memories, photos and voice recordings are essential.

Cassette recordings of your memories should be limited to 2 minutes or less per each incident.

Please provide a “Then and Now” photo of yourself and a Crew photo, if available.

A Master Copy of this multi-media database is now a part of the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA. Other copies will be available to Museums, Libraries, Universities, Schools and on the World Wide Web Internet. You may also have your own copy of the full database, on a CD, to run on a home computer.

Last Name: _____ First: _____ Initial: _____

Address #1: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phones ~ Home: _____ Other: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Nickname: _____

Date Deceased: _____ Date Enlisted: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Spouse: _____ 8th Air Force Group/s: _____ Squadron/s: _____

Special Military Training: _____

Graduating Class: _____ Location: _____ State: _____



Group Rank: _____ Group Duties: _____ Ret. Rank: _____

Your ASN (Serial Number/s): _____

Occupation Prior to Military: _____

Occupation After Military and/or Continued Military Service: _____

Arrival at ETO base: _____ Arrived From: _____

Arrived How (Any Details): _____

Personal Memories, Experiences & Stories: _____

Specific Mission Comments: _____

Date Departed ETO: _____ How: _____ Destination: _____

Trip Details: _____

Military Honors & Decorations:

Congressional Medal Of Honor: _____
Distinguished Service Cross: _____
Distinguished Service Medal: _____
Silver Star: _____
Legion of Merit: _____
Distinguished Flying Cross: _____
Soldiers Medal: _____
Bronze Star: _____

Air Medal: _____
Purple Heart: _____
Presidential Unit Citation: _____
Prisoner of War: _____
Good Conduct Medal: _____
Victory WWII: _____
European Theater Ribbon: _____

Other Awards: _____

Special Status: Shot Down: POW: Evaded: MIA: KIA: Ditched: Crashed: Interned:

Escaped: Parachuted: Wounded: Hospitalized: Disabled: Other:

Details: _____

Ground Crew: Crew Chief: Assistant CC: A&E Mechanic: Armorer: Radio: Radar:
Instruments: Sheet Metals: Refueling: Bombsight: Hydraulics: Other: _____

Duties: _____

Aircraft You Crewed: (Names and Numbers): _____

Aircraft Lost or Damaged: _____

Memories: _____

Base Operations: Administration: Clerical: Communication: Medical: Security: Photo Lab:
Engineering: Mess Hall: Supply: Intelligence: Other Duties or Assignments: _____

Your Contributions Must Not Be Forgotten, Please Provide Details: _____

Here is a wonderful story condensed from a speech by Leo K. Thorsness, a recipient of the Medal of Honor. It is about United States Air Force, Navy and Marine pilots in the Hanoi Hilton prisoner of war camp and what the Flag, Freedom and America meant to them, and Mike Christian in particular. Sadly, after Mike Christian was freed he died in a fire.

Mike Christian's US Flag

You've probably seen the bumper sticker somewhere along the road. It depicts an American Flag, accompanied by the words "These colors don't run." I'm always glad to see this, because it reminds me of an incident from my confinement in North Vietnam at the Hao Lo POW Camp, or the "Hanoi Hilton," as it became known. Then a Major in the U.S. Air Force, I had been captured and imprisoned from 1967-1973. Our treatment had been frequently brutal. After three years, however, the beatings and torture became less frequent. During the last year, we were allowed outside most days for a couple of minutes to bathe. We showered by drawing water from a concrete tank with a homemade bucket.

One day, as we all stood by the tank stripped of our clothes, a young Naval pilot named Mike Christian found the remnants of a handkerchief in a gutter that ran under the prison wall. Mike managed to sneak the grimy rag into our cell and began fashioning it into a flag. Over time we all loaned him a little soap, and he spent days cleaning the material. We helped by scrounging and stealing bits and pieces of anything he could use.

At night, under his mosquito net, Mike worked on the flag. He made red and blue from ground-up roof tiles and tiny amounts of ink and painted the colors onto the cloth with watery rice glue. Using thread from his own blanket and a homemade bamboo needle, he sewed on stars.

Early in the morning a few days later, when the guards were not alert, he whispered loudly from the back of our cell, "Hey gang, look here." He proudly held up this tattered piece of cloth, waving it as if in a breeze. If you used your imagination, you could tell it was supposed to be an American flag. When he raised that smudgy fabric, we automatically stood straight and saluted, our chests puffing out, and more than a few eyes had tears.

About once a week the guards would strip us, run us outside and go through our clothing. During one of those shakedowns, they found Mike's flag. We all knew what would happen. That night they came for him. Night interrogations were always the worst. They opened the cell door and pulled Mike out. We could hear the beginning of the torture before they even had him in the torture cell.

They beat him most of the night. About daylight they pushed what was left of him back through the cell door. He was badly broken, even his voice was gone. Within two weeks, despite the danger, Mike scrounged another piece of cloth and began another flag. The Stars and Stripes, our national symbol, was worth the sacrifice to him.

Now, whenever I see the flag, I think of Mike and the morning he first waved that tattered emblem of a nation. It was then, thousands of miles from home in a lonely prison cell, that he showed us what it is to be truly free.



MISCELLANEA

The News from ENGLAND

The 44th Presence At Mildenhall

Mainly through the efforts of our U.K. Representative, Steve Adams, we have for some time had a very supportive and friendly relationship with the USAF 100th Air Refueling Wing and Headquarters 3rd Air Force based at RAF Mildenhall, the only active USAF base remaining in Norfolk.

You may recall in 1997 the 3rd AF Headquarters building was dedicated and named General Leon W. Johnson Hall, honoring him as the first 3rd AF Commander. Steve Adams furnished most of the archival photography that now decorates the building interior. After our 44th History was published, it seemed appropriate that our WWII history should be made available for the young people of today's Air Force to help make them aware of the importance of the Norfolk region as the home of the 2nd Air Division and its B-24 bases and Bomb Groups such as Shipdham and the 44th.

Steve Adams contacted M/Sgt. Mark E. Brotherton, Chief, Logistics Training Flight of the 100th ARW, a friend and strong supporter of the 44th BGVA, and requested that he represent us in making the presentation of our history to the Base Library.

Pictured below is the presentation with L to R, Colonel Jeffery Kohler, 100th ARW Commander, M/Sgt. Mark Brotherton and Mr. Neil Ahern, Base Librarian. Col. Kohler and Mr. Ahern have expressed their gratitude for embellishing their History Section with our own. We have likewise presented a copy of our history to the Shipdham Village Heritage Center and 2nd Air Division Memorial Room, Norwich Central Library.



More Library News

Back in 1997, Pete Henry stepped down from the position as the 44th Group Vice President to the 2nd Air Division, Dick Butler. Dick replaced Pete and organized funding of a Memorial Library endowment to honor Pete for the eighteen years he served both 2nd AD and the 44th BG. The drive netted \$2795. An endowment was established and the funds invested with the earned interest were used to perpetuate the purchase of books pertaining to a better understanding of American history and culture. Each of the books purchased would bear this bookplate on its flyleaf:

Presented To

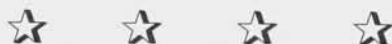
2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room

Norwich Central Library

By 44th Bomb Group 2nd ADA Members With Gratitude

In Honor Of

This photo was taken on Remembrance day in the Shipdham Church yard with Don Dodd, local leader of the Shipdham chapter of The British Legion assisting Dick with the laying of the wreath on the 44th Memorial Stone.



Memory Lane

September 18, 1998

Dear Roy,

Have had the enclosed photo for your Memory Lane page printed from my old negative. Having a girl friend who worked in 'high places' I was able to take the view from an advantage point.

A store called Debenhams had been built on the remains of the bombed buildings in the bottom foreground in the picture, when I attended the 1992 reunion in Norwich staying at the Hotel Nelson with the 44 BG Vets, and where I met Mike Neri again.

You may be wondering how an Englishman like myself has come to be so closely associated with the 44 BG. It is not widely known that all newly constructed airfields for the USAAF, even those actually built by the U.S. Army Engineers, were initially opened by ground staff of the RAF. This ensured that when the ground crews of the Bomb Groups arrived, there was accommodation, food and communications all in place for their use. Flying control was manned by staff who had checked out the recently installed equipment. RAF Signals personnel continued working alongside their newly arrived counterparts explaining navigational aids, etc., that were already in place. Other staff explained how the UK telephone and teletype network operated and in this respect I got to know Mike Neri and the late Richard Bottomley. Later I went on a mechanics course and maintained the British teleprinters both at Shipdham and Wendling.

I can claim that I was at Shipdham first, arriving on 14th August 1942 and leaving on 29 July 1944, after American made teletypes had replaced the British machines I had maintained.

Hope you have a good reunion with Steve this year with whom I am continually in touch.

Kindest regards to Lolly and yourself, from Olive and me.

Peter Broadley

5 Station Road • Hampton Wick • Kingston-Upon-Thames • Surrey KT1 4HG UK • Telephone: +44 181 977 1373

INFORMATION NEEDED:



With the closing of Arrow Air, Steve Adams has been inventorying and retrieving all of the photos, books and memorabilia that our members have placed in the Arrow Air Pub and entrance (History Room) over the years. We don't want these things to disappear, so Steve will store them until another suitable archive can be located.

There are a few items which he has been unable to identify the owner, and he needs help. If you have contributed any items to Arrow Air, please list them and send that information to Steve or Will Lundy (both are on the Executive Board) to assist him in collecting those items.



Can anyone recall CARLTON L. HASELEY, ASN
32586092?

His DOG TAGS have just been found by owner of building which housed a bicycle shop in Shipdham in wartime, and given to me to return if he can be located. If you have any information, please call (225) 925-8454.

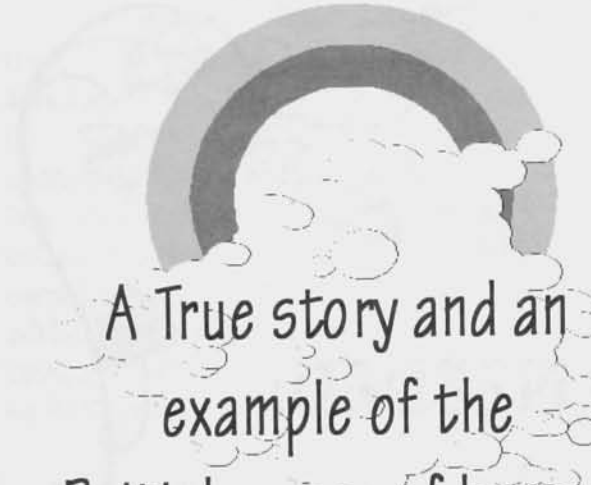
Sincerely,

Strategic Air Depot Association National Headquarters

Wiley Noble, Secretary

7266 Goodwood

Baton Rouge, LA 70806



A True story and an
example of the
British sense of humor.

This story comes from a United Airlines pilot on a flight descending into Frankfurt Airport.

The German controllers at Frankfurt Airport are infamous for being a short tempered lot. They not only expect you to know your parking location, but also how to get there without any assistance from them.

So it was with some amusement that we (United 747) listened to the following exchange between Frankfurt ground control and the pilot of a British Airways 747 (call sign Speedbird 206).

Speedbird: "Good morning Frankfurt, Speedbird 206, clear of the active."

Ground: "Guten Morgan, taxi to your gate."

The BA 747 pulls onto the main taxiway and stops.

Ground (brusquely): "Speedbird, do you not know where you are going?"

Speedbird: "Standby ground, I'm looking up the gate location now."

Ground (with typical German impatience): "Speedbird 206, have you never been to Frankfurt before?"

Speedbird (coolly): "Yes, several times in 1944, but I didn't stop."



ENGLAND TRIP CANCELLED

Unfortunately we have had to cancel the Summer '99 trip to England for lack of participation. We only had 14 sign ups. This was really disappointing after the show of hands at the General Membership meeting in Savannah of those wanting to join the trip. We counted more than enough to fill one bus.

There are still a few who are planning to go on to Europe on their own this Summer, but it is too bad our group travel folded. We put a lot of work and a fair amount of our treasury money into planning and promoting the trip all for naught.

Let's face it, we haven't got too much time or endurance left to make overseas travel, so that may have been the last one we will attempt. I understand that those who wish to celebrate Y2K with travel are already flooding the travel agents.

I will leave the door open for 2000 only if those who are seriously interested in a trip, that will first go to France, Belgium and Germany then have an option to return to England for a visit to Norwich and Shipdham before returning home, will write or e-mail me a letter of FIRM intentions (not reservations) to join such a trip and tell me where they would prefer to visit, then if I receive enough responses to make a trip feasible, I will plan a small tour to satisfy a consensus of the group desire. Write early if we are to get reservations.

Roy Owen

FOLDED WINGS

April, 1999



- Appelin, Carl W.* 12/98 67th Squadron. T-125238. Carl was a navigator for the Lt. Frank Hurst crew that arrived at Shipdham on 19 July, 1944, completed their tour and departed for the U.S. on 18 May, 1945.
- Bata, Frank B.* 5/28/98 Frank was a gunner assigned to the E.J. McKenney crew when it arrived at Shipdham in early August, 1943, then immediately flew to Africa arriving too late for the Ploesti mission. This crew was broken up at this time. Cannot identify missions flown by Frank without sortie reports. Later Frank was assigned to the John K. Winchester crew, flew many missions with them. Then when Lt. George Insley returned to the 44th for his second tour, this time with the 506th Squadron. Frank joined them as a tail gunner. As this was a lead crew, missions were less frequent, flown mostly in bad weather. The last identified mission flown by this crew was 15 Feb, 1945. In essence, Frank flew the equal of two tours as did most of the Insley crew. They all were exceptionally brave and patriotic men. Frank remained in service after WWII until he retired. He was buried in Arlington Cemetery on 7 July, 1998.
- Brandt, Daniel F.* 11/98 0-701552 67th Squadron. Dan flew as a navigator for the Robert J. Gunton crew. This crew arrived on 14 May, 1944, quickly flew 34 missions, with most of the crew ending their tour in September, 1944.
- Brown, Norman D.* 08/97 Pilot, 67th Squadron 0-768430. Norman was a co-pilot on the Ernest G. Holmer crew when they were assigned to the 44th Bomb Group in August, 1944. Later he was assigned his own crew and flew as a 1st pilot until April, 1945. He brought his crew back to the States in A/C #44-48821A.
- Fairchild, Kenneth L.* 03/01/98 67th Squadron S/Sgt. Fairfield was a waist gunner for the Edward C. Yatkones crew which arrived at Shipdham on 8 June, 1944. This crew quickly completed their tour in November, 1944 except for the pilot, who was ill for a short period, his crew flown with other crews.
- Falls, Billie D.* Unknown 67th Squadron S/Sgt. Falls was a tail gunner on Lt. Ralph E. VanEss crew in early October, 1943. He was part of the echelon on DS to Africa on 23 Sept. 43. Cannot confirm his combat missions at this time.
- Farnham, Dale F.* 09/27/98 Dales served with the 1132 QM and the 1646 Ordnance Units. Reported by his wife, Lorraine.
- Folland, George W.* 10/05/98 0-823344 George served as a co-pilot for Lt. Condray and then as 1st pilot on his own crew. The Newton E. Condray crew was assigned to the 67th Squadron in July, 1944, flew many of their mission in 049 O-Bar, Fearless Fosdick. George became a 1st pilot after 32 missions with the Condray and Crandell crews and completed his tour of 35 by flying his last three as a lead crew pilot.



- Long, BG Robert F..... Unknown General Long served with the 18th Weather Station on the base at Shipdham.
- McNamara, Raymond L. ... 12/16/98..... 67th Squadron 11046207. S/Sgt. McNamara was one of the early ground crewmen to join the 44th BG at Barksdale Field, LA. He was part of the ground echelon that sailed to England on the *Queen Mary* on 5 September, 1942. He served as Assistant Crew Chief on "Suzy Q," went to Africa in September, 1943 (second trip) as a Crew Chief on aircraft #779, "4-Q-2." Ray returned home in June, 1945. Ray served again in the Korean War, having been recalled as a reservist. His wife of 51 years, Mary, and he, suffered severe strokes in mid-December, both of them succumbed within 18 hours of each other.
- Petrosky, John J. 07/29/98 67th Squadron. He was a tail gunner on Lt. Jefferson's crew. This crew was listed on the 67th roster on 28 December, 1943, flew their first mission on 1 January, 1944. The crew went to a Rest Home for a week on R&R on 24 April, and completed their tour on 11 May, 1944.
- Pauly, Bruce H..... Unknown 0-434434. He enlisted in the USAAC in 1941 as an Aviation Cadet and was assigned to the 44th BG at MacDill Field, FL. In December, 1941, he served as a 44th BG Engineering Officer from February, 1942 to November, 1943. He was a member of the Flight Echelon, flew to England as a passenger on A/C #41-23786 piloted by Lt. James Dubard. He served in S-4 at Shipdham from November, 1943 to April, 1944. He then became Director of Maintenance, 2nd Air Division from April, 1944 to May, 1945 Maintenance Division at Wright Field, OH, where he retired in November, 1980.
- Pschirer, Albert, Jr. 12/26/98 35217311, 68th Squadron. He was the Flight Engineer on the Robert G. Seever crew which arrived in the 68th Squadron on 15 August, 1944. Mission #1 was flown on 25 August, 1944 and their 30th was completed in April, 1945. Many of their later missions were flown in lead crew positions.
- Sheetz, Elvin N. 10/96 68th Squadron. Cannot confirm his pilot or crew, but 68th Squadron records reported that he completed his tour of missions on 15 October, 1944.
- Strug, Emil J. 12/3/98 02-009015. 67th Squadron Navigator. Lt. Strug flew about half his missions with Newton E. Condray crew until they finished their tour. Then he flew with various other crews, including Roger S. Markle and Norman Brown. He was classified as a PN (Pilotage Navigator).
- Stanley, Tyrus J. 11/25/98 17110585. 68th Squadron. He was a Tail Gunner on the Harold C. Morrison crew. This crew assigned to the 66th Squadron on 28 February, 1944, with Tyrus becoming part of the crew shortly thereafter. He was with them when they were transferred to the 68th Squadron on 20 April, 1944. Luckily, he was not with the crew when it was shot down on 7 July 1944 on their 35th mission. Harold Morrison had completed his 35 mission tour on 4 July, so Lt. Wilson was 1st pilot replacing Lt. Morrison.



- Tomhave, John V. 02/99 37116222. 66th Squadron Crew Chief. John was a member of the ground echelon that went over on the Queen Mary to England in September, 1942. John was rapidly promoted and by December, 1944 was a Master Sergeant in Flight "A" reporting to M/Sgt. Morton. One of the planes that he crewed was #42-50761, A+ and later F+, "King High" which had operational missions from October, 1944 to end of war.*
- Thompson, Clarence W. ... 01/20/99 "Tommy." 0-1297615. Navigator on Russell G. Erickson's crew. Assigned to the 68th Squadron on 25 October, 1945, flew their first mission on 5 November 1944. This crew flew the last mission of the war on 25 April, 1945 in E - 806, Louisiana Belle, and also flew the same plane back to the States. Tommy obtained a college degree, was a safety engineer. Survived by two sons and a daughter.*
- Van Epps, Elwood A. 12/46 (Auto Accident) 506th Squadron. Was a Radio Operator for Lt. John w. Jones' crew. On 7 October 1944, when this pilot was very seriously wounded by enemy action. Elwood probably saved the pilot's life by quickly applying medication and bandages to stop the bleeding, and removed him from the pilot's seat, so the wounded co-pilot could have help flying the plane. He earned the nickname "Doc" for his skillful actions. Elwood flew his later missions with Lt. Horsley and then finished his tour with Lt. Zitzman.*

Crewmen from the Charles S. Herring Crew:

Lt. Charles S. Herring • 0-813512 • After the war, killed in aircraft accident.

Major James C. Holcolm • 0-761099 • Co-Pilot 1989 Prostate Cancer.

Lt. Bernard L. Fisher • 0-699065 • Navigator 1978 Leukemia.

T/Sgt. Frank J. Gerbe • 20251385 • Engineer 1984? Heart Attack.

The above crew information received from John L. Rhodes, tail gunner for the Herring crew.

This crew was organized in December, 1943 at March Field, California.

They flew their tour of missions from 18 June to October, 1944.



The 8-Ball Tails ©

Official Journal of The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association, Inc. ©



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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.



A "Cold" Cold War Story

By Roy Owen

This story begins in the Summer of 1958 during the great glory days of Strategic Air Command (SAC), the General Curtis E. Le May Cold War answer to the USSR threat of nuclear war. I was a young Captain, Aircraft Commander of a three man Combat Crew of a Boeing B-47 Stratojet bomber in the 22nd Bomb Wing at March AFB, outside of Riverside, California.

Looking back, these were the halcyon days of my flying career. I was born and raised in Southern California, and after a WWII combat tour flying B-24 Liberators in the 44th Bomb Group with 8th Air Force out of England, a discharge, return to college and a Korean War recall, I had progressed through the SAC buildup flying B-29's, B-50's and, in a bomber pilot's dream fulfilled, along with Captain Mel Cooper, my Co-Pilot and Lt. Ron Gingold, my Radar Navigator/Bombardier, I was flying our nation's first line jet bomber. Further, being raised as a warm weather beach boy, I was close to home and flying in a climate I loved.

About the airplane; the B-47 was a sleek, swept wing six engine beauty that, while not supersonic, had both the best characteristics of a bomber (range and payload) and a fighter (speed and maneuverability). It had some unforgiving traits such as twin truck landing gear in tandem alignment. A careless touchdown with the front truck first, could lead to a porpoising bounce. A stall at the top of a porpoise bounce and a stalled wing dropping either way could be fatal. There was also a high altitude performance "coffin corner" where the wing lift coefficient

curve and the altitude curve met wherein the aircraft was liable to experience a high speed stall and a state of unaccountability. Aside from these "Red Caution" areas, the airplane was a joy to fly, and when not carrying auxiliary, long range fuel tanks hung under the wings, it could perform rolls and even an Immelmann maneuver well within it's structural limits. When mated with a KC-97 prop-driven tanker, it was tough to air refuel at the slower speeds required (that is another story), but mated with a KC-135 at higher altitudes and compatible speeds, it was an air refueling romance.

The United States doctrine in the "Cold War" was one of a retaliatory nuclear strike in the event of a pre-emptive attack by Russia. The SAC war plan of the day was to rotationally maintain a nuclear trained and equipped wing of SAC bombers on 90 day tours at bases in England, Spain and Guam. Each combat crew was assigned a specific USSR target on a single sortie individually launched from it's overseas base on a programmed generation scheduled to begin at "A" (Alert) hour.

Thus was our life, fly training missions, keep current on our assigned target, and deploy about once a year on a 90 day tour to the Wing's assigned overseas Emergency War Order (EWO) launch base. In that summer of 1958, technical



advances in nuclear weaponry on both sides was manifested in smaller, more destructive weapons no longer requiring hours of pre-launch testing and loading procedures meaning quick reaction times with weapons able to be pre-launch loaded on the aircraft. As Huckleberry Finn mused "Times', they is a changin'."

For us in the B-47 Combat Crew business we began to hear terms like "quick reaction," "Alert Pad" and "MITO" (minimum interval take-off) soon followed by training in positioning aircraft on what was the formerly named "warm-up pad" now renamed "Alert Pad" just near the take-off runway. The aircraft, loaded with training nuclear weapons, were pre-flighted and pre-take off checklists were run up to the point of pushing the first start button at the instant the ground power unit (GPU) put power on the aircraft main bus. We then began to spend 3 or 4 twenty four hour days in some make-shift buildings near the "Alert Aircraft." We trained in fast reaction procedures by responding to a Klaxon Horn signal like firemen to the Fire Bell, dressing and scrambling to our aircraft, quickly climbing aboard donning helmets already connected and reporting "Ready to Launch" to the Command Post. Our response time goal from Klaxon to take-off roll was 15 minutes. The Command Post response could be "This is an 'Alpha Alert' you may terminate the alert, return to the Alert Pad, re-cock your aircraft and return to quarters" or "This is a 'Bravo Alert,' start engines and report when ready to Taxi, after call-in terminate," etc. Or "This is a 'Cocoa Alert,' start engines, taxi to take-off position and report 'Ready for Take-Off,' then taxi to the first turn-off and return to the Alert Area and terminate," etc.

In the remaining Summer months and into Fall, we trained in these procedures until all the crews were 15 minute response capable. Concurrently, we trained and were tested on the current Nuclear weapon (Mk 41 Bomb) we would carry and in procedures for an actual EWO launch. This involved the Wing Command Post issuing a Top Secret coded launch message to be decoded and authenticated by the crew. Once certified in these procedures the Wing was ready for it's alert assignment.

During the B-47 era at March AFB (1954-64) the 320th Bomb Wing (a Korea recalled Air

National Guard outfit from New York), also B-47 equipped, shared the base with the 22nd. They were also "Alert" trained.

Rumor had it the 320th was to be assigned to Eilson AFB, Fairbanks, Alaska for its alert commitment (code named Reflex) and the 22nd was to go to Andersen AFB, Guam. To a Beach Boy/Bomber Pilot like me, this sounded like a perfectly sensible choice. New Yorkers were accustomed to cold and snow and warm blooded Southern Californians would function well in a tropical climate.

I have heard that, in the lexicon of Air Force Planners, it is said "If you don't have a plan, you have nothing from which to deviate!" Alas, this proved itself when the alert assignment came down with both the 22nd and 320th committed to each place 6 aircraft on alert at Eilson AFB.

For the combat crews this meant approximately three 23 day alert tours year which, with a deploy and re-deploy day on each end, had a crew on alert 4 days and off 3 days through three cycles. My crew was not scheduled for the first couple of alert rotations and, while my memory is dim on the exact date of our first rotation, I remember well that it was November and the Alaska Winter was in full swing. On deployment day we pre-flighted the aircraft and took off in high 70's weather, having donned Artic Flight Clothing just after pre-flight. I landed on a snow-packed runway at Eilson on a clear day in minus 20 degree temperature and about 3 feet of frozen snow on the ground. I was directed to park the aircraft in a maintenance area on the apron, where the maintenance team could clear the two or three minor write-ups I had entered in the Form 1. That completed, the Weapons Team would load the Mk 41 weapon and the Crew Chief would supervise the installation of the Jet Assisted Take-Off (JATO) collar. At that point the aircraft would be positioned in the alert line and I would be called with my crew to pre-flight the aircraft and weapon then "cock" the aircraft; relieve the crew we were replacing and assume the alert responsibility for our EWO target assignment.

The entire Reflex operation was housed in an immense wooden, arch-roofed flight line building called the "Birchwood Hangar." The ground floor housed the Command, Maintenance and Admin. Offices around the inside perimeter. Each of the

12 Alert Combat Crews had its own Weapon Carrier Vehicle with a ground power unit GPU) attached to the trailer hitch. These were parked on the hangar floor in order and in a diagonal line pointed toward the flight line door. Located on the second level were the Combat Crew, Crew Chief and Assistant, sleeping quarters, alert mess kitchen and dining room, Recreation Room and Reading Room and Shower/Latrine facilities.

At the sound of the Klaxon the Alert Combat and Ground Crews would dress, scramble to their vehicle, start the GPU then drive out of the hangar to their aircraft. The aircrew scrambled up the ladder into their cockpit position while the Crew Chief and Assistant hooked up the GPU to the aircraft bus. When power and radios came on the Aircraft Commander would report in and await instructions.

Our first night in the Birchwood Hangar gave us the opportunity to ask questions and listen to the other crew members who had some experience with the alert business at minus 20 degrees F., such as: n-e-v-e-r touch bare metal with bare skin. In these conditions there are many do's and don'ts that are not always covered in your checklists.

It seemed the natural order of things that when an alert sounded it would be the Aircraft Commander who would jump into the alert vehicle drivers seat, start the engine and drive the crew to the aircraft. There were two very important things that could not be taught in the Birchwood Hangar or on the warm March AFB ramp. The first was to teach a Beach Boy/Bomber Pilot how to drive a Weapons Carrier with a GPU hitched to the rear in packed snow with a glaze of ice on the surface. Or how cold an oxygen mask and ear pads in a jet helmet can get when left overnight in the cockpit.

We didn't have long to wait to gain that experience! About 1000 hours the first day of our Alert duty, the Klaxon sounded and away we went! I took the drivers seat and as soon as the GPU was started and all were aboard, I drove out into my first arctic day. I was headed for the alert line in a column of alert vehicles, and as I approached our aircraft I pulled out of the line and steered toward the #4 and 5 engine pod ready to turn left and pull the GPU close to the aircraft external receptacle. I put on the brakes to

slow down, the wheels locked and we went into a sideways skid headed toward the double engine pod. I swear, the vehicle accelerated the more I pumped the brake pedal. I had also lost most of the steering as the front tires were sliding on the ice. Aghast, I sat furiously attempting to brake and steer as we slid toward what appeared to be an inevitable crash into a nuclear bomb loaded aircraft. Suddenly, at the last split second, the vehicle made a sliding left turn and stopped in perfect position to plug in the GPU. My crew chief came running forward and with a wild-eyed look of amazement and shouted "Great job, Sir!" As I jumped out of the vehicle and started for the crew ladder, I think I noticed a bit of a shake of his head.

As I was regaining my breath, I scrambled up the ladder into the Pilot's seat, grabbed my helmet from the control column (where we had learned to leave it at sunny March AFB in our practice alerts) and pulled it on and snapped on my oxygen mask. It only took an instant to realize that my headset ear pads and rubber oxygen mask were frozen solid. All I could hope was we would get lucky with an "Alpha" alert and I could report "Ready to Start" and get released before my ears and cheeks also turned to ice. Fortunately this was the case for our first Reflex alert. Before we shut power down, I asked on the interphone if Cooper and Gingold thought it would be a good idea if we unplugged our helmets and took them with us in the Alert vehicle to the warmth of the "Birchwood Hangar." No Objections.

When we got all settled down with the other crews in the "Rec" room another pilot came over to us and commented how red our ears were; this brought howls of laughter from the rest. It seems that on the first Winter alert tour they had all been through the same torture and it had become a sort of "rite of passage" into the alert business. Thus mention of keeping helmets and oxygen masks in the alert vehicle was not an item to be covered in alert indoctrination. It was "learn the hard way!"

Some introduction of a warm weather Beach Boy/Bomber Pilot to Arctic Alert. I can attest to the "Cold War" being just that. To this day I detest a cold climate!

Mail Call



More Good News from the Mother Country.

Dick and Ardith Butler made more good points for the 44th while in Norwich by inviting our good friend Andrew Doubleday and wife Debra as their guests at the 2nd Air Division Executive Banquet with many other honored Norwich dignitaries. Andrew, for those who have not had the pleasure of meeting him, is now the owner of the old Rix Farm which has the remains of the 14th Combat Wing Headquarters. Thanks to our Good Will ambassadors, Dick and Ardith, here is a letter I received from Andrew just after they had attended the dinner.

Dear Roy,

I saw Steve Adams about 3 weeks ago when he came over with Veteran Bob Dubowsky. He gave me the article and kind letter you sent. Thank you so much.

Since we last met my life has changed for the better, having been on my own for some 10 years. I am now living with my partner Debbie of Hillcrest. We have both been looking at the article with great interest and thank you for this and your kindness in your letter.

We feel it is a great privilege and honor to own the 14th C.W. Hq. And will always be pleased to offer hospitality to members of the 44th B.G. Vet. Assn. through our good mutual friend Steve Adams.

When I first purchased the property I had little spare cash and we set about some restoration work on some of the buildings I needed for the business (nursery). There is, however, much to be done just to halt "the ravages of weather" in a few important areas. The most urgent of these is perhaps roof repairs to the old kitchen area behind the War Room where the wall is, alas, deteriorating fast. We would very much like to adapt one of the buildings into a small chapel and museum dedicated to the 44th but this may be some way off as I am sure you will understand that site is primarily our private home and much effort has been needed this last year to upgrade the house.

I must say here that all our ideas are of a private nature and while we hope to see as much of the 44th Veterans Association as possible, we have no desire to open the site in any way to the general public. We have enjoyed a good relationship with Steve who phones us when he has a visitor. It goes without saying that we hope you can make much more use of the site at reunion times and all stay longer on your next visit. We had such little time to prepare last year (1997). We greatly look forward to seeing you all again and

there will be a warm welcome at the site; Stars and Stripes flying on the new flag pole (provided by Steve Adams). Last night we both had a wonderful celebration dinner in Norwich with the 2nd Air Division as guests of Richard and Ardith Butler who had paid us a visit at Hillcrest during the day. With kind regards,

*Yours Sincerely,
Debra & Andrew Doubleday*



"Pete" Henry, Veterans
Corresponding Official, 44th Bomb Group

Dear Mr. Henry,

Your name and address has been given to me by the Air Attache's office of the American Embassy in London. I am trying to find an American serviceman who passed through the air base at Perranporth in Cornwall UK in 1943/44.

I have learned from the Royal Air Force Museum that the 44th Bomber group passed through Portreath enroute to North Africa in 1943. At Perranporth the only sighting that I have found is a USAAF B17 carrying a special courier from North Africa, which landed at Perranporth on June 1st, 1943, having overflown Portreath, and departed the following day. I don't know which squadron it belonged to.

The reason for my search is that in the summer of 1943 an American serviceman saved my sister's life. She was six years old, and while playing in a cove, got her foot trapped under a girder, which was used for sea defenses. The tide was coming in rapidly; and without help, she would have drowned. Her only companion was me, the baby of the family, who was totally unable to lift the girder. I went for help and found this young serviceman who not only listened to a very small child, but immediately went down the steep cliff and rescued her before the water was over her head. He may not even have realised that he saved her life, but he did. He was with other servicemen who just may remember the incident too.

It has made a lasting impact on the lives of my sister and myself; and very belatedly, we would like to thank him. Is it possible that you could put this story in a newsletter, if you have one? Any information or help that you can give me, I would be so grateful for.

Yours sincerely,
Jan Zuckerman Mather

From the Editor: If this letter reaches the right person, or if anyone knows the airman who helped the child, please notify Pete Henry, 164B Portland Lane, Jamesburg, New Jersey 08831. Please let the 8BTs know, also.



44th Bomb Group Reunion

ITINERARY



Thursday, September 2

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Registration Hilton Hotel Airport.
8th Air Force Military Heritage Database Meeting.

Reception at Hilton Hotel ~ cash bar,
hors d'oeuvres, finger sandwiches.
Dinner on your own.

Friday, September 3

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
9:00 a.m.
12:00 noon
12:30 p.m.
12:30 p.m.
6:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting Hilton Hotel.
City Bus Tour approximately two hours.
First bus leaves Hotel for Country Club.
Ladies Luncheon Chateau Country Club.
Men's Luncheon Hilton Hotel.
Cash Bar.
Squadron Dinners.

Saturday, September 4

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
1:30 p.m.
6:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.

Annual Membership Meeting.
Walking Tour French Quarter.
Cash Bar.
Banquet (seated meal) • Present Colors •
Candle Lighting Ceremony • Speaker.

Sunday, September 5

10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
6:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.

Tours: 1/2 Day Plantation Visit.
Harbor Tour with visit to Aquarium.
Cash Bar.
Buffet Dinner • Masquerade Dance •
Entertainment by Tulane Students.
Leave for Home.

Monday, September 6

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 2-6, 1999

To like to make reservations of the New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Hwy., Kenner, LA 70002, (504) 469-5000.

Reservations must be received by: **8/1/99**

Arrival Date: _____ Time (Circle One)
 2-4 p.m. 4-6 p.m. 6-8 p.m. 8-10 p.m.
 10 p.m. - midnight offer midnight

Departure Date: _____ Time (Circle One)
 before 7 a.m. 7-9 a.m. 9-11 a.m. 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Early Checkout Fee:
 A \$50.00 Fee will be applied to your account if you depart before your stated departure date. Refunds can be made up to time of check-in without penalty. Any changes after check-in will result in the Fee Assessment.

Please circle type of Room and Rate Requested:

KING \$80
DBL/DBL \$80
NON-SMK OR SMK

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____
 Firm _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Guaranteed by Credit Card # _____
 Credit Card _____ Exp. Date _____ Signature _____
 SHARING WITH Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Hospitality Room Hours

Open: Thursday, Friday, Saturday ~ All Day • Sunday ~ After Annual Meeting

Closing: *Closing Time of Hospitality Room is to left up to the members-in-charge.*

\$175 Registration Fee includes (does not include tours):

Reception; Ladies-Men's Luncheon; Squadron Dinner; Banquet; Masquerade Dinner, Dance, Entertainment; Tote Bag (1 per couple or if single, 1); T-Shirts (1 for each); and Hospitality Room.

(*All tours are not refundable, unless they can be sold to other people. We need at least 20 people to make the tours.)

Bal Masque

Your last evening in New Orleans will be a memorable one. Because New Orleans is identified with festivals, we have planned a Bal Masque (Masquerade) for the closing banquet. Come dressed as anyone you wish; remember while the temperatures may be warm, the hotel is cool and that is where the event will be held.

We have an "Andrews Sisters" type trio backed by an eight piece band for your listening and reminiscing pleasure.

You will get a taste of Mardi Gras, coupled with the nostalgia of the 40's for an evening to be remembered.

Martin Richard & Mike Yuspeh, Reunion Co-Chairs



44th Bomb Group Reunion

September 2-5, 1999
New Orleans, Louisiana
Hilton Airport Hotel (Kenner, LA)



Registration Form

Please Print or Type. All Information Must Be Complete.

Last Name _____ First Name (Tag) _____

Spouse _____ Squadron _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Guests & Relation _____

Number to Attend: \$175/each _____

Tour #1:

Friday, September 3 ~ Complete City Tour by Bus (approximately 3 hours).

Time: Bus leaves hotel 9:00 a.m. \$23 # Attending: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Tour #2:

Saturday, September 4 ~ French Quarter Walking Tour (approximately 2 miles).

Time: Bus leaves hotel 1:30 p.m. \$19 # Attending: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Tour #3:

Sunday, September 5 ~ 1/2 day Plantation Tour (Oak Alley)

Time: Bus leaves hotel 9:00 a.m. \$36 # Attending: _____ Amount: \$ _____

ALTERNATE TOUR Tour #4:

Sunday, September 5 ~ Harbor Cruise with Aquarium

Time: • Depart hotel 10:00 a.m. • Aquarium 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 • Boarding Boat 12:45 to 1:15 p.m.

• Cruise Harbor 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. • Board bus for hotel 3:15 p.m.

\$35 # Attending: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Total # Attending: _____ Total Amount: \$ _____

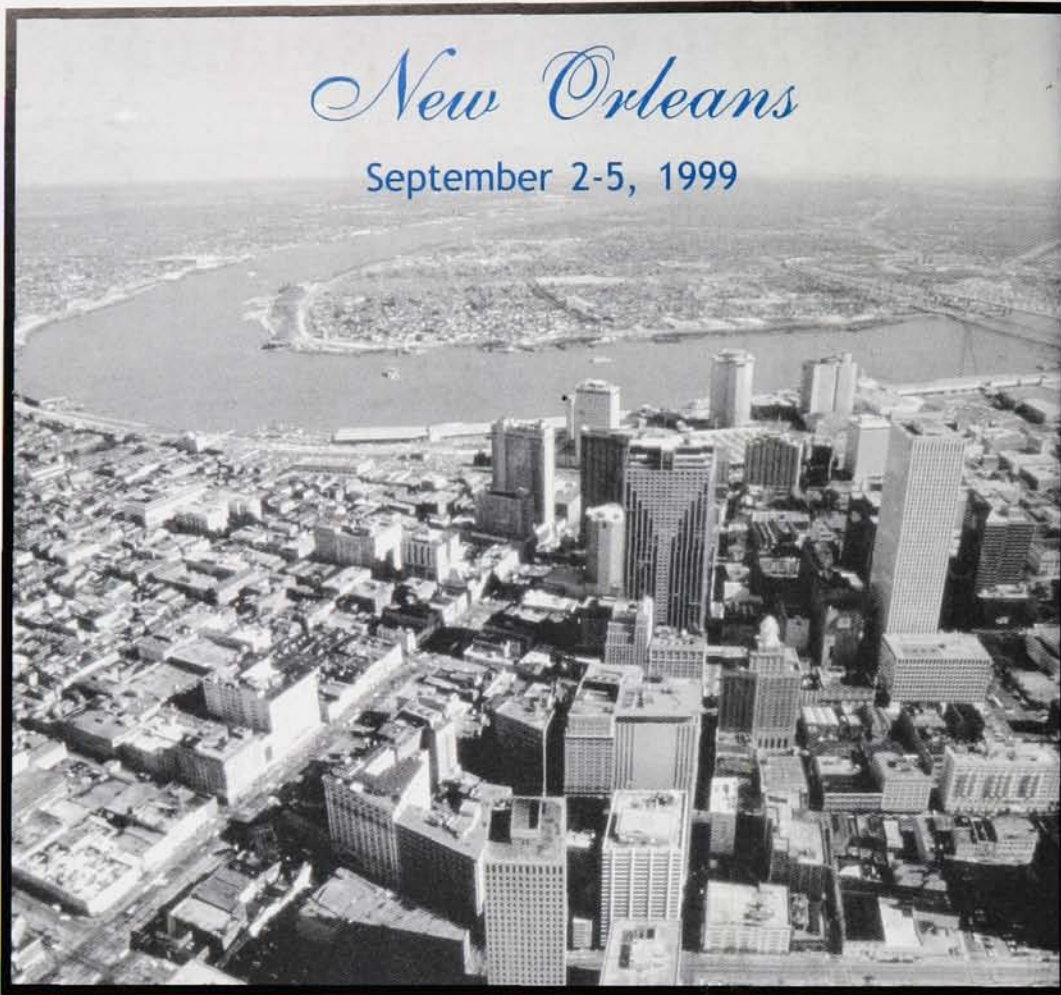
T-shirt size and number of each size required: Small # _____ Medium # _____ Large # _____ X-Large # _____

Registration must be received by August 1, 1999. No registration will be taken after that date. We would like to firm up reservations as soon as possible. Please send this registration form with your check at once to:

Mail to: Mike Yuspeh • 7214 Sardonyx Street • New Orleans, LA 70124-3509

Phone: (504) 283-3424 • Fax: (504) 283-3425 (pick up at 6 rings).

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New Orleans

September 2-5, 1999

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**44th Bomb Group
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 712287
Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287



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44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

Vol. 3 - Issue #2

Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Summer, 1999

Non Profit Veterans Organization

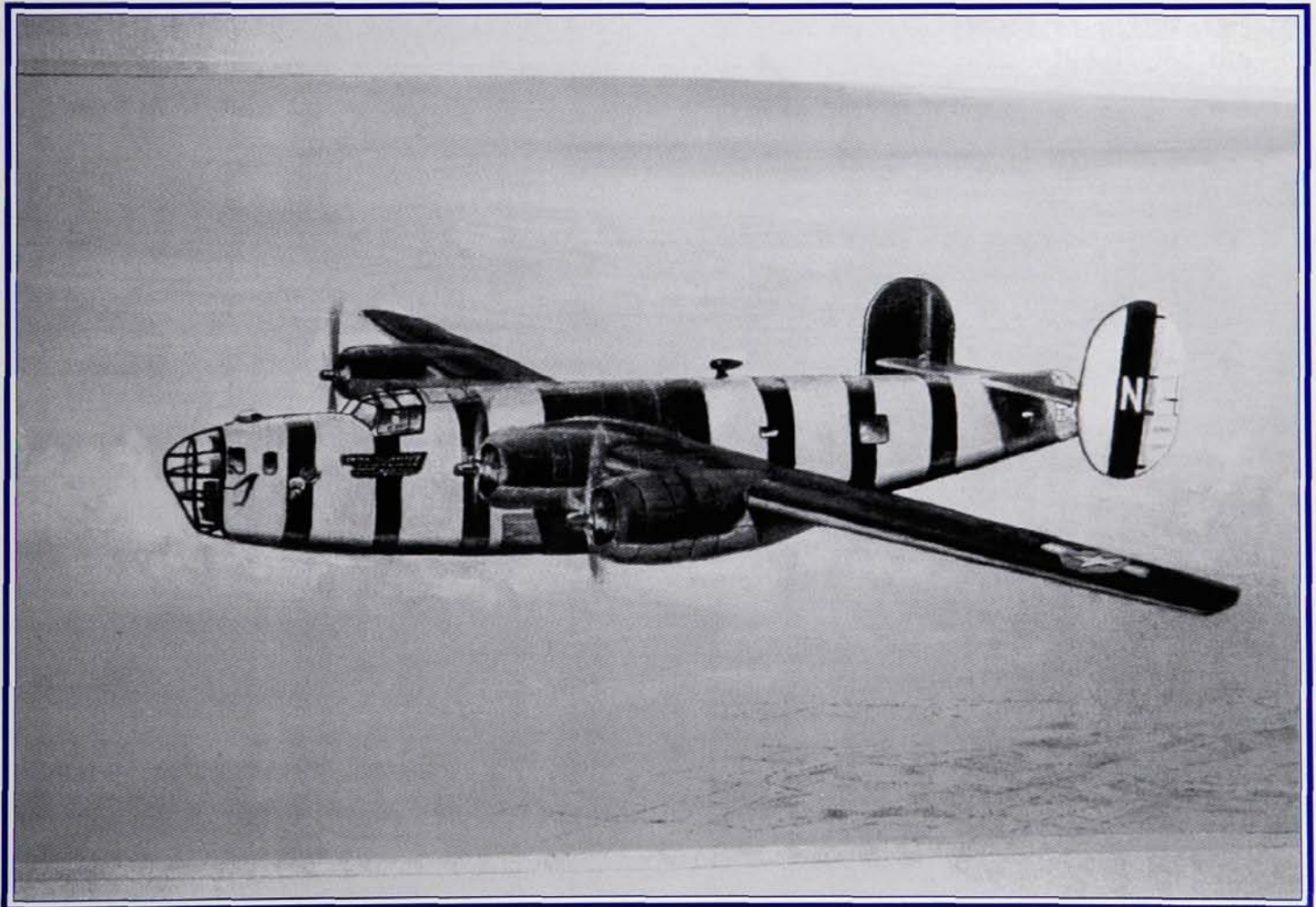
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This Year's Honorees Heroes of the Kiel Mission



The honorees at the New Orleans Reunion are the airmen on the Kiel Mission, May 14, 1943. The target was the Krupp Submarine shipbuilding installations and German Navy submarine pens in Kiel, Germany. The well documented account of that mission was reported in the 1996 summer issue of 8BTs and later in spring, 1997.



"LEMON DROP" B-24-D #41-23699 • Built by Consolidated 1942 7/17/42
68th SQUADRON LEAD AIRCRAFT - FORMATION PLANE.

The 67th Squadron of the 44th BG had been through three grueling months of daylight bombing. By March 8 they had lost five of their original nine crews. Raids over Rouen and Wilhelmshaven cost another two; so on the morning of May 14, only three aircraft and crews were available for the heavily guarded submarine works in Kiel. All three were lost. Col. Bill Cameron, who was land-bound that day, was the only one of the 67th original pilots to remain alive and unscathed.

Kiel was one of the greatest aerial battles of the War. Both B-17's from the First Air Division and B-24's from the 8th Air Force were assigned, the first time both types of aircraft were sent on the same mission. The B-17's were first to drop 500 pound HD bombs, to be followed by 100 pound incendiary clusters which were transported by the Liberators. Compensating for differences in aircraft performance, Col. Leon Johnson's maneuver to avoid the dropping bombs of the higher altitude B-17's led the 44th to greater exposure to German fighters. As it happened, the incendiaries of the B-24's came apart immediately, so pilots following were forced to spread their formation to avoid colliding with the incendiaries. The Luftwaffe took full advantage of the altered pattern, and five B-24's in the rear echelons were lost in the target area, one on withdrawal.

According to Roy Owen's studied account, the variant efforts of the B-24 gunners brought down 23

enemy aircraft, 13 probables and one damaged.

The tactical side of the mission was carefully studied after the planes came in. Even today, historians pore over the sobering details. However, the human side of the story was related best by John L. Susan, a Radio Operator who became a POW. His reports starts with a prophetic statement by Gilbert A. Wandtke, Engineer:

"Since our original plane, "Suzy-Q" was in for repairs, we had to use a replacement, "Miss Delores" a plane that had sat in a dispersal for some time. Our engineer, Gil Wadtke, had indicated that he would not care to take "Miss Delores" over a target because he had been jilted by a Delores back in the States and that "Miss Delores" probably would take us over the target but not bring us back! "Miss Delores" was contrary. However, since "Suzy-Q" was out of action, the war had to go on.

We were briefed early, and took off for a rendezvous with the B-17's over the Wash in east Anglia. The rendezvous was goofed up. Instead of flying above and behind the Forts, we missed the rendezvous by about 10 or 15 minutes. The Fort Squadrons were ahead of us, and above the B-24's of the 44th Bomb Group by at least 10 minutes.

We tried to overtake the B-17s and get above them but the chase was futile. We could not catch them even though we were faster. When we got to the target (Kiel), we had reached a good altitude but the 17s were still ahead of us. The German gunners had a good track on the B-17s and the 24s coming in on the same track encountered a lot of flak.

"Miss Delores" took a hit and we started to fall behind, as one of our left side engines was out. "Wing" had recently declared with a directive that Radio Operators could not man the top turret, but should man the radio. Gib Wandtke was operating the top turret on this mission. But the flak burst had also hit Gib, who had taken metal in his knee. He came tumbling down out of the turret. He motioned to me that I should get into the turret - and I did. But unknown to me was the fact that the flak burst had also knocked out the Intercom! Everyone, therefore, was on his own.

When I got into the top turret we were already a sitting duck as we were falling behind the formation due to that lost engine. And my guns would not fire between the two verticle stabilers for some reason. I kept cussing as I would bring the guns down to shoot at least six following Jerries who were taking pot shots at us from the rear. I don't know if our tail turret guns were functioning or not. But soon our left wing



The crew on "Miss Delores" consisted of:

Robert I. (Rye) Brown	Pilot	POW
Hartley A. Westbrook	Co-Pilot	POW
Robert H. Bishop	Navigator	POW
Holden A. Haywood	Bombardier	POW
Gilbert A. Wandtke	Engineer	POW
John L. Susan	Radio Operator	POW
August Ullrich	Waist Gunner	POW
Richard E. Cate	Waist Gunner	KIA
George R. Millhousen	Hatch Gunner	KIA
Roy L. Klinger	Tail Turret	KIA

started on fire - and it was time to get out.

Just when I decided the situation was too precarious, our pilot, Lt. Brown tried to give the signal to bail out, but he could not communicate with the crew to advise them. We had dropped our bombs and the bomb bay doors were still open. Gib Wandtke, wound and all, fought his way back to the rear of the plane to warn the gunners to abandon ship. When he got back to the flight deck I had found my chest pack chute and was standing on the catwalk at the front of the bomb bay. So I tumbled out, and knowing that some Jerries would attack a chute, I delayed my opening of the chute for about 60 counts. When I pulled the cord, my altitude was about 8,000 feet and the feeling was very eerie - no sound whatsoever. It was a very, very quiet feeling. Only the wind through the shrouds that could be called a whisper, was the only sound that could be discerned.

Above, I could see the remaining planes on their way back from Kiel. Back over the Bay. I could see many chutes on their way down high above me. Below, I noticed some boats leaving their wake in the Bay. Shortly thereafter I took off my bail-out bottle, my shoes, and loosened my harness as we had been instructed to do over water. Hanging onto the harness by my hands, I approached the water of Kiel Bay. There is one problem however. How do you know how high you are off the water? Are the whitecaps you can see six inches high - or 16 inches high? You have no reference point on water to judge your altitude. When I thought I was 6 to 10 feet above the water I let go of my harness, but I had miscalculated. Just as I let go, my feet were already in the water and the shroud lines came tumbling down over my head.

As I entered the water I went on down possibly 10 feet, but being buoyant, popped right up under my shroud lines. The parachute canopy also had dropped over my head and my fight to free myself began. I struggled with the shroud lines and the chute until I thought I would never get free. Just then a boat came by and a fisherman took his gaff and pulled the chute from my head. Then he gaffed me and pulled me out of the water like a big fish. He probably saved my life by being there. Other members of the crew - if they did not delay their opening, may have drowned by being blown out to the mouth of the Bay.

The first words uttered by the boat crew were "Fer sie der krieg ist fertig" - meaning "For you the war is finished."

Later I learned that during the battle, Lt. Hayworth, our Bombardier, after dropping the bombs, saw a cannon shell coming toward the front of the plane and covered his head with his hands. The shell exploded on the plexiglass nose section and shattered plexiglass burst against him. When he became a POW, his hands and forehead were peppered with shrapnel and plexiglass. He no doubt saved his eyes by shielding them with his hands.

I did not realize that the last three original planes in our squadron had been hit and downed on this mission until the crew members of the other B-24's showed up in the prison camp."

John L. Susan

Every mission is a learning experience. It was recommended that emerged was that the B-17's and B-24's should not have combined operations until a combat wing of at least two full strength groups are available. The 44th paid a heavy price for poor planning, mismatched bomber performance, dissimilar bomb loads with faulty fusing and tactics which exposed the group to enemy attacks.

Honoring the airmen on the Kiel Raid cannot be overdone. That was an awesome mission, unique in the annals of air history.



Recognition of Kiel and Ploesti Raids at Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

GENERAL JOHN H. GIBSON

A Great Man Who Was There When He was Needed

By Ruth W. Davis-Morse

The test of any great leader is his willingness to share danger with his men. General John H. Gibson proved his mettle many times, significantly for joining General Leon Johnson in leading the mission to Omaha Beach on D-Day. It was one of many missions he flew, along with the men that he commanded.

Long before WWII began, "Jack" Gibson was already looking skyward. He knew what he wanted to do—fly.

The General was late for the recent 2nd Air Division Reunion in May, and with good reason. The Senate of the State of Texas was honoring him, along with the members of the 95th Bomb Group for their WWII service. The Resolution was signed by Rick Perry, President of the Texas Senate, having been affirmed by the entire Senate on May 30, 1999. His fame on the B-17's was well known. No less colorful was his career on the B-24 Liberators with the 44th Bomb Group.

Gibson's career as an airman began in 1932 when he attended Randolph/Kelly Fields, at that time the 'West Point of the Air.' 200 would-be pilots started in his class; 87 finished. He envisioned a career as a commercial pilot, but retained his status in the Air Force Reserves. In '42 he was called into the service as a First Lieutenant in the Air Transport Command.

That was not exciting enough for this avid young man. He called an old friend, Curtis LeMay, asking for an assignment with a Bomb Group. He said, "I want to see some action." General LeMay replied, "I've got the job for you."

The job this eager aviator sought took him to the 2nd Air Force Headquarters at Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington. From there he



*General
John H. Gibson
(Ret.)*

went to the 95th Bomb Group in August of 1942, and was one of the first five officers assigned to the newly established 95th Bomb Group. He became the Group Operation Officer (S-3). 'Jack' completed 25 missions under the command of Col. Kessler. When the 44th Bomb Group opened up, he became Commander in February of 1944, stationed in Shipdham, replacing Col. Frederick Dent. By that time he was a full Colonel.

A short time after arriving, the 44th was assigned to lead the Division to Brunswick, Germany, the target—aircraft manufacturing plants. This was April 8, 1944, Easter Saturday. Gibson chose to be Command Pilot in a formation which included 44 Liberators, an unusually high number for a raid at that time. Bob Lehnhausen was Deputy Lead Commander. Together they rode his staff car from Shipdham to Hethel, where the lead planes would take off. It was Lehnhausen's opportunity to get to know his new Commander, establishing a lifelong friendship.



Col. John H. Gibson ~ 1944

Lehnhausen recalls that mission clearly, "I was on the Right Wing, and just when we reached the IP, we saw a group of German fighters coming toward us head on, just to the right of twelve o'clock. The frontal attack was truly vicious, and my craft was hit with 20mm fire. As it happened, our top turret gunner, managed to get that fighter, and it crashed into the plane just behind ours. General Gibson could see what was happening out of the corner of his eye. He assumed that it was my ship going down.

"We were disabled, having lost our entire electrical system." Lehnhausen continued, "and our pilot chose to come home 'on the deck.'

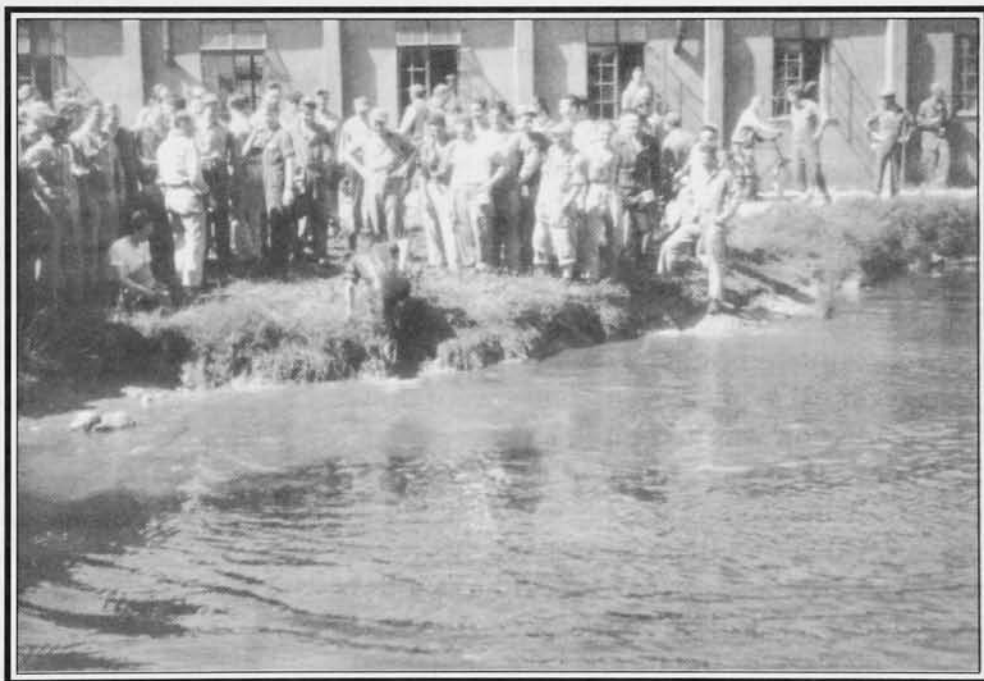
"We did manage to get back to Hethel after the formation had landed. Colonel Gibson couldn't believe his eyes when he saw me at the briefing, alive and breathing".

He said, "I am seeing a ghost. I saw that German fighter crash into your plane—head on.' To this day when we meet, he reminds me of that mission, that he had given me up for dead."

According to Roger Freeman's book, *The Mighty Eighth Diary*, the 2nd Air Division dispatched 350 planes on that Brunswick mission; 44 were lost. The 44th Bomb Group sent up 44 Liberators, with Colonel Gibson leading. Eleven planes went down with their crews, the greatest loss of planes and crews the 44th suffered in all WWII operations.

Lehnhausen describes General Gibson as a truly unique individual in military leadership. He was fiercely loyal to his responsibility, and his personal courage and gentlemanly ways never went unnoticed by his men.

Gibson demanded excellence, insisting on continuous training of both air and ground crews. He felt that practice assured better



Can anybody identify the gentleman climbing out of the 'drink' at the 200th Mission Party of the 44th Bomb Group?

maintenance of planes and equipment, and a better survival rate for the airmen. Members of the 44th frequently boasted that they had the 'best Group CO in the whole Air Force'.



One of the 44th's lighter moments was the day after they had completed their 200th Mission. Nobody flew that day ... it was just one great big party. It was agreed that nobody would come to the party showing rank. At one point General Johnson even drove his own staff car, a big old Packard sedan, with his chauffeur, Mike Fusano, riding the back seat.

"The party was near a big pond," the General recalled. "A young Captain was foolish enough to walk out of his office wearing his bars. The airmen picked him up and threw him in the pond. I guess it was so much fun, they picked up General Johnson and threw him in. Then it was my turn to get wet," he laughed.

The D-Day mission is forever memorable to General Gibson. "I was the 44th Leader and Johnson was the 14th Combat Wing Commander. We hit the shore line at low altitude at 5:30 in the morning, bombing the big guns the Germans had placed along the cliffs over Omaha Beach. The General was proud and elated to be a part of the battle that was the turning point in WWII.

Gibson's last mission with the 44th was in July, when he led the 14th Combat Wing of the 2nd Air Division to an oil refinery in Politz, on the German/Polish border. It was low altitude flying at 18,000 feet against a barrage of flak. They encountered fighters over the North Sea. Of his Combat Wing eleven planes went down, but the mission was accomplished.

After nine months in Shipdham, he was sent to Washington, to use his expertise at a higher level. From there he went to the Mountain Home Desert Base, 40 miles south of Boise, Idaho. This base was later destined to be the testing area for the B 1s, F 111s, Refueling Planes and the DC 10's. It also became a base for the Strategic Air Command.

The war ended on August 15, 1945. Gibson rode a B-17 to Nashville, and three days later was a civilian, ready to resume his peacetime occupation with American Airlines.

His career as a civilian was as colorful as his war record, and the two sides of his life were constantly interlacing. By 1935 he had become a co-pilot, and then flew as a Captain for many years. He took time out for the War; but upon

returning to civilian life, remained in the Reserves. When the Korea War came about he was pulled back into the 3rd Air Force, and was sent to Johnson Air Force Base. In February he was assigned to the 8th Air Force in Carswell, Ft. Worth, Texas as part of the Strategic Air Command.

Gibson's war experience served him very well in the civilian world. He set up the American Airlines Flight Academy, a program in which their Captains are retrained every six months, and their Co-pilots every year.

The General was honored by three countries for valor, leadership and courage: the United States, England and France. Considering the foreign countries rarely confer high level medals to foreigners, he stands among the most highly decorated men of WWII.

Without question, General Gibson, a true leader and a visionary, helped shape the world of aviation for the millennium.

General Gibson now lives in Dallas with his wife, Ruth. He has one daughter, one son and four grandchildren.



General John H. Gibson

• *Flew 35 combat missions*

• *His decorations consisted of:*

Silver Star - 1 Oak Leaf Cluster

Distinguished Flying Cross - 2 Oak Leaf Clusters

Air Medal - 4 Oak Leaf Clusters

British DFC

French Croix de Guerre - Palm

Commendation Medal

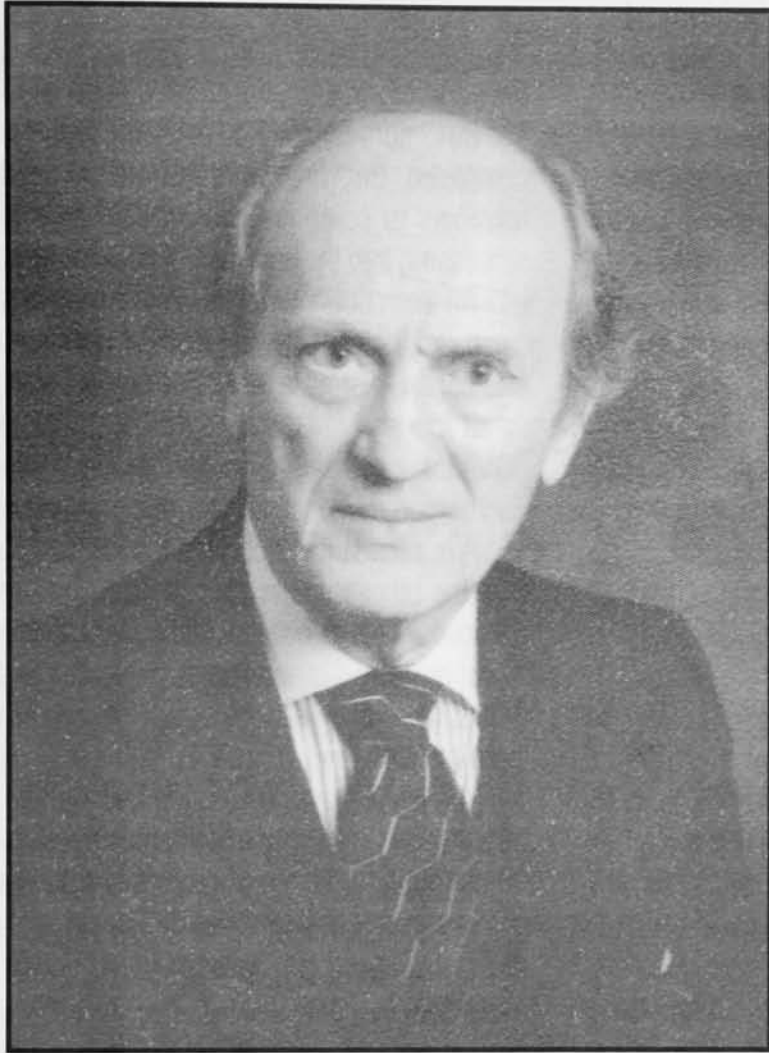
Presidential Medal - 1 Cluster

European Defense Medal - 3 Bronze Stars

American Defense Medal - 1 Bronze Star

World War II Medal

Air Reserve Medal - 1 Hour Glass



Mike Mikoloski

*From the
Desk
of
our
President*

Sunday, May 30, 1999...

...a day that I will long remember as one of my most eventful and challenging dates. It was on this day in Austin, Texas, where your Executive Board held their semi-annual meeting, and that was the very first transition of the office of the presidency of the 44th BGVA. It was near the end of this meeting that then President Roy Owen announced the change-over and inducted me as the new President of the Association.

Needless to say, I accepted this esteemed position with great excitement, enthusiasm, expectation and humility. It is, in my view, both an honor and a challenge which inspired me to serve you in this capacity to the best of my ability. It is also my sincere hope that I will be able to continue on the same path of success that has been laid out for us by our fearless leader, and now Immediate Past President Roy Owen. You perhaps are unaware that I have served on the Executive Board with Roy since its inception at Fort Worth and Colorado Springs and during this time participated in and supported the



projects, plans and programs developed under Roy's outstanding leadership and direction. Consequently, I make you this promise -- that I will continue "to stay on the course" as defined by Roy and his Board. Of course, there may be need for an occasional "dog leg" to be taken for unexpected circumstances, but as all airmen know a "dog leg" is taken for a specific reason and always returns back on course.

Our Association has been blessed with the diplomatic, illustrious and solid leadership of Immediate Past President Roy Owen and the people he and you chose to conduct its affairs. Where, I ask, would we be without the tireless efforts, devotion and dedication of people like Will Lundy, our Historian; Jim Clements, Reunion Premier; Tony Mastradone, Archival Researcher Supreme; Jerry Folsom, Treasurer, 44th's Alan Greenspan; John Gibson and Bob Lenhausen, our statement and "Delphic Oracles"; Pete Henry and Dick Butler, singularly distinctive ambassadors from the 44th to the 2nd Air Division; Mel Trager, Parliamentarian and Royal Master of Roberts Rules of Order; Ed Dobson, Secretary, Asst. Historian and Ploesti Cognitatus Extraordinare; Mike Yuspeh, current Reunion Supremo; Tommy Shepherd and Art Hand, Membership and Historical Hanchoes; Bob Brown, Director and Chief Protestor who admonished me at our first meeting since May 14, 1943 with "Mike, you _ _ _ _, what did you do to us at Kiel?" (Bob and five other crews from the 67th flew tail end Charlie and all were lost on that raid); Steve Adams, U.K.'s gift to the 44th; Nancy Van Epps, our new Secretary; Ray McNamara, loyal friend, Director, and former Asst. Crew Chief on "Suzy Q" and "4Q2" (I flew in both aircraft to Bourdeaux and Kiel May 14 and 17, 1943); Charlie Simpson, our Missileer Magnificatus; John Milliken, loyal 506th advocate; and of course, all of their wives, without whose "clearances" their contributions would not have been possible. Roy and they deserve and will have our sincerest thanks and eternal gratitude. They have established a pattern of unselfish, voluntary, productive and exemplary behavior that will serve as a model for us to follow and emulate.

In summation, much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done, among which are the following.



Completion of the Master Database Program (MDP)

For your information, the archival material (344 missions and 8013 sorties), the Roll of Honor, and the clean-up are completed. But, now what is urgently needed is for all members to complete and send in their bio forms for processing into the database. This is important, so please let's fill them out and get this critical information into the database. Incidentally, the 2nd Air Division at their May Reunion in Austin, Texas endorsed the MDP for adoption by all fourteen (14) groups and complimented the 44th BGVA for once again taking the lead in this innovative but very important endeavor. We had 33 members from the BGVA in attendance. Not a bad turnout, but in comparison with the other thirteen (13) groups, we came in 8th in attendees. This is not a noteworthy achievement in view of our renowned reputation as being the leader and front runner of all the B-24 groups. Hey, even the 93rd, our longtime arch rival, topped us with a total of 77. It was a well run and enjoyable function and I would urge you to try and make at least one of the next 2nd AD affairs. Their candle lighting memorial ceremony was deeply moving and impressive and alone "worth the price of admission."



Membership Drive

I need not remind you that our ranks are not increasing. As a matter of act, a reading of our Folded Wings column illustrates the diminishing pool of members available. By strengthening our Membership Committee, I submit we can increase our membership by a) each member getting a member (we have in the 44th BGVA Roster a list of 3,000 names, but less than 800 are paying members). b) Each member enroll his children, grandchildren, relatives and/or friends. They, in my view, are where our future lies. We need more Ed Dobsons, Steve Adams, Larry Herpels, Mark Copelands, Pete Frizzells, etc. c) Recruit and enroll members of the 44th SMW, the 44th Air Refueling Squadron, and any other units attached, assigned or otherwise connected to the 44th BG.



Finances

I intend to continue Roy's pattern of Fiscal controls to insure the financial solvency and stability of our Treasury. In accordance with our Constitution and By-Laws, I will appoint an Audit Committee to conduct an annual audit of our Organization's financial records and also engage an independent accounting firm to conduct a biennial audit.



Memorial/Museums/Displays

As you know, our efforts to establish some kind of a memorial/museum at Shipdham have come to an end. The Board and I will explore other possibilities and keep you apprised of developments in this area.



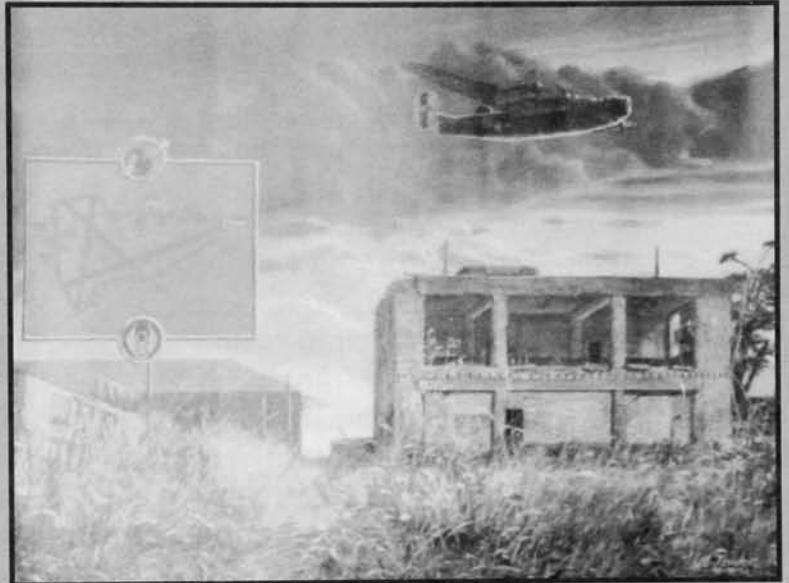
Board Development and Reduction

The Board at its last meeting on May 30, 1999, upgraded Dick Butler, the 44th group VP to the 2nd Air Division, to a full voting position. This action, plus the Constitutional Provision that adds our Immediate Past President to the Board raises the total of Board members to eleven (11). As Roy reported at the General Meeting in Savannah, the Board at my instigation has under active consideration a proposal to reduce that total to nine (9) thus effecting greater efficiency and lower costs.

Before closing, I want to say a few words about our Immediate Past President, Roy Owen. He has been a remarkable President. His accomplishments over these past six (6) years have benefitted and enriched the entire membership, and these accomplishments will endure into the next century. He has been a gift to the 44th BGVA. His are very big shoes to fill. I am no Roy Owen, but be assured, you will get the best that Ed "Mike" Mikoloski can give.

Thank you all for the trust, honor and confidence you have bestowed upon me. See you in New Orleans where Mike Yuspeh has arranged a fantastic, fabulous and entertaining reunion.

FOR SALE



An original lithograph, 18" x 24", of the Control Tower in Shipdham. It will surely bring back memories of your true delight in seeing it, time after time, when you made it back safely across the Channel.

Notify Gerald Folsom @
44th BGVA
P.O. Box 712287
Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287

if you wish to own this treasure,
a piece of your own history.

The price is \$32.50/each.

FROM THE EDITOR Ruth W. Davis-Morse

Since I have never been in a B-24, and since nobody ever shot at me, I have been devouring all the literature I can, hoping to develop the terminology which, hopefully, will earn me the respect of those experts (heroes) out there.

Eddie Picardo sent me his book, **Tales of a Tail Gunner**, a documentation of his fears as he did his job, the relief at seeing the English soil each time, the shock of seeing planes go down around him, and the joy of completing his missions. While bombing an oil refinery in Hanover, Germany, a shell exploded under the tail, so close the impact shoved him against the gun handles and knocked the controls out of the co-pilot's hands. Thinking it was a direct hit in the tail, the pilot came over the Intercom, "Go see what's left of Picardo." Fortunately he was fine.

However on the return home, he was so tired, he leaned back and let his butt hang out the back end of the turret. Despite his heated suit, he was frostbitten. Although Eddie was deeply religious, he admitted that he never saw any guardian angels in the war, but he must have had at least one. He said, "I would like to complain to him about letting me fall prey to a frostbitten butt."

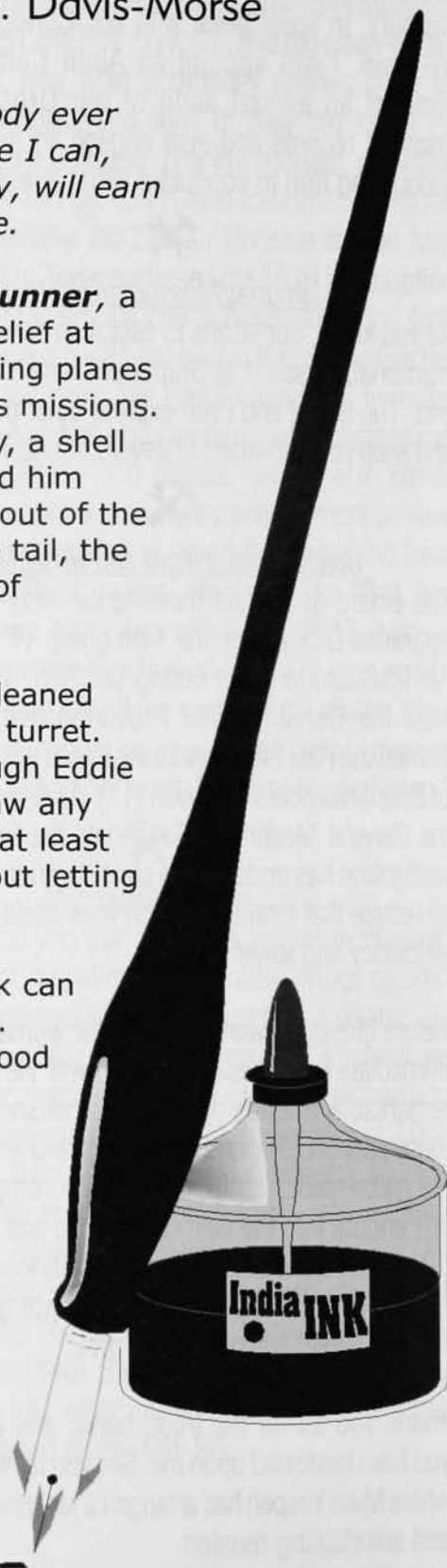
Anyone interested in getting a copy of Eddie's book can contact him at P.O. Box 19732, Seattle, WA 98107. Thanks for the book, Eddie. It gave me another good glimpse of life in the 44th.



Historian Will Lundy is updating the Roll of Honor. Anyone wishing to purchase a copy may contact Will. (See "Will Sez.")

The original hard copy cost was \$29/each.

The price of the new one will be announced.
Any profits will be applied to the database.



BACK ROW: JACK CHRISTY, RAYMOND LIPPERT,
JAMES ALEXANDER, WALTER BANKS AND MARVIN JENSON.

FRONT: LABAN BROWN, GEORGE BERGER,
ROBERT JOHNSON~PILOT, ESTIE CUNNINGHAM
(c-p) AND MICHAEL D'ANGELO, BOMB.



Deb Woodhouse of Springdale, AR is looking for information on her father's plane, *Flak Dodging Fanny a/k/a Prince, Princ-ass, Princess*. Her father was S/Sgt. Laban W. Brown, 44th BG, 506 Sq. One of her father's most dramatic missions, April 24, 1944, was to the rail yard in Hamm, Germany. Intelligence had learned that at that site would be many tank cars full of aviation fuel. Fanny's crew led the mission and destroyed the fuel. Flames shot well above the plane; and verification of the success of the mission was in the photographs which her father took.

Deb sent a picture of her father's crew, hoping that any members who see it will contact her. In addition, she is hoping the plane has survived somewhere. Does anybody have any information? She can be reached at 5618 Elmore Street, Springdale, AR 72762. Tel. (501) 442-8466; FAX (501) 973-9793; E-mail dgwoodhus@aol.com.

The 44th Bomb Group needs new members.

You've been telling stories to your children and grandchildren for years; and when you are gone, the memories will dim. Right now the unbelievable experiences of WWII are a fascination for all generations. Sign up family members to the Bomb Group, and keep the memories alive.



44th BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION NEW MEMBERSHIP

- Dues are \$20. •Outside U.S. \$25
 - Life Membership Dues 60 and over \$125 •Life Membership Dues 40 to 59 \$150
- Join now so you don't miss the next issue of the 8-Ball Tails!

Name: _____

Dues Paid: _____

Address: _____

Donation Amount: _____

(Tax Deductible)

Phone: _____

Fax/e-Mail: _____

MAIL TO:

44th Bomb Group Veterans Association

P.O. Box 712287

Salt Lake City, Utah 84171-2287



A new generation of aviation buffs has risen in France. Claude Helias of western France, north of the Bordeaux area, and a group of enthusiasts are locating burial sites of 44th BG casualties, photographing them, and making information available to inquirers. The group is exchanging information with historians in

THOUGHTS ON THE QUEEN MARY

Tony Mastradone received the picture of the Queen from a neighbor who had been in the 68th Sq. After 3 1/2 years overseas, he says coming into New York Harbor on that crowded but magnificent ship was a feeling he will never forget. Nothing was more touching to him than being back in the good old U.S.A. and joining his parents.



Melvin Murrack has been named as a Temporary Alternate to Dick Butler, for his position on the 2nd Air Division.



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Tele: (717) 846-8948 • Fax: (717) 767-6194
e-mail: REWDM@PRODIGY.NET

Norwich. Over the last few years they have pieced together the story of the war, have researched the RAF and USAAF losses, collected relics, and now plan to open a museum. Anyone wishing to contact this group can write to: Claude Helias, Ty-ArGroas, 2900 Plomelin, France. Tel. 0033 02 98 94 25 61.



The U. S. Army Military History Institute is looking for WWII stories. Remembrances that you send to me, you can also copy for this library. Having visited the Carlisle Barracks Library, I can assure you it is a good repository of well organized information. It is important to the 44th that you fill out the information for the Database; but when you have done that, consider also placing your memories at the Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA 17013-5008. A hundred years from now your great great grandchildren might be looking you up, and you should make it easy for them to find you.

folded Wings

July, 1999



CARSON, HERBERT D. JR.

Died 12/3/98..... 67th Squadron 34258795. Herbert was a member of the L. C. Smith crew, a gunner, which arrived in Africa shortly before the Ploesti mission. His pilot became a POW on 16 August 1943, crew broken up, so Herbert then flew with various other crews as a spare. His last mission was with R. C. Griffith on 8 April, 1944.

FIELDS, LEE H. Died 10/8/87..... 19180515 66th Sq. Gunner. Flew first mission on 30 Jan, 1944 with Lt. Eldridge's crew. Later, on 7th mission as member of R. E. Harleman crew, was shot down, badly wounded, later repatriated.

GLASS, ALBERT W. Died 6/3/98. 68th Sq. 0-727333 Lt. Glass was one of the original combat men, a bombardier, flew his first mission on 7 Nov. 1942 as a member of the N. W. Sullivan crew, the first mission of the 44th BG. On 27 Jan 1943, this same crew was shot down, their plane exploded, with Lt. Glass being the only survivor when his parachute somehow opened. He was captured, severely wounded, with a leg having to be amputated. Later he was repatriated to the U.S. He flew four missions.

HAZELTON, WALTER..... Died 5/30/99..... 66th Sq. 12035280 He was one of this squadron's original combat gunners, flew his and the 44th's first mission on 7 Nov. 1942 as a member of R. E. Miller's crew. He finished his tour of 25 missions plus four additional ones on 17 July, 1943. Target was to Naples, a member of Lt. Tom Scrivner's crew.

HINMAN, HOWARD L. Died Date Unknown.. 67th Sq. Lt. Hinman, a 1st Pilot, flew his first mission on 24 Dec. 1944, the day that the 44th BG put up 61 aircraft, the most planes in one mission. On 16 Jan. 1945 he and his crew were forced to bail out over France., was seriously injured, and later returned to the U.S. He flew 5 missions in that period.

LOUIK, LEONARD H. Died Date Unknown.. 67th Sq. 0-2057334 Lt. Louik flew his first mission as a member of J. Steele's crew on 13 Jan, 1945. He flew his last mission and last of the 44th's on 25 April 1945, completing 30 missions in his tour.

KREBS, ANDREW JACKSON

Died 6/99.

2nd Lt. 0-699738 68th Sq. Lt. Krebs was a co-pilot on the W. H. Barry crew that joined the Group in mid March, 1944. They were on their first mission on 8 April when their formation was hit by a heavy concentration of enemy aircraft, were shot down along with 10 others. This was the worst loss of the war by the 44th BG. Lt. Krebs and eight of his crew survived to become POWs.

MC CAMMOND, JAMES A.

Died Date Unknown

68th Sq. 11040993 Sgt. McCammond flew his first mission as a gunner on Capt. Cramer's crew on 4 February 1943. James had been a ground crewman and volunteered for combat. His second mission proved to be his last when the M. C. Howell crew was lost on 14 May, 1943 - Kiel. He was captured and was a POW for the duration.

MC KINNEY, DONALD W.

Died Date Unknown

67th Sq. 35662959 Sgt. McKinney was a gunner on E. F. Taylor's crew when they flew to Africa on 16 Sept. 1943. His first mission was the fateful mission to Weiner Neustadt, Austria on 1 October 43. His second and last mission was 20 Oct. 43, again on Taylor's crew as a belly gunner. He then was grounded, was assigned the duties of an armorer and transferred to the 506th Squadron.

MORGANTHALER, THEODORE J. Died 4/12/99 at the age of 89. 68th Sq. Ted enlisted in April, 1942, attended Radio School at Scott Field. His transportation to England was on the Louis Pasteur ship, landing at Liverpool. He served in the Ordnance section until June, 1944 and then transferred to the 50th Station Complement. He attended an anti-aircraft school in Cornwall. At war's end he was a passenger in A/C #44-50612 that departed Shipdham on 22 May, 1945. He was discharged Oct. 13, 1945. Ted was actively working at the time of his death.

SHARRETT, DOYLE V.

Died 12/8/98

806th Chemical Company (Attached). Survived by his wife, Ada.

TEBBE, LOUIS A.

Died 16 Feb. 1999.

68th Squadron 37148463. Joined the 68th Squadron on 3 August, 1944 and flew his first mission as Waist Gunner with the Ray Boggs crew on 12 August. He flew his last mission with the W. R. Eriksen crew on 25 April, 1945, his 26th mission. He flew home on 28 May 1945 with the Boggs' crew.

WARD, JAMES B. JR.

Died 2/9/99

506th Sq. 19092289. Gunner for the Leo S. Bielinski crew. They left Boston on Ile De France, 5 days to England, unescorted, arriving in Dec. 1944. This crew, intact, completed about 20 missions with their first one being 14 Feb. 1945 and last one 25 April, 1945. They return to the U.S. flying A/C 44-50500 via the Azores, Gander and to Mitchell Field in June 1945.



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Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287



WILL SEZ

For this issue, please permit me to discuss the history of this Bomb Group and my efforts to obtain it. To do this I must explain how I got involved.

I joined the good old 44th BG at Barksdale Field the last of May, 1942, after completing an aircraft mechanics school at Keesler Field. I enlisted in the Army Air Corps with the intentions of flying in combat via the back door. I was assigned to a 67th Squadron on Sgt. George Baccash's crew, and worked as a mechanic for him for nearly two years.

In early 1943, the Group had lost several planes and crews without any replacements. Several combat men had also been grounded from injuries, frostbite, etc. So a call was made for volunteers from the ground personnel and I was one of those that answered it. For here was my opportunity to take the War to the enemy. By this time, though, it was obvious to all that the chances of surviving 25 missions was very slim at best. These volunteers knew it, but went ahead anyway - True Heroes.

Again I was rejected. So finally I had to be less than content as a mechanic. Nearly everyone of my friends that volunteered were lost in combat, with scarcely any that survived in POW camps.

In 1972, Irene returned home to Norwich and learned that there was a new library containing an American Memorial Room, and that anyone could donate a book or books in honor of friends or crewmates. When I needed to get correct data about several of these men for the books, I was told

by William Robertie that no 44th BG History book was available to obtain that data. So I set out on my own to locate military records of the 44th BG, buying three microfilm rolls from Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

After locating the full names of these men, I found further data that was most interesting, and then concentrated on my 67th Squadron history and operations records. This led to the compiling of a 67th Squadron history book which I sent to some of my buddies with whom I had been in contact and they urged me to dig out more.

Today I am still at it, but there has to be a change! Both Webb Todd and Norman Kiefer have produced their books on the history of their Squadrons, and Steve Adams is working on the final Squadron, the 66th. So the 44th now has one of, if not the best records of any Liberator group. Now there is little else that is available, since Tony Mastradone had copied all of the Sortie reports found at the archives in Washington, D.C.

Is our work finished at last?? Not really. Why? Because of the world wide web. It seems that the public has discovered that they can contact various sites on-line with information about World War II, leading to the 44th BG. Now these family members can find help in locating data about their dear ones who served with the 44th BG. Larry Herpel, bless him, is now busy fielding these requests and is using my Roll of Honor Book to obtain many answers for them. Occasionally I have additional info not in that book, so I furnish it.

But the best part is still to come... Now that we have entered all of the combat records from the Sortie Reports - nearly 8,500 of them, individual data about any combat man is now just a few clicks away. So is the data about our planes. So we are off to a good start. Start? Yes!

Arlo's computer program was carefully conceived to permit almost an unlimited amount of information and data to be made available, "hanging" or attaching it to any appropriate spot on the basic information data. For instance, data from individual airman's diary can be attached to this man's Sortie Report for that mission, and for all of his missions. My war room is filled with supplemental data such as this. Now Arlo furnished us the program which can utilize all of this.

Back in the late 1980's, I compiled and had printed 160 copies of the Roll of Honor and Casualties book. I had to hold it to that number as I could not afford to pay for a larger printing. The former 44th HMG Board refused to finance it even though any profit would go to them. Ever since that number was sold, I have planned to make a second printing to correct many errors and to add so many personal accounts that you members have supplied to me over the years.

Jim Hamilton, an associate, recently offered to help me with a new printing by scanning the pages of my old manuscript and then placing it into a new format. In addition, he is underway in scanning many photos of crashes, etc. to be used in this book as well.

With the text now in new format and back into my computer, I had been planning to add the many stories that you members have furnished me after the first book went to press. But wait! Wouldn't they go just as well into Arlo's computer program? Yes, obviously, and then that information would be available worldwide, not just in a book. Too, the book would be smaller and less costly.

Now could I ask you to give me some kind of an idea of the number of books to be printed? How many of you would consider purchasing one if the cost could be held to a minimum and with any profit being set aside to help with cost of data entry into Arlo's

program. Would you prefer paperback over hard cover? The original printing and binding was about \$27, but surely more with inflation. Could I ask those of you interested in that book to send me a card or letter to my summer address shown in the Board section of this newsletter? It will help greatly in helping me decide how to handle these records now on hand.

A related subject is the future of Arlo's program now that we have our basic data entered. Of course, this work can be done only with considerably more money that I personally think should come from grants and other sources. You, the members have financed most of the money so far, either through dues or donations and it would not be fair to ask you to dig deeper. Providing that grant money is received, then I will have the answer of what to do with your records that I still retain.

I do not have the time nor the energy to work much further with our history. I have neglected my family far too long already and would like to have time to do other things -- like fishing in the lake 200 feet from my summer cabin when I get up there in a few days.

Remember those letters!

Will Lundy



Now could I ask you to give me some kind of an idea of the number of books to be printed? How many of you would consider purchasing one if the cost could be held to a minimum and with any profit being set aside to help with cost of data entry into Arlo's program? Would you prefer paperback over hard cover?

LEFT TO RIGHT: Roy Owen, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT; Michael Mikolosi, PRESIDENT; Gerald Folsom, TREASURER.



SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION REUNION

Thirty-two members of the 44th BG rubbed shoulders with fellow airmen at an extravaganza at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Austin, Texas. Alongside the Congress Bridge where one million six hundred thousand bats dwell, (yes, bats, and the count is correct) the 2nd Air Division held their annual get-together, complete with awards and certificates of recognition to groups who work to perpetuate the history of this esteemed organization.

Unceremoniously, President Roy Owen symbolically 'passed the gavel' to his successor, Mike Mikolosi. It was anticlimactic. When there should have been a standing ovation, there was quiet conversation. But a new era has dawned. Mike promised to give ALL to keep the 44th afloat in the tradition of his predecessor.

At the 44th BG dinner, all members introduced themselves, and relayed a little of their history. The last speaker was Col. Goodman Griffin, who brought the house down with his description of vague and uncertain assignments at a time when the country was mobilizing for WWII. It seems that frequently others knew his destinations better than he.



Will Lundy, 44th BGVA HISTORIAN AND WIFE IRENE.






PERRY MORSE, WAIST GUNNER, 506TH SQUADRON STANDS UNDER AUSTIN'S BATMOBILE, THE CITY'S MONUMENT TO THEIR INSECT-EATING NIGHT HUNTERS.

Six hundred fifty-three airmen and wives, representing fifteen groups, came together to remember the toughest assignment that was ever given to America's youth. The country CANNOT be allowed to forget. The 2nd ADA needs the support of all groups for the monumental projects it has undertaken to preserve the memory of their great contribution to victory in WWII.

DEDICATED TO THE

44TH BOMB GROUP (H)

THE B-24 FLYING EIGHTBALLS

14TH COMBAT WING - 8TH AIR FORCE - WWII
 SHIPDHAM, ENGLAND 7 NOV 1942 - 25 MAY 1945
 344 COMBAT MISSIONS - 338 ENEMY A/C DESTROYED
 8809 SORTIES DELIVERED 18,980 TONS OF BOMBS
 WITH 153 A/C LOSSES
 TWO PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATIONS
 KIEL, GERMANY - 14 MAY, 1943
 PLOESTI, RUMANIA - 1 AUGUST 1943 DAYLIGHT LOW LEVEL ATTACK ON OIL REFINERIES
 COLONEL LEON W. JOHNSON - MEDAL OF HONOR FOR PLOESTI RAID LEADERSHIP
 ACTIVATED AND TRAINED AT MACDILL AIR FIELD 15 JANUARY, 1941 MOVED TO BRACKSDALE
 AIR FIELD ON 7 FEBRUARY, 1942 TO BECOME THE FIRST GROUP TO TRAIN WITH THE B-24
 LIBERATORS

*The MacDill Memorial Park
 entrance marker original
 design sketch for the plaque.
 (See next page).*



THE TIN GOOSE

By

Col. Roy W. Owen, USAF (Ret)

Counting back, the year must have been 1933, and we were living in Burbank, California. I was nine years old, and in the dawning of what was to be a long love affair with the airplane.

My life was filled with dreams of aerial dogfights and action filled pictures of bi-wingers in screaming dives, strafing the Hun with hammering machine guns. Each week represented six days of suspense until Saturday arrived and I could spend my dime at the Loma Theater to see the matinee episode of the "Tailspin Tommy" serial.



**ROY OWEN, AGE 9, AT EDISON
GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BURBANK, CA
1933.**

Countless times I had hurtled into the air, the engine of my wooden orange box fighter roaring and the slipstream whining in the wing struts. Hunched behind the broomstick barrels of my machine guns, I would meet the enemy in glorious looping and turning combat (making machine gun sounds that only boys can duplicate) until, riddled with holes and trailing smoke, they would spiral down to the final crash.

Our house on Cedar Street, to my great fortune, was just a short distance from grand Central Air Terminal. My only touch with the real world of airplanes was the same then as it is now; that magic pull in the sound of an overhead airplane that invariably turns my eyes to the sky. From my front yard, it was a passing parade as I watched them in the landing pattern.

One of my favorites was the great transport of the era, the Ford Tri-motor. Nicknamed "The Tin Goose," there was an awesome beauty in those broad, sturdy wings, corrugated metal fuselage and powerful engines as they flew through the San Fernando Valley sky.

Where had they been? What strange and far-away places did they reach when they left? What kind of rich and mysterious people were able to travel in that beautiful machine? And what of the pilots? What kind of super-man would be able to master and fly an airplane with three engines? These questions burned in my mind as I would watch each slow, graceful turn toward the final approach to landing.

I soon came to realize that every afternoon, shortly after my arrival home from school, the great airplane would come overhead on the way to landing. To my mind, it was always the same Tri-Motor, and each day we had a rendezvous over my front lawn. It became a ritual of waving and wonderment for me.

Then came THE DAY, that great day! I was just running from the front door to join the baseball game in the vacant lot across the street, when I heard her coming. I stopped momentarily to wave, by now force of habit, and started again. One stride, and I stopped. For an instant I stood frozen; did I see an arm extended from the pilot's window waving in return? One look back into the sky told me. There was no mistaking it now; a slow, back and forth wave. Startled for an instant into immobility at this wondrous sight, I then began to wave wildly in return. For a few seconds, the arm continued to wave and I felt a flood of astounded joy. Then the arm was withdrawn into the cockpit and it was over.

I stood transfixed. Did it really happen? There could be no doubt; I had seen it with my own eyes. For a few sweet seconds a real pilot in a real airplane had chosen me, and we had made silent contact!

Now, with the memories of a flying career past, that vision remains. Still warm and vivid, I bring it out occasionally to savor again; the pilot of a big "Tin Goose" waving acknowledgment (and perhaps encouragement) to a small fellow pilot. A camaraderie fully understood only by those known as Aviator.

Note: After a 30 year U.S. Air Force career that spanned flying B-24's to the SR-71, Col. Owen retired to Chico, Calif. where he taught Political Science for 12 years at California State University. He now resides in Santa Rosa, Calif. with his wife Lolly where he writes feature articles on Aviation History and Public Administration.

Col. Roy Owen, age 46,
suited up for a Mach 3 flight in
the SR-71. October, 1970,
Beale AFB, CA.



Ford Trimotor ~ A Golden Age Classic



One cannot discuss the Golden Age of Aviation with out acknowledging the Ford Trimotor. It was a key aircraft in the development of modern air travel. July 7, 1929 Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) later became TWA began transcontinental passenger service from San Diego to New York. They used Ford Trimotors for day travel and passenger trains for night travel, transporting famous passengers as Charles Lindberg and Amelia Earhart. The Ford Trimotor was based on the general layout of the highly successful Fokker F.VII/3m (q.v.) three-engine high-wing monoplane, except that the Ford was all-metal with corrugated metal skinning and was tagged with the nicknamed "Tin Goose". It's strong construction and flexible design made it a work horse in many countrys and a variety of power plants in the 300/450 horse power were installed on the Trimotor. It was originally designed by William B. Stout, who, in 1966, reintroduced the type for production as the Bushmaster 2000, having modernized the design to meet modern-day requirements in terms of safety, comfort and operational facilities as a simple and cheap transport aircraft for use from small grass fields

The above was taken from: <http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/4515/ford.htm>

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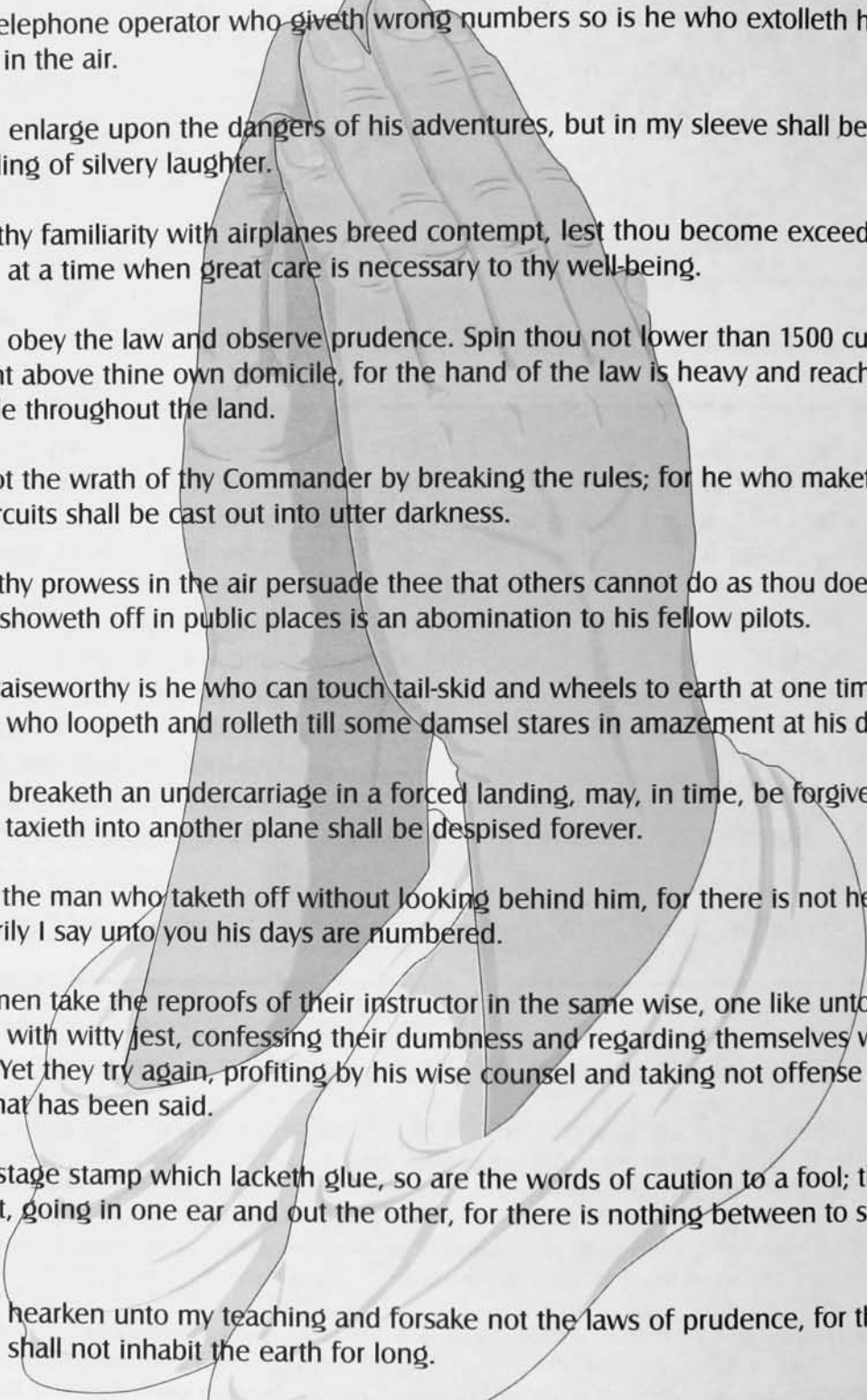
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The Pilot's 23rd Psalm

By Capt. J.D. Olive

- 
1. As the telephone operator who giveth wrong numbers so is he who extolleth his exploits in the air.
 2. He shall enlarge upon the dangers of his adventures, but in my sleeve shall be heard the tinkling of silvery laughter.
 3. Let not thy familiarity with airplanes breed contempt, lest thou become exceedingly careless at a time when great care is necessary to thy well-being.
 4. My son, obey the law and observe prudence. Spin thou not lower than 1500 cubits nor stunt above thine own domicile, for the hand of the law is heavy and reacheth far and wide throughout the land.
 5. Incur not the wrath of thy Commander by breaking the rules; for he who maketh right hand circuits shall be cast out into utter darkness.
 6. Let not thy prowess in the air persuade thee that others cannot do as thou doest; for he that showeth off in public places is an abomination to his fellow pilots.
 7. More praiseworthy is he who can touch tail-skid and wheels to earth at one time, than he who loopeth and rolleth till some damsel stares in amazement at his daring.
 8. He who breaketh an undercarriage in a forced landing, may, in time, be forgiven, but he who taxieth into another plane shall be despised forever.
 9. Beware the man who taketh off without looking behind him, for there is not health in him, verily I say unto you his days are numbered.
 10. Clever men take the reproofs of their instructor in the same wise, one like unto another with witty jest, confessing their dumbness and regarding themselves with humor. Yet they try again, profiting by his wise counsel and taking not offense at aught that has been said.
 11. As a postage stamp which lacketh glue, so are the words of caution to a fool; they stick not, going in one ear and out the other, for there is nothing between to stop them.
 12. My son, hearken unto my teaching and forsake not the laws of prudence, for the reckless shall not inhabit the earth for long.
 13. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not; thus wilt thou fly safely; length of days and a life of peace shall be added unto thee.

Mail Call



The Close Call

From: Forrest S. Clark
703 Duffer Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34759

We were having a sort of reunion in the officer's club at Shipdham base. I had just returned to the base from France and had completed my missions and was awaiting transfer back to the States.

I had been shot down and had escaped from Switzerland into France in the closing days of December, 1944. I got back to the base in the early days of January, 1945.

My companion was a Lt. Bill Partridge of the 44th who was a friend from my high school days back in the United States. He had been assigned to the 44th and it was the first time we had seen each other since school days.

We had some close calls in the skies over Germany on missions and we were both looking forward to completing our tours and making it back home. Bill and I had been to Alconbury I believe a few days on a leave.

It was a happy reunion and he had invited me to the Officer's Club for a celebration over a few drinks and talk of home.

I recall saying to him that we would both make it and we should plan to meet at a favorite place in the United States. He pledged he would and said the only thing that could stop him now was a stray piece of German flak or a fighter.

It was rather late at night by the time we met after the long English twilight. There was the usual exchange of drinks and jokes.

I remember somewhere during the evening we both decided to drink a toast to our homecoming. No sooner had we raised our glasses than out of the darkness came the sound of the steady put-put of a German buzz bomb.

I can still hear that sound as all who heard the buzz bombs will never forget. It sounded closer and closer with a frightful put-put, then it cut off and we knew it was coming down somewhere very close to the officer's club. I remember we ran outside and flung ourselves flat on the damp English turf. We lay there waiting.

There was a tremendous explosion, or so it sounded to us, and a flash of light. The buzz bomb had landed in a farm field adjacent to the Club, digging a considerable crater. In a second

it was over.

We looked at each other and I remember one of us said, "I guess we will make it after all."

Another 100 feet and that Jerry bomb would have landed directly on us and the club. I don't recall the date of this episode, but it must have been in early January, 1945, perhaps during the period when Hitler was sending the buzz bombs over England. Records will show some fell near enough to the vicinity of Norwich to scare many, including some of us at the 44th.

We did make it despite a Jerry bomb that tried very hard to spoil our reunion.



From: Will Lundy, Historian
44th BGVA

Dear Chuck Wagner,

Sure was good to see and read your article in the last issue of 8-Ball Tails. It is articles like yours that add so much to the publication, gets more interest. I've admired your contributions to the 68th Squadron newsletter, and have learned much more about the 68th Squadron, as well as our time on the base at Shipdham, and enjoyed your story.

I will enclose a paper covering the attacks on Shipdham during our 31 months of "occupation" there, which confirm that Barrett was correct - it was a JU-88 which dropped those butterfly bombs. Steve Adams, who is busily compiling a history of the 66th Bomb Sq. was searching through some 2nd Division microfilm, came across this page, copied it and sent it to me. The page also tells about one other attack, as well as one that was in question -- much ado and activity, but evidently, no evidence found about that one attack.

You asked if there might have been any other butterfly bombs (UXBs) found after the bombing, something similar to the experience of you 68thers. Must tell you that indeed it did happen again, and this was in the 67th Squadron area. Like you, we were cautioned to walk ONLY on paved surfaces, DO NOT CROSS open fields between the various dispersal. We were most cautious at first, but as time passed, we walked from our dispersal across to our friends in the adjoining ones. Later, we forgot about those darned things. But even though we had searched most of that area closely, we DID MISS one. Like your's, one of our gang saw something, also in a clump of weeds, so close to the main taxiway and to the entrance to our dispersal that each time a plane taxied into or out of that dispersal entrance, the propellers were cutting the air within two to three feet of that bomb. At first we thought that it was



a "dud" because it had not been set off by the noise or vibrations of the propellers, but I, personally, was most surprised when the bomb disposal squad placed sandbags around the bomb, moved back and then shot the darned thing. I was amazed at the size of the explosion! People could have been killed if someone had set it off!

I believe that I'll send a copy of this page on to Roy Owen for information in case he wants to use the "facts" dug up by Steve.

Sorry you won't make it to San Antonio -- this reunion should be a good one.

All the best,
Will Lundy

Raids on 8th Air Force Stations by German aircraft.

SHIPDHAM STA 115.

2249 hrs - 23rd August 43.

One JU-88 - three 50 KG demolition bombs and three buckets (64) Butterfly bombs on lighted airdrome. Slight damage to perimeter track by one Butterfly bomb and lighting on runway made temporarily unserviceable for 12 hrs. No casualties.



JOHN WOLBARST of the 464th Sub-Depot with CANNISTER of "DAISY CUTTER" bombs dropped on field, 21 April, 1944.

04:45 hrs 21 April 44.

Action taken to repel attacks: none. E/A flying at probably 8000 ft, weather clear with no moon. There were frequent alerts during the night. During all clear period, a lone enemy intruder dropped two canisters of 10 lb anti-personnel bombs in open ground just outside the gas dump area and dispersals in the NW part of the airfield (66th and 67th Sqdn. areas). E/A flying from NW to SE. Both canisters were found a mile or more from where the bombs dropped. Thirty-two out of 34 exploded or UXB7s have been found. Damage negligible: damage two land huts, one fragment hole in fuel service trailer. Efficiency of present defense plans - good. There is no doubt the enemy knew the location of the airdrome.

03:40 hrs. 23 May 44.

One E/A believed to be JU 88, flying at an estimated height of between 500 and 1000 ft was seen by a combat crew gunner to drop what he first thought was a bomb. A moment later it opened up into what he thought to be a parachute and dropped about 400 yards to the North. He was unable to communicate immediately with the control tower as no transportation was available. About a half hour after the incident, it was reported to flying control officer, who in turn notified the stations Defense office, the latter called out the alert Defense Detachment of 50 men and made a very careful search of the area with no success. Two hours later 300 men searched the area finding nothing. The plane was flying now north to south at an estimated height of 500 to 1000 feet. It was also seen by three other members of the crews. The sky was mottled with clouds but not raining. The enemy undoubtedly knows the location of our station.

This report is based on hearsay evidence of one man and may not be true. He is very positive that he saw a parachute open and descend to the ground. A thorough search was made for a parachute, parachute flare, land mine or any evidence which would sustain the attack. This search was made by personnel on this station, Home guard and Civilian authorities.



Forrest S. Clark
703 Duffer Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34759

To 44th BG News,

A fifty year search recently that took the searcher into the secret files of the Belgian resistance movement and the dreaded German S S troops has finally revealed the story of one 8th Air Force crew that parachuted into enemy territory in January, 1944.

That crew was that of Lt. Harold Pinder of the 44th Bomb Group, 67th Squadron, shot down during the Frankfurt mission over the Ardennes of Belgium on 29 January 1944. Among the crew members was a very good friend and fellow crewmate of mine, Sgt. Abe Sofferman, radio operator.

By a twist of fate, I could have been on that mission. Sgt. Sofferman and I were called to go as radio operators but Sgt. Sofferman volunteered in my place and went with Lt. Pinder's crew. It was a fateful decision. I survived and my friend went down. Lt. Pinder's B-24 Liberator was shot down by FW-190s near Wibrin in the Ardennes where later was to be one of the greatest battles of WWII. Pinder and Sofferman parachuted and survived to be taken into hiding by the resistance forces in that portion of Belgium. For 32 days they went into hiding from place to place as the resistance evaded the Germans. The Belgian resistance fighters were engaged in sabotage of German facilities at the time. Pinder and Sofferman were with these forces.

Some date in the last days of February, 1944, an informer gave away their hiding place to the Germans. Within hours, the hiding place in a villa or farmhouse was surrounded by German troops and a battle began.

Sgt. Sofferman was armed and tried to make an escape from the hideout but was shot down by the Germans and killed on the spot. Pinder was taken prisoner and survived the war. His hometown was listed as Pittsburgh, PA.

I visited Sofferman's parents in the Bronx, NY in 1945, but at that time did not know of his fate.

It was not until nearly 50 years later and after repeated inquiries with contact in Belgium that I received a letter from a former resistance fighter telling the true story of his death at the hands of the Germans. Most of this information was taken from the records and secret files of the Belgian partisan army and various eyewitnesses.

I have contacted the family of my friend and learned he has a brother still living in New York. Through this brother and a surviving sister of Sgt. Sofferman I was able to visit his gravesite in Union Field Cemetery, Long Island, NY. I have since lost track of Lt. Pinder and do not know if any others on that crew survived and are still living. If they are I hope they read this and are able to contact me with the rest of the story.

There are still unanswered questions that need to be completed not only for the surviving family of Sgt. Sofferman. Why did Pinder and Sofferman not make contact with one of the existing escape routes at the time?

Perhaps we shall never know.



Deno C. Tulini
501 14th Avenue
Rock Falls, IL 61071

Dear Ms. Davis-Morse,

I am writing in regards to the article on the Saga of Southern Comfort. I was a waist gunner on Lt. Jack (Jake) J. Wind's crew. Out of the original crew there are only four of us left -- Edwin Waldo, Co-Pilot; Harold Lightcap, First Flight Engineer; "Rocky" Stoltenburg, Radio Operator, and myself.

On April 8, 1944, we flew our first mission to Brunswick on the plane "Consolidated Mess." The 506th lost five planes that day. The 44th lost eleven.

On April 18, we were assigned to Southern Comfort II for our second mission. Jake Wind piloted her for 29 missions, not the 19 the article quoted. I flew 29 missions with Jake, and one as a tail gunner on Smith's (first name escapes me) crew. The last three missions I flew on I can't remember names of planes or pilots. Our crew flew 33 missions, then it was increased to 35. They compromised with us and made it 33. Almost the whole month of July went by between our 30th and 31st mission.

I have a photo of Southern Comfort II with 32 bomb markings on it (32 missions).

Editor's Note: Deno Tulini started running at age 55, and just won his 5th First Place trophy for 70 and older Bix 7 Race in Davenport, Iowa. At age 78, he has collected a total of eight trophies.

*See you in
New Orleans!*



44th Bomb Groups 1999 Reunion

September 2-5, 1999

44th Bomb Group
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