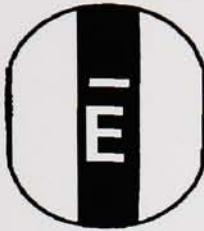


44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



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	Saarbrücken M/Y, Germany
16th	Duwe	Saarbrücken M/Y, Germany
20th	Duwe	Erfurt North A/F, Germany
21st	Duwe	Oberföhrhofen 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; Osnabrück M/Y, secondary
14th	Yatkones	Kaiserslautern M/Y (Call letter now J).

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 - Pfasel. 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

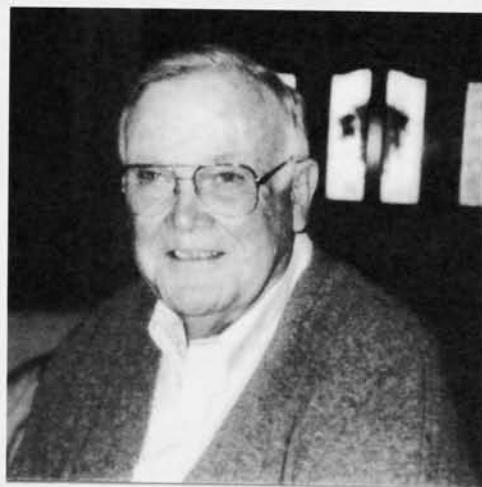
<u>APRIL</u>	<u>1945</u>	
02nd	Zanoni	Tirstrop Airdrome, Denmark - but recalled
4th, 5th, and 7th		No formation sketches found. Cannot verify.
08th	Richardson	Bayreuth Ordnance Depot, Germany
09th	Lee	Leipheim Airfield (Grunszberg) Germany
10th	Louik	Parchim Airfield, S/E of Schwerin, Germany
11th	Lee	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

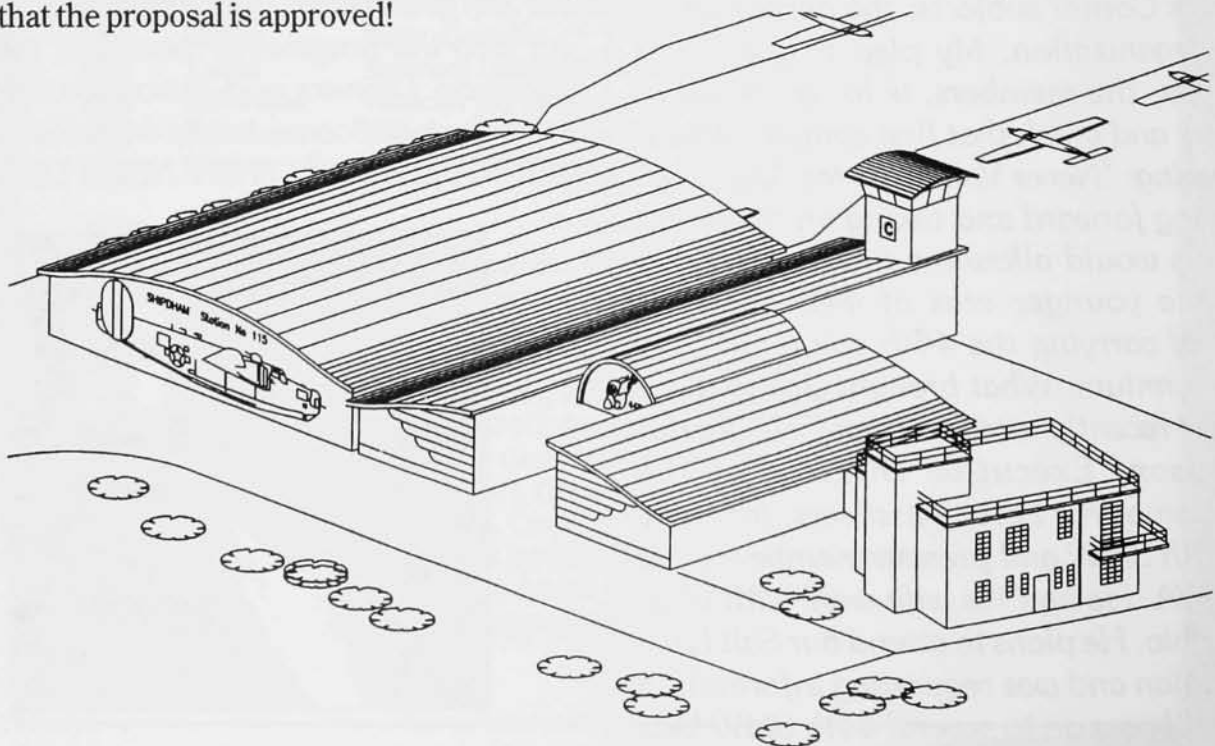
THE SMALL DREAM, PERHAPS A BIG REALITY

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.

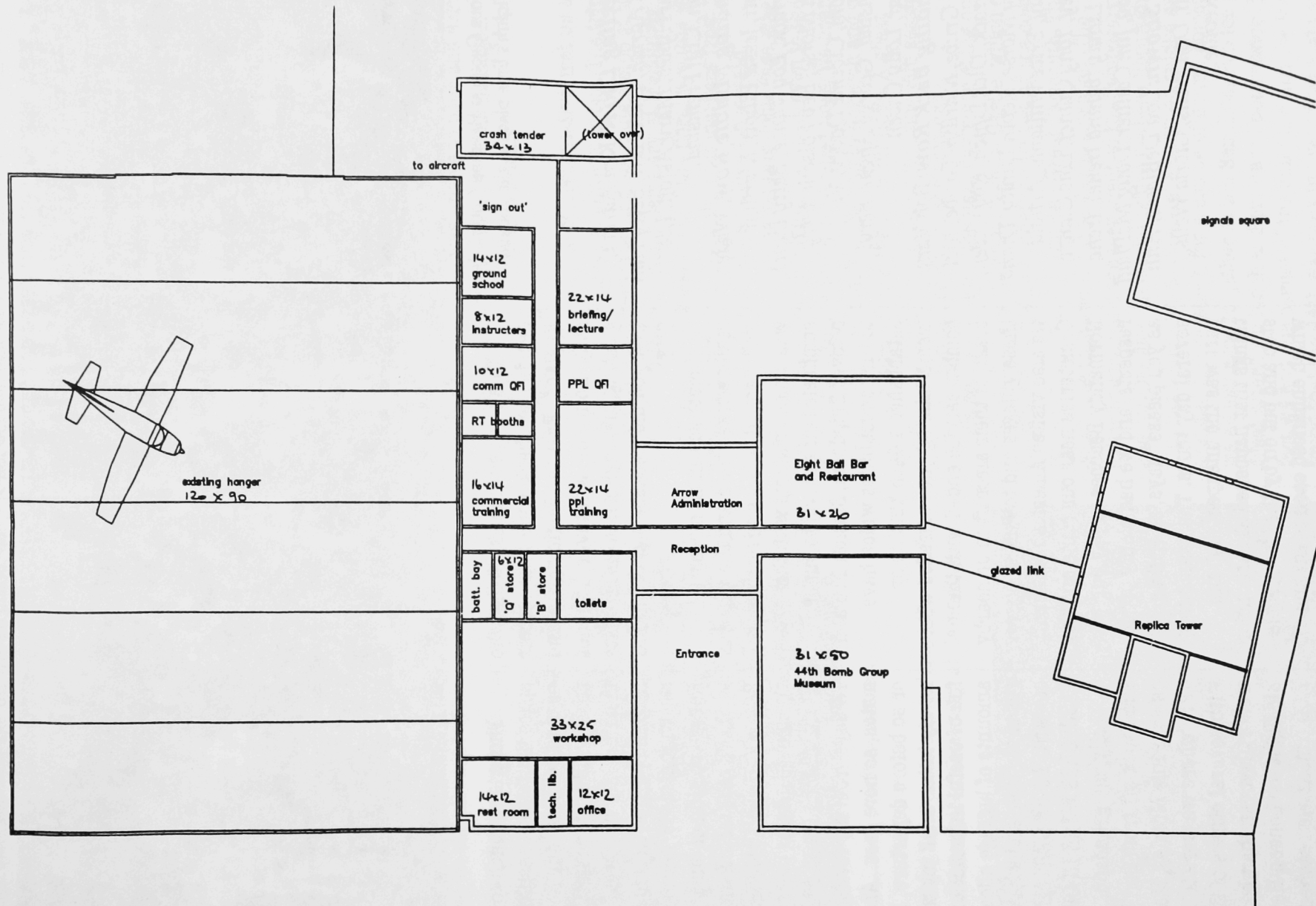
Sometimes a small key will open a lock on a large door of opportunity otherwise inaccessible to those without the proper credentials. Our little Funding and Construction Agreement, it seems, was the key that opened the lock on the door to large amounts of grant money available to non-profit organizations. 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.

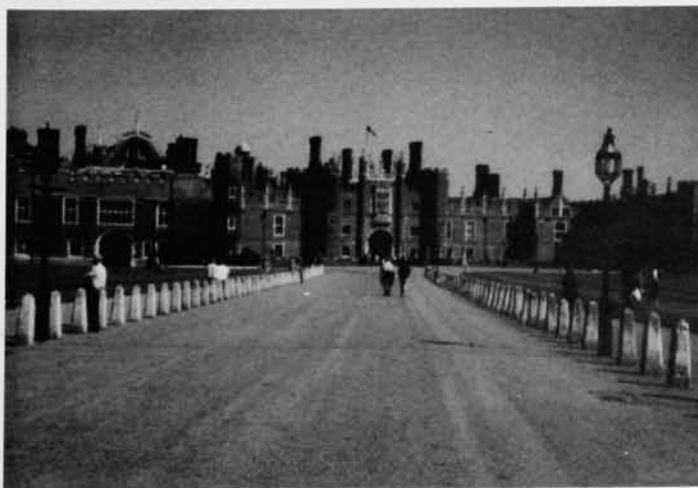
Lolly, my grandson, J.R. Reville, and I took off from San Francisco on schedule Monday, May 26 for JFK, where we were to rendezvous with several others of the group for a short layover, then board a Virgin Air flight for London Heathrow at 7:00 p.m. As we reached the gate, a young man checked our tickets 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 am. 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 wreathes ceremony with the British Colors born by Don Dodd of the British Legion and our own Louis DeBlasio, 506th B.S.



After a short visit to the Shipdham Heritage Center located in the Village Cemetery, we loaded the bus again with our guide Steve Adams for our tour of all the squadron and composite sites, conveniently stopping at the old 14th CBW site at noon for a tour and box lunch picnic hosted by Mr. Andrew Doubleday and his son who furnished all the liquid refreshments and desserts to accompany our Hotel Norwich packed

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.



MR. ARTHUR KING AND HIS DATE MOUNTING OUR BUS FOR THE TRIP TO BUTTS BROW.

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."



BEING GREETED BY HER HONOR THE MAYORESS BERYL HEALY AND MP NIGEL WATERSON.

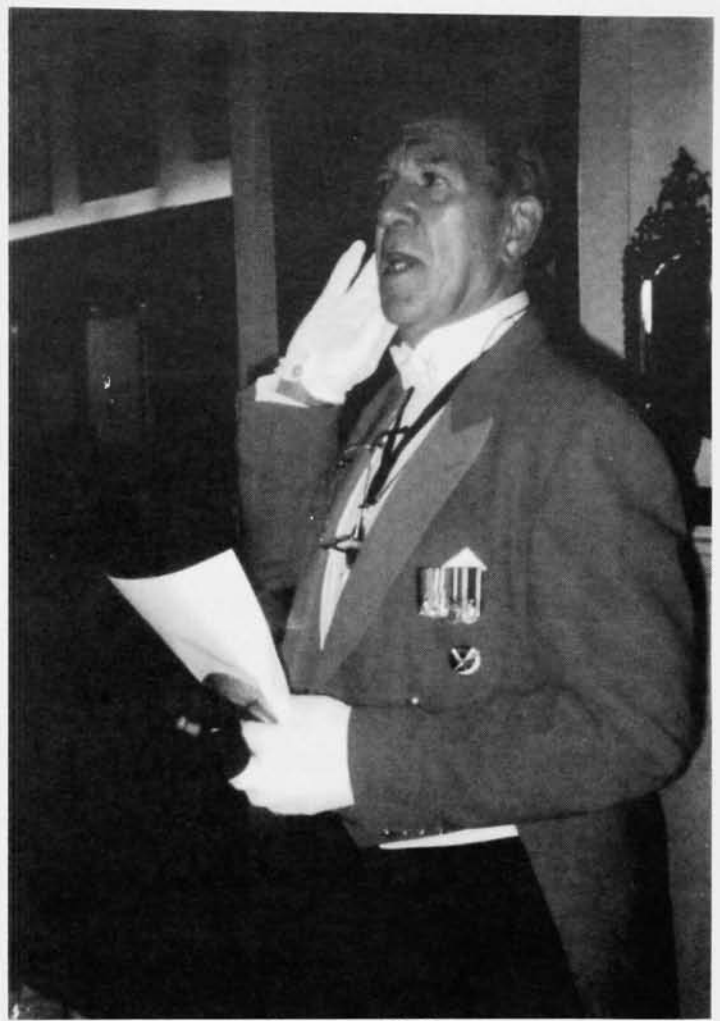


THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION EASTBOURNE IN THE LOWER BACKGROUND.



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.



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 urn 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

WND 71 5005

DATE

11/5/43

By

WVJ NRRA Date 12/3/66

ALWAYS GIVE TIME, PLACE HEIGHT

Researcher By

T. Mastradone

44th B. Op. Vets Assoc.

Interrogation Form

44th
(Group)66th
(Squad)936
(A/C No.)J
(Letter)20X100
(Bomb-load)inland
(Date)head all way
(Position in formation - Where changed)09.00
(Time took off)15.00
(Time Landed)

Capt. Robert J. Abernethy ✓ PILOT

T/Sgt. Willard W. Scott (?) TOP TUR

2nd Lt. Spencer S. Hurn CO-PILOT

S/Sgt. John A. Romeo

1st Lt. Edward Mikolowski W/V

S/Sgt. Bernard G. Traudt

1st Lt. William H. Minder BOMB

S/Sgt. Walter L. Sumoy

T/Sgt. Earl E. Goodman RADIO

S/Sgt. Howard M. Lucas

REAR HATCH GUN COL. LEON W. JOHNSON - Passenger

1. BOMBING ATTACK

24000 45 (Altitude) (Heading)

(Initial point)

(Method of sighting, individual or other - describe)

(Target)

(Wind Direction)

(Wind Velocity)

(Airspeed)

(Time)

(Bombs Brought Back)

(Area of target)

(Area of target)

(Area of target)

(Area of target)

(Area of target)

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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 Hesselton 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 Luftwaffe 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 MacCommand in the 52 years.



JIM O'BRIEN (Left) & JOHN BLEDSOE (Right).

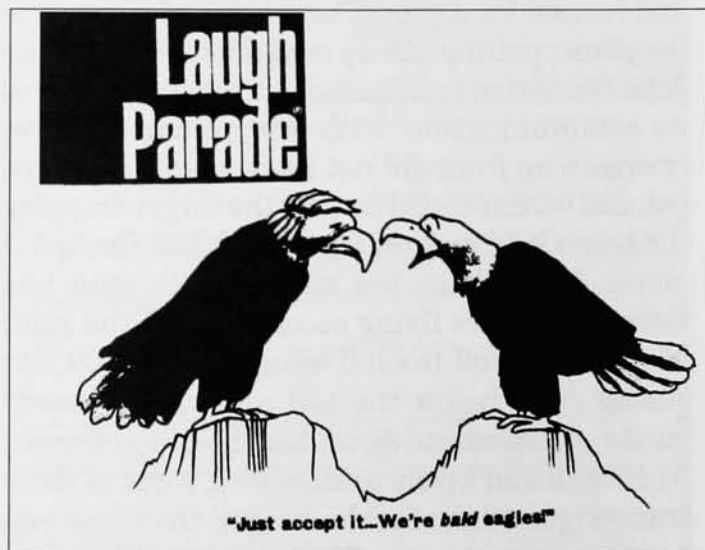
Editor: Boy! What I wouldn't give if some of the rest of you guys would loosen up and write letters like this one to me. I was remarking to Will Lundy, if I could get around and tape all of the great "war stories" that you guys sit around and tell one another after "honkin' down" a few in the Hospitality 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 Huart 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.

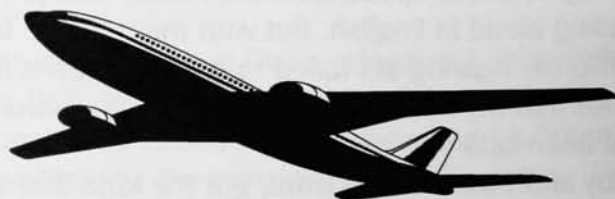
He stated that this cemetery had well over 700 "Unknown" people whose remains were unidentifiable after the final processing that took place in 1949 and 1950. Their remains were buried here in separate graves, marked as Unknown, and their names are listed on their Wall of Missing. Of course there remains 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. DiGiacinto	Unknown	Unknown
Edmund H. Donnelly	2/17/97	506th Squadron. POW. Shot down on 23rd Mission. Retired as Lt. Col. USAFR.
William Dorrissey	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...

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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

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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.

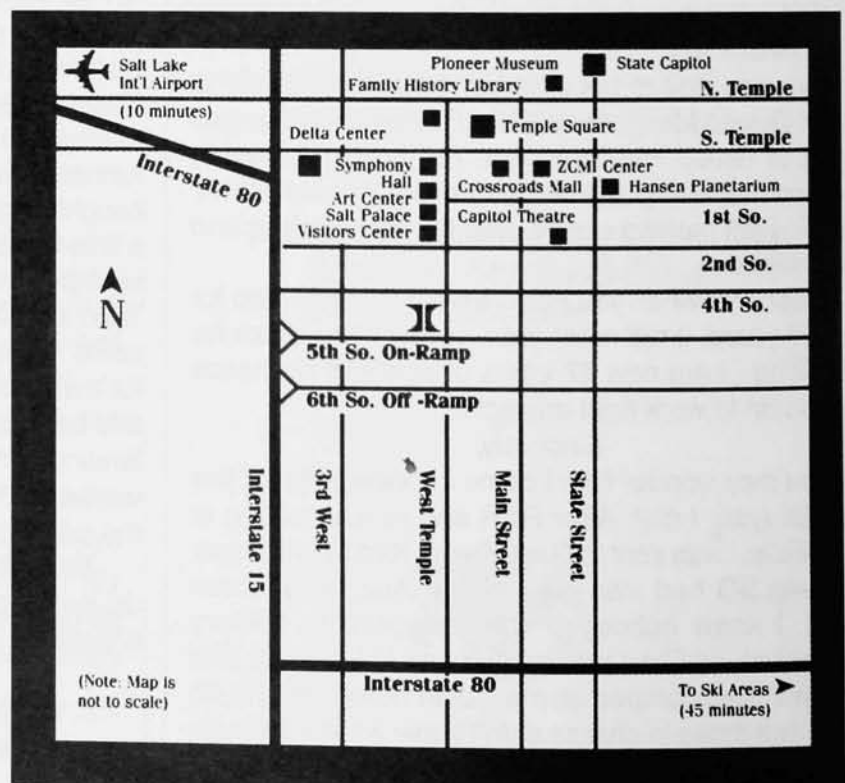
We will have our traditional Hospitality Room up and running every day.

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.

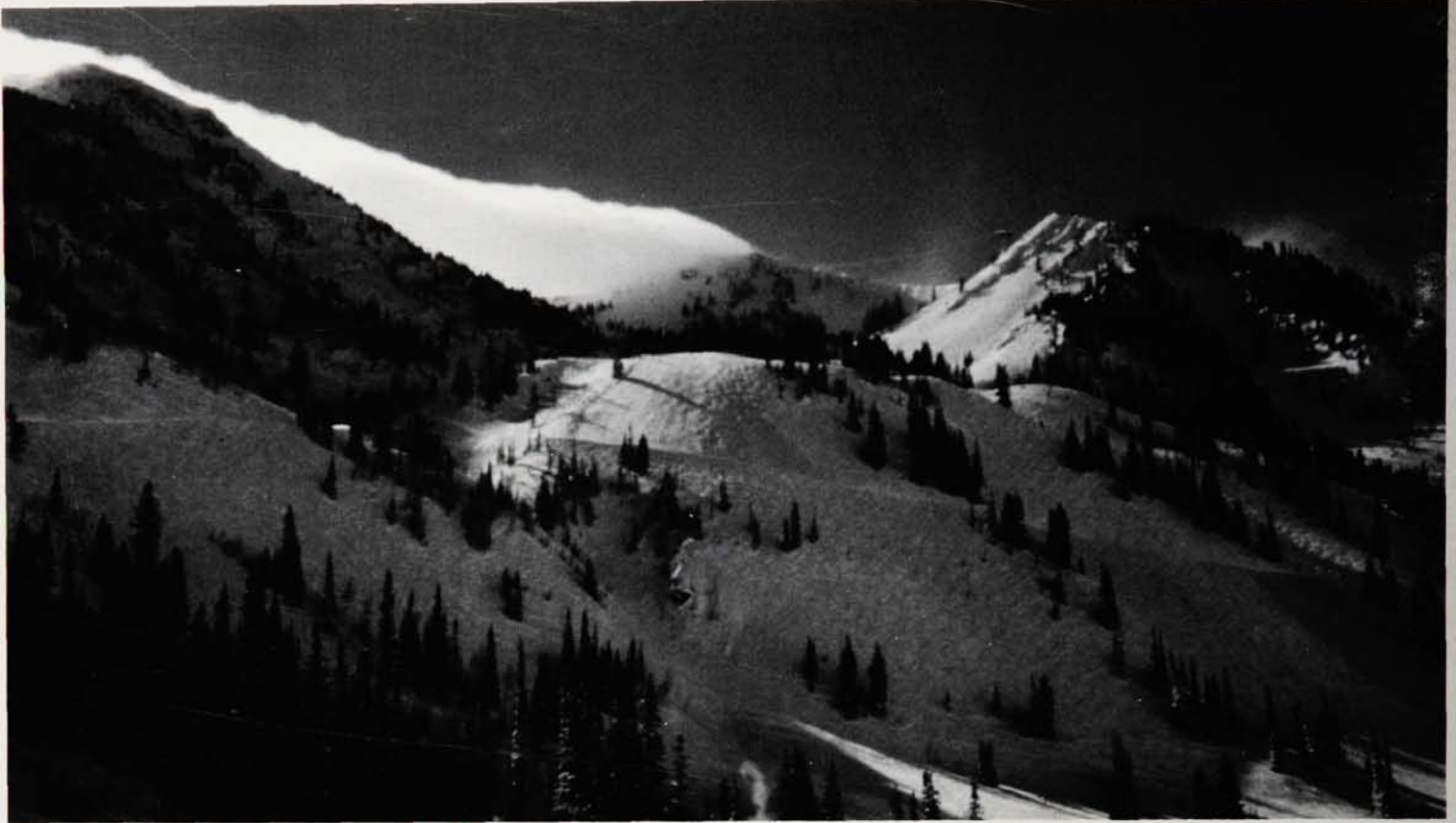
Tour No. 2: Snowbird Tram.

- 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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OCTOBER 9 - 12, 1997