

44TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS ASSOCIATION



8 BALL TAILS

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Journal of the
44th Bomb Group
Veterans Association

Summer, 1999

Non Profit Veterans Organization

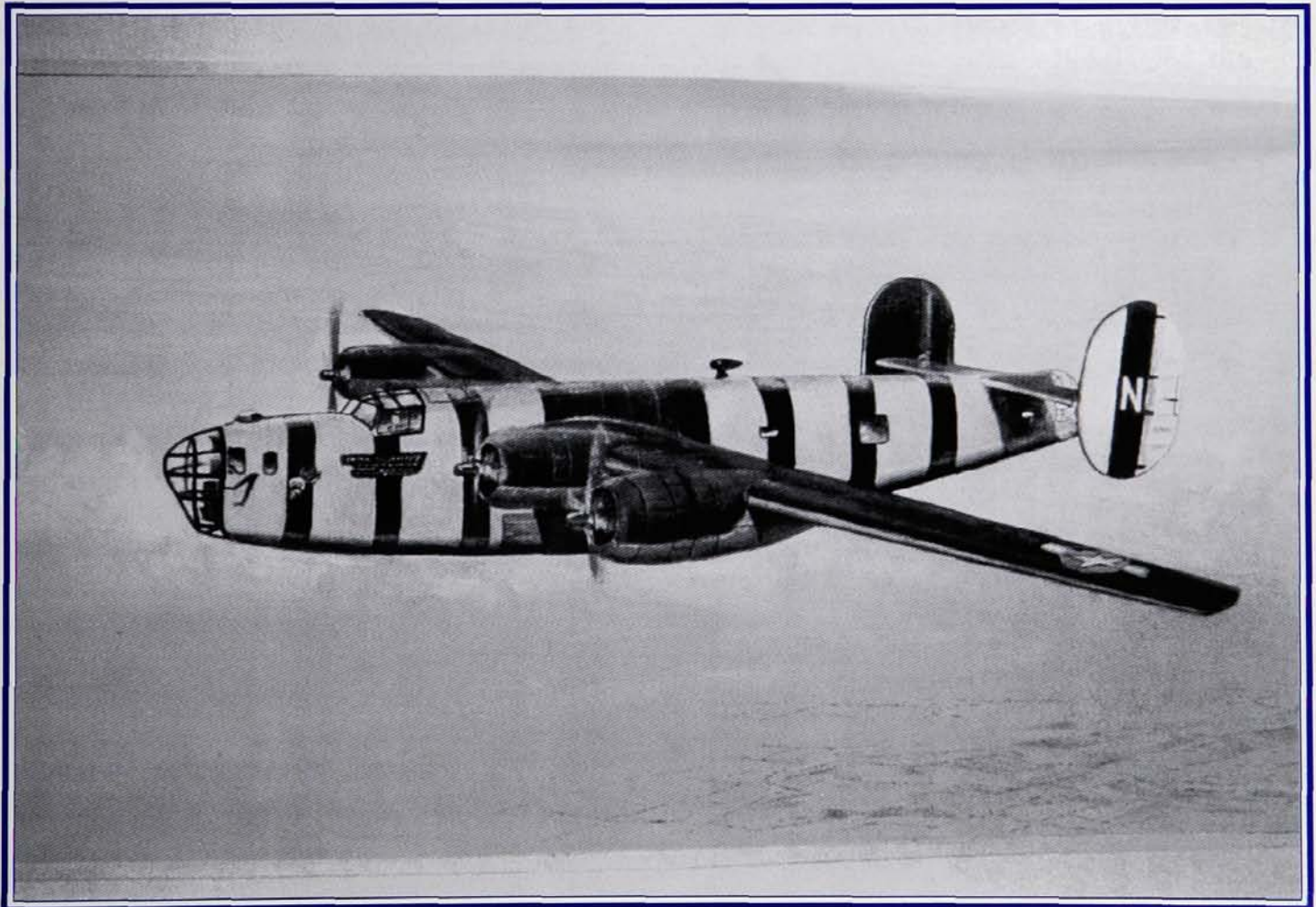
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This Year's Honorees Heroes of the Kiel Mission



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.

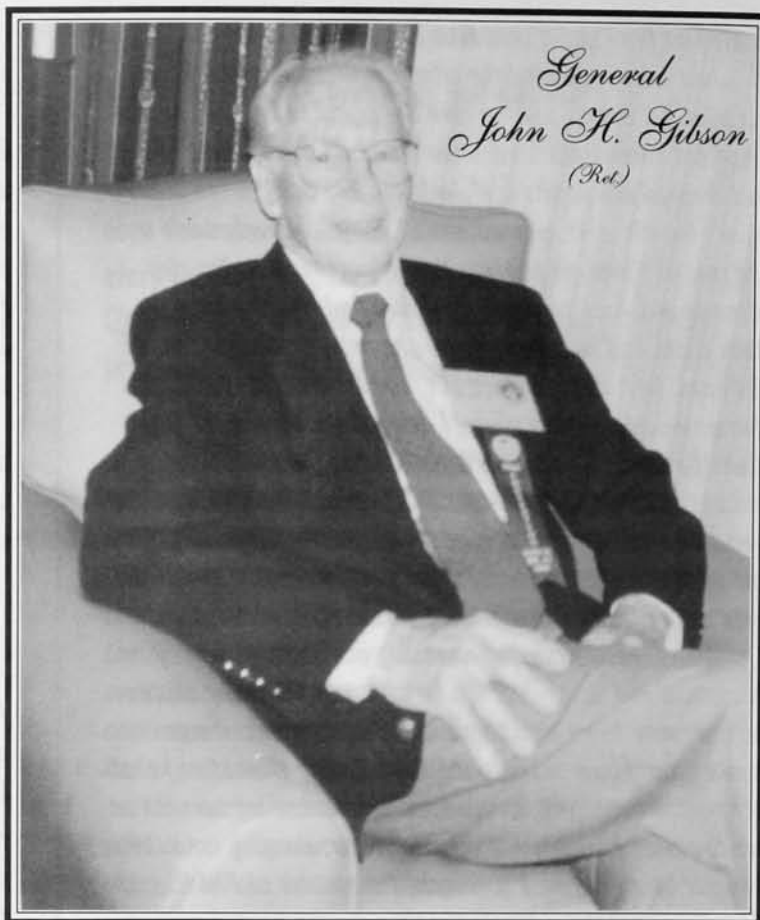
Long before WWII began, "Jack" Gibson was already looking skyward. He knew what he wanted to do—fly.

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.'

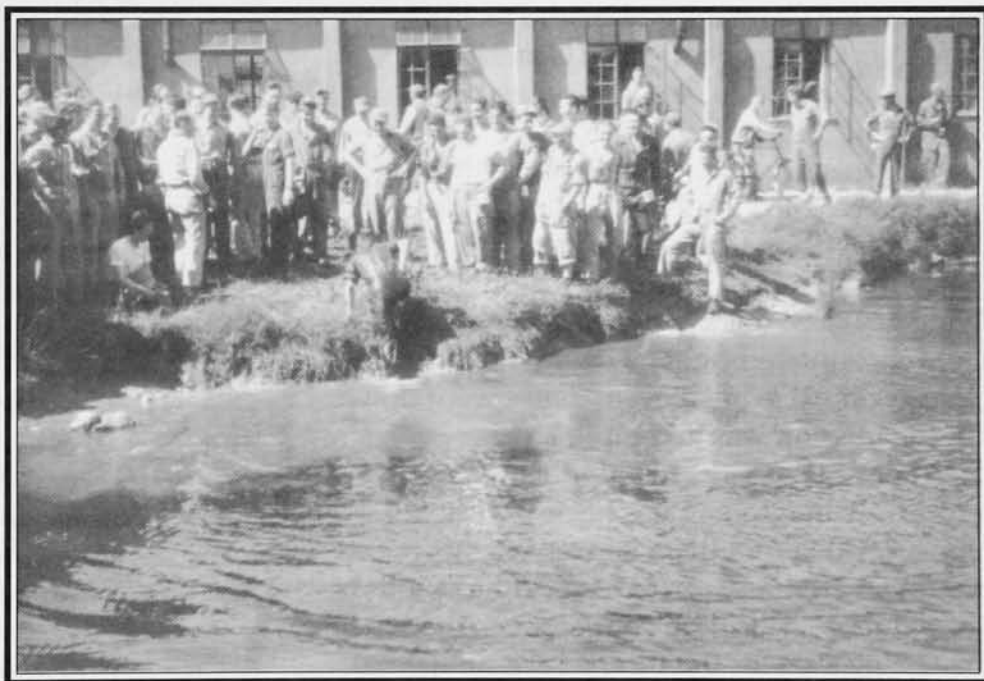
"We did manage to get back to Hethel after the formation had landed. Colonel Gibson couldn't believe his eyes when he saw me at the briefing, alive and breathing".

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

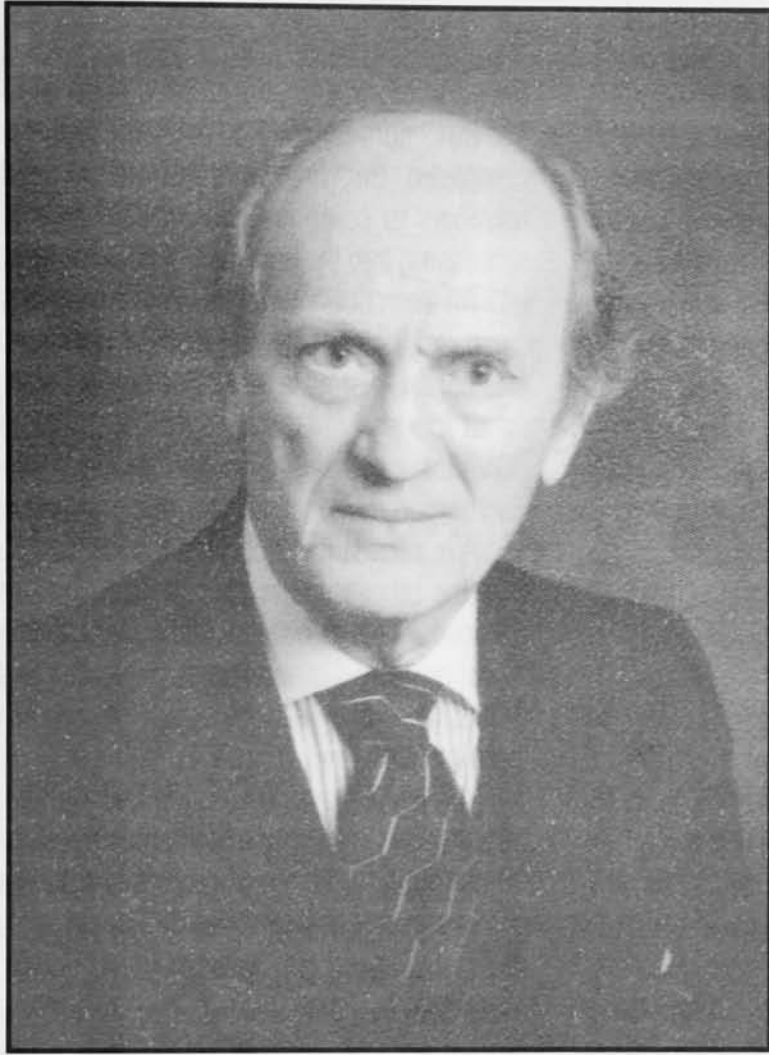
Presidential Medal - 1 Cluster

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.



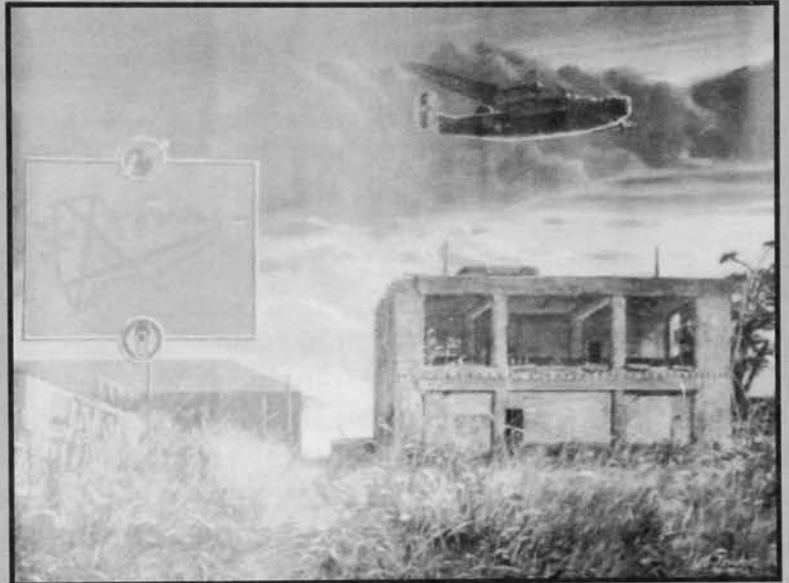
Board Development and Reduction

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."

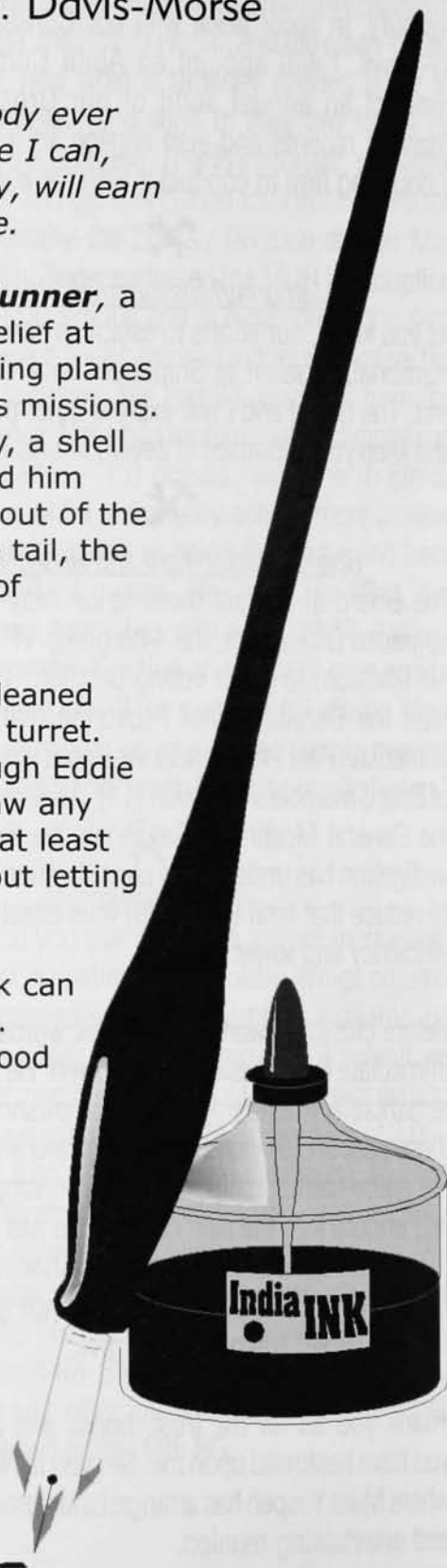
Anyone interested in getting a copy of Eddie's book can contact him at P.O. Box 19732, Seattle, WA 98107. Thanks for the book, Eddie. It gave me another good glimpse of life in the 44th.



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: _____

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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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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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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

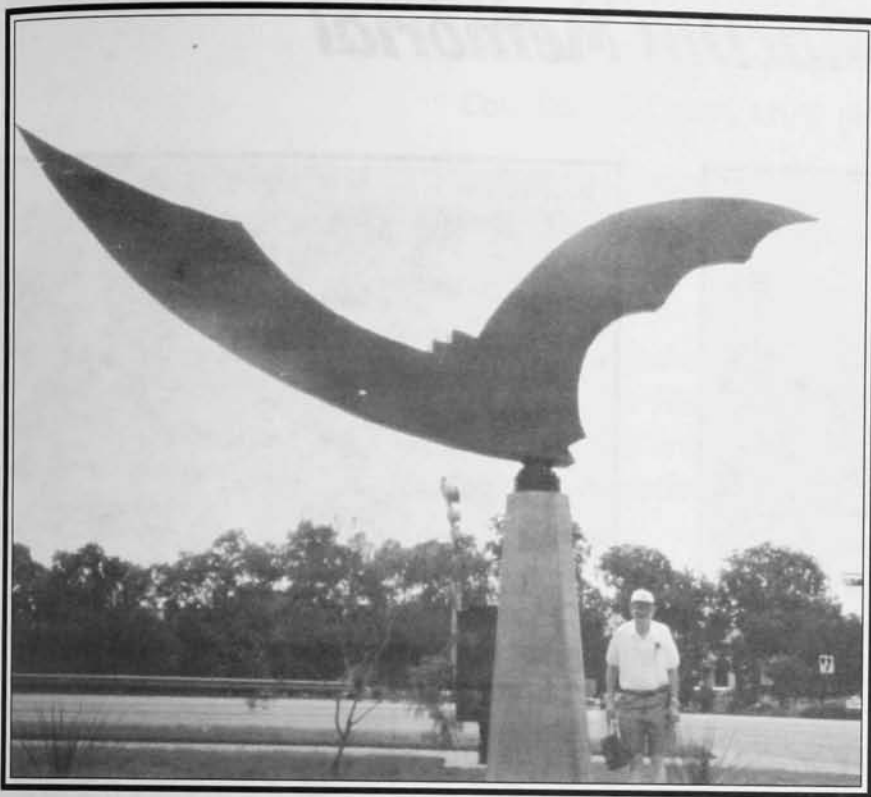
Thirty-two members of the 44th BG rubbed shoulders with fellow airmen at an extravaganza at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Austin, Texas. Alongside the Congress Bridge where one million six hundred thousand bats dwell, (yes, bats, and the count is correct) the 2nd Air Division held their annual get-together, 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 MacDill Memorial



Our "Man in Tampa," Harry Snead, has notified us that finally, after two years of delay for construction of a memorial wall, the dedication ceremonies for the MacDill AFB Memorial Park took place on January 19, 1999. Unfortunately, after all of his hard work in designing, arranging for the casting and placement of our 44th Bomb Group Memorial plaque, the Memorial Park Executive Committee failed to give Harry sufficient notice of the dedication to allow us to form a regional 44th Bomb Group attendance in the manner we had for the Barksdale Memorial Dedication. We owe our thanks to Harry for all his work on the memorial plaque and for representing us all at the dedication ceremonies.

Harry took pictures of our plaque and the Memorial Park entrance marker and has sent a copy of the original design sketch so all of us with "weak eyes" can make out the insignia and text inscribed on the plaque (previous page). Harry will be joining us in New Orleans, give him a 'thank you' pat on the back.

MACDILL MEMORIAL PARK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: [Name], [Address]
 Vice President: [Name], [Address]
 Secretary: [Name], [Address]
 Treasurer: [Name], [Address]
 Members: [List of names and addresses]

EX OFFICIO

Honorable Earl Court, Mayor of Tampa
 Honorable Eric Pas, [Address]
 Brig Gen James Soligan, USAF

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

Walter Dyer, [Address]
 [List of other contributors and their addresses]

PROGRAM		AIRCRAFT FLOWN AT MACDILL	
Welcome	Capt Jeff Smith	B-18 "Bolo" Bomber	1943-41
Invocation	Ch. (LtCol) John Stefero	B-17 "Flying Fortress" Bomber	1941-May 42
National Anthem	SSgt Terri Flores-Payne		1943-1945
Flyover	6 ARW	B-26 "Marauder" Bomber	June 1942-43
The Vision	Col Charles Ohlinger, III USAF Retired	P-51 "Mustang" Fighter	1947-48
The Foundation	Col Ron Buchert USAF Retired Mr. Joseph Voskerichian	B-29 "Superfortress" Bomber	1945-48
The Community	Mayor Dick Graco	B-50 "Superfortress" Bomber	1950-51
Closing Remarks	Brig Gen James Soligan	KC-97 Air Refueler	1951-62
		B-47 "Stratofortress" Bomber	1951-63
		RB-47 "Stratofortress" Bomber	1958
		F-84 "Thunderstreak" Fighter	1962-64
		T-33 Trainer	1962-70
		F-4 "Phantom" Fighter	1964-82
		B-57 "Intruder" Bomber	1968-72
		F-16 "Falcon" Fighter	1979-93
		KC-135 "Stratotanker" Air Refueler	1996-Present

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>

The 8-Ball Tails ©

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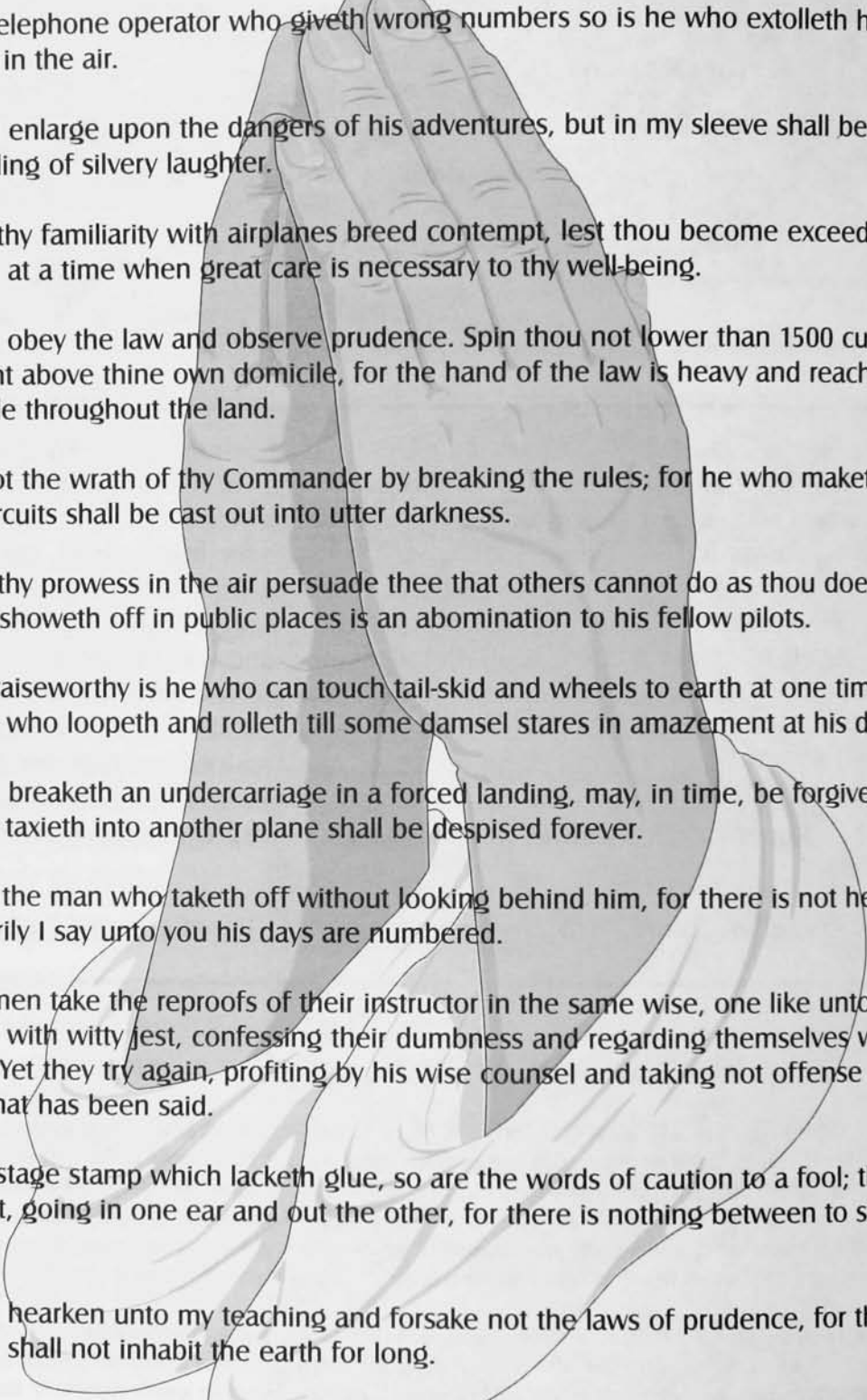
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The Pilot's 23rd Psalm

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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