



# CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

*455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter*

Fall, 1989

Here it is, your first 455th Bomb Group Newsletter. This format will improve with age as you send more contributions, stories and photographs to your editor. You will hear from your group officers. There will be interesting historical facts and figures. We will print excerpts from your letters, war stories, crew photographs, if you'll just send them in. And dig into your files for other snaps obtained while you were overseas. Your newsletter will be just as good as you help to make it.

When sending photographs or any other material that you want returned, be sure to identify the contents and affix your address label on the back of the material submitted. Include a postage-paid self-addressed envelope. This will insure that everything will be returned promptly.

**FROM THE FILES** - When the 455th Bomb Group left Langley AFB, 868 went by air and 1136 by ship. There were a total of 64 crews, but only 62 airplanes. Destination was San Giovanni, Italy, by the way of Africa. The 455th was stationed with the 454th on a strip at San Giovanni, Italy, about 5 miles west of Cerignola and 20 miles southeast of Foggia. The 455th flew 255 missions during the 15 months of combat. 147 airman were killed in action; 268 missing; 173, prisoners of war. New assignments to the group, 2478. Injured, returned to duty, 112. Total group personnel, 3374. 1200 completed their tour of duty. The 455th was the last group to be inactivated after the war and did not leave Italy until September 1945. Col. Hugh Graff, Group Historian.

**THE ADJUTANT'S REPORT** - At the annual meeting of the 455th Bomb Group Association, the following officer/directors were duly elected to serve a term of two years, beginning November 1, 1989. President, Col. Alfred Asch; Vice President, Lt. Col. Ross Strode; Secretary, Col. John Davis; Treasurer/Executive Director, Col. Louie Hansen. Newly elected directors to the board are: Col. Hugh Graf, T/Sgt. James Bates, T/Sgt. Robert Armstrong, and S/Sgt. David Frawley. Other directors include: S/Sgt. Jack Abbot, S/Sgt. Phillip Clark, Lt. Lawrence Liberty, M/Sgt. Gerald Oliver, Lt. Col. Timothy Swearingen, Capt. John Vanient. It was resolved that the Association hold Bi-annual meetings of the members during the same time period in which the reunions are held, in lieu of annual meetings. The membership expressed a desire to hold the next reunion independent from other organizations thus focusing the reunion entirely on members of the 455th. Of interest to members, and a project we've been working on for several years, the 455th Bomb Group Association is now exempt from income taxes plus members have donor's rights to deduct contributions made to our organization. A memorial plaque is being developed for presentation to the Air Force Academy. And there's considerable talk about a trip to Italy with a stop in Cerignola for interested members. More about these last two items in our next newsletter. Col. John Davis, Secretary.

## EDITORIAL FROM THE PRESIDENT

In this first issue of "The Cerignola Connection" we focus our sights on our recent 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc. reunion in Fort Worth, Texas, 17-21 May, 1989, the general status of our association, the Bomb Group history gathering process, and some items of interest to the 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc. membership at large.

It was very obvious from several letters I received, viewing three video tapes of the Bomb Group reunion and the 50th Anniversary of the B-24 Liberator Bomber, that a good time was had by all while in Texas for the reunion. Also, a lot of work was accomplished for the 455th B.G.

I was particularly impressed with the number in attendance, 275 "Vets" and their Ladies and the active role each played in the reunion. I applaud your willingness to get involved and strongly encourage you to seek out other members and bring them into the fold. This effort is vital to our association, its future and its effectiveness in gathering data, pictures, and operational stories of the past and present. We continue to support the 455th Bomb Group events in the annals of history of aviation records and appropriate edifices and memorials deemed necessary in honor of the memoirs of the 455th Bomb Group personnel.

The business meetings in Fort Worth, Texas, May 1989, elected/approved the following officers/directors for your Association for the years 1990 and 1991: Col. Al Asch, President; Lt. Col. Ross Strode, Vice President; Col. John Davis, Secretary; Col. Louie Hansen, Treasurer/Executive Director. The Directors are as follows: SSgt. Jack Abbott; TSgt. James Bates; SSgt. Philip Clark; TSgt. Robert Armstrong; Lt. Lawrence Liberty; MSgt. Gerald Oliver; Col. Hugh Graff, Sr.; SSgt. David Frawley; Lt. Col. Timothy M. Swearingen; Capt. John Van Lent. Lt. Liberty moved that the 455th Bomb Group Ass'c., Inc. shall hold its next reunion (1991) independent of any other organizational activity, i.e., 15th A.F. Association, anniversaries, etc. to permit more time for reacquaintance with fellow service members and friends and indulgence in Air-crew gatherings and/or support personnel gatherings and closer socializing. He referred to the approval of the general membership for such a procedure. The motion was seconded and carried.

Folks, 1 November brings my two years to a close as your President. I feel I have served you well; however, there are always things you would have done differently or better. My priority in planning was always to have things as comfortable as possible and to keep you advised of happenings in your Association. The Cerignola Connection paper will be coming to you as a Spring and Fall issue. We have placed a memorial plaque, stone and tree in the Air Force Museum Memorial Park, we have plans for another in the Air Force Academy and some in other areas. Our Bomb Group history is moving along nicely and with cooperation some material should be finalized in the near future. There is work effort to schedule a travel tour to Italy, especially, to the Cerignola and Bari areas. Also, our good Secretary has obtained a "Tax-free" status for the 455th B.G. Association, Inc. and is pursuing a "bulk-rate" mail rate, which will be a tremendous benefit to our Association.

The best and most important issue I wish to continue is providing all members and their Ladies with a fraternal, happy, functional organization with a strong enhancement toward good fellowship and pleasure. Because a close and happy group provides high morale and easy recall of happenings gone by while still remembering how valiantly we strived together to defend the world peace during WWII....all from within the confines of San Giovanni Airfield outside Cerignola, Italy.

My Lady Margaret and I certainly enjoyed serving you, may the GOOD LORD BLESS and respect you forever.

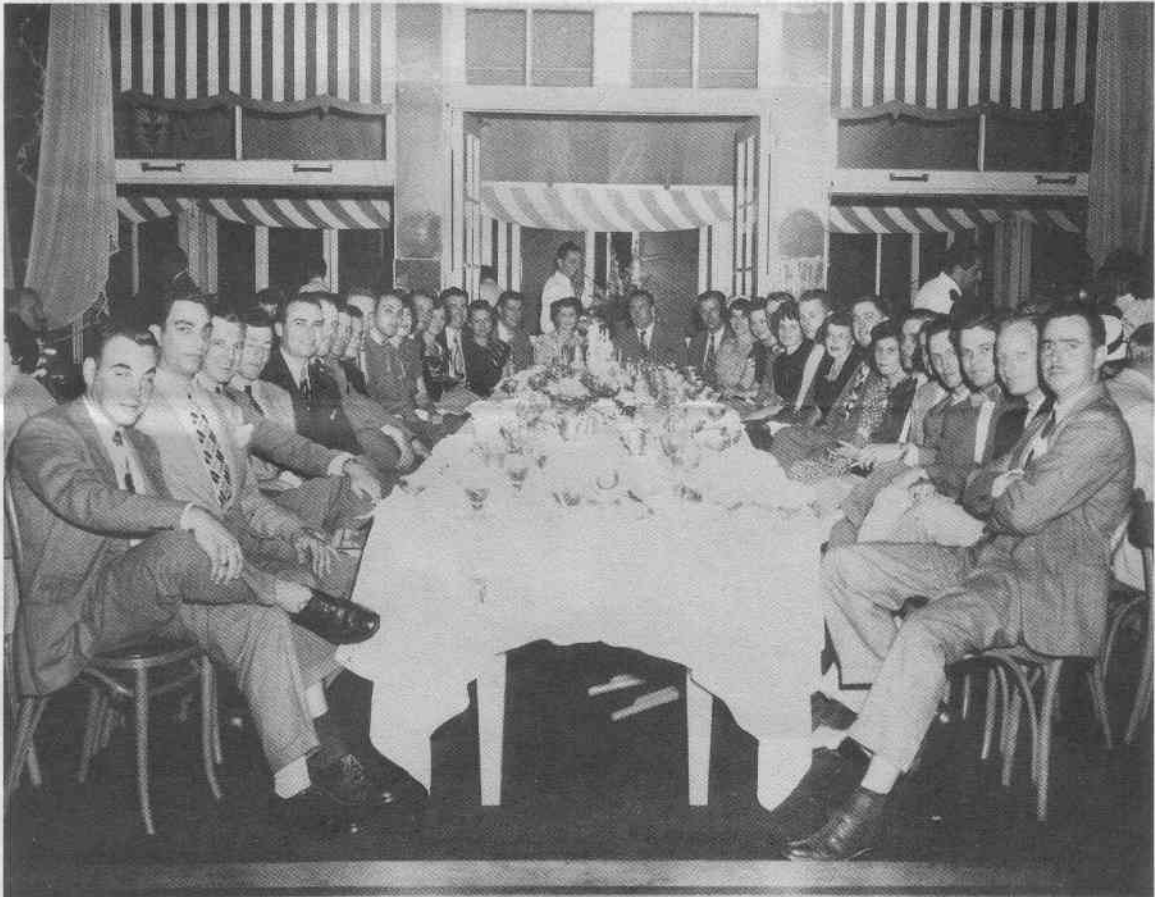
*James W. Shumard, Jr.*

President, 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc.  
Colonel USAF (Ret)



455th BOMBARDMENT GP CONVENTION  
ST. LOUIS, MO. *Golden State* SEPT. 10, 1948

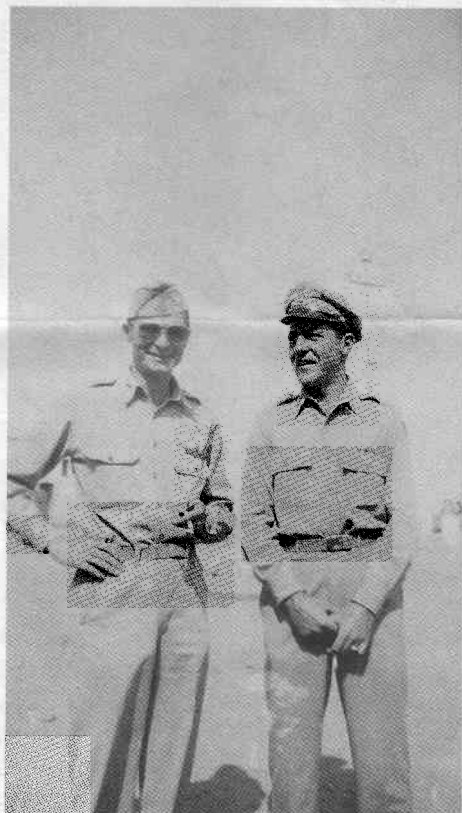
First 455th Bomb Group Reunion, September 18, 1948, St. Louis, Missouri



Second 455th Bomb Group Reunion, 1949, Chicago, Illinois



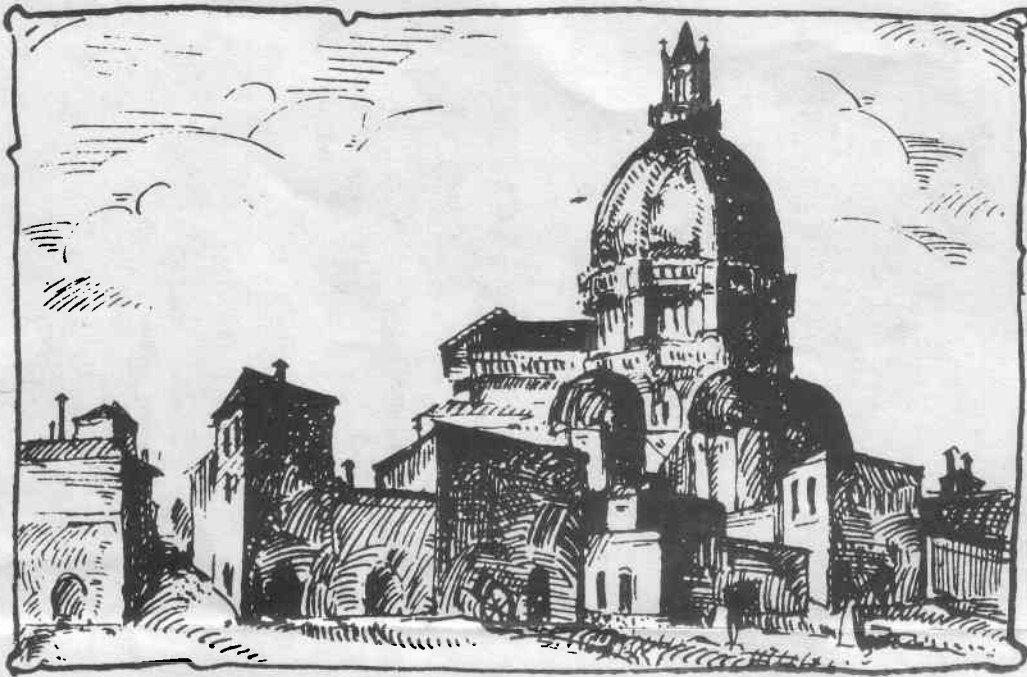
Third 455th Bomb Group Reunion, September 2, 1950, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Col. Cool, Group Commander  
Maj. Thayer, 743rd Sq. Co.



One of ours - crew unknown.

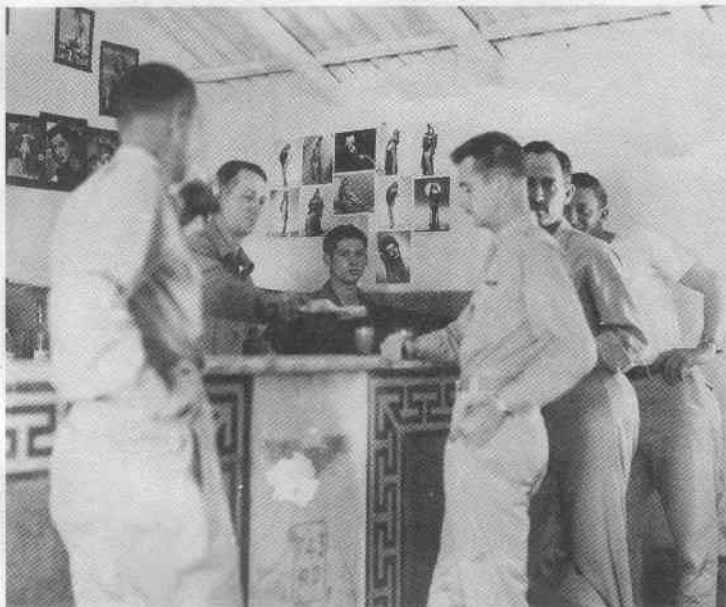


"CATHEDRAL, CERIGNOLA"

For group navigators and pilots with a sense of direction, a memorable landmark. 5 miles east of San Giovanni, 20 miles southeast of Foggia. When you saw it, you knew you were home.



Your President's crew #200, standing, L. to R. Sgt. Roy Bamberg, EG; Lt. Carroll Sorenson, N; Lt. John Brown, B; Lt. Thomas Delaney, CP; Lt. James Shumard, P; front row, L. to R. Sgt. Ralph Shoemaker, CG; Sgt. Hubert Vreath, CG; Sgt. Edward LaPointe, RG; Sgt James Merritt, AG; S/Sgt. John Elek, CG. This very fortunate and capable aircrew successfully completed 52 missions, 36 sorties, with no early returns, hauled 94 tons of bombs, received many flack holes and had slight to heavy aircraft damage, with one crew member injured.



Bottom's Up! 743rd Officer's Club.



INTELLIGENCE - they told us where the flack and fighters were! Tom Lyle Mitchell, organizer of the first three reunions, in center, L to R, Pappalardo, Harrington, Mitchell, Perry, McDermott.



After mission briefing in the old far house. Yes, we did get a shot of whiskey. No, we did not have to pay for the doughnuts and coffee.



Reminiscent of the very early days of WWII military service (1942) found two eventual B24 Aircrew Commanders of the 455th Bomb Group. T/Sgt. James Shumard, 3rd from left & Sgt Tom Ramey (your editor), 4th from left, as crew chief and radio operator. Taken in Presque Isle, Maine, on duty with first air cargo flights to Greenland to establish BW-1 & BW-8 as Air Bases for WWII. Jim is now your president of the 455th BG Assn.

WITH APOLOGY. This is your first edition of the Cherignola Connection. Granted there is more 743rd than other squadrons, this will change with future issues. Just send your editor - crew photos, photos of general interest, squadron/group happenings, or anything that you believe will be of interest to the membership. We'll publish the newsletter twice a year. The more you send, the more informative your newsletter will become. Remember, all contributions to: Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclair Ct., Appleton, Wisconsin 54915. And as more contributions come in, we'll increase the size, set in type, and give you more photos. Many of the photos in this issue are shot to size in order to save engraving costs. It's your publication - I'm thinking about the next issue, already.