



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.

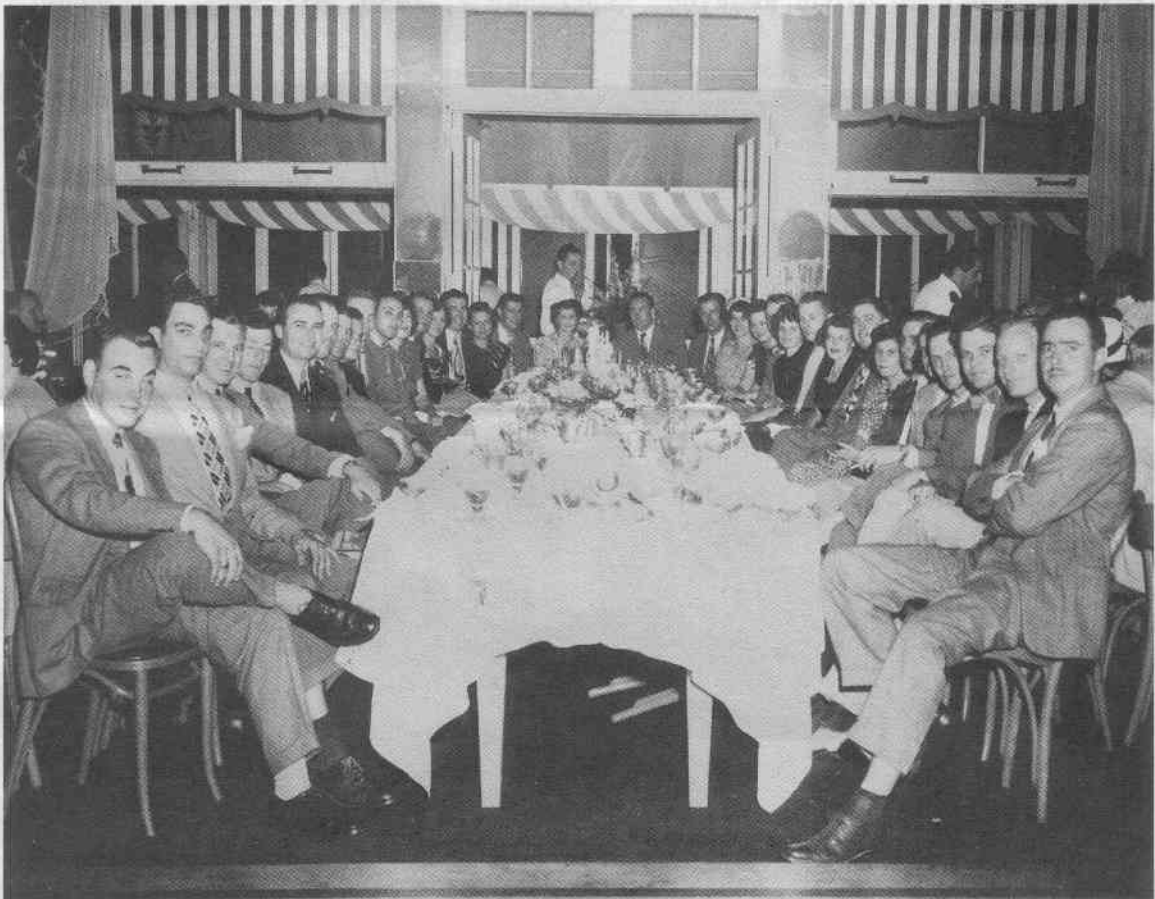
My Lady Margaret and I certainly enjoyed serving you, may the GOOD LORD BLESS and respect you forever.

James W. Shumard, Jr.

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



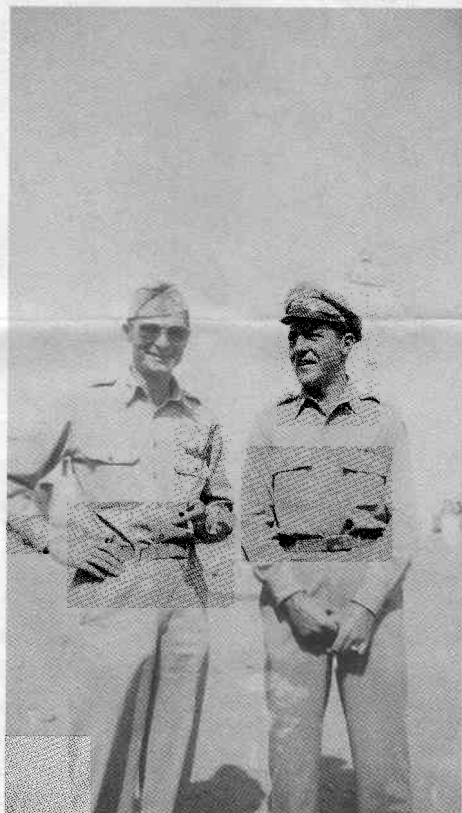
First 455th Bomb Group Reunion, September 18, 1948, St. Louis, Missouri



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



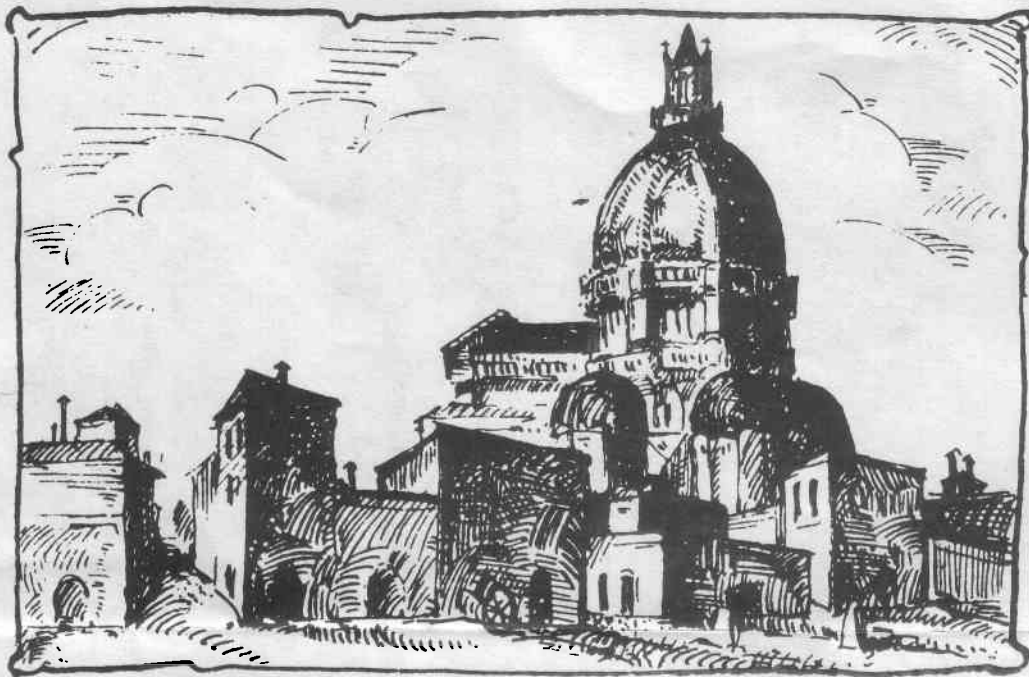
Third 455th Bomb Group Reunion, September 2, 1950, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



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



One of ours - crew unknown.

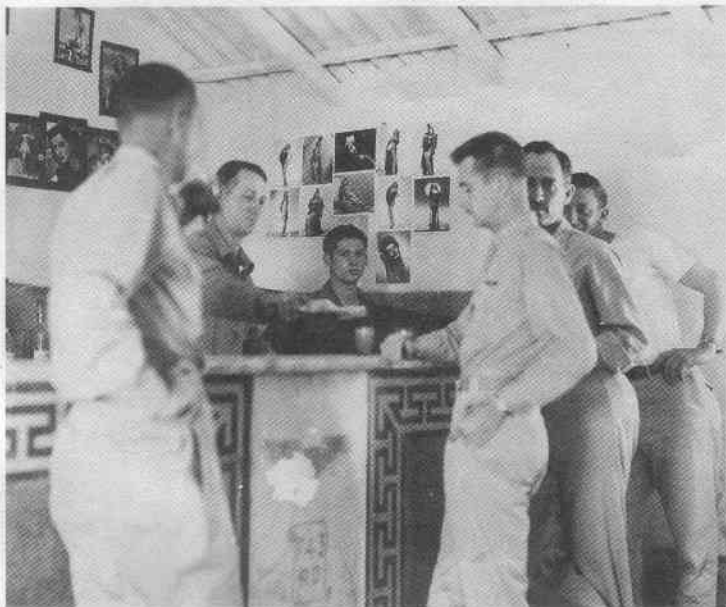


"CATHEDRAL, CERIGNOLA"

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.

THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER - The USAF Chaplains. The official origin of the chaplaincy within the American military services was a resolution passed by the continental congress in 1775. Since that time, military chaplains have administered to the spiritual needs of the serviceman, often at the risk of their own lives. For example, during WWII, 8,896 ministers, priests, and rabbis served as chaplains with the American military forces. Of these, 78 were killed in action, 4 died in Japanese prison camps, and 264 were wounded in action. The chaplaincy of the United States Air Force was separated from that of the U.S. Army on June 11, 1948 with the creation of the Office of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains, almost a year after the USAF became a separate service. Today there are more than 1,000 chaplains within the Air Force, whose role involves not only worship and pastoral functions, but also religious and moral education, personal counseling, humanitarian services, cultural leadership, and public relations. Whether it be at a base chapel near a major American city or before an altar made of snow blocks north of the Arctic Circle, the chaplain brings solace to the lives of servicemen and women wherever they may serve. Major General Charles I. Carpenter, First USAF Chief of Chaplains.

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth.
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hovering there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untresspassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

In December 1941, Pilot Officer John G. Magee, a 19-year-old American serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force in England, was killed when his Spitfire collided with another airplane inside a cloud. Several months before his death, he composed his immortal sonnet "High Flight."

John Gillespie Magee Jr.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO - Your editor is looking for the address of T/Sgt. Perry Corley, Radio Operator, 743rd Squadron. If you are looking for a current address, or want to know what happened to someone in the group, let me know. Perhaps we can find out through the newsletter from one of our members.

LIBRARY - Available, Flight Manual for the B-24D airplane. This is a faithful reproduction of the original and contains numerous illustrations and tables, as well as a history of the B-24's evolution. \$12.75 plus \$2.50 postage and handling. From Aviation Publications, Inc., P. O. Box 357, Appleton, WI 54912-0357. Publisher also prints similar instruction books for most warbirds. Catalog available on request.

How to Fly the B-24, a Warbird Video. A full color film on pilot training. Learn to fly the B-24 Liberator. Complete instructions on how to taxi, run-up and take off. Running time: 57 min. \$14.50 each, shipping included. Order PB 80 from Pierce Butler Publishing, 801 Pierce Butler Rt., St. Paul, MN 55104. Minnesota residents add 0.87 sales tax per tape. Similar offerings on most war birds. Free catalog upon request.

ODE TO SPAM

When the cry is over and the smoke has cleared away, Historians pick their pens up to record each bloody day. Some will tell of sieges, some of great retreats. But always there is one who'll dwell on what the airman eats.

When he makes that diary of beans, biscuits and stew, there's one thing he'll have to mention and devote a page or two. It won't be fried potatoes, or cans of southern yams. Twill be the Air Corps standby...that mystery meat call SPAM!

Jackson had his acorns. Grant his precious rye. Teddy had his poison beef and the doughboy hardtack and jam. All armies move on their stomachs, but this one moves on SPAM!

For breakfast they will fry it. At dinner it is baked. For supper...what a delicacy, they have it paddy caked. Next morning it's with flapjacks...or maybe powdered eggs. Where the hell do they get it all, they must order it by kegs!

Oh, you haven't seen the last of it, there's plenty left to go. For dinner it's in a GI pan, with a lovely crust of dough. Perhaps you didn't like it, it leaves you in a rash. But if you're specially watchful, it's in the supper hash.

Next morning's winding chow line, leaves you with regrets. You never would have believed it, now it's SPAM croquettes! And when at noon as you return to get your ration dole, your eyes bulge out, you start to swear...it's SPAM on casserole.

Surely for this evening's meal they could cook up something new. But these cooks sure are uncanny, now it's in the stew. And thus this endless cycle goes, it never seems to cease, SPAM in stew, SPAM in pies, and SPAM in boiling grease!

We've had it tucked in salads with cabbage for corned beef. We've had it for an entree, perhaps an appetizer. We've had it with spaghetti, with chili and rice. I remember such a happy day, we only had it twice!

Back home I have an angel, whose name I'm going to change, I'll buy her such a fancy home and with a new-fangled range, I'll let her cook...cook...cook all she can. But, she positively will never cook with SPAM!

+ Anon, appeared in "Weekly Briefing", ARC Club, Foggia, Italy.

A PRAYER - Let us pray. Almighty God, Creator and sustainer of all that's good help us to find glimpses of You in all that is and ever will be. Help us to understand that life is not all good or all bad and that we live somewhere in between. Forgive us when we fall short of Thy glory and may we do our best to be more like Thee in all things. We remember those still listed as MIAS, and their families, and do request an accounting here on earth as well as in Thy glory. AMEN From the Ex-POW Bulletin, October 1989, John Romine, National Chaplain.

DUES...DUES...DUES - November 1, 1989 starts the new year and your dues, are due! \$15 covers you until this time, 1990. An annual billing reminder is not sent out so we have to rely on you to remember and then to post your check. This issue of the Cherignola Connection is going to all addresses of record. Your spring issue will go to only current dues paid members.