



# CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

*455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter*

Spring 2000 – Editor, Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclair Ct., Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 731-2500

## From Your President

I am honored and pleased to be elected your president for the next two years, and look forward to meeting each, and everyone, of you, at our next reunion.

The 455th Bomb Group Association is still strong, as we make our way into the new millennium. Reunion attendance in September was less than previous years, but so is our membership, still the turn out was gratifying. The spirit of the 455th, which was notably evident from 1943 through 1945, still exists, and guides us today. The reunion for the year 2001 is already in the planning stage. We'll keep you informed through the Cerignola Connection. For most of us, our health and vitality is waning. I exhort everyone to make a "maximum effort" to attend the next reunion. Plan to attend. Don't feel that you may not know many anymore. When the 455th gathers there are no strangers. We shared a unique experience which shaped the rest of our life. We cooperated in erasing an evil that threatened civilization, every man of the 455th, no matter his role, was vital. This teamwork is our common bond.

Check your address label on this Cerignola Connection. It shows your status in our roster. If your dues are not current please bring them up to date. Weigh becoming a Life Member, the cost has been reduced to \$60. Or if you've paid annually for the last ten consecutive years, you can be a Life Member for one payment of \$25. We have no other source of revenue other than dues and the interest on our savings. These fund our operating expenses and the Cerignola Connection.

Treasurer Col. Gus Wendt has a notice printed elsewhere in this newsletter. The Board of directors voted to trim dues-delinquent members from our Cerignola Connection mailing. However, there is no intent, or desire, to remove anyone who cannot afford to pay. A note to Gus stating your inability to pay, which will remain confidential, will retain you on the mailing list. It will not be charity, it's part of our continuing tradition. We believe most of the non-respondents are deceased, and their heirs have neglected to send us the information.

Your new board and officers are at work for the group looking forward to the new millennium. I welcome your ideas and suggestions, and look forward to your support. We are an organization to be proud of.

*Frank Lashinsky*

## 127 Members to be Dropped From the Newsletter Mailing List

A recent survey showed that those members whom we haven't heard from since 1995, or before make up the biggest percentage of those whose mail is returned by the P.O. Last year we paid the P.O. several hundred dollars for their newsletters to be returned or forwarded. The addressee has either made his final flight (which is probably a large portion) or has moved without notifying us. To meet printing and mailing costs, the Association depends on annual dues and interest from CD's bought by Life Membership money.

In the past, it has been our policy to send the newsletter to all

members of the 455th Bomb Group Association, regardless of whether or not their dues were current. At the last Board of Directors meeting it was voted that members who haven't paid their dues in the last 5 years, be dropped from the mailing list of the newsletter. Their names will still remain in our roster and can be quickly returned to the mailing list. There are 127 such members. It was also decided that if it would be a severe hardship for any member to pay his annual dues, he would remain on the mailing list. There is no intention to deny him the newsletter. This brings up a very difficult problem. How do we get the name of such a person? If you know of such a person or if you are such person, please drop a note to the **Executive Director, Gus Wendt at P.O. Box 4043, Sierra Vista, AZ 85650.** Include your telephone number, so we may call you. Such information will be kept secret and the note destroyed.

To determine when you last paid your dues, look in the upper right corner of the mailing label on your Cerignola Connection. The number appearing there indicates the last year you paid your dues. Life members have an asterisk (\*) and Associate Life members (Widows) have a number sign (#). All Life members are always considered current.

A reminder, annual dues are \$15 per year. Our fiscal year is from 1 Nov. thru 31 Oct. Life Membership is \$60—all past dues are forgiven. If you have paid annual dues for the last 10 consecutive years, a Life Membership is \$25.

Join us! We value your membership greatly!

*/s/ 455th Bomb Group Association Board of Directors.*

## 455th E-Mail Roster

Below is a listing of e-mail address' of 455th members that were sent to us for publication in the Cerignola Connection. \*Indicates a new listing since last published in the Cerignola Connection. If you want your e-mail address included in this roster, please send it to us;  
**455th Bomb Group Assn, Inc.;**  
**P.O. Box 4043**  
**Sierra Vista AZ 85636-4043.**

Harry W. Anderson (740), San Antonio, TX. **pomganny@aol.com**

Jack Blum (741), New Port Richey, FL. **jblum15677@aol.com**

Robert Caldwell (741st), Prescott Valley, AZ. **rc7306@aol.com**

Howard Cooper, Staton Island, NY. **howgladcoop@worldnet.att.net**

Robert (Bob) Collette, St. Petersburg, FL.  
**dotybob1@juno.com**

William (Bill) Crim (741), Lakewood, CO. **brcrim@aol.com**

\* Theodore Deppe (741), Bloomington, IN.  
**tdeppe@indiana.edu**

Curtis Diles (740), Dayton, OH.  
**curtis-diles@prodigy.net**

\* Paul H. Ditchett, (742), Safety Harbor, FL. **paul546@juno.com**

Bob Emick (741), Battle Creek, MI.  
**rfemick@aol.com**

James A. Fedewa (740), Dunnellon, FL. **jcfedewa@cs.com**

William B. Gemmill (740), McAllen, TX. **geml@laguna.com.mx**

William C. Graves (742), Jacksonville, FL.  
**wgraves210@aol.com**

Lou Hansen (743), Spencer, IA.  
**lohansen@nwiowa.com**

Harvey Hewit (743), Haverford, PA.  
**lhew@aol.com**

Thomas L. Kablack (742), Crown Point, IN.  
**techmart@mail.icongrp.com**

Erling Kindem (742), Farmington, MN. **erlingk@aol.com**

Jack Lancaster (742), Clovis, NM.  
**mandj@3lefties.com**

Charles Oltarzewski (740), Gallatin, TN. **murphB24@aol.com**

Wesley Powell (740), Seabrook TX.  
**wesjulia@gateway.net**

\* Sid Schoengold (740), Monroe, TWP, NJ. **harsid1@juno.com**

\* Gus R. Seefluth (742), Lebanon, OH. **gus@go-concepts.com**

Walt Shostack (741), Dayton, OH.  
**shirlystack@compuserve.com**

\* (Dr.) Stanely Vogelfang (741), Houston, TX. **stanvog@aol.com**

## Final Flights

M/Sgt. Grover Cleveland West, Jr., 8/21/99, 1st Sgt 742nd Bomb Squadron

S/Sgt. Raymond J. Ciccone, 11/98, Aerial Gunner on Louis Dolan's Crew, 740th Bomb Squadron

Sgt. Joseph H. Hunt, 1/99, 740th Bomb Squadron

T/Sgt. Rohland F. Bessell, 9/3/99, 740th Bomb Squadron

S/Sgt. Clifton J. Knott, 10/24/99, 742nd Bomb Squadron

T/Sgt. Dino Franceschini, 6/15/99, 740th Bomb Squadron

S/Sgt. Richard F. Rushmore, Waist Gunner, Ed Rigg's Crew, 740th Bomb Squadron

Our hearts are with and sympathies go to the loved ones of the 455th Members.

## What Went Wrong?

This is the story of four people: **Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody**

There was an important job to be done, and **Everybody** was sure that **Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got angry because it was **Everybody's** job. But **Everybody** still thought that **Somebody** would do it. Still, **Nobody** asked **Anybody**. It ended up that the job wasn't done and **Everybody** blamed **Somebody**, when actually **Nobody** asked **Anybody**.

## Chaplains Corner Drinking From My Saucer



I've never made a fortune  
And it's probably too late now  
But I don't worry about that much  
I'm happy anyhow  
And as I go along life's way  
I'm reaping better than I sow  
I'm drinking from my saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Haven't got a lot of riches  
And sometimes the going's tough  
But I've got loving ones around me  
And that makes me rich enough  
I thank God for his blessings  
And the mercies He's bestowed  
I'm drinking from my saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed

Oh, Remember times when things  
went wrong  
My faith wore somehow thin  
But all at once the dark clouds  
broke  
And sun peeped through again  
So Lord, Help me not to gripe  
About the tough rows that I've  
hoed  
I'm drinking from my saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed

If God gives me strength and  
courage  
When the way grows steep and  
rough  
I'll not ask for other blessings  
I'm already blessed enough  
And may I never be too busy  
To help others bear their loads  
Then I'll be drinking from my  
saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed

*Author Unknown*

## Keep 'Em Coming

Keep your war stories, photographs, and adventures with the 455th coming. It's what makes the Cerignola Connection interesting, and your newsletter. All original material will be returned after printing.

## From C E McMullen Jr.

I received my copy of the 455th history book. It brings back memories that would never have been recalled without it. I appreciate the effort of those whose time and effort are responsible for the historical record of the 455th.

I was radio operator on the Robert Kafka crew, 741st squadron. We were a replacement crew that arrived in late June or early July. I do not recall the date but I do remember that it was a day or so after a mission that was a near disaster from a severe fighter attack according to the crews that related the information to us. I do not recall the 741st being under a fighter attack again while I was with the squadron.

All of our crew is listed in the book except for Bob Kafka, our crew commander, and Leonard Kujawa, our bombardier. I am enclosing a picture of our crew that I believe was taken prior to our departure from Topeka, Kansas to go to Italy.

Harry Wade was promoted to first pilot of another crew that was shot up pretty badly on or about November 17. He was incapacitated by flak wounds to the chest. Lt. Dolinski, Co-Pilot (I may have the name wrong) was severely wound-



Front row: Harry Wade, Co-Pilot; Robert Kafka, Pilot; Leonard Kujawa, bombardier; Nate White, Navigator.

Back row: C. E. McMullen, radio operator; Bill Goble, flight engineer; Edward Chapien (name later changed from Chapootian), tail gunner; Carl Otto, top turret gunner; Fred Vestal, nose gunner; Hershel Shaffer, armorer.

ed) The navigator was a young Lt. named Hicks who without pilot training flew the plane back to Italy and managed to land it on a fighter strip. At least one person, the radio operator named Rhodes was killed. Wade received a Silver Star and Hicks received a Distinguished Service Medal after the mission.

Nate White (our navigator) was transferred to Group early in his

tour. We completed our missions in December. Chapootian and I remained with the group until the month of May. We boarded a ship for our return to the USA on the day that Germany capitulated, as I recall it. On arrival in the States I was eligible for discharge in the newly announced point system and was discharged May 23 at Camp Shelby Mississippi.

## John Is Still Building



In the fall '99 issue of the Cerignola Connection, pages four and five, there was an article about John Skelton titled Sgt. Salesman, and it covered the interesting story of how, out of nothing, John built a house, on base, overseas, 455th Bomb Group. And this for only \$9 - during war time.

I heard from John the other day. He's been retired for 24 years. Is 88 years old and is still building. His home is on a 150 ft. by 145 ft. lot with 75 full grown trees, in the middle of Tampa, Florida. His pro-

ject has been written up twice, ie "A man builds a forest to his whim in the middle of the city." And "A country escape in the middle of the city." He sent me pictures of some of his projects, garden gazebo and pony cart for his granddaughter.

So if there's a stick of lumber around - John will make something out of it.

Ed

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The idea that no one is perfect is a view most commonly held by people with no grandchildren.

## Times Running Out!

At this writing only a few group history books remain on inventory. If you still want one - run, don't walk a check for \$36 to **Gus Wendt, 4934 Bannock, Sierra Vista, AZ 85650.**

Jid

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Guest: "What on earth do you put in your mattresses?"

Innkeeper: "The finest straw, sir."

Guest: "Now I know where 'the straw that broke the camel's back' came from."

## Henry Molica Writes —



I am glad that we have a Cerignola Connection newsletter. It lets people know that the 455th Bomb Group was all out for them and their families. I am enclosing a picture of our crew — we flew 23 missions before the war ended.

*Bottom row, L to R — Jim Middleswarth, tail turret gunner; George Campbell, engineer; Sam Mushel, radio operator; Henry Molica, ball turret gunner; Orrin Glidden, top turret gunner; Sam Contella, nose turret gunner.*

*Top row, L to R — James Hill, navigator; Glen Pratt, Co-Pilot; Roy Kirkland, pilot; Ed Drabik, bombardier.*



## Remembering the Forgotten Mechanic



Through the history of world aviation  
Many names have come to the fore  
Great deeds of the past  
in our memory will last,  
As they're joined by more and more.

When man first started his labor of quest to conquer the sky  
He was designer, mechanic and pilot,  
And he built a machine that would fly...  
but somehow the order got twisted,  
And then in the public's eye  
The only man that could be seen  
Was the man who knew how to fly...

The pilot was everyone's hero,  
He was brave,  
He was bold,  
He was grand,  
As he stood by his battered old biplane  
With his goggles and helmet in hand...  
To be sure, these pilots all earned it,  
To fly you have to have guts...  
And they blazed their names

In the hall of fame  
On wings with bailing wire struts...

But for each of these flying hero's  
there were thousands of little renown,  
And these were the men;  
Who worked on the planes  
But kept their feet on the ground...  
We all know the name of Lindbergh,  
And we've read of his flight of fame...  
But think, if you can,  
Of his maintenance man,  
Can you remember his name?

And think of our wartime hero's,  
Gabreski, Jabara, and Scott...  
Can you tell me of the names  
Of their crew chiefs?  
A thousand to one you cannot...  
Now pilots are highly trained people,  
And wings are not easily won...  
But without the work of the maintenance man  
Our pilots would march with a gun...

So when you see mighty aircraft  
As they mark their ways through the air,  
The grease-stained man with the wrench in his hand, is the man who put them there.

*Anonymous*

## It's the Soldier!

When the country has been in need;  
it has always been the soldier!  
It's the soldier, not the newspaper  
which has given us the freedom of the press —

It's the soldier, not the poet who  
has given us freedom of speech —

It's the soldier, not the campus  
organizer, who has given us the  
freedom to demonstrate —

It's the soldier, who salutes the  
flag, and serves under the flag —

It's the soldier, whose coffin is  
draped with the flag, who allows  
the protester to burn the flag —

And, it's the soldier who is called  
upon to defend our way of life!

*Author Unknown*

## A Can of Paint, A Brush, and Henry Groen!



I finished basic training in Keesler Field, as a B-24 mechanic. From there they sent me to Salt Lake City where they organized the 455th Bomb Group. From there we shipped to Langley Field, VA where we went through our last phase training. From there we boarded a Liberty ship, December 13, 1943 and 33 days later we landed in Italy.

The first B-24 I worked on in Italy was named Skeeter. Lt. Curtis and crew flew her. After 13 missions he was checking a co-pilot out to 1st pilot and hit a mountain killing all aboard except two men. Lt. Waters our engineering Lt. died in Skeeter.

Also I painted the nose art on 5 or 6 B-24s, including Yo Yo, Multa Bona. Peel Off. Multa Bona was hit by flak pretty bad and had to ditch in the Adriatic. This killed seven men.

I have over 500 pictures of the 455th. We developed these pics in our tent. We made a contact printer and used a B-24 battery for energy. We found a German camera and used the end roll of film from the pics taken of bomb strikes on missions. A soldier by the name of Turner worked in the photo lab and lived in our tent. He supplied us with hypo and developer, etc.

Two of my paintings hang in the Air Force Museum in Roy, Utah.

*Ed: Henry sent me several copies of his B-24 paintings and I must say they are outstanding and I'm pleased to have them.*

## I Am Thankful For...

...the taxes I pay because it means that I'm employed

...the mess to clean after a party because it means I have been sur-

rounded by friends.

...the clothes that fit a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat.

...my shadow who watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine.

...a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home.

...all the complaining I hear about our government because it means we have freedom of speech.

...the spot I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking.

...my huge heating bill because it means I am warm.

...the lady behind me in church who sings off key because it means that I can hear.

...the piles of laundry and ironing because it means my loved ones are nearby.

...the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours because it means that I'm alive.

...weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been productive.

## Advise to B-24 Aviators

Hovering is for pilots who love to fly, but have no place to go!

You know when you've landed with wheels up...It takes full throttles to taxi.

IFR...I Follow Roads.

Things that do you no good in aviation:

- Altitude above you.
- Runway behind you.
- Fuel in the truck.

Takeoffs are optional...

Landings are mandatory.

Flying is not dangerous...crashing is!

It's easy to make a small fortune in aviation...you start with a large fortune.

What's the difference between GOD and pilots? GOD doesn't think HE's a pilot!!

## Ed Ambrosen Writes—



Reading the Spring 1999 edition of the Cerignola Connection, it behooves me to make a small addition to the article about the Mickey of the 455th.

The first mission using radar was flown with the 742nd leading. I was the leader on a mission to Trieste. My co-pilot was then Colonel Thomas Powers, later General and Commander of SAC. The radar bombardier was 1st Lt. George Basler. The target was the clock area of Trieste. (It was a "milk run").

*Ed*

## Remembering World War II

I just received word of your extremely generous contribution of \$1,000.00 to help us build the National World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

On behalf of everyone here at the American Battle Monuments Commission, I want to express my sincerest thanks for your outstanding support. You are a rare and very special group. You have truly gone "above and beyond" the call of duty, and we are very grateful.

*James W. Aylward  
Executive Director*



## Chaplains Corner

Here's a little story to pass on to those people in your congregation who can't decide whether or not to take part in a servant event:

A man whose heart was heavy because of all the pain he saw in the world, decided to take his concerns to God.

"Dear God," he cried out, "look at all the suffering and distress in the world. Why don't you send help to the people who need it?"

God looked at him and said, "I did send help. Why do you think I put YOU there?"

## 5 March 1944 Subject: Commendation

To: Commanding Officer, 741st Bomb Sq(ID), AAF, APO 520, U.S. Army.

1. On March 2, 1944 your Squadron assigned a maximum number of airplanes to a group mission. This same number completed the mission successfully, and all made a safe return.

2. Perusal of the records clearly shows your part in this one mission to be consistent with your past performance of maximum effort.

3. This is the first tangible fruit of long months of preparation and training. This fruit is the sole purpose, aim, and mission of our organization.

4. Results reflect good organization, teamwork, esprit and morale throughout your unit. Every section, every officer, every man in your Squadron can justly and rightfully claim his due share and part in your efforts, in the results and in the reward.

5. I wish to express my hearty commendation to you and every member of your Squadron on a job well begun, with high promise of a job well done and finished.

6. Desire this letter be read to each man of your organization by their respective section heads.

*Kenneth A Cool  
Lt. Col., Aircorps,  
Commanding*

## Thanks to Members of the 455th B.G.

On behalf of the National World War II Memorial Campaign, I want to thank you and the members of the 455th Bomb Group Association, Incorporated for your support to the Memorial. Your contribution of \$1,000 will take us another step closer to building a long overdue tribute to America's great World War II generation.

We continue to be successful in reaching our goal of groundbreak-

ing for the Memorial by Veterans Day 2000. It is groups such as yours nationwide that are helping make this a reality.

Again, thank you for your interest and support.

*Bob Patrick*

## Ed Enghaus Asks...

This is a page from the diary of Jim Jackson a crew member of G. Tanner. We did not know what had happened to Lt. Hawley. It was his first mission as first pilot with a new crew. Is there some way to find out what did happen to them?

Fuhar was our original plane we flew from the states.

If my memory is correct I think Lt. Lamer was killed on about our last mission July 2, '44.

*Ed: Can you help? ie: Ed Enghaus,  
7707 S. Huntsville Rd. Modor, IN  
47358.*

## Did You Know?

Though only 50 miles long, the excavation material from the Panama Canal could:

- build a wall 1,000 miles longer than the Great Wall of China.
- equal a canal 55 feet wide and 10 feet deep, spanning the widest points of the U.S.
- build 63 pyramids the size of the Pyramid of Cheops that, when put end-to-end, would stretch nine miles.

Total cost of the Canal in 1914: \$352 million

Today's equivalent cost: Nearly \$6 billion

Total length of the Canal: 50 miles distance from San Francisco to New York:

via Cape of Magellan=13,515 mi.  
via Panama Canal=6,080 mi.

Distance saved=7,873 mi.

First completed passage of the Canal occurred:

Jan. 7, 1914, by the Alexandre La Valley, a French ship.

## Curtiss IV Model D "Old Number 2"

The second fixed-wing aircraft purchased by the U.S. Army was a Curtiss IV Model D, a pusher-type biplane that was nicknamed "Old Number 2." It had a wingspan of 30 feet and was nearly as long. It weighed 700 lbs. empty. The engine was a Curtiss 8-cylinder, 51hp design. The Curtiss was that first airplane to have a tricycle landing gear.

Another innovation on this plane was the set of ailerons the Glenn Curtiss installed to control the roll of the airplane. This differed from the wing-warping design used by the Wright Brothers. Early aircraft were not easy to control. For example, the pilot in the Curtiss airplane, wearing a shoulder harness, had to lean in the direction of the turn to bank the plane.

In the spring of 1911, "Old Number 2" was shipped to College Park, Maryland. Here the 8-cylinder engine was changed to a 4-cylinder engine more suitable for pilot training. As good as the Curtiss engines were, they were still apt to stop unexpectedly at times. One such emergency caused the Curtiss plane to make a forced landing on a chicken farm in nearby Laurel, Maryland. Retrieved from the chickens, the plane flew at College Park until shipped to Augusta, Georgia, for winter flight training during 1911 - 1912.

By April 1912, the Curtiss plane was back at College Park where it was involved in two more accidents, not uncommon in that era. Finally the Army shipped "Old Number 2," that sturdy Curtiss veteran, to the aviation unit at Texas City, Texas.

*Credit-Vera Rollo, PhD-The Wright Flyer*

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## A Tribute to Hamilton Frost

From the Nashville Banner  
May '45

### Lt. Hamilton Frost Recounts Experiences on Air Missions

One flakked-out engine on his first mission over Munich, two missing motors and a crash landing eight days later, and a blasted hydraulic system on his final sortie were the highlights of 1st Lt. Hamilton Frost's nine months of combat as a 15th Air Force B-24 copilot.

Veteran of 35 missions and 52 sorties flown from Italy as part of the recently-victorious Allied air offensive over Southern Germany, and Northern Italy, Lieutenant Frost is now home on leave visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Frost, 3810 Whitland Avenue. He is a nephew of Marcellus Frost, Westover Drive.

Getting his combat initiation last October 4, the Nashville flier hit oil and rail targets in rapid fire succession, briefing nine times for Vienna, three times for Munich, twice for Hitler's hideout at Berchtesgaden.

It was that crash landing on a return from Vienna that won for Lieutenant Frost the Distinguished Flying Cross.

One engine of "Tepee Time Gal," his Liberator, was shot out over the target; a second was the victim of flak on the way back to home base. Losing altitude fast, Lieutenant Frost and crew sent out an SOS, and air-sea rescue crews put out power launches on watch in case the B-24 should crash into the Adriatic Sea.

Crash landing in an Italian farmer's back yard near the British-held town of San Severo, the limping B-24 was totally wrecked, but with only slight injuries to the crew.

Building a signal fire from oil and gasoline, the crew sat by the

demolished plane all night listening to the waves of the ocean they barely missed and waiting for the transportation back to base which arrived 24 hours later.

Lieutenant Frost flew again the next day, and the next, hitting Prague, Lenz, and other centers on the South Europe bombardment circuit.

He incidentally combined his 25th mission with the celebration of an anniversary of his plane. The flight over Germany was the B-24's 100th mission, her 1,000th combat hour. The ship went on to stack up 120 missions, a record for any plane in Lieutenant Frost's heavy bomber group.

That last mission in support of the Fifth Army in Italy ended safely only when the crew used their heads and a group of handy parachutes. The latter, billowed out the turrets, served as ample make-shift brakes, when the real ones were shot out.

Leaving for home on May 6, Lieutenant Frost received the V-E Day news at Gibraltar.

As for living conditions in Italy, Lieutenant Frost gives a lot of credit to American ingenuity at their particular bases. "We used the power plant from a cracked-up plane to rig up some electric lights; we coiled pipe units around our stoves and got hot water; some Italian labor built us cement walks," he recalled.

Wearer of the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Lieutenant Frost entered the service in October, 1942, earning his wings at Randolph Field, Texas, in December, 1943.

*Ed: Hamilton Frost is quite ill but may be reached by mail through his son, Hamilton Frost Jr., Frost Dental Lab, 104 Harlau Avenue, Hendersonville, TN 37075*

## Fred Czerwionka Turns Poet

I was the upper turret gunner and engineer with Bill Richard's Crew in the 743rd Squadron. I

thought you might use the following poem in the "Connection":

## Why We Were There

We tented in an olive grove, we Liberator crews,  
Our aim was to defeat the Nazi Huns  
for they were resolute to strangle Freedom in their noose  
And all they understood was bombs and guns.

So we were there to show them that the world preferred our way  
Of Freedom, not the way that Hitler willed;  
That we'd engage them bomb for bomb and gun for gun 'til they Surrendered to our cause, or else be killed.

Our planes name "Liberator" fit the job we were to do:  
To keep peace through the world in Freedom's name;  
And being based where olive branches, symbols of peace, grew  
Impressed on us the reason that we came!

Thank you for taking on the job of being editor of the "Connection." We enjoy every page of every issue. May God bless you in this good work!

*Fred Czerwionka*

## A Little Lie?

An Army cook liked to brag about being in the service. One morning after he cooked up a large order of scrambled eggs for new recruits, he wrote a letter to his girlfriend. "My darling — for two hours, *shells* have been bursting all around me."



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# From a 741st Squadron Picture Album...



Line chiefs and line men – McGrath, Utley, Al Hageman, Day, Mc Daniels, Casey Colman, Lt. Berkle, Lt. Waters.



Line chiefs – Mc Coy, John Ritte, Unknown



Mechanics of the 741st Bomb Sqd. that finished training in Langley Field – John Jevish, James Green, F. Farmer, L. Day, L.D. McCoy Jr., William Duncan, Leon Horn, Charles Ford, Lester Roberts, John Schutz, John Tyson, Henry Groen, J. Bridgehouse, Carl Klein.



Mechanics, Utley, Day, Berkle, Coleman, Mac, McDaniels, Albert, Hagman



741st Ordinance.



Groen (did nose art on many planes), Roberts, mechanic.





741st orderly room, Welch, Rochnouve, Lockwood, Miller, Beeson, Sharpy, Pellum.



741st Operations, Johnson, Buck, Manning, Sullivan.



741st Supply, Martin, Curlie, Unknown.



741st Medics, Capt. Schuknecht and his crew.



741st S-2, Hornstine, Van Lint, Unknown



741st Photo Lab, L to R: Lope, Turner

## John McBain Writes—

*Ed-In the fall '99 issue of the Cerignola Connection, page 24, Editors lament, I wrote: Drop me a line once in a while – it gets lonely during a Wisconsin winter. John McBain wrote, making up for all who didn't.*

I just wanted to let you know your efforts in preparing the Cerignola Connection Newsletter is greatly appreciated.

As instructed in your "Editors Lament—" "I paid my dues"— I presume they rightfully went to Sierra Vista, AZ.

I look forward to receiving each copy of the Newsletter with all of the interesting stories experienced by members of the 455th.

Most of the people involved in the Group who are or were associated with the development of the newsletter go back to the early days of the Group when the missions were very rough.

We didn't arrive in Cerignola until December of 1944. We experienced enough to thank the Lord for his timing regarding our orders.

We didn't have real stories to tell – sure a nice slice out of the rear hatch did have an affect on one crew member. He used to have comments about a crewman who did a bit of praying during a reign of those dark clouds over the target.

The day the hatch received a nice gash the loud mouth happened to be sitting on the hatch. Since the strike didn't go all the way through he didn't know how close he came to possibly loosing everything until we were back at base and a member of the ground crew asked if it had been a little rough that day when he pointed to the hole in the lower section of the hatch – That ended the persons comments about prayer performed by others.

We didn't lose an airplane in combat, but we did lose one after an engine repair test trip.

Coming in for the landing on the final approach when we were almost down to the runway we lost

power on one of the engines, just enough to make us sink – B-24s did not glide well. Directly in line with the runway was a large valve which I presume carried a source of fuel.

The left landing gear hit that valve. It didn't hurt the valve but it did a job on the gear. Our pilot Leonard Jackson Brunson did a nice job of holding the weight off the left gear and we then skidded to a stop over on the left wing.

They had a lot of good spare parts to cannibalize from that ship. Brunson thought he was going to stay in the Army Air Force for life to pay off a statement of charges for each B-24.

The next day when he appeared at Group Headquarters to explain what happened to the CO, the CO shook his hand and said "Thank you, I didn't like that airplane. It was always cold."

So we were lucky to have arrived near the closing months.

We were also fortunate enough to have been assigned to fly home an airplane.

We spit polished that airplane for it's trip home, but then they decided the British 8th Army needed some supplies up north. Wooden bins were built into the bomb bay to carry the supplies. Our crew flew one load up north then they had other crew fly a trip.

We didn't like our polished plane getting dirty and landings were being made on a dirt field which was being chewed up by all the heavies landing. We were afraid someone would wipe out a landing gear. It didn't happen of course.

As you can tell our war problems were very minor. Nothing for the historians to write about.

Our trip home was the standard route. Italy to Marakesh, Azores, Ganda and Bradley in Connecticut.

Going into the Azores was interesting. We flew along the coast looking at the cliff just off the water. All of a sudden there was a black top runway which appeared to start within feet of the cliff and then ran up hill.

Brunson always made nice smooth landings. On one mission our radio operator had his head buried in the radio and came up

for air asking when we get back to the base. We were already on the ground and halfway down the runway.

At the Azores, Brunson made one of his beautiful landings, ran up the hill and down toward the end of the strip. About that time the tower called our ship and said "Lt. that was a very nice landing but why didn't you try our 10,000 foot cement runway?"

After an evening of good food, milk, ice cream and all kinds of goodies our stomachs hadn't experienced in some time we headed for Gander the next morning.

Better than halfway, Brunson got sick. He had chills and spent most of the later part of that leg on the floor covered with blankets, etc.

Our copilot, Richard Miller, did all of the flying during that period. However, when we got in range of Gander Brunson got up and said that he hadn't flown all the combat missions without getting killed and he wasn't about to on the way home. He got up and greased another one.

Miller understood Brunson's feelings and was happy to give up the responsibility of making the landing, especially after having done all of the flying for a number of hours.

The whole crew was pleased that Brunson had recovered sufficiently to take over at that point.

That about did it. We only had one more leg into Bradley and then we dispersed to various areas of the country.

Brunson and I did write on occasions and did visit a few times. We went to Tennessee a few times and he came to NJ. We heard from a couple of the crew but no reunions.

Gad my pen sure ran off at the mouth!

I guess you shouldn't have said "it gets lonely during a Wisconsin winter – drop me a line once in a while."

I paid my dues, I dropped you a line all there is left to say is Have a Happy Holiday and Great New Year.

McBain

From a 742nd Picture Album...



*Fueling up!*



*Armament.*



*Engine change.*



*Ground crew on old 938*



*Crew Chief on old 938*



*100th mission party donkey races 7/1944*



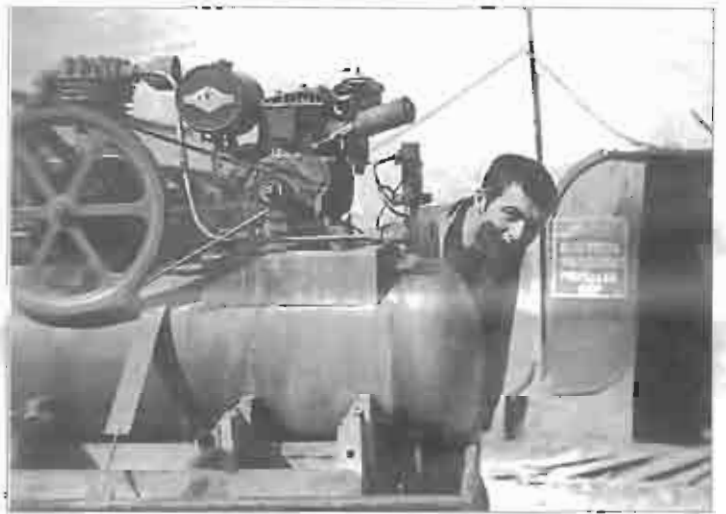
*They keep them flying!  
742nd Maintenance crew.*



*Checking out a sten!*



*A happy maintenance crew!*



*Free air!*



*Armament check.*



*Why are these guys smiling? Missions completed.  
L to R: Boucher, engineer; Bahos, radio operator;  
Matheson, nose turret gunner*

## Thank You...Thank You...Thank You!

455th Bomb Group Association

I wanted to write to thank your organization for the donation of your book 455th Bomb Group (H) to McBride Library. The book is a welcome addition to our collection and I am sure it will receive much usage from our library patrons.

The book has been cataloged and has been included in the regular adult non-fiction book collection for World War II. The interest by Keesler AFB personnel, including retiree's is keen in this area and we get requests on an almost continual basis for information about America's participation in World War II.

Again, please accept my thanks for your donation of this fine volume to our library collection. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

*William R. Province  
Library Director  
512 Larcher Blvd., Bldg 2222  
Keesler Air Force Base, Ms 39534*

## If Your Spouse Gets a Sudden Hankering for Army, Navy or Air Force Gourmet Dining, Here is the Recipe –

2 lb ground beef  
1/4 lb butter or margarine  
1/2 cup flour  
5 cups milk  
3 tsp beef bouillon or soup base  
1 1/2 tbsp instant minced onion

### White Sauce

Melt butter in a 2 1/2 quart saucepan. Add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and stir until thickened and smooth. Add bouillon and onion. Simmer over low heat.

Meanwhile, brown meat and add without juice to the white sauce.

Continue to simmer 1 hour, stirring as needed. Divide into 6 pint containers and freeze. Each pint serves two. Serve over biscuits or toast.

(This was taken from U.S. Army recipe file and originally was enough to serve 200 people. Some or all of the amounts have been changed to protect the eater.)

*From the Retired Officer Newsletter.  
Credit CWO John Ziebel.*

## The Lib



Until now her name's hardly been mentioned  
Still they've praised all the others before and to extol her is not my intention  
Though her merits are more than a score.

She was needed and born for a reason  
And she has every right to be proud  
To me it's almost high treason  
To slander her good name aloud!

It's a visible fact she's no beauty  
And her lines are no work of art  
But she's up there doing her duty  
A patriot right to the heart.

She's a queen in the sky and she knows it  
She ignores all ridiculous rib  
She was named for queen and she knows it  
Perhaps that's why they christened her "Lib."

She goes where the fighting is toughest  
Be it Berlin, Ploesti or Kiel  
And she fights where the fighting is roughest  
She's as hard as true tempered steel.

When the haul is too long for others  
Or a load too heavy to pack  
She's out there ahead of her brothers  
Braving both fighters and flak

On a run she's as smooth and as steady  
As the pillars of old Hercules  
If it's bombing you want then she's ready  
Just a few of her merits are these.

I could list two or three dozen  
Of her virtues that I've known and seen  
As she fights along side her first cousin  
The commendable B-17.

It is said that queens live and die proudly  
For freedom, for country and more  
but none fight for these things more proudly  
Than our "Liberator", the B-24

*Credit-Briefing Magazine  
The poem was found on a bulletin board in Stalag Luft III  
August 1944 by Don Durant (POW)  
Author Unknown*

## A Rock From the Sky...

A rock from the sky fell on an unsuspecting target. I was a crew member from the 740th Bomb Sqdn. It was near the end of the war, targets had become scarcer and missions fewer. At our aircraft parking hard stand there was a large rock approximately 50 to 75 lbs. We decided to take it and drop it on a target as we returned home from a mission. For the safety of our formations we determined that it should be dropped from the number seven position of the low squadron. Later when we received an assignment to that position the rock was loaded on the aircraft and the mission was on. After dropping our bombs the Bombardier lined us up on another target and opened the bomb bay doors. When he said bombs away the rock was rolled out. No target damage assessment was ever made.

*M/Sgt. Lloyd C Kestner*

## From the National World War II Memorial Committee —

I am pleased to forward copies of the Winter 2000, National World War II Memorial Campaign Newsletter. As you will see in the newsletter articles, we are making great progress and continue to attract nation-wide support for the memorial.

We are still optimistic about ground breaking during this year. Veteran organizations continue to play a big role in contributing towards this effort. To ensure that your organization continues to get full credit for all donations we receive from the organization or its members, it is very important that the mail code that you have been assigned is used on checks or correspondence sent to the campaign. **The mail code for the 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc. is VG0FE.**

If you have any question regarding this or need any additional information, please contact me at (703) 696-3121 or Kimberly Frazier at (703) 696-9274 or call toll free 1-800-639-4WW2, option #3.

As always, thank you for your continual and strong support for the National World War II Memorial.

*Bob Patrick  
Assist Director for Veterans Affairs  
& Grassroots Programs  
National World War II Memorial*

## Special Thanks to Al!

*In line with the mission of the 455th Bomb Group Association, DEDICATED TO PRESERVING ITS MEMORY AND HERITAGE, Al Asch, Group Historian has succeeded in placing copies of our history, "Flight of the Vulgar Vultures", in key libraries across the country. Our special thanks go to Al for his personal effort and expense. As letters of thanks come in we'll publish them in the Cerignola Connection. Ed*

## Dear Al:

*The story of the Four Hundred and Fifty-fifth Bombardment Group...is one of the best BG histories in the Ross Barrett Collection. Thank you very much. I am pleased to add it to the Collection. When I was checking the cataloging network, preparatory to having it "officially" added, I noted the other libraries owning the work. The Denver Public Library is proud to stand among them. Often I have requests for various BG, squadron histories, etc. and will now be able to offer one of the most professionally produced ones as an example. Please convey my thanks and congratulations to the other authors and contributors.*

Thank you also for your referral in the matter of the *Ball of Fire*. I shall look forward to hearing from Mr. Davidson.

In answer to your questions about the Ross Barrett historical Aeronautics Collection — The Collection began as the result of public interest and the auspices of William Barrett, author, aviator, and aviation consultant to DPL and Frederick Ross, Denver philanthropist. The original body was purchased from Maggs in London in 1939. Several other major purchases and numerous large bequests later complemented the Collection. In the early 1970s it was unfortunately relegated to boxes in a warehouse due to lack of space. In 1995 it was resurrected and is now gradually thriving again. The Collection is strictly reference and covers the history of man's flight from Icarus to the space age. The history of ballooning is particularly strong as are the sections on WWI and WWII. In addition to books, several dating to the sixteenth century, the Collection includes a considerable area of photographs, prints, a large collection of war posters, an outstanding manuscript collection of Chanute materials and other manuscripts.

Because the Collection is reference, many letters of inquiry are received and answered each year

from the United States and abroad. The Collection, part of the Special Collections Division of the Library, is accessible through our general catalog online. However, other than the book material, much of the Collection is not in the online catalog proper, hence any letter of inquiry that cannot be answered by using the catalog would be welcome. I would be delighted to answer any questions you or your group may have regarding projects research or simply "curiosity."

Again thank you for your generous contributions to the Ross Barrett Historical Aeronautics Collection

*Marilyn Chang  
The Denver Public Library*

## Dear Mr. Asch:

I would like to thank you for the wonderful donation of the book *Flight of the Vulgar Vultures: 1943-1945*. This will make a great addition to our archive collection and will be proudly added to the SAC Museum Library. Your letter will serve as a donation agreement and I have enclosed a formal agreement for your records. The Museum has been slowly gathering group and unit histories over the years. The hard work by organizations like your own will provide the desired research material for generations to come. Again I thank you for the wonderful book.

*Brian T. York  
Asst. Curator  
SAC  
Strategic Air Command Museum*

## Dear Colonel Asch:

Thank you for providing us with a copy of *The Story of the 455th Bombardment Group (H) WWII*. The book chronicles a part of our Air Force history well worth marking and passing on to future generations. We welcome your book as a source of history and inspiration.

Our staff and cadets appreciate

the sacrifices of those who gave their lives in service of their nation. Gifts like yours keep that appreciation alive.

*Tad J. Oelstrom, Lt Gen, USAF  
Superintendent  
United States Airforce Academy*

## Dear Colonel Asch:

Thank you very much for sending your book titled *The Story of the Four Hundred and Fifty-fifth Bombardment Group (H) WWII* to Lieutenant General Daniel W. Christman, Superintendent, for inclusion in the Academy Library. This carefully prepared and detailed history of your Bomb Group will make a fine addition to the historical collection. Unit histories provide information not available elsewhere on World War II, and I know that our cadets and Faculty will find your account to be helpful and interesting.

Congratulations on producing this valuable record of the contributions of your group's B-24 Liberators. I appreciate your thoughtfulness in making this available to the Library.

*Kenneth W. Hedman  
Librarian  
United States Military Academy*

## “Military Ponderables”

Don't look conspicuous, it draws fire  
If the enemy is in range...so are you.  
Five second fuses only last 3 seconds.  
It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed!

## Things You Didn't Know You Didn't Know:

- A crocodile can't stick his tongue out.
- A snail can sleep for three years.
- All Polar bears are left-handed.

## THE 455TH BOMB GROUP IN COMBAT (a continuing series)

**Mission 199, February 21** The Group sent 27 B-24's to bomb the central marshalling yards at Vienna, Austria. Six aircraft returned early due to various malfunctions. Twenty-one aircraft dropped 39 tons of 500# RDX bombs on the target by pathfinder method. Flak in the target area was intense and accurate. Two aircraft received extensive damage and 12 aircraft received light damage. Two crew members received slight wounds by flak. No enemy fighters were seen and all but one aircraft returned to base. This aircraft landed at Zara, Yugoslavia and the crew was returned to base later.

**Mission 200, February 22** The Group again had a double mission. Twenty-eight B-24's took off to bomb the Straubing, Germany marshalling yards. However, the weather did not accommodate these planes and they had to settle for an alternate target at Bischofhofen. No flak was encountered at the target and few bombs were dropped. All planes returned to base safely.

**Mission 201, February 22** The target was the same for 15 B-24's loaded with 500# RDX bombs. They too encountered bad weather but were able to drop 28.5 tons of bombs on the marshalling yards at Bischofhofen, Austria with good results. There was no flak at the target or en route. All planes returned to base without incident.

**Mission 202, February 23** Twenty-eight B-24's took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Gmund, Germany. Weather conditions prevented any sightings of the target and all planes returned to base with their bombs.

**Mission 203, February 25** The Group was briefed to bomb the main north marshalling yards at Linz, Austria. Twenty-eight B-24's loaded with a mixed load of RDX and GP 500# bombs successfully bombed the primary target. They were escorted by P-38's Flak at the target was intense and accurate. One aircraft received heavy damage and four aircraft were slightly damaged, but all aircraft returned to base safely.

**Mission 204, February 27** Twenty-eight B-24's took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Augsburg, Germany. Twenty-one of the aircraft bombed the primary target despite pathfinder trouble on the lead ship. Three aircraft bombed the Innsbruck marshalling yards. One aircraft bombed buildings at Wessobrunn, one dropped its bombs on Swartz and another dropped its bombs on the Villach, Austria marshalling yard. Flak at the target was intense and accurate. One aircraft was hit just before the target and dropped its bombs early. It was last seen heading for Switzerland. Two other aircraft were missing as well. One aircraft had a forced landing at Falconara, Italy where two of its crew were injured on landing. There were 33 crewmen missing in action and three crewmen were severely injured by flak. Four aircraft had severe damage and 15 received slight damage. One radio man reported that one of the aircraft reported reaching Switzerland. Only 24 planes returned to base and 19 of these were battle damaged.

**Mission 205, February 28** Eighteen B-24's, the red force, took off at 0705 hours to bomb the railroad bridge at Isarco/Albes, Italy, escorted by P-51's. Flak at the target was moderate to intense and accurate. One aircraft was hit over the target and was last seen

with two engines smoking and losing altitude. A total of 51 tons of 1,000# RDX bombs were dropped near the target area with results that were not very satisfactory. Eight crewmen were reported missing in action and 17 aircraft returned to base.

**Mission 206, February 28** The blue force, consisting of 17 B-24's, carrying 1,000# RDX bombs took off at 0755 hours to bomb the same target, the railroad bridge at Isarco/Albes. One aircraft returned early because of engine trouble and 16 aircraft dropped 46 tons of bombs on the target area with better results, 60% of the bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. Flak again was moderate and accurate. Eleven aircraft received slight flak damage and 16 aircraft returned to base at 1340 hours.

February was over and we had flown 26 missions. Seven of these were aborted. We had effectively put 505 aircraft over the targets and dropped 840 tons of bombs. We lost five aircraft and had 41 crewmen missing in action. One man was killed in action and 16 severely wounded. With weather conditions as they were, it speaks highly of the support given by the ground echelon as well as the effort put forth by the crews. With better weather on the horizon, things would only get better.

## Our Final Missions

### MARCH 1945

March arrived with some good flying weather, at least for the first three or four days, and the 15th Air Force took advantage of it. Our final missions supported the "mopping up" activities of the Allies in the defeat of the Nazis. The German defense in northern Italy still held along the Gothic Line and

the battle on the eastern front was in full swing as we went back to our attacks on the communication systems of the enemy.

**Mission 207, March 1** At 0900 hours, 18 B-24's took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Maribor, Yugoslavia. Eleven aircraft dropped their bombs on the secondary target, the marshalling yards at Jesenice, as the primary could not be reached due to weather conditions. Seven aircraft did not bomb. All aircraft returned to base.

**Mission 208, March 1** At 0930 hours, 16 B-24's took off to bomb the same Maribor marshalling yards. Scant but fairly accurate flak was encountered at the target. The weather had improved and a good concentration of bombs were observed in the target area. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 209, March 2** Twenty-eight B-24's loaded with 500# RDX bombs took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Linz, Austria. Nineteen planes dropped their bombs on the primary target by pathfinder. Five aircraft dropped their bombs on the Knittelfeld marshalling yards as they could not line up on the primary. Flak at the target was moderate to intense and accurate. All planes returned to base safely.

**Mission 210, March 4** Seventeen B-24's took off to bomb the station yard at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. All 17 aircraft dropped their bombs by pathfinder method and returned to base. No flak or fighters were encountered.

**Mission 211, March 4** Twenty-one B-24's took off to bomb the primary target at Brod, Yugoslavia, but all returned without dropping their bombs due to bad weather conditions.

**Mission 212, March 8** The Group was scheduled to bomb the railway cars at Novezamke marshalling yards. Twenty-one B-24's took off at 0738 hours loaded with 500# RDX bombs. The weather prevented them from bombing any target as the Group tried to find targets of opportunity but none were found. Three aircraft were missing due to shortage of fuel. Two were heading to Zara, Yugoslavia for refueling and one plane was reported missing. There was no flak nor fighters but bad weather was our foe for the day.

**Mission 213, March 8** The second section, or blue force, took off at 0810 hours with 21 B-24's loaded the same as red force to bomb the same target. They had the same results, as they were unable to spot even a target of opportunity. All planes of the blue force returned to base safely.

**Mission 214, March 9** The red force of 19 B-24's took off to bomb the Pragersho marshalling yards. They were loaded with 500# GP bombs. One aircraft returned early because of an oil leak and 18 aircraft bombed the secondary target, the marshalling yard at Graz, Austria. They dropped 42 tons of bombs by pathfinder method. Flak at the target was slight and inaccurate. All planes returned to base safely.

**Mission 215, March 9** The blue force took off with the same bomb load. Their target was the same but they were unable to bomb because of weather conditions. All planes returned to base with their bombs.

**Mission 216, March 10** Twenty-one B-24's took off to bomb the railroad bridge at Verona Paraona, Italy. They were loaded with 1,000# RDX bombs. Two aircraft returned early due to mechanical trouble. Nineteen aircraft dropped



their bombs with outstanding results. Over 75% of the bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. Flak at the target was moderate and very accurate. One aircraft received heavy flak damage and three were slightly damaged. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 217, March 12** We are back in the oil business. We put up a maximum effort of 42 B-24's to bomb the Florisdorf, Vienna oil refinery. The load was 500# RDX bombs. Only 38 aircraft dropped their bombs by pathfinder method. Flak at the target was intense but inaccurate. No results were observed because of clouds. One aircraft was missing. It was seen leaving formation with the pilot saying he could not feather his number four engine. Twelve crewmen were reported missing in action.

**Mission 218, March 13** Twenty-eight B-24's took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Regensburg, Germany. Three aircraft returned before bombing but 25 dropped over 52 tons of 500# GP bombs by pathfinder method. Flak at the target was slight and inaccurate. All planes returned to base without incident.

**Mission 219, March 14** Twenty-one B-24's of the red force and another 21 of the blue force consolidated their efforts and took off between 0805 and 0840 hours to bomb the primary target. They settled on the alternate target of the marshalling yards at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. They dropped 93 tons of bombs on the target by pathfinder method. Flak was not experienced at the target or en route. All planes returned to base.

**Mission 220, March 15** The red force of 20 B-24's took off to bomb their primary target but had to settle for their fourth alternate, the

marshalling yards at Bruck-Leitha, Austria. Thirteen aircraft dropped their bombs on the primary target. Seven others dropped theirs on the Wiener Neustadt marshalling yards, a target of opportunity. No flak nor fighters were encountered. All planes returned to base.

**Mission 221, March 15** The blue force was unable to bomb its primary target so 13 of their aircraft bombed a target of opportunity, the marshalling yards at Murzzuschlag. Seven aircraft of "C" box bombed various targets of opportunity. All planes returned to base.

**Mission 222, March 16** Red and blue forces combined and took off between 0800 and 0830 hours. Weather prevented the Group from getting to their primary target so they bombed the marshalling yards at Amsteten, Austria. Thirty-seven B-24's dropped over 87 tons of 500# GP bombs on the target with fair results. No enemy resistance was met and all planes returned safely.

**Mission 223, March 19** Forty-two B-24's took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Muhldorf, Germany. One aircraft returned early and 41 aircraft dropped over 116 tons of 1,000# GP bombs with good results. Over 55% fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. No enemy resistance was met and all planes returned safely.

**Mission 224, March 20** Forty-two B-24's loaded with 500# RDX bombs took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Wels, Austria. All 42 B-24's dropped their bombs with outstanding results. Over 80% of the bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. Again, there was no enemy resistance. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 225, March 21** There were three days of good flying

weather and on the 21st of March, the group was able to get 42 aircraft into the air for the third day in a row, an outstanding effort by the ground crews. One aircraft returned early and 41 dropped over 94 tons of 500# RDX bombs with outstanding accuracy. Over 87% fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. Flak at the target area was non-existent but some flak along the route inflicted slight damage to one plane. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 226, March 22** This was the fourth day of good weather and the red and blue forces again combined to fly a mission. Forty-two B-24's took off to bomb the oil refinery at Kralupy, Czechoslovakia. This time we were escorted by P-51's and P-38's. The bomb load was 500# RDX bombs. Two aircraft returned before bombing and 40 B-24's dropped 93 tons of bombs. No enemy resistance was met and all planes returned to base.

**Mission 227, March 23** This was the fifth day of good flying weather and the group sent both red and blue forces to bomb the St. Valentine Tank Works. Forty-two B-24's took off between 0805 and 0825 loaded with 1,000# RDX bombs. There were no early returns and 42 aircraft dropped their bombs on the primary target with very good results. Flak at the target was intense and accurate. One aircraft was badly damaged and crash-landed at a nearby field. Three of the crewmen were seriously injured and six were injured slightly. Another aircraft landed at Zaro, Yugoslavia with engines damaged from flak and the crew returned to Bari, Italy by C-47. All other aircraft returned to base. Another aircraft landed at Zaro, Yugoslavia with engines damaged from flak and the crew returned to Bari, Italy by C-47.

**Mission 228, March 24** This was the sixth day of flyable weather. The group sent both red and blue forces on a combined mission. Forty-two B-24's were scheduled but only 38 took off. One aircraft returned early and 37 dropped their bombs on the primary target, which was the Riem Airdrome at Munich, Germany. Over 85 tons of 500# RDX bombs were dropped with fair results. Flak at the target was intense and accurate. Four aircraft received heavy damage and four slight. All planes returned to base.

**Mission 229, March 25** This was the seventh straight day of flyable weather and again the Group scheduled 42 B-24's. Thirty-eight got off the ground to attack the C.K.D. Liben Tank Works in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Two aircraft returned prior to bombing. Thirty-six aircraft dropped 96 tons of 1,000# GP bombs with good results. Flak at the target was moderate and accurate. Three aircraft received slight damage from flak. No enemy fighters were seen. All planes returned to base.

**Mission 230, March 26** The Group sent 28 B-24's loaded with 500# GP bombs to the marshalling yards at Szombathely, Hungary. Only six aircraft dropped their bombs on the primary target as the weather moved in. Thirteen aircraft returned their bombs to base, while seven jettisoned their bombs in the Adriatic. Those that dropped their bombs on the primary did a good job because over 75% fell within 1,00 feet of the aiming point. Flak was moderate and accurate; one aircraft received heavy damage and ten had slight damage. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 231, March 30** Four B-24's took off to bomb the North Station and Good Depot at Vienna,

Austria under the cover of weather to avoid fighters. Two aircraft dropped their bombs on the primary and one dropped its bombs on an alternate target, the Kapfenberg Tank Works. One aircraft did not bomb because the primary target was clear. Results were good as bomb strikes were seen in the target area. Flak at target was intense and accurate. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 232, March 31** The last day of the month and the group sent 28 B-24's to bomb the freight and locomotive depot at Linz, Austria. The group was escorted by P-38's to the target. Three aircraft returned without bombing. Eighteen aircraft dropped 33.5 tons of 100# GP bombs on the primary target. Four aircraft returned their bombs to base and three aircraft jettisoned their bombs in the Adriatic. Results were not observed. Flak at the target area was intense and accurate. All planes returned to base.

March was over and the Group had flown 26 missions, putting 719 aircraft over the target area. The Group dropped 1,376.15 tons of bombs during the month. While no enemy fighters were shot down during March, it was because we were not attacked by them. We lost three aircraft to flak but only two of those resulted in a loss of 12 crewmen as the third aircraft crash landed and most of the crew escaped with minor injuries. We had six men severely wounded and three received minor wounds. The concentration of flak around the major targets seemed to be increasing as the Germans appeared to be "circling their wagons" for the final attack.

**APRIL 1945**

April started off with a continuation of March's good weather. Our targets this month would be troop

concentrations and communications. By communications we were including marshalling yards, railroads bridges and depots. We would hit one oil depot as our last effort against oil resources. The war was fast coming to an end and we hastened it a little with our effort.

**Mission 233, April 1** The Group sent 28 B-24's loaded with 1,000# RDX bombs to bomb the railroad bridge at Kreglach. One aircraft returned prior to bombing with engine trouble. Twenty-seven aircraft dropped 78 tons of bombs on the target. Results were not observed because of smoke in the target area. No flak was experienced and no enemy fighters were seen. All planes returned to base.

**Mission 234, April 2** The Group sent 28 B-24's to bomb the marshalling yards at Krems, Austria. One aircraft returned prior to bombing because of low engine oil pressure. Twenty-seven aircraft dropped over 65 tons of 500# RDX bombs in the target area with outstanding results as 87% of the bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. There was no flak at the target and non en route. All planes returned safely.

**Mission 235, April 5** Twenty-eight B-24's took off to bomb the railroad bridge at Verona, Italy. Weather prevented them from reaching the target so all planes returned to base, aborting the mission.

**Mission 236, April 6** Six B-24's loaded with fragmentation bombs attacked the flak emplacements at Verona, Italy. They dropped 14 tons of bombs with poor results. Flak at the target was moderate and accurate. All planes returned safely without casualties.

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## Where Will We Have the 2001 Reunion?

At our last reunion in San Diego it was decided we would try something new. Give the membership a say in where we'll have the 2001 Reunion. The members voted that we should have the reunion in the Central or Eastern time zone. In addition, they decided to limit consideration to five locations. They are Minneapolis, MN.; Dearborn, MI.; St. Louis, MO.; Houston, TX., or Central Florida, (Orlando area).

In addition, those at the reunion expressed a little disappointment that we didn't have our own private bar, as we usually do. It should be noted that certain locations, that are strongly unionized, will not allow private bars. At San Diego we had an agreement that we could operate our own bar, but we had to have their bartender in the room, watching to make sure we didn't give liquor to minors, etc. If we had to pay for a man, we chose to have him work. Thus, no private bar.

At one suggested location, finding a place that can serve 350 persons for our banquet, is a problem. The location is Orlando. It is a family oriented operation. As a result, finding a location that has a large dining room for a Banquet, forces us to look a little beyond a specific site. Thus, we indicate, Central Florida instead of Orlando.

Listed below are some facts furnished to us by Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. (They are the outfit that provided us with lot of assistance at our last reunion). Look these sites over and then send us a postcard indicating your choice. We'll do the rest.

### MINNEAPOLIS

When; Shortly after school starts. Mid-September.  
Room Cost; \$90 to \$100 per night.  
Private Bar Allowed; No.  
Discussion; Beautiful area with a lot of history.

### DEARBORN

When; Shortly after school starts. Mid-September.  
Room Cost; \$90 to \$100 per night.  
Private Bar Allowed; No.  
Discussion; A lot of history and museums.

### ST. LOUIS

When; Mid-September thru mid-October.  
Room Cost; \$65 to \$75 per night.  
Private Bar Allowed; Yes.  
Discussion; A lot of historical sites and things to see. Hotels are close to the airport.

### HOUSTON

When; Late September thru end of October.  
Room Cost; \$75 to \$90 per night.  
Private Bar Allowed; Maybe (depending on the location)  
Discussion; A modern town with a lot of things to see.

### CENTRAL FLORIDA

When; October (not during school break)  
Room Cost; \$70 to \$80 per night.  
Private Bar Allowed; Probably (depending on where we choose.)  
Discussion; Family oriented. Many things to see and do, but they require considerable walking. (Even visit Cape Canaveral)

Well, there you see it. Give us your vote. Write us a postcard and send it to;

**455th Bomb Group, Assoc.  
P.O. Box 4043  
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636**

## Members of the 455th Bomb Group Association

It is my very sad duty to advise you that Margorie Riggs, wife of our past President Ed Riggs, passed away on 7 March.

Marge, Ed and Eds' son, had just finished dinner at a local restaurant, Saturday night the 4th, when Marge complained of not feeling too well and advised Ed she was going to their car. She collapsed before reaching the car. She was immediately rushed to the hos-

pital and it was determined she had a lower abdominal aneurism. Surgery was performed successfully. However, the next day she had pneumonia. She responded well to antibiotics and all thought she was on her way to recovery. However, Tuesday morning she made a turn for the worse and she passed away that evening.

Funeral services were held Friday afternoon at the John Knox Presbyterian Church in Tulsa.

The 455th Bomb Group Association sent a floral arrangement for the funeral. If you desire to send condolences, Ed's address is;

**LTC. USAF (Ret) C.E. Riggs  
3415 So. 85th East Ave.  
Tulsa, OK 74145-3840**

Sadly

*Gus H Wendt, Jr.  
Executive Director/Treasurer*

## There's a Life Membership in the 455th Bomb Group Association Awaiting You! Board votes to change cost of life memberships.

During the 1999 Board of Directors meeting in San Diego, the Directors voted to change the cost of becoming a Life Member from \$100 to \$60. This change will become effective with the 2000 FY year, which is November 1999. In addition, Annual Members who had paid their dues for the last 10 consecutive years thru 1999 can become Life Members for \$25. If any of these members have already paid their dues for 2000, they can become Life Members for an additional \$10. This reduction recognizes that our life expectancy has changed since 1988 when the original charges for Life Membership were established.

**Missing or Inaccurate  
Addresses.  
MIA? WE NEED  
YOUR HELP!**

The Postal Service advises us that it cannot deliver the Cerignola Connection to our members listed below. Thus, we have deleted them from our mailing list. They are still on our membership roster. Those with an asterisk in front of their first name, have appeared in the MIA list for one year. They will be deleted from the next MIA listing.

\* Murray Abramowitz, 3803 Williamsburg Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45215

\* George E Bercik, 10318 Indianapolis Blvd, Chicago, IL 60617

If anyone knows the whereabouts or has any information about these members, please let us know so we can bring our database up to date. Names preceded by an asterisk will be deleted permanently from our mailing list if no verifiable information is received. Send info to **455th Bomb Group Assoc., Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-4043.**

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I don't understand some of the plastic surgeries people get these days. I remember when "bringing up the rear" was a military term.



Medic anyone? 742nd Sqd. Front Row, L to R – Lesena, Lester Kratzer, McNally, Daniel Durkee. Back Row, L to R – Capt. Blackman, Unk, Unk, Henderson, Remanasez.

**HELP!**

In the Spring 1999 issue of the Cerignola Connection, page 20, Top left picture you list an UNK between Bill Dishbrow and Kenny Vinchet. The UNK is Don S. Keegan, then from Monroe, Michigan.

Don was a bombardier in the 741st Squadron and was a tent mate along with Bob Crowley, Lew Nixon and myself.

I maintained contact with Crowley while at Purdue but then lost him. I've never been able to find Keegan since Italy. (searched the Web etc.) I'm still in touch with Nixon and Gus Wendt frequently.

If you have any other comments from anyone since you

published that picture, I'd appreciate the names so I could call them for any Keegan info they could give me.

Hope you and yours are in good health. Thanks for any help you can give me on Keegan.

*Bill Crim  
2275 Estes St.  
Lakewood, CO 80215  
(303) 237-3643*



**455th Bomb Group Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 4043  
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636**

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