



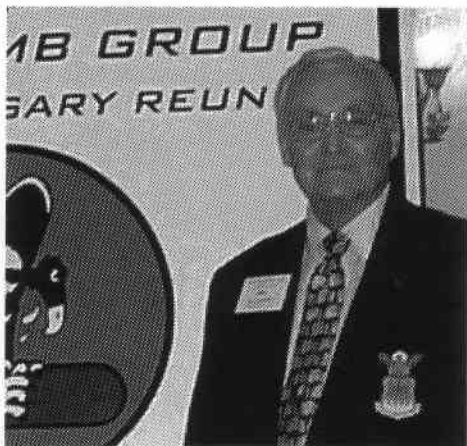
CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Spring, 2006 Editor, Craig Ward, 813 Peterstow Drive, Euless, Texas 76039
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President's Message

William Gemmill, Lt. Col (ret.)



Eldred Specht

Carl Barr recently advised me of the passing of Eldred Specht (743) on 17 March, 2006. Eldred was the ball turret gunner on Tim Swearingen's crew, and Carl was the navigator.

Eldred was a guy, along with Bob Armstrong, who was still able to wear his WWII olive drab Class A uniform. That alone made me stand in awe of Eldred, let alone his living to tell about his experiences in that awful ball turret. Eldred's widow, Elizabeth, was very thoughtful to pass this sad word to Carl for all of us to share.

Bill Gemmill

Marian L. "Ann" Davis

Ann Davis, 86, passed away March 26, 2006. Born in Des Moines, Iowa, Ann attended Iowa State, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa and with highest distinction from the University of Iowa.

In 1942, she married Col. John F. Davis (741), then followed him around the country when he was in the military and at Harvard Law School. Son Craig was born in 1946 and daughter Karen in 1949.

The family lived in Des Moines, where John still lives. Craig, his wife Katy, and their sons, Ian and Connor, live in Texas. Karen and husband John Langbein live in California.

Ann and John enjoyed traveling, Friendship Force, Terps Dance Club, Family Forum, golf, skiing, their Clear Lake cottage, and friends.

Ann will especially be remembered for her intelligence, graciousness, energy, and enthusiasm.

Bill Gemmill

To 455thBG Assoc. members:

I would like to ask all of you to inform us of the deaths of any of our comrade-in-arms from the 455th.

We are growing to be a closer-knit family as the years go by, and each member becomes dearer to us.

You can reach us by e-mail at jgriggstx@austin.rr.com (Exec. Dir. Greg Riggs), aphp@comcast.net (C.C. Editor Craig Ward), and wgemmill@tampabay.rr.com (Bill).

Best Regards,
Bill Gemmill, President
455th BG Association

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Can You Help?

Ref: Anderton Article, Fall 2005 Cerignola Connection

Dear Editor,

My dad was real excited about the article last fall in the *Cerignola Connection*. He even had someone from Salt Lake City (about 45 minutes from Morgan) give him a call and they are planning on getting together to "reminisce".

I appreciate the newsletter. It means a lot to these brave veterans.

I have a few questions. The picture of my dad and his crew (in front of the *Liberty Bell*) is from their training session. I was unaware that any other picture was in existence of his crew together.

I recently ran across a very interesting picture (see bottom of article). It appeared to be taken overseas.

I confirmed this after searching on the web for the *Teepee Time Gal*. Past issues of the *Cerignola Connection* talk about this airplane. This at least confirmed the picture being taken in Italy.

To my knowledge this may be the only picture of my dad in Europe. He remembers that no one on his crew had a camera.

He has always maintained that at this point in the war, they did not have assigned aircraft. My belief is they may have flown in this aircraft on at least one mission "or" the plane was popular for crew pictures. Anyway, one of

my questions is if you know of any record that exists which would give a log of specific aircraft and the mission history of the aircraft and possibly the crew assigned to specific missions? In my dad's records, it just states time logged and where they went. There is an identifier such as B-24J, H..., but no serial number. Do you have any pictures of the *Teepee Time Gal*? It would be a wonderful thing if I could peg down the fact that they might have flown this aircraft.

I am especially interested if you have any group records or pictures which may be of interest or know where this material may reside.

Thanks for your help.

Regards,
Rodney Anderton

Picture of D. J. Anderton (back row, left) and his crew in front of *Teepee Time Gal*



Can You Help?

I have been a B-24 historian since 1979. I am researching a series on the 15th Air Force consisting of four volumes ... one for each of the four Bomb Wings using the B24.

Our next volume is the 304th Bomb Wing. I am interested to see if your

readership could help me in obtaining the following:

- 1) Photos of Nose Art, and;
- 2) Mission Flimsys, which contain the mission date, the target, the pilot names, and the last three digits of the aircraft serial numbers.

I have received a great deal of assistance from David Bellemere, Hank Groen, Mark Mason, and Victor Murray. Please thank these gentlemen for the help.

If any of your readership are able to help, I would appreciate it. I will copy and return any material, and will reimburse any expenses.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best Regards,

John Beitling
B-24 Historian and Archivist
503 S. Oakley
Kansas City, MO. 64123
816-241-1784

Nina Von Stauffenberg

Widow of Nazi Army officer who tried to kill Hitler in 1944

On Sunday, April 2, 2006, Nina Von Stauffenberg passed away in Bavaria at age 92. She was the widow of the aristocratic Nazi Army officer who tried to kill Hitler with a briefcase bomb. The plot failed.

Col. Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg and other collaborators were shot, and their families were arrested by the Gestapo. The family members were released from custody at the end of the war.

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Dear Editor,

This letter is regarding the short article on the Fairchild PT - 19A in the Spring 2005 Cerignola Connection. My father, S/Sgt. Raymond Windsand (740), owned two of them and said they were great planes.

He bought one near Lansing, Michigan. And for the second one, he flew to Norfolk, Nebraska (birthplace of Johnny Carson), to purchase.

The first one had shark teeth painted on the nose. He's looking for a picture. He thinks this was in the early 50's, it was before the Mackinaw Bridge across the straits was built. (connecting the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan).

He flew this one back, needing to add oil because of an oil leak. He owned this plane for about a year and a half.

To acquire the second one, he flew his J3 CUB to Norfolk for a trade. It was a cold trip in November. It was deer season here, and the mine he worked is closed down for the hunting season.

He's not a hunter, so when his friend showed him the ad in the "yellow pages" (I think this is what the flying paper was called), he lined it up.

There was no heat in the CUB. This plane had a cruise propeller, not a take-off prop. He could cruise at 110 mph. He went into a lot of detail, but this is the gist of it.

He was a private pilot for 49 years. He sold his aircraft after he was diagnosed with diabetes. He owned this Taylor

Craft for 29 years.

Dad joined the U. S. Army Air Corps March 3, 1942. In August, he attended Army Gunnery School in Las Vegas, Nevada. On December 16, 1943, he left the states to join the new 15th AF in Cerignola, Italy, arriving Feb 1, 1944.

He flew 50 missions as a right waist gunner. Most of the missions were flown in the Skywolf (Col. Ed Riggs' aircraft).

I finally started to listen to his stories. We went out to eat at an Italian restaurant. There was a map of Italy in the lobby. That's when I realized how important it was to learn this. I have a lot of his papers. I have a copy from the diary of Col. Riggs. It describes every mission, targets, injuries, etc. Stunning!

My Dad is 86 years old, and in great shape. He remembers the war like it was yesterday.

Thanks,
Mary Windsand

Can You Help?

My father, S/Sgt Joseph H. Force (Service # 33701029) served with the 455th BG, 743rd Bomb Squadron, in 1944. He was a ball gunner and flew 35 missions.

I'm trying to locate anyone who flew with my father or find his name on a Squadron roster.

Respectfully,
S/Sgt. Robert Force

Editor's Note: Please forward any information you have to your editor, and I'll make sure Mr. Force receives it.

Final Flights

S/Sgt. William F. Flynn (742) of Florham Park, NJ passed away Feb. 6, 2006 at age 87. His aircraft was the "Miss I Hope". He was stationed at San Giovanni from November 1944 through September, 1945, flying a total of 25 missions and receiving the Air Medal. After the war, Sgt. Flynn was an FBI agent for 30 years, and Security Director for a New Jersey bank before retiring in 1980. He is survived by his wife, June, two sons, four daughters, ten grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

S/Sgt. Donald Kaplanek (740) of Tomahawk, WI., took his final flight June 30, 2005 at age 83. Sgt. Kaplanek was shot down on his 48th mission (the 100th mission of the 455th BG) over Bleckhammer, Germany. The crew bailed out over Hungary, where they were taken prisoner for the remainder of the war. Sgt. Kaplanek flew in the Bob Millar crew with S/Sgt. Gerald Adams. *See crew photo below.*



Front row, l to r: Donald Kaplanek, waist gunner; Julian Counts, engineer; Richard Keen, radio operator; William Grooms, waist gunner; David Goble, tail turret gunner; Gerald Adams, ball turret gunner. Back row, l to r: Abram Pendleton, pilot; Robert Millar, co-pilot; John Pramak, navigator; Israel Katz, bombardier.

Eldred Specht (743) made his Final Flight on March 17, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Specht, of Mariposa,

California. Eldred was the ball turret gunner from Tim Swearingen's crew. All his life, he was able to wear his WWII - era Olive Drab Class A uniform, along with Bob Armstrong. Carl Barr was Navigator on his crew.

1st Lt. Howard Shaffer (741) took his final flight on October 28, 2005. He is survived by his wife Anne Shaffer.

Editor's Note: Please see the accompanying article (page 23) about a June 20, 1944 incident in which Lt. Shaffer's crew bailed out over the Grand Canyon in Arizona after an engine failure.

Elberon Grayson Andrews took his final flight on March 20, 2006 at age 81.

He lived in Colorado Springs. He was a member of the 455th when they were training, and broke an eardrum as they were getting ready to go overseas. He was hospitalized in New Hampshire, and delayed the crew.

A guard was put on him in the hospital, as the Army knew he would get out and go with the crew, if possible.

Sgt. Milton Kaplan (743) of Scottsdale, AZ. took his final flight on Feb. 25, 2006. He is survived by his lovely wife Doris. Milton submitted several items for publication in the newsletter in years past.

Final Flights for which Editor has limited information

1st Lt. Karl Anderson (742) made a final flight June 1, 2005.

T/Sgt. Donald Bauer (741) took his final flight in 2005.

Lt. Col. Robert Boldt (742) made a final flight May 5, 2005.

Capt. Andrew Graham (742) took his final flight in 2005.

1st Lt. Robert Greenquist (743) took his final flight on March 1, 2005.

M/Sgt. Hubert "Hub" Vreatt (743) took his final flight on May 5, 2005.

God Bless these brave
veterans and their families

Can You Help?

I am a Czech aviation historian. I learned that on Oct. 14, 1944, in Czech territory, one American airman bailed out and was found dead.

According to local archives, he was named Edward W. RUYTER (born 1922), 455th BG/741 BS, personnel number O-776804.

He was buried in local cemetery and in 1946 exhumed. Unfortunately, I can't find his name in the roster of the 455th BG history book. On that day, Oct. 14, 1944, there was the Bleckhammer Refinery mission.

Please, could you tell me if you have any information about this case? Thank you very much for your answer.

Regards,
Vaculik Svatopluk, RNDr.
svatopluk.vaculik@ub.cz (or)
atavel@netscape.net

455th BOMB GROUP
ASSOCIATION GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 22, 2005
Kansas City, Missouri

The General Membership of the 455th Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc. met in the "Century A" room of the Westin Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri, on Saturday, October 22, 2005. Association President Bill Gemmill presided, assisted by Executive Director Gregory Riggs.

The meeting was called to order at 0905 hours by Bill Gemmill. The minutes of the October 11, 2003 General Membership meeting were read and accepted as written.

Greg Riggs briefly explained to the membership Gus Wendt's medical issues, and why he had assumed, by vote of the Board of Directors, Gus' responsibilities on May 30, 2005.

He then briefed the members on the present association membership and financial condition. There are presently 626 individuals on the association mailing list of which 377 are life members and 116 are widows of former members. The association had just over \$16,600 coming into the reunion, but much of the reunion expenses have not yet been paid.

Greg Riggs presented the majority recommendation of the Board of Directors that the Association hold annual reunions beginning in 2006.

Associated with this proposal was a proposal to attempt to combine reunion efforts with other 15th Air Force B-24 associations for future reunions.

After much discussion of the pros and cons of these issues, the membership approved two decisions. The first was to begin annual reunions but to defer that change until 2007. The second was to attempt to join forces with other 15th Air Force bomber associations.

Greg Riggs said he would begin with 304th Bomb Wing B-24 associations, then expand as necessary to other 15th Air Force B-24 associations, then expand as necessary to 15th Air Force B-17 associations. The proposed arrangement would be similar to this year's effort with the 454th Bomb Group Association; i.e.: separate reunions held at the same time and location. No decision was made concerning the location of the next reunion because of the flexibility required in coordinating with other associations. General guidelines would be a central-U.S. location, and avoiding extreme cold and high altitudes.

Greg Riggs informed the members that the Board of Directors had amended the by-laws concerning the composition of the Board. The requirement to have ten directors, in addition to the officers, was amended to have six-to-ten directors. He then presented the nominating committee's proposed slate of officers for the next two years.

The proposed officers were elected. Greg Riggs then presented the nominating committee's proposed slate of five directors, who were also elected. An additional five directors were nominated from the floor and they were also elected.

The results for the coming two years are:

William (Bill) Gemmill,
President
Francis (Frank) Lashinsky,
Past President
Roderick (Rod) Clarke,
Vice President
James (Jim) Smith,
Secretary
Gregory (Greg) Riggs,
Executive Director/Treasurer
Carl Loiocano,
Continuing Director
James Gould, III,
Continuing Director
John Davis,
Continuing Director
Craig Ward,
Continuing Director
Elmo Henske,
Incoming Director
Ted Tronoff,
Incoming Director
Ormond Buffington,
Incoming Director
Carl Barr,
Incoming Director
Bill Crawford,
Incoming Director
George Underwood,
Incoming Director.

Gene Hudson asked if anything had been considered to honor Gus Wendt for his eight years of service as Executive Director/Treasurer.

The membership was informed that the Board of