



THE FILE COPY TORRETTA FLYER

Torretta Flyer No. 10 Redondo Beach, California 90277 Spring 1984

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, AND IT'S MANY ATTRACTIONS, GIRD THEMSELVES FOR THE 1984 REUNION SET FOR MAY 31, THROUGH JUNE 3, 1984



The planes are gone now, but 40 years later, the men who flew and maintained the B-24's of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups, shown above, will meet again for their 4th reunion in Orlando, Florida.

INSIDE

1984 Reunion Information	1
Association News	2
Message from the President	3
"I Wanted Wings" - Poem	3
Submitted by Joe Bryant (765 Sq.)	
Supplement to Membership Roster	4
Sick Call	6
Special Intelligence Report No. 110 (continued from Flyer No. 9)	6
The Last Mission	11
The Last Flight of Crew #14	12
by Tefry Ross (765 Sq.)	
Mission No. One	18
Mail Call	20
Escape Statements	23
Photo Pages	25
1984 Reunion Registration Forms (Duplicate)	Insert

The Orlando Hyatt, the Kennedy Space Center, Disneyworld, Epcot, Sea World, and other attractions have put out the welcome mat for the 1984 Reunion attendees. You'll be interested to note that 60% will arrive by car and 32% will use air transportation. 73% of the attendees plan to visit Disneyworld/Epcot and 56% of you want to go to Kennedy Space Center. 25% of the Association Membership have sent in their tear slips indicating their plans to attend this year's reunion. Of these, more members who have one previous reunion outnumber slightly the ones who will be attending for the first time.

The 1984 Reunion promises to reunite more crews and buddies than ever before. Members are urged to send their prepaid registration forms in promptly. To avoid disappointment (Orlando hotels fill up fast) mail the hotel reservation card NOW.

You'll note the corrected registration form and hotel reservation card is duplicated elsewhere in this Flyer. Please observe the May 25, 1984 cutoff date for the Reunion Reservation Form, and the May 1st cutoff date for guaranteed hotel rooms and rates. From past experience, we know that the 250 rooms blocked off for us will go very quickly.

REUNION NOTES: MEMBERS, GUESTS AND FRIENDS are reminded to bring photo albums, movies, slides, video cassettes, newspapers, documents and memorabilia for display in the Hospitality Room and for sharing during the Squadron Mixers. We will arrange for the necessary projection equipment. A bulletin board will be located near the registration desk for the posting of announcements and notices for the convenience of our guests.



The Active Committees

The following members and members' wives are serving on the various committees:

Publicity:

Bill Harrison-764 Sq.
Jim Van Nostrand-765 Sq.

Flags:

Ginny Dudley-764 Sq.
Mary Lou Watkins-825 Sq.

Address Update:

James Dooley-766 Sq.
Rita Rees-764 Sq.

Memorial Scholarship:

Chris Donaldson-765 Sq.
Ed Goree-764 Sq.

Committee reports will be given at the Annual Meeting, (Friday, June 1, 1984 at 7 PM)

About the Dues Increase

Upon the urging of many of our members and our CPA, dues for 1984 were raised to \$15.00 per year. We regret the delay in making the announcement, as we had to wait for the hotel reservation cards before mailing Torretta Bulletin No. 2. We want to thank the many members who prepaid their 1984 dues early, and then sent in the additional \$5.00 on their own.

Computer Fund

Through your support, the Computer Fund is beginning to grow but we have a long way to go yet. Keep those tax-exempt donations coming in!



THE TORRETTA FLYER

Official Publication of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups

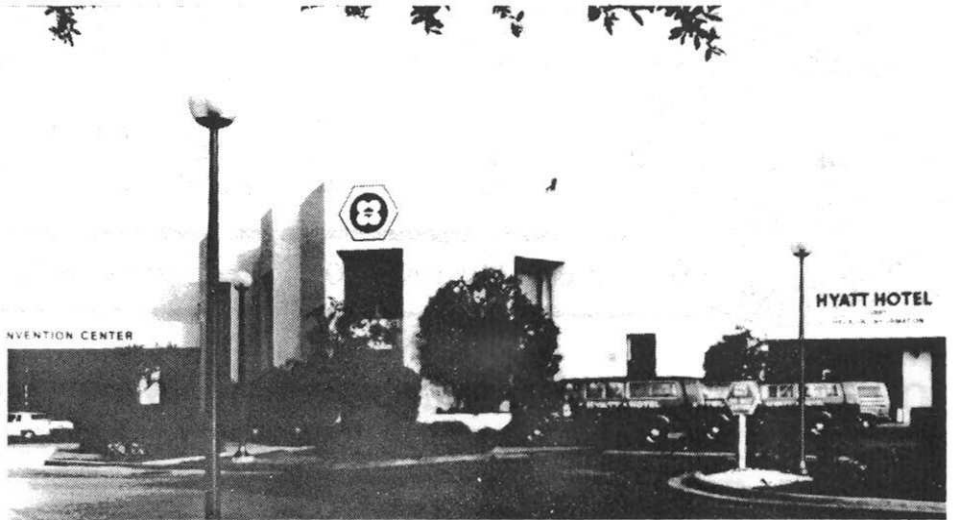
Association is distributed several times a year to members of the Association.

Editor: Bud Markel
Associate Editor: Bea Markel

The Association welcomes stories and photos for use in future issues. Direct all inquiries to Editor, Torretta Flyer, 1122 Ysabel St., Redondo Beach, California 90277. Phone (213) 316-3330.

Design & production by Gunn Graphic Design

Reproduction prohibited without permission.
Copyright © 1984
by the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association.



The Hyatt Orlando is Central Florida's largest convention/resort facility. With 960 rooms and over 45,000 square feet of meeting space, the Hyatt offers the finest facilities for vacation guests or convention delegates.



Group Navigator Marion Pruitt (l) 461st B.G. reviews a route map with 461st B.G. Group C.O., Col. Glantzburg, prior to a bombing mission.
(James C. Dooley photo -461st B.G.)



Our Red Cross Girl, Ellie Mae, at 461st B.G. Headquarters, summer or fall 1944.

(George Brinker photo-461st B.G.)

Additional List of Contributors to the Memorial Scholarship Fund Since Torretta Flyer #9 Publication

Dan C. Paul	827
Richard E. Brown	824
Mrs. C. Richard "Skipper" Ellis	827
Harry Hoermann	767
William Lovett, Jr.	767
Joel Fish	766
Claude Schroeder	827
Frank J. Valdez	826
James Van Nostrand	765
Harold Reeve	766
Fred Dunn	766
James R. Johnson	764
Paul W. Kerr	826
Al Mai	765
Charles G. Shaffer, Jr.	827
Tom Hendry	764
William A. Lecuyer	766
Ralph Seeman	766
Edward Schrader	767
Leonard J. Roederer	767
Carl R. Shank	764
Oscar Detweiler	765
John M. Billings	825
Norman W. Caudill	766
Franz Holscher	766
Ralph J. Hallenbeck	824
Edgar A. Squires	767

Who are Our Members?

We are proud to list here the relatives of Association personell who have opted to become members of our Association:

Christopher C. Bruner	764 (O)
Bob Foster	764 (C)
Rita H. Rees	764 (W)
Michael DeSpain	765 (O)
Edith C. Dusenberry	765 (W)
"Skipper" Ellis	827 (W)
Virginia Lowerins	766 (W)
Virginia M. Malott	766 (W)
Cecilia C. Obloy	766 (W)
Mrs. Anthony Puente	766 (W)
Matilda E. Mente	461 (W)
Mildred Brubeck	827 (W)
David DeLong	825 (I)

W=Widow O=Offspring C=Cousin I=In-Law

Message From The President

The great air fleets are gone. The flak batteries stilled and the parachutes belong to sportsmen who jump for fun. The bombers and fighters have been resmelted many times over to appear as 747s and the like, but who remembers? The sacrifices of airmen and soldiers of the opposing nations—who remembers? The fear and exultation of air combat, the emotional churning that makes a man sweat at 40 below, what takes place in the brain of a man when missions fail, when rendezvous are missed and weather mixes friends and foe alike? When a slight miscalculation or flak burst throws ships into collision, when a damn bomb shackle hangs up and a 500 G.P. bomb gives up its protecting propellers to threaten a whole 3 ship element? Who records the anxiety of the moment?

The tired bomber slams down hard on the Italian earth, blowing a tire and slewing at a crazy angle, leaving a trail of bright red sparks, tearing up yards of laced landing mat. A bomb drops blowing the tail off, tossing the wreck skyward to land upside down in a huge dust cloud. Who watches, frozen in fear? To this aim, this issue is dedicated. To facilitate improved future issues of The Torretta Flyer, that hopefully will become a respected historical journal, we are asking writers, editors, and artists to form a Torretta Flyer Staff, to create and assemble a magazine that will record the history we all were so much a part of. Members interested in joining the Flyer staff can contact me by mail or at the reunion in Orlando.
SEE YOU ALL IN ORLANDO!!!
BUD MARKEL 827 Sq.



I Wanted Wings

I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddam things.
Now, I don't want 'em any more;
They taught me how to fly; and sent me here to die.
I got a belly-full of war.
You can save those zeros for those goddam heros,
But those D.F.C.'s do not compensate for losses.
Buster, I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddam things,
Now I don't want 'em any more.

I don't want to fly in a damn old PBY—
That's for the eager—not for me.
I don't trust to luck, to be picked up in a duck.
After I've crashed into the sea.
Oh, I'd sooner be a bell hop, than a flier on a flat-top
With my hand around a bottle—not around a goddam throttle.

Chorus

Buster, I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddam things,
Now I don't want 'em any more.

I don't want a tour over Berlin, or the Rhine.
Flak always makes me bolt my lunches.
For me there's no hey-hey
When they holler "bombs away"
I'd rather be home with the bunch.
And there's one thing you can't laugh off—
That's when they shoot your ass off,
And I'd rather go home, Buster,
With my ass than with a cluster.

Chorus

They wake you up to fly in the middle of the night,
Breakfast at a quarter after four.
You crawl out of the sack, and you think about the flak.
That's what's so tough about this war.
Now you take the truck to briefing, you can hear a lot of beefing.
If the target's not a milk haul,
you had better go on sick call.

Chorus

You walk into S-2, and you wish you had a few.
Christ, there's the target on the wall.
It's rougher than a cob, and I'll bet you this, by God.
That you'll be listening for recall.
You can bet you old banana, that we're heading for Vienna;
If you thought a little faster,
You'd have joined the quartermaster.

Chorus

Air combat's called romance, but it makes me wet my pants.
I'm not a fighter, I have learned.
I'll take the dames, and let the rest go down in flames.
I've no desire to be burned.
You can save those Mitsubishi, for those sons-of-bitches,
But I'd rather have a woman, than the cockpit of a Grumman.

Chorus

They filled me full of poop, when they sent me to the Group.
That's where all my troubles began.
If I had stayed at home and never crossed the foam,
I'd have my ass out of this jam.
When the rockets start a-bustin' and the gunners start a 'cussin',
That's the time I wish I was back in Ohio or Cleveland.

Chorus

They got me in the middle, and they tho't they had me diddled.
That's where I fooled them one and all.
In 1944, I fought this goddam war.
Boy! I was really on the ball.
Said the General "Ain't it purtty", when he pinned it on my shirt;
For a moment I was ABTO,—but now I'm just another "Joe".
Buster, I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddam things,
Now, I don't want 'em any more.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This Roster is issued solely for the purposes of communication between members of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups Association and is not to be transferred or used for any commercial purpose. The Association will terminate membership of anyone violating this declaration.

The information compiled in this Supplement is current as of the date of publication.



MARCH 1984

461ST GROUP HDQTRS.

Address Change
Lyman M. Delemeter
P.O. Box 7312
Canyon Lake, CA 92380
#461006 (Winter)
Rt. 1 Box 29C
Eureka, MT 59917 (Summer)

764TH SQUADRON NEW MEMBERS

Robert Arndt
2201 Greenside Drive
Valrico, FL 33594
#764116
Armante R. D'Amante
362 N. State St.
Concord, NH 03301
#764113
Charles D. Crowe
1604 Dearing Road
Memphis, TN 38117
#764119
Victor W. Davis
84-01 Main Street
Briarwood, NY 11435
#764114
Joseph W. Doody
2022 Broad Avenue NW
Canton, OH 44708
#764115
Richard P. Duwe
R-3 Box 72
Mukwonago, WI 53149
#764117
Bob Foster
115 East Locust St.
Lebanon, PA 17042
#764120

John T. Jackson
141 Alto Court
West Branch, MI 48661
#764112

John P. Joyce
9305 62nd Place W.
Mukelteo, WA 98275
#764123

Albert Keller, Jr.
1810 Greenview Ave.
Kankakee, IL 60901
#764124

Edward A. Nahkunst
519 Summit
Richardson, TX 75081
#764121

John G. Oliver
750 Old Trail Drive
Naples, FL 33940
#764118

Robert G. Olshin
7492 Malibu Crescent
Boca Raton, FL 33433
#764105

John F. Wilson
Box 175
Double Springs, AL 35553
#764122

764TH SQUADRON ADDRESS CHANGES

Milton P. Dionne
4201 Jean St.
Port Arthur, TX 77642
#764052
Richard L. Durand
SR #3, Box 104
Northwoods Drive
Chugiak, AK 99567
#764016
Walter J. Galloway
8150 Dingess Ave.
Hamlin, WV 25523
#764025
Marvin Weinstein
14 Canterbury Lane
Unionville, CT 06085-1609
#764072

Charles H. Dudding
9824 S. Irvington Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74137
#764093

765TH SQUADRON NEW MEMBERS

Hugh G. Baker
415 Lytle Cl.
Memphis, TN 38122
#765096
Leonard H. Bathhurst, Jr.
6163 E. Alluvial Ave.
Clovis, CA 93612
#765089
Edith C. Dusenberry
4895 Edgewood Drive
Provo, UT 84601
#765094

Mel Gidez
F-2 Franklin Square
Randolph, MA 02368
#765091

Milton A. Klarsfeld
16 Harding
Albany, NY 12208
#765095

Devere (Bud) McRorie
RD #1 Box 291A
Endicott, NY 13760
#765097

Elza S. Massie
814½ Washington
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
#765090

Elias E. Moses
2134 Kenneth Ave.
Arnold, PA 15068
#765092

James P. Strano
59 Schiller
Buffalo, NY 14206
#765093

765TH SQUADRON ADDRESS CHANGES

Irving Kaufman
820 S. Hollybrook Drive
Bld. 57 Apt. 205
Pembroke Pines, FL 33025
#765067
Malcolm L. Leech, Jr.
2815 Selma
Ft. Worth, TX 76111
#765086
Norman L. Hallett
555 N. Pantano Lot 241
Tucson, AZ 85710
#765051 (Oct-May)
Tom C. Long
3317 NW 20
Oklahoma City, OK
73107-3005
#765030

766TH SQUADRON NEW MEMBERS

John C. Bon Tempo
200 James Thurber Court
Falls Church, VA 22046
#766099
James F. Breuil, Jr.
13025 Arch Creek Terrace
No. Miami, FL 33181
#766103
Joseph L. Coffey
9241 E. Berry Ave.
Englewood, CO 80111
#766100
Joel Fish
165K Cross Slope Ct.
Covered Bridge
Englishtown, NJ 07726
#766102

W. Richard Kassian
2140 Willowick Sq.
Columbus, OH 43229
#766097 **

Howard W. Kavanaugh
1092 South Lewis Road
Collegetown, PA 19426
#766098

Dale D. King
3414 Croyden Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
#766100

Spencer L. Newcomer, Jr.
#3 Terrace Lane
Port Richey, FL 33568
#766104

DECEASED

Albert W. Tokar
202 Clubhouse Circle
Jupiter, FL 33458
#766003 9/23/83

766TH SQUADRON ADDRESS CHANGES

John J. Edwards
1941 Lakeview Road
Canby Park
Wilmington, DE 19805
#766020
James T. Jones
P.O. Box 702
Byers, CO 80103
#766064
Harrison G. Word
157 E. Treasure Way
San Antonio, TX
78209
#766051

CORRECTIONS

James English
Box 1094
Juneau, AK 99802
#766091
Wasil (Bill) Glushko
2123 Red Rock Drive
Dayton, OH 45431
#766039

James A. Schreck
4673 Ebenezer Road
Cincinnati, OH 45248
#766092

Henry F. Simcox
52-30 65th Place
Maspeth, NY 11378
#766058

767TH SQUADRON NEW MEMBERS

Socrates Delanedis
2132 Trafalgar
Riverside, CA 92506
#766103
Arthur G. Hermansen
313 Paulette Drive
Newport News, VA 23602
#767106

Robert K. Jones
3721 Jomar Drive
Napa, CA 94558
#767104
Thomas K. McGuire
Rt. 1 Box 330
Okanogan, WA 98840
#767107
D.R. Perkins
7120 Salizar St.
San Diego, CA 92111
#767109

Carl H. Peter
2523 Eye St. NW
Washington, DC
#767108 20037
Pete Zenovieff
1521 Mikon Street
Bryte, CA 95605
#767064
Luther M. Kessler
RR#1 Box 115
Morocco, IN 47963
#767110

**767TH SQUADRON
ADDRESS CHANGES**

Frank Skroski
16 Elm Circle
South Deerfield, MA 01373
#767071
Harold J. Seberle
818 Redfield Drive
Port Richey, FL 33568
#767024
Ed Kotarksi
2276 Lakewood Ct.
Nokomis, FL 33555
#767073

CORRECTIONS

A.E. (Hank) Aldredge
873 Bransford Court
Fairfield, CT 94533
#767098
Bob C. Ferguson
3801 Lynbrook, Dr. NE
Cedar Rapids, IA
52404
#767058

Wallace W. Robinson
3 East Cardott
Ridgway, PA 15853
#767029

**484TH GROUP HDQTRS.
NEW MEMBERS**

Thomas F. Moseley
2624 Heath Lane
Duluth, GA 30136
#484017
Christopher Pollock
7437 N. Haven Ave.
Portland OR 97203
#484016
Thomas Sainsbury
67 Palmer Drive
Pawcatuck, CT 06379
#484018

**824TH SQUADRON
NEW MEMBERS**

Morris B. Burke, Jr.
207 Hazelwood
Barberton, OH 44203
#824099
Bernard R. Button
6807 Alan Hale Drive
San Antonio, TX 78240
#824092
John S. Howell
3479 W. Vickery Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76107
#824100
George Ray Johnson
117 Vernada Place
Medford, OR 97501
#824098
Richard King
1313 Rounds
Delano, CA 93215
#824097
Herbert G. Larson
150 Worcester St.
West Boylston, MA 01583
#824095
Newton D. Lewis
P.O. Box 528
Greenville, PA 16125
#824101

Frank Mendes
P.O. Box 434
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
#824094
Glen L. Moss
408 Garfield St.
Burlington, WI 53105
#824096
Victor J. Seely
8678 E. Roosevelt Circle
Scottsdale, AZ 85267
#824092
Virgil C. Vaughan
Rt. #1 Box 209
Waelder, TX 78959
#824091

**824TH SQUADRON
ADDRESS CHANGES**

Ralph J. Hallenbeck
3035 Hiway A1A Apt. 2B
Melbourne Beach, FL 32951
#824080
Karl W. Nittel
P.O. Box 18
South Chatham, MA 02659
#824025
Harold T. Toomey
115 Pinebrook Drive
Rochester, NY 14616
#824023

**825TH SQUADRON
NEW MEMBERS**

Elvin W. Brush
932 Valerie Lane
Modesto, CA 95350
#825080

Jess Compton
515 So. Ave. R.
Post, TX 79356
#825084
David D. Dixon
East Road
Richmond, MA 01254
#825084
Robert A. Harrison
P.O. Box 68
Lowell, NC 28098
#825085
Hank Kramer
P.O. Box 280
Fulton, TX 78358
#825087
Mel Marchese
1050 Harriett St.
Port Charlotte, FL 33950
#825082
Robert E. Self
306 Oakridge Rd.
Cary, NC 27511
#825083

**825TH SQUADRON
ADDRESS CHANGES**

Walter W. Bondarchuck
Rt. 3 Box 95AA
Beaufort, NC 28516
#825057 ***
Robert E. Fritts
1881 Dormitory Road
Rescue, CA 95672-9605
#825019
Joseph W. Watkins
451 San Miguel
Santa Paula, CA 93060
#825068

CORRECTIONS

Harry R. Watkins
14373 Cohasset St.
Van Nuys, CA 91405
#825015 * * * * *

**826TH SQUADRON
NEW MEMBERS**

Chester Roy Evans
6522 W. Glenrosa
Phoenix, AZ 85033
#826077
Vincent Fornieri
1308 C Street
Elmont, NY 11003
#826082
Albert Krapf
22 Oceanview Road
Lynbrook, NY 11563
#826083
Max Lockwood
c/o Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 112
Douglas, GA 31533
#826078
Francis J. Mitchell
P.O. Box 72
8 Old Shipyard Lane
Hanover, MA 02339
#826084

Kenneth Monsell
Box 94
Reedsville, PA 17084
#826079
Harold F. Noel
214 S. Jackson
Benton, IL 62812
#826086
Chester A. Ray
14521 Winter Drive
Lutz, FL 33549
#826081
Thomas C. Shortell
4531 E. 7th St.
Tucson, AZ 85711
#826085
David R. Ward
30 Glecker Road
Portland, ME 04103
#826087

**827TH SQUADRON
NEW MEMBERS**

Howard L. Hatch
2710 S. Hametown Rd.
Norton, OH 44203
#827086
Robert E. Hatch
1224 Mayfair Road
Jacksonville, FL 32207
#827081
Leroy A. Hamilton
1208 Ave. B
Dodge City, KS 67801
#827084
Patrick W. Layne, Jr.
23 Battlefield Circle
Route 5
Ringgold, GA 30736
#827082
Marshall M. Mallory
P.O. Box 782
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
#827083
Gilbert Eugene Stover
11 Northampton Rd.
Timonium, MD 21093
#827080

Marvin H. Watson
Kenly, NC 27542
#827085
Arthur W. Shaw
Rt. 4, 40 Lavera Drive
Midland, TX 79701
#827087

**827TH SQUADRON
ADDRESS CHANGES**

Glenn A. Lloyd
6204 S. Valley Drive
Murray, UT 84107
#827029
John L. Mulligan
108 Julia Street
Prattville, AL 36067
#827006
Victor J. Cerasi
2504 Bryn Mawr Ave.
Ardmore, PA 19002
#827078

Sick Call

Edwin W. "Pat" Grogan is in a rest home with Alzheimer's Disease, reports his wife Grace R. Grogan, of 125 -5th st. Silverton, Oregon 97381. She welcomes correspondence from members and friends who know "Pat" Grogan -461st Hdqtrs.

Letter dated December 30, 1983, received from Rose Fornieri, wife of Vincent Fornieri (826th Sq. - missing in action 14 Oct. 1944, returned to duty 22 Nov. 1944)

"Dear Mr. Markel: I am sorry for the delay in sending the 1983 membership but unfortunately due to illness, there were priorities. Vince was hospitalized at Sloan Kettering-Cancer Memorial Hospital for a pancreatic resection earlier this year. Thanks be to God, his cancer was completely removed and although he is still recuperating, the prognosis is excellent. I do hope you've enjoyed a healthy and happy holiday season and pray that 1984 will bring better days for everyone. Thank you for your indulgence."

Sincerely, Rose Fornieri

Address: 1308 "C" Street, Elmont New York 11003



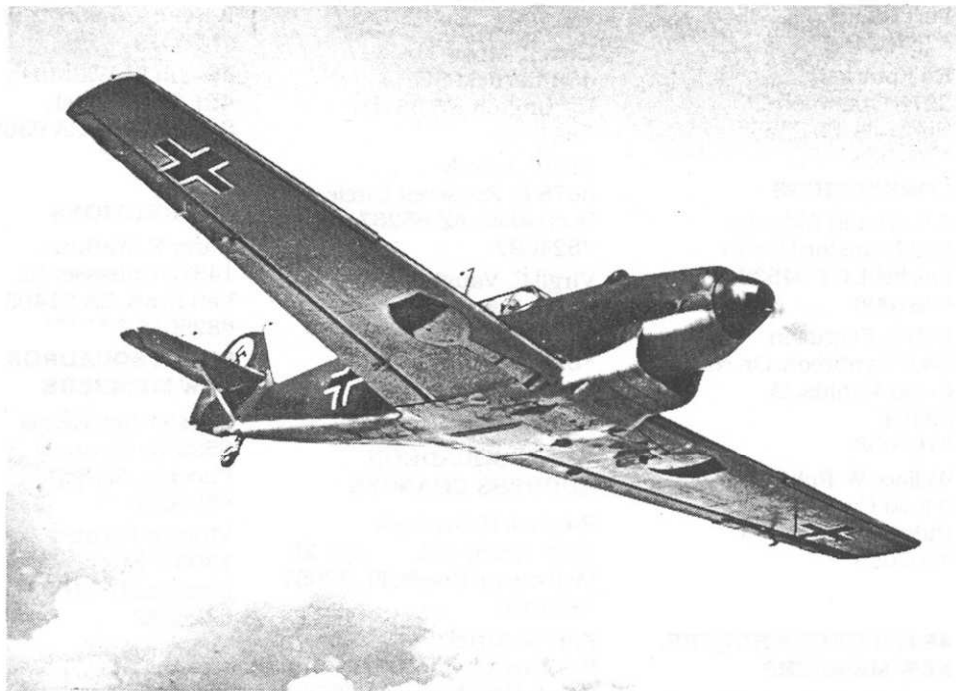
LT/COL. "Pat" Grogan (R), command staff 461st B.G. is shown with Brig/Gen Samuel M. Connell (L) and Maj. Burke (C). Photo taken 29 March 1944. (Harry Oglesby photo 767 Sq.)

Special Intelligence Report (continued from Flyer #9)

EDITOR'S NOTE

The aircraft on the front cover of The Torretta Flyer No. 9 is a FW190 symbolic of the German Air Force's emphasis on fighter planes. While this type of aircraft was suited to the defense of their homeland, the need for long range 4 engine bombers was evident during the battle of Britain when it was shown that the twin engine HE111 had insufficient range to penetrate deep into the English heartland to destroy war production. During the height of the battle of Britain when the English were nearly on their knees, a trickle of Spitfires and Hurricanes continued to be received by Fighter Squadrons from factories out of range of the German bombers. When targets were within range, the German bomber force could wreak terrible havoc. As exemplified by the devastating attack on Bari harbor in December 1943, sending to the bottom Allied shipping containing supplies for the newly formed 15th Air Force. The Douglas B-19 an early experimental bomber shown on the back cover, gives contrast between the Allied bomber forces and the fighters of Germany. The plane shown on page 28 of Torretta Flyer #9 is a Consolidated B-32 heavy bomber that was used briefly in the Pacific War. It was a big brother of the B-24.

With the start of raids into the REICH proper, which took them first to the RUHR district, then the industrial areas of the UPPER RHINE, then beyond the



MAIN. DARMSTADT, LUDWIGSHAFEN, the so-called defense of the REICH was initiated. We had a Fighter "Gruppe" of about thirty aircraft, at our disposal in HOLLAND. Twenty of them were operational. We also had at our disposal in the REICH the fighter schools with the so-called operational 'Schwarme'. They consisted of one or two 'Schwarme' that is four or eight aircraft piloted by instructors. We had at our disposal the so-called industrial 'Schwarme' manned by in-

dustrial test pilots. That was the fighting force which was the foundation of the REICH. What happened to this fighting force was that they also on account of their lack of experience had heavy losses and little success. Then we started denuding our front lines; we brought up fighter formations from the South, from the Southeast, from the East, from the West, in order to obtain more or less adequate fighting force with which to oppose that assault. 'Divisions' were

formed: seven fighter 'Divisionen'; whenever we actually went into operation, each fighter 'Division' had from thirty to fifty aircraft in the air. That is to say, if two fighter 'Divisionen' both threw in their aircraft together. These raids proved the impossibility of operating according to old principles or to principles which were all right in the East; that is to say to send them up simply on the strength of 'Fluko' reports; a thoroughly reliable ground control had to be developed. I shall skip this development as it would take me too far afield. Finally the defense of the REICH was as follows: the 'Divisionen' who were to put fighters into operation, received detailed reports about enemy raids from 'Korps' and from their own range-finding posts. As soon as the first aircraft took off in ENGLAND and reached a height of 500 m we received the report: "Assembly has started in ENGLAND." Then the assembly was continuously observed until they started to leave, as soon as the assembling of those many hundreds of aircraft, a thing which presents colossal technical difficulties, was completed. Then their flight was followed, to establish where they were going, whether they were heading due East, or North across the NORTH SEA or South-East. From all those items we formed our decisions. The 'Divisionen' for day fighting were able to make use of battle HQs which had already been prepared for the night fighters. Slight alterations were necessary but on the whole this huge apparatus could be used for direction by day too. Then the formations got the take-off order: "Take off at such-and-such an hour." Usually ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before. Assembly-point for instance at the end of 1943 or beginning of 1944 - HANOVER and BRUNSWICK, at a height of 8000 m. Then all the formations flew to that area and assembled at the prescribed height. After assembling, this close formation of 50, 80, 100, 150 aircraft was directed towards the enemy formation until it sighted them. As soon as it sighted the enemy the leader of the formation had the task of organizing the attack in whatever way seemed most favorable. This control was fairly easy as long as there was no fighter escort present. The first attacks, which were carried out without fighter escorts, were easier to combat and were easier for the ground control to direct than they were in later developments. The most famous and widely known was that attack on the ball-bearing factory at SCHWEINFURT, which resulted in the first large victories, which, I believe, were announced as 140 aircraft. 140 aircraft were announced as having been shot down, 67 or 68 were actually found on REICH territory and in the occupied countries i.e. barely half the number announced - and about 300 were reported as having been shot down. How can one explain that? Is it simply the

pilot's dishonesty or are there other reasons? I can assure you that there are other reasons, and one of them is as follows: in an air battle everything happens so tremendously quickly that the whole thing is over in a few seconds. One fellow fires on an aircraft and it catches on fire, in the same instant a second fighter, say further behind on the right, fires at the same aircraft; the pilot sees that it's on fire; still a third fighter comes up and in his excitement doesn't see that it's on fire, opens fire on it as well, and suddenly the bomber falls earthwards. Result: three fighters report shooting down an aircraft. In addition to all that: after air battles like those, aircraft always landed all over the place, fighters which took off from MUNICH landed in HOLLAND, on the NORTH SEA coast, or in the industrial area, and there they handed in the reports of their victories at the airfield HQ. In addition to which the pilot rang his home airfield and said "I shot one down." Again a duplicated report. Why? Because the authorities have demanded to know within two hours the exact numbers of aircraft shot down. I know of one single instance only where a 'Divisions-kommandeur' refused to pass on a report, because the 'General' ... was rung up maybe three, four, five times by the REICHSMARSCHALL. "How many aircraft did your fighters shoot down?" and he kept repeating: "I can't say; they haven't arrived back yet; they landed all over the place; if I do tell you, the reports may turn out false."

Why weren't the successes any greater? At that time the 'Defense of the REICH' had already about 250 to 300 fighter aircraft. The long-range-fighter-bomber Geschwader 26, to which I belonged, was then also withdrawn from both the Eastern and Southern fronts and put on to REICH defense. You will have noticed that it never happened either in the East or the South that 50, 80 or 100 of our aircraft flew in a body and carried out any major operation. In RUSSIA they flew in 'Rotten' of two or 'Schwarme' of four. The fighters, that is. What were the long range fighter-bombers doing? They had been dropping bombs and had thereby lost all feeling for flying as fighters, and now, thanks to a situation forced on us by the enemy, thanks to the huge formations in which they fly in and which in turn can only be attacked with huge formations, our fighter arm suddenly had to conduct the fight in a strength to which it was never accustomed. The few who could have done it right from the beginning of the war were no longer there, they had already been killed. As a result only individual dog-fights developed in all those raids. An enormous number of us arrived, a crew of 30, 50 sometimes 60 aircraft, but each pilot simply attacked wildly at random. Result: Each of them was shot down wildly at random. The long-range-fighter-

bombers and the Fw 190 then received, in addition to their other armament, the so-called 'mortar-shell' 21 cm, the one you know from the 'Nebelwerfer'. That would have been a marvelous thing had we had the necessary sights for it. Two such 'mortar howitzers' were built into each wing of the '110' for instance, making four mortars in all; the fuze was ... at 1000 or 1200m. It kept changing during this experimental stage. Some very good successes were actually scored with it; my predecessor shot down two four-engined aircraft with one round from it. Their fuselages simply broke in half and the two huge things plunged earthwards. But, taking it all round, one had to say that successes due to the 'mortar-shell' were infinitesimal, in fact so few that it was withdrawn again. I had no instrument in the aircraft for calculating exactly how far away I was from the enemy aircraft. The only means I had was that so-called 'Reflex' sight. That's an illuminated circle with a graticule in it, there's a target ... in it, rather similar to a telescopic sight, and I know that when the Boeing takes up a third of the diameter I am 1000 m away from it. But it's impossible to say whether it's exactly 1000 m or 1100 m or 900 m. That's why it kept occurring that people fired at too great a range; especially the inexperienced crews were always afraid of those huge aircraft which already had so many victories to their credit, so they didn't wait to open fire at 1000 m but fired at 1500 m, 2000 m and 2500 m. The 'mortar-shell' also had a bad effect on the pilots; they wouldn't close in any more but remained at a distance at which it was impossible to engage in combat. That's why, having introduced that 'mortar-shell' in the Autumn of 1943, they started to remove the thing again at the beginning of 1944, and rightly so, as I had to admit afterwards, although I was all for it in the beginning.

After that lack of success a strongly-worded order was received from the REICHSMARSCHALL in which he again reminded fighter pilots of their duty to protect the FATHERLAND, to get to close grips with and shoot down the enemy, and ordered that the attack be delivered from behind and that fire must not be opened until the range had closed to 400 m. If one can get to within that distance, there's a lot of point in what he said, but we have already seen that the probability of attaining that range was extremely small. That was because it's also harder to shoot down an aircraft from the front. Naturally, the inexperienced crews had little success when they started attacking from the front and only after half a dozen operations did they find out how it should be done and really record some successes. For these reasons, there were the strictest orders that the attack must come from the rear and anyone who didn't comply was court-martialed. Re-

sult: our fighter forces which was already sickening under a shortage of experienced pilots, obstinately pressed home its attacks from the rear and were equally obstinately shot down. It was dreadful to see; they approached from the rear, flying in closest formation, and doing a slightly greater speed than the enemy and 50, 60, 70% or even greater percentage of them were shot down.

To the existing dilemma there was added, at the end of 1943 or beginning of 1944, the Allied fighter escort, the American long distance fighter, the Thunderbolt and then the Mustang. The first time the Thunderbolts escorted them as far as the RHINE everyone was horrified and utterly confounded - what ever next? Then they got auxiliary tanks and flew as far as HANOVER. The troops reported this but they were laughed at and were told they were seeing things; "It's impossible for a fighter to fly that far," said our GOC Fighters and said the REICHSMARSCHALL - nobody dared tell the FUHRER that that it was possible for enemy fighters to fly so far into REICH territory. The GOC fighter himself took off with his inspector in order to have a look and see how his fighters pressed home their attack. He was fortunate enough to meet four Mustangs and the Mustangs took him in charge and chased him all the way to BERLIN, so then he knew how far the things could fly and believed it; but despite that no one dared report the air situation to the FUHRER. Orders to our fighter pilots remained the same, to avoid air battles with enemy fighters and go solely for the bombers. I should like to add here that by the beginning of 1944 no one was attacking from the rear anymore, despite the 'Reichsmarschall's' orders and despite the fact that this order is still in force today; it was just impossible. I have several times requested, even in writing, that that order be rescinded, but it was in vain. That order which I mentioned earlier, to attack only the four-engined bombers, is, of course, understandable insofar as it was only the bombers which were a nuisance to us, because it was they that dropped the bombs. The order was, however, psychologically wrong. When talking with one of the REICHSMARSCHALL's staff officers in January or February of 1944, I said: "It's absolutely essential that one day in one of those penetrations we attack only the fighters, to take them down a peg, make them lose their feeling of superiority and make them suffer losses for a change." This desire on the part of the men, which wasn't only my own wish, was passed on; it went up to the 'Division' the 'Korps' and to the GOC Fighters; it was turned down with the remark: "We must shoot down the bombers, those are the ones we don't like, the ones which are dangerous to us." What was the result of that? The flight of an American fighter over Germany was

the safest flying in existence. Not a soul attacked him. The pilot had no need to look around to see whether there was anything coming up from behind which would try to shoot him down. It never happened, he merely had to look ahead - "What is down there ahead of me that I can shoot down without endangering myself?" There again we felt the effect of this factor. To start with, the Americans were rather apprehensive and attacked very unwillingly. But once they noticed that nothing happened to them they grew increasingly cockier and more daredevilish. Then they had successes and got a taste of how wonderful it is to be able to shoot down an aircraft; until finally it got to the stage when our fighter formations were no longer able to reach their bomber formations because they were shot down first by the fighters, which always had the advantage of coming from a higher altitude. The moral effect of that on us was that all our pilots, whether rightly or wrongly, I'll leave open, felt inferior to those enemy aircraft, and the collapse of our fighters' moral dates from then. The inferior aircraft at those heights was the Fw 190 which, although it had shown excellent performances at low level, was inferior to the enemy aircraft at altitudes of 8000 m. Equal to the Mustang and superior the the Thunderbolt was our '109'. In addition to all that, on account of the losses suffered in those air battles, the ground control made the greatest effort to direct their own fighter formations so as to avoid the enemy fighters and bring them on to a bomber formation which had no fighter escort or only a small one. As a result, this feeling of inferiority increased still more, and you ran into fighters again any way, for it's impossible to get such a clear air picture as to be able to say: "There are fighters there, there are no fighters there." In the end they were all over the place. This difficult situation for us was complicated still further in the spring of 1944 by the attacks of the enemy air force on our fighter industry, AUGSBURG, and the large aircraft factory at WIENER-NEUSTADT which produced 600 fighters a month was destroyed. Also destroyed were the engine factories at MAGDEBURG, the engine factories at CASSEL, the aircraft factories at POSNAN, at SORAU in SILESIA, everywhere and it was really remarkable with what spirit and energy the industry and our workers succeeded in the shortest possible time - at AUGSBURG for example, from that completely ruined and oft-bombed factory they reached not only the equal production figure but an even higher one within fourteen days; they hadn't a roof over their heads, either. You met with the same picture practically everywhere. Despite that however, we were faced with the necessity of splitting up and dispersing the whole aircraft industry. Small workshops were set up in villages,

engines were mounted there; one workshop produced the rudder, the second produced the elevator, the third the fuselage end, etc., etc., and in the fifth or sixth the whole thing was assembled. It was a Sisyphen task, which had now become necessary. When the enemy air forces realized that they couldn't completely destroy the aircraft industry, they switched over to smashing our fuel industry. We have learned in the meantime, with what success.

We flyers had one ray of hope in that situation and that was the new jet fighter the Me 262. The Me 262, armed with four cannon 108, calibre 3 cm, is the first combustion turbine aircraft to be used operationally. First an explanation of the superficial details; a low-decker with extremely thin wing profile, with a wonderful aerodynamic rounded shape and a so-called tricycle undercarriage. The two wheels, just like in ordinary aircraft, fold inwards, but the third wheel, which is about at the nose is drawn backwards into the fuselage. Now, as far as I'm able, just a short description of the combustion turbine. The principle is as follows: air is sucked in in front through the revolution of the turbine, which is first started up with a small two-stroke (?) engine. This sucked-in air then passes into a combustion chamber after it has been compressed before induction by compressors and there it is mixed with a substance similar to Diesel oil - it can also be crude oil - and this mixture is then ignited and explodes and it then propels the turbine, which is at the back, and the exhaust comes out at the back. With the high rpm attained by the turbine - over 6000 rpm - the thing works out as follows: air is sucked in in front, the aircraft literally sucks its way forward. In other words a suction and pressure effect with the pressure effect considerably greater than the suction effect, of course. The normal cruising speed of this type of aircraft is over 800 kph. When one thinks that the highest speed of the most modern fighters is 600 kph one can realize how superior this aircraft is, as regards speed to all other aircraft so far used operationally. The disadvantage of this aircraft firstly, it is difficult to move on the ground and for this reason has to be towed by tractors or MC tractors or similar things which are capable of pulling the aircraft. It weighs about six tons. For just taxiing once around the airfield one uses about half the amount of petrol which in flight is sufficient for one and half to two hours of flying time, according to the height. The aircraft is simply wonderful from the point of view of flying. Of course with that speed, the takeoff presents difficulties, as does the landing, because it needs a very long run. So we put all our hopes on this type of aircraft and kept hoping that when it went into operation it would finally turn the scales of the air war again. As luck would have it,

my 'Gruppe' was chosen to be re-trained on this pattern of aircraft in May 1944. Unfortunately, I was unable to accompany them, because I then had to take over the 'Geschwader'. After the 'Gruppe' had already started re-training and some of the pilots were already accustomed to this pattern of aircraft, and others were still re-training, an order was suddenly received from Supreme Command: "This aircraft will not be employed as a fighter, but as a bomber." So after we were already up to our necks in trouble this type of aircraft began to be tried but as a bomber, as a fast bomber, to be exact. A fierce struggle went on between Air Staff Officers and the FUHRER. But they stuck to it at the time, that the aircraft was to be tried as a bomber. It was badly suited to that or not suited at all; its maximum load was one 500 kg bomb, and its flying time barely an hour.

QUESTION: What was its consumption of fuel compared to that of an ordinary Messerschmitt?

ANSWER: Of course, with those turbine aircraft the consumption of fuel is terrific, corresponding with the performance. The aircraft needs about 1800 litres of fuel to be able to fly for two hours; that's to say about twice as much as an ordinary twin-engined aircraft; but ... that you can fill it up with anything combustible. Diesel oil, crude oil and one can therefore obviate the need for all kinds of fuel, etc. In May last year there was still no acute shortage of petrol, there was still sufficient petrol available. Meanwhile the aircraft was actually employed as a bomber and dropped an odd 500 kg bomb here and there. But as there was also no bomb-sight for use at this speed, they didn't hit anything and now they have at last reached the point of saying that the aircraft is to be employed solely as a fighter, now when it is already too late.

Simultaneously with this experimental employment of the '262' as a fighter, the Me 163, a peculiar looking aircraft of which the principle of propulsion is completely different from the Me 262, was sent into operation. The '163' which is armed with three (?) 3 cm cannon, is entirely a rocket aircraft with proper rocket-propulsion. It has broken entirely new ground. It retains hardly any similarity to an ordinary aircraft; it no longer has an elevator at all, and that accounts for its peculiar shape. The elevator is incorporated in the aileron which can be set to alter the direction of flight according to the height. This aircraft may possibly play a tremendous part in the future as a so-called specific target-fighter or Flying Flak. The speed of this type of aircraft amounts to about 1200 kph in horizontal flight, and it can climb to 8000 m within three minutes. I have seen a film of a '163' taking off and I thought at first it was a trick-film; as a matter of fact I saw the film in BERLIN. For taking off, this aircraft has two wheels,

a small undercarriage on which the aircraft rests; there is a skid on which it slides when it lands again. When the rocket fuze is actuated, a huge cloud of smoke comes out behind with a deafening noise, and with terrific acceleration the aircraft shoots forward, leaves the ground after a short run, jettisons the wheels undercarriage and then climbs at an almost vertical angle of about 80°, until the fighting altitude of 8000 or 9000 m, whichever is necessary, is reached - then it changes over to horizontal flight and tries to get into a favorable position for attacking the enemy aircraft. The pilot has seven minutes in which he can, so to speak, keep the throttle open, and if after several minutes he has still failed to attain a favorable position for attack, then the propellant will have been used up, there is no longer any propulsion and all there is left for him to do is to come down to earth again like a glider. Several have been shot down in these circumstances and if they weren't shot down at once, because of their excellent maneuverability, then they were shot up on the ground as soon as they had landed.

The success of this aircraft which has been employed in the LEIPZIG area since August last year, has remained negligible; the losses were terrific. It also frequently happens that these things explode or catch fire and in that case even an asbestos suit, etc, which the pilot had to wear was no protection. They were only employed as day fighters. A further development permitting a longer flying period would give us the means of waiting on the ground for the enemy, spotting him, then taking off and shooting it down within sight of the object to be protected. The aircraft cannot be maneuvered at all when it is being propelled, but once the maximum speed has slackened, it is extremely maneuverable, that's to say it is more maneuverable in ordinary gliding flight than any fighter because it is very light and its construction is extremely suited to flying tight curves.

It was then recognized in all these developments that our greatest weakness is the small number of aircraft we can send into operation. A so-called 'Fighter programme' was accordingly set in motion, which, by the stopping of production of all other aircraft, whether bombers, reconnaissance aircraft, or anything, achieved in November 1944 the production of 4000 fighters a month. A terrific number which is larger than the total production of fighters in ENGLAND and AMERICA. then came the dark side of this mass-production, and above all this production in primitive work shops under unimaginably unfavorable conditions. In September I started to re-equip the first 'Gruppen' of my 'Geschwader' and to bring up to strength and to equip the second 'Gruppe' which was already in operation against the invasion.

The 'Gruppe' were brought up to a strength of about 60 to 70 aircraft and a corresponding number of pilots, and then the re-training started.

QUESTION: To what kind of aircraft?

ANSWER: Fw 190 and Me 109. The third 'Gruppe' flew the '190'. During the re-training I lost the following: six excellent pilots killed, a large number seriously wounded, and between 40 and 50 aircraft. I can no longer remember the number exactly. Only because of technical defects! Each time a 'Gruppe' went on a so-called 'Gruppe' training flight, I had to count on probably one killed and on two, three four or five emergency landings of which a certain number of aircraft had to be written off because they were damaged. I should like to describe one sortie on which I flew in the AIX LA CHAPELLE district with the second 'Gruppe' after Christmas. I took off in bad weather - we had about 100 m (?) visibility - that's to say you could just see the limits of the airfield. Those were weather conditions in which we would never have flown in the old days. I took off with rather more than 40 aircraft, and then set off in the direction of the RUHR district. Over the RUHR district I heard someone say on the RT, presumably a young pilot: "What shall I do, what shall I do, the cockpit's on fire?" Presumably an engine was on fire. As there was dense fog down in the RUHR district, and not more than 500 m visibility, and an emergency landing was consequently impossible, and was also inadvisable after the losses we had already sustained which could have been avoided if the pilots concerned had bailed out in time I have him the order clearly and concisely: "Bail Out!" Then, of course, everyone looked to see whether he would get out, until they did see him get out. He landed all right, the aircraft was done for. These were conditions which of course did not contribute towards raising the pilots' self-confidence or strengthening their confidence in their aircraft.

I have already described the effect of the enemy air-raids on the aircraft industry, and also the effect on the fuel industry which then led in the summer and autumn of last year to an acute petrol shortage. I will touch briefly on the effect on communications centers.

The bottle-neck industries which were attacked by the enemy, such as the ball-bearing industry for example, resulted for instance in the latest engine produced by DAIMLER BENZ, the 'DB 603', having sleeve bearings for its crankshaft instead of ball-bearings which were no longer obtainable; these sleeve-bearings are a type of bearing which is quite useful for reasonable peacetime use by suitably trained personnel, but is, however, not as reliable as a ball-bearing, and it has recently led to an extraordinary amount of engine trouble.

In view of the whole situation, it was fairly clear to us airmen what course the

invasion would take. The whole available fighter force would be thrown into action - we had been told that beforehand - and it was quite obvious to us personally that the whole of the fighter force would be destroyed after two, or at the most three days. That's what happened, too, and that's why the invasion was the success which we saw it to be. With the approach of the front to the borders of the REICH, came the fighter-bomber post in addition to all the other enemy air attacks. Fighter-bombers spent hours darting about the territory near the western frontier of the REICH, and attacked trains and engines driving along, and fired into petrol dumps and houses, and it was these attacks which caused the complete collapse of all means of transport. It was, for instance, no longer possible for us to move a petrol tanker by day. Petrol supplies could only be brought up at night - the passenger trains were normally from 15 to 20 hours late, they had to stop umpteen times on the way, and all the passengers had to tumble out of the carriages and lie in the ditch or take cover somewhere. I heard from a railway man that at the end of last November there were about 60 smashed locomotives at ZWOLLE in HOLLAND which had been smashed up in these attacks. That was only one station. It was no longer possible to transport from the RUHR district the available coal which was being requested and which in November amounted to about 30,000 trucks of coal. It was equally impossible to take ore and raw materials to the RUHR district to be worked up there. Along with the transport system generally, the post, which had previously carried on fairly well, naturally also suffered delays. I have received ordinary letters which have taken from three to four weeks from AUSTRIA to central GERMANY. I am also convinced that 90% of the letters we write from here don't arrive at their destinations.

Now I should like to touch quite briefly on how this utter failure of the GAF came about. If our leaders had realized at the end of 1942 that we hadn't finished with RUSSIA, we had to reckon with the American Air Force, and that we must, therefore, change over to the defensive not only on the ground, but also in the air, then it would easily have been possible to quadruple the fighter arm in one year. By the middle of last year we could easily have had a force, not of 1000 or 1200 fighters as we did have, but of 4000. It would have been possible for us to inflict right at the coast such heavy losses on all enemy air forces that they would never have penetrated into REICH territory. It would have been impossible for the enemy to start the invasion. Our Fatherland would have been spared this fearful devastation which is its lot, not only by night but now also by day. The fighter programme which I have mentioned did not get under way until

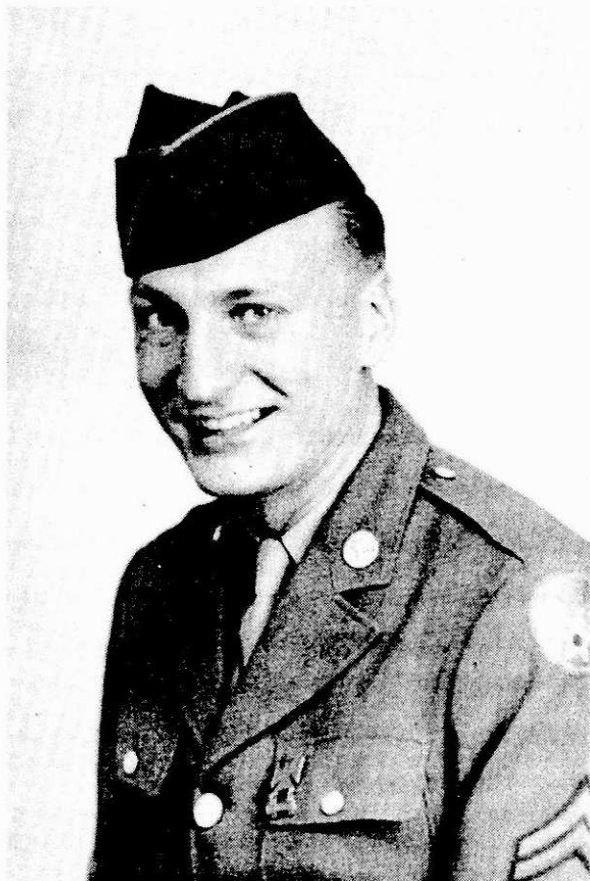
towards the end of last year. It was started in the middle of the year, and was half-way completed by the end of the year. Not until towards the end of last year did we take steps to re-train the bomber pilots we had into fighter pilots, as far as they were suited to it, because we could no longer manage the training. It was not until last year in November that an attack by about 2000 to 2500 fighters was to be mounted against a penetration into REICH territory. The planning was wonderful. The proportions were magnificent but it was never carried out, because the air leaders had lost their nerve and had already withdrawn three Geschwader from the west before then. They were wiped out, decimated, in no time. Then the remaining 'Geschwader' were also withdrawn and the great blow which it was supposed to be, the turning point in aerial warfare, again failed to materialize. I am convinced that if this operation had been flown, in which for once we should have appeared in numbers equal to the enemy's - about 1000 fighters act as escort to round about 1000 to 1200 American bombers, so there would have been one of our fighters to each enemy aircraft. I have guaranteed that we would have shot down at least 300 to 400 bombers, and that would have been the shock the enemy needed to make them cease their penetration, at least into the heart of GERMANY. Our command lacked the adaptability which I have described in the case of ENGLAND in 1940. Above all, we failed in sending the formations into this new type of battle inside the REICH without giving them any sort of tactical training beforehand. The experience the fighter-pilots gained in the west - attacks from the front, etc. - was simply ignored, and I have already described the result of this adherence to old customs. The complete collapse of the defense of the REICH came about during RUNDSTEDT's offensive when, in consequence of the enormous losses we sustained, for little gain, we simply gave up the fight against the four-engined aircraft. They were allowed to fly wherever they pleased and nobody did anything about it. It's shattering that things had to reach that pitch. The change of tactics which also took place only last November - namely that everything which came along was to be attacked, regardless of whether it was an enemy fighter or bomber - also failed to make its effect felt, due to the occurrences I have previously mentioned. The order was duly issued but it no longer achieved its effect. It's a tragic fatality in German history; whatever we did was too soon or too late. One felt almost ashamed to go out in GAF uniform at home. The civilian population with their confidence and trust - the new GAF is coming - with their questions: "Well, when are the new aircraft, the fast ones about which we were told so long ago, coming out, and the good ones which are better than any

others and which will shoot down masses; when are they really coming out? It must be soon. It's high time. If things go on like this we shall cease to believe that the outcome can be good." These questions were so difficult to answer, especially for us airmen who had been through the whole thing - what could we tell the people? - that in the end we hardly even left our own airfield. If I say, for instance, that I took-off with seventeen aircraft - that was in the Spring of last year - and of those two had to turn back on account of engine and undercarriage trouble - one of them could not retract its undercarriage, and the engine of the other one was not in order - As leader of a battle formation with these fifteen aircraft I tackled an enemy division with some sixty aircraft and then when I say that of these fifteen aircraft now a single one returned, but all were shot up - half of them killed or severely wounded, and the other half had made crash-landings and were wounded - then you can form a fairly accurate picture of the severity of these battles. Then when the following day I took off again with the remaining eight aircraft which we had raked together, and was then the only one to return home because I was the oldest and most experienced pilot, that only makes it clearer still.

At a conference at 'Korps' at which this attack on 1 January was briefly announced, General PELZ and General SCHMIDT said: "If we don't at last succeed in driving the fighter-bombers from our REICH territory, then after three weeks our remaining industries will have no coal left, and in about as many weeks the industries in the RUHR district will have no ore." These three weeks have now passed, and I have been told by a 'Hauptmann', who was only just recently taken prisoner, that there are a great many factories in which the workers no longer have anything to work on because there is no coal and no raw material there. Particularly the GAF, which is such a highly-developed technical arm, has special need of far-sighted planning. Measures which are adopted only take effect in the available aircraft about four to six months later. You have to arrange for the necessary training and provide the necessary material. Unfortunately, we lacked this far-sighted planning, so that, as a member of the GAF, I have to admit that the war which we are now waging has been lost by the GAF.



The Last Mission



ALBERT W. TOKAR, 766th Sq. A member of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association, and a close friend of 766 Sq. 1st Sgt. John Tenery, passed away 24 Sept. 1983. Al was unmarried, providing a home for his widowed mother. He is survived by his sister, Wilma Stastny.



Edmund F. Welber, (765 Sq.) MOS 762 Airplane Engine Repairman passed away December 13, 1982. Mrs. Welber wrote us: "He had been sick and in a wheelchair for the last 4 years. He really enjoyed your newsletters and always hoped he would get well again so he could go to one of your conventions. I would have enjoyed that too. Wishing you continued success with the Association. Sincerely JANET WELBER"



Member. ARTHUR W. BOYLE, the bombardier of pilot Donald A. Bolmgren's crew (824 Sq.) passed away April 16, 1983. Lt. Boyle was reported missing in action on 15 January 1945 when his plane was hit by flak on a mission to bomb the south marshalling yards at Vienna. He returned to duty 14 February 1945. Arthur Boyle is survived by his wife, Mrs. Arthur Boyle.*

**See Escape Statement 13 Feb. 1945 elsewhere in this edition.*



EDWARD F. STEELANDT (765th Sq.) died 25 February 1984 at the age of 68. He enlisted in the Army Air Forces 20 April 1943 and served as a Radio Operator/Gunner. His decorations included the Purple Heart and Soldier's Medal along with Campaign Medals. On Dec 17, 1944, his plane crashed into the Adriatic where he was wounded and was reported missing in action. He later was returned to duty after being rescued. He was a well known musician in Moline and Rock Island, Illinois, and was heard on WHBF Radio. He is survived by his wife, Betty and a daughter, Mrs. Jeannette Sorenson, two sons, Steven and Daniel and a sister, Mrs. Jennie Tillie.



ROBERT KELLY DUSENBERRY, 765 Squadron Navigator, later Group Navigator, passed away 5 September 1977. His wife, Edith C. Dusenberry, who has joined the Association, advised us in a recent letter. Bob retired as a Colonel (USAF) after 30 years of service.



The Last Flight of Crew #14

December 17, 1944
15th AAF 49th Wing 461st B.G.
765th Squadron
Flying out of Cerignola, Italy - near
Foggia.

By:

Trefry A. Ross, S/Sgt., Radio operator, right waist gunner. Written on December 17, 1976. 32 years have elapsed so my narrative may have a few discrepancies; although I doubt it, as it seems like it happened yesterday, and most of the happening is quite vivid in my memory.

"Alright you guys, outa the sack. Come on, let's go! Keerist! You wanna sleep all day - come on, let's go — Jesus, watta bunch!" My eyes open slowly, and staring at me in the dark is the orderly with his flashlight. It's 3:00 a.m. in the morning and time for another flight over enemy territory. I lie there trying vainly to remove my body from my warm sack; and sack it was. In order to keep warm we (the enlisted men anyway) used to crawl into our mattress covers - which in essence were sacks - this way we could keep a little warmer. The original "Italian sleeping bag" You might call it. Anyway I'm lying there listening to "Put-put" get the razzing from Frank. Put-put is Fred Gaul, the flight engineer, and called Put-put because one of his jobs is to fire up the little gasoline engine (like a power mower) which powers the airplane until the engines are started. Frank Yesia, the ball gunner, is the wise guy. Frank is from Cicero, Illinois, home of the gangsters, and although Frank is far from the so-called "tough nut", he is still held in awe by a few of us as having come from that tough part of Chicago - Al Capone's old stomping grounds. Anyway - he's needling Put-put - the youngest on the crew, and the "goat". We all have a good laugh and finally manage to shake ourselves loose from the sacks.

Our enlisted men's tent was comprised of 6 men: Thomas Deibert, S/Sgt., top turret gunner; Joe Mergo, S/Sgt., tail gunner; Roy Doe, Sgt., nose gunner; Frank Yesia, Cpl./ ball gunner; Fred Gaul, Sgt., flight engineer - waist gunner; and myself, right waist gunner - radio operator. We were a close knit crew. I think we were possibly the most congenial crew in Italy. We all got along great. The officers, who lived in a separate tent in another part of the airfield, were considered by us as "regular guys". They were a good group. I know this "comaraderie" was not universal. I firmly believe we had a unique crew, and it was a shame it all came to an end this 17th day of December 1944.

So, here we are struggling into our clothes, each man dressing as he saw fit - it was an informal uniform we wore, we weren't going to stand inspection or bow before the C.O., so we chose the most comfortable and warmest clothing each

preferred. I usually wore my O.D.'s (wool shirt and pants) for warmth. We later picked up our electrically heated suits, parachutes and oxygen masks at the flight line. We finally get dressed and stagger over to the mess hall for breakfast. One thing I can say about combat crews and combat flying - we never wanted for a warm place to sleep or good things to eat. It was hell over the target, but, before and after, we had it pretty damned good! So here we are, eating our eggs and bacon, plenty of it, along with coffee and toast, and razzing each other about last night. Wow! What a night that was. First, I'd like to explain how it was when we weren't flying. One night we had movies or played ping-pong. The next night the Enlisted Mens Club was open. So, on alternate nights, it was either movies or the Enlisted Mens Club. The movies weren't bad, held outdoors, usually an old Betty Grable or Bob Hope movie, but anything was ok as long as it had a few laughs in it. The Enlisted Mens Club was just the mess hall, after 8:00 p.m. It was a bar, period, but the drinks were cheap enough - 50¢ each, or 3 for a dollar. Needless to say, we all ordered 3 at a time. There wasn't much choice. I can't remember for sure what else there was, but I know we always had 101 proof British Rum and grapefruit juice from the kitchen. It made a potent drink. At 3 for a dollar it didn't take many to relieve our frustrations and anxieties. So, at breakfast this morning we were discussing the last night's events. It wasn't much - after about 6, or 9, or 12 rum and grapefruits we were feeling no pain. Roy Doe was singing over and over, "Roll me over in the clover, lay me down and do it again, roll me over in the clover, lay me down and do it again--". I can still see it as plain as yesterday, and hear Roy singing. It wasn't long before he was out of it, so we got the stretcher and lugged him home to the tent. Knowing 3:00 a.m. was going to come around quite soon, we all joined Roy and flaked out. So here were a few hours later, eating like nothing had happened, (I wish I could do it now) and razzing each other.

Breakfast over, we had to go the general briefing for the flight and then we went to our respective special briefings. My Radio Operator briefing usually consisted of frequencies for the day, and I picked up my chaff (aluminum foil) which I threw out over the target to foul up the enemy radar. Next stop was the plane. Each man had a specific job to do - a general pre-flight. We checked our guns, loaded them — I checked the radio equipment, etc. We put on our electrically heated suits - which were a thin suit, similar to thermal underwear, laced with wiring and had a plug which we plugged into a jack on the airplane. Over the

electrically heated suit we put on a heavy jacket and pants which protected the relatively thin and fragile electric suit and was heavy enough to protect one from the cold in the event of an electric failure - even though it seemed as if you were freezing to death. So here we were, all dressed up and no place to go, as it were.

Tom Qualman, the navigator, comes by and says, "Well, it looks like we are sitting around here for awhile. The magneto on #3 is kaput and we'll have to wait for it to be fixed." Before long we are wondering if we are going to make it. You'd think we'd be tickled pink to be able to abort, even before leaving the ground, but as I had said before, we weren't a "normal" crew. Even when we had first arrived in Italy we wanted to fly the very next day, but training and other events took precedence over foolish actions. So, even after a good number of missions, we were still itching to fly and perform our foolish action. Finally came the order to get ready. We were going to fly! If we could get off and catch up with the rest of the group we could go. Keerist! You'd think we were going on a picnic instead of a deadly bomb run.

We're off, climbing through the grey overcast to find the sun at 20,000 plus. Where is everyone? Jesus! - we're all alone, we'll never make it - but we try. Soon, far out over the Adriatic, we spot the rest of the group and try to catch up. We are heading for Bleckhammer - the oil refineries - the dreaded target - No. 2 on the list, right after Berlin. The second toughest, and the longest distance from Foggia. All of a sudden I'm feeling cold. What the hell, my electric suit must be going out. Keerist! It's freezing! About this time, I look out the left waist window and see the group way off to our left. I'm to myself what the hell they are doing way over there, and here we are flying tail-end Charlie when we should be right wing (as we had worked our way up), but having left the ground late due to magneto trouble we had to settle for what we could grab and that was easing into the slot at the ass end.

I couldn't help but think about what we had been through, all the previous missions, all the flack, all the tensions, watching the others go down, fail to come back, working our way up from tail-end Charlie to right wing. Boy! Only one more to go and we would be squadron leader! I recalled the first few days, when I talked with some of the crews that had been here for awhile. We were talking about R & R (that's short for "rest and rehabilitation"). It was a known fact that our rest camp was on the Isle of Capri, on the far side of Italy from where we were. So, I innocently ask - "Well, how is it on the Isle of Capri - how's the wine

-what are the girls like?" He laughs, and remarks, "Who knows, no one had ever lasted long enough to get their 25 missions and go!" It didn't take long to find out what the score was. Day by day crews didn't come back - and now we were heading for the same fate, although we didn't know it then.

So, here I am, freezing to death I thought, and wondering how come we're alone when over the intercome comes Joe's voice - "Fighters! Here they come!" Almost immediately his exclamation was followed by the sound and reverberation of his guns. I'm looking out the waist window but can't see any fighters as they were to my rear and high, but it wasn't more than 3 or 4 seconds from the time Joe had yelled when it sounded like rain on a tin roof, and the 20mm shells from the fighters were ripping through the roof of the plane, missing Put-put and myself by inches, and exploding into the forward part of the plane. The oxygen bottles on the deck near the bomb bay doors blew up and caught fire. I was encased in a sheet of flame, my clothes were on fire. The aircraft took a violent lunge upward. I was knocked flat to the bottom of the plane and momentarily stunned. You see, Put-put and myself, being waist gunners, just stood up - we were not sitting in a seat or turret, strapped down with safety belts - so with any violent maneuvers of the aircraft we found ourselves hanging on for dear life or being thrown around like rag dolls. Now I was on my knees looking for my parachute, the interior of the plane was a mass of fire. I found my chute (it was a chest pack and I had to snap it on the harness which I was wearing). It seemed like hours - I couldn't life it - it felt like a ton. Little did I realize then that we were in a flat spin, and I was under negative G forces.

I finally managed to get the chute snapped to the harness and then, just as I dove head first through the waist window, I saw Put-put standing there watching me and assumed that he followed. I hadn't wasted any time once I was able to move. I just knew I had to get away from fire. I didn't even take the time to disconnect my oxygen mask, intercom, or electrical suit. In the ensuing dive through the window I just ripped everything loose as the slack in all the wires was taken up. My oxygen mask was torn from my face. Due to the centrifugal force I didn't clear the side of the aircraft and my left foot was caught on the window sill. I kicked back with my right foot and suddenly I was free - falling through the bright sunshine. Pulling the rip-cord was an involuntary act - I don't remember actually doing it. God, it was quiet - so peaceful - so still. I looked around - nothing - no chutes - no planes - the overcast was way below, no ground in sight, bright sun overhead and clouds below. I couldn't get over how

quiet it was. Then I began to panic - it felt like I was just hanging there. There was no sense of motion - nothing close to relate a downward drift to. I just knew I was stuck. How the hell was I going to get down? All of a sudden, I found I couldn't breathe! I was in pain! I didn't realize it then, but I was suffering from lack of oxygen. It was a horrible feeling, I couldn't stand it. I wanted to end it - now! I tried to unsnap my chute. I couldn't do it because of my weight. I wanted to unbuckle the harness and free myself so I could fall free and quick to relieve my misery, but I couldn't get the harness unbuckled either - because of my weight. It was approximately 12:05 p.m. - at about 26,000 feet - I passed out from lack of oxygen.

The next thing I knew, I was under the clouds and coming down near a village. I could see the various buildings, a church spire quite prominently. There was snow on the ground and I saw that I was about to land in a plowed field on the edge of town. I could see some figures running to where I was about to land. I was coming down backwards. I reached up to shift the risers of the chutes to try and turn around when I hit the ground. I hadn't realized how fast I was descending, and hit the ground unexpectedly, and immediately folded up like an accordion. It was probably a lucky thing, as I did not brace myself but landed like a limp rag, and, therefore did not break any bones. I lay there for a few seconds getting my breath back. I wiggled my toes to make sure my back wasn't broken - it had felt like I had broken every bone in my body. Just as I struggled to my feet I remembered the figures I had noticed running across the field. By now they were close upon me. I could see they were German soldiers. They were shouting and yelling, "pistola, pistola" and making gestures by holding their hands under their right armpit. They wanted my Cold .45 automatic pistol. We had been issued the pistol and a shoulder holster but were advised not to carry it as it was very unlikely we would be in the position to use it. Generally the situation was such that an armed airman was treated badly by the Germans as opposed to better treatment for an unarmed airman. Anyway, the German soldiers were having a foot race to see who could get to me first and get my pistol. I suppose I should say at this point in my story that I could have "John Wayne" it and pulled out my .45 pistol and shot the first 5 or 6 soldier-like in the movie - and then stood there while the rest shot me full of holes, but then I wouldn't be here writing this story - would I? You see, I had landed just across the road from a German army camp, and had literally thousands of soldiers to welcome me to their country.

The first soldier to reach me was disappointed to find no pistol, so he took my helmet instead. The helmet and my parachute was all they took. I was not

molested in any way. I was then escorted to the Commandant's office, where I received a cordial welcome, and had a nice chat with the Commandant - who, by the way, spoke fluent English.

I had bailed out at 12:01 p.m. It was 29 minutes later when I hit the ground - 12:30 p.m. when I had first glanced at my watch. It is now almost 1:00 p.m., and the Commandant has offered me a cigarette and a glass of brandy. I'm sitting there petting his big Irish setter and feeling relaxed and free. It is just beginning to penetrate my senses that the war is over - for me anyway - selfish though it may sound. I tell the Commandant my name, rank and serial number - discuss my home and family, and exchange a few pleasantries. No military or vital security information was discussed whatsoever. After a few moments, I noticed him looking at me rather oddly, as if he were worried about something. He picked up his phone and made a short call. About this time my eyes were beginning to feel rather strange - a tight sensation - no pain, but a feeling as though I couldn't blink my eyes. A moment later the door opened and a doctor entered. He gave me a brief examination and spoke to the Commandant in German. I did not know what he said. The doctor left in a few minutes, and no sooner had he gone when two soldiers, in full uniforms, with Schmeiser machine pistols, appeared and the Commandant said they would escort me to town. He wished me well, we shook hands and I was off. The town center was about 3 miles away, and we walked.

We had walked several hundred yards before my thoughts brought me the recollections of stories we had heard about the Germans. The farmers would stick you to death with their pitchforks - the doctors' had enormous hypodermic needles to fill you with poison - the soldiers would march you to a remote spot in the forest and shoot you - on and on and on - my imagination ran rampant with all the thoughts. I was positive these two soldiers were going to kill me. They spoke no English, I no German. They would motion and point with their machine pistols the direction I was to take. Right into the woods, along a narrow and isolated path - this was it - I just knew it. At first they were along-side, one on each side; presently, they were talking among themselves and were slowly getting behind me. The slower they walked, the slower I walked. I wasn't about to let them get behind so they could shoot me.

Well, it wasn't long before the path widened and we were on a road. A few houses appeared and then the town. I was taken to what looked like a school (at any rate, it was very similar in appearance to the grammar school I attended when a child). They took me into the kitchen - a huge area that had been turned into a makeshift first aid area. I received another brief examination, and then appeared

the dreaded hypodermic needle. I swear it appeared to be about 2 feet long and 4 inches in diameter. It was a size I had never seen before but, I was assured it was only a tetanus shot. Next I was ushered into the auditorium where there were about 2 dozen airmen, none of whom I had seen before. It was now about 3:00 p.m., and I sat there wondering what next. About every 15 to 30 minutes, two or more airmen would be brought in. The room was slowly filling up and yet, no one I knew appeared. I was beginning to wonder, "Christ! Did I jump out too soon?" It had been done before. Maybe I'd panicked and left a crew now on its way home. Then I thought back — looked at my flying suit! (I was quite a sight!). My flying suit was in shreds, blackened from the fire, holes completely burned through in spots. I finally convinced myself I couldn't possibly have been burned like this and the plane still be flying.

About 4:00 p.m. they brought us some black bread and coffee (irsatz) which couldn't eat. I didn't like the taste of either, and I wasn't hungry. Later on I would have given anything to have that glorious piece of black bread - which was soon to come to taste like rich cake. My eyes were now beginning to swell shut and I could hardly see. The pain was beginning, and I was slowly comprehending that I was burned worse than I thought. My helmet and oxygen mask had protected my head and face, with the exception of the area around my eyes. My goggles were on my head, riding high on my forehead - they were too uncomfortable to wear (sound familiar?), so my eyes had been burned, and not having access

to a mirror I couldn't see the extent. About 5:00 p.m. an orderly came up to me and said that when it got good and dark they would put me in an ambulance and take me to a hospital. I think it was about 8:00 p.m. when they led me to the ambulance.

I was met by a sound I will never forget — the voice of Tom Noesges bombardier, who was lying on a stretcher with a broken leg. It was a voice out of heaven. Not only was I among friends again, (the auditorium by 8:00 p.m., had filled almost to capacity and I still hadn't seen any one I knew) but my worst suspicions were allayed. I now knew for certain that I hadn't jumped too soon. I believe Tom was as glad to see me as I him. I know, for myself, it was a grand and glorious reunion. We were taken to a train and eventually ended up in a hospital in Brunn, Czechoslovakia, where we received our initial treatment. I remember quite well being given a bath upon arrival, by female nurses, and not being able to see, my embarrassment was well hidden. Tom Noesges and I were in the same room with two other Americans. Shortly thereafter (about 2 weeks later) I had recovered enough to travel, and one of the other prisoners-of-war and myself were taken to a regular POW camp for interrogation — leaving Tom Noesges at the hospital.

The aircraft of Crew #14, a B-24 Bomber, 15th AAF, 49th Wing, 461st B.G., 765 Sqdn., flying out of Cerignola, Italy (near Foggia), was shot down by enemy fighters over Troubky, Czechoslovakia at 12:01 p.m. December 17, 1944, upon being hit by enemy 20mm cannon

shells from either FW190 or ME109 German aircraft, it immediately caught fire and within minutes exploded. The main portion of the aircraft, with 6 bodies, crashed near the village of Troubky. 4 airmen were able to parachute to safety.

Those who gave their lives were:

WEST, Thomas K 1st Lt. Pilot
 DEIBERT, Thomas E. S./Sgt. Top gunner
 MERGO, Joseph G. S./Sgt. Tail gunner
 DOE, Roy L. Sgt. Nose gunner
 GAUL, Frederick H. Sgt. Waist gunner/-
 Flight engineer
 YESIA, Frank C. Cpl. Ball gunner

They are buried in a mass grave near Troubky, Czechoslovakia and have a marble monument with a bronze plaque, donated by the villagers of Troubky, to commemorate the day these American boys gave their lives so that Czechoslovakia could be free.

The four survivors are:

QUALMAN, Thomas 2nd Lt. Navigator
 NOESGES, Thomas 2nd Lt. Bombardier
 KASOLD, Edward 2nd Lt. Co-pilot
 ROSS, Trefry A. S/Sgt. Waist gunner/-
 Radio Operator

These men were returned to the United States following cessation of hostilities in Germany in June 1945. They are now living in various parts of the United States. Tom Qualman is in Georgia; Tom is in Illinois; Trefry Ross is in California; and Edward Kasold's whereabouts are unknown.



2nd Lt. James English (right) bombardier of crew #17-S12 with an unknown companion (left), both of the 766th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group, taken in a night club in Rome during July or August of 1944. (JAMES ENGLISH PHOTO 766TH SQ.)

The Last Flight of Crew #14, Part II

It was time to leave. There had been rumors, but we didn't really know for sure until one particular morning. Only two of us were going. A pilot who had been shot in the back and myself, with my burns. We were, obviously, well enough to travel; however, to look, at us you'd think we were just arriving instead of leaving. We were on our way to interrogation in Germany, far from where we were in Czechoslovakia ... all the way across Germany to Frankfurt On the Main ... three days by train.

They brought our clothes. Keerist! What a sight I presented ... my flight jacket had been on fire at one time; it was charred and blackened and had numerous holes. My flight boots were missing so they gave me a pair of black shoes (good shoes, but they didn't quite match my olive drab uniform) which made my whole appearance just a bit more ludicrous ... I was quite a sight!

It was the first part of January, the 3rd or 4th, of 1945. I can't remember for sure which. It was a typical winter day, cold, gray, ice and snow everywhere. I didn't realize how cold it actually would be outside, as it was nice and warm in the hospital. I said goodbye to Tom Noesges and the others, and we left. The two of us, and two guards. They would be our "companions" for the rest of trip. They were sixty years old, or older, an in Wehrmacht uniforms ... the "Last of the Old Guard", so to speak.

We left the warm hospital lobby and were immediately struck by the cold icy air. I didn't have an overcoat or heavy jacket, just what was left of the outer portion of my electrically heated flight suit. We walked; the two guards behind us so we wouldn't take up too much room on the sidewalk. It wasn't too far to the streetcar. I couldn't get over the appearance of the people, compared to the people of Italy ... the southern part of Italy, anyway. The people of Italy were poor. The houses, the clothes, the roads, everything reflected poverty; and now, here in Brunn (BRNO) Czechoslovakia ... it was like home; like walking down Market Street in San Francisco. Men wore suits, the women had on fur coats, and the whole atmosphere was one of relative prosperity. I just couldn't get over the sudden change. My impression of Europe, based on Southern Italy, was quite wrong ... I soon found out. The rest of Europe which I saw, was prosperous as opposed to the poverty of Southern Italy.

We rode the streetcar to the train station. The Czech people were friendly, smiled, spoke to the guards, querying them about us I presume. On the train we had a compartment to ourselves ... nothing fancy, no pullman, no berths ... we sat up or slouched the whole trip. The guards were quite considerate. It was a shame we didn't speak enough of each other's language to really converse. One of the guards shared left over cookies his family

had sent him for Christmas and, at several of the train stops they would bring us pastry of some sort. I often felt they thought of us as they would their sons, or at least, had compassion for us because of the discrepancy in our ages. With the exception of two incidents, the trip was uneventful. We were still far enough north and east to escape the bombings and strafing that was to come later. One day I had a fever ... don't know what caused it ... reaction to the soft time in the warm hospital I suppose. Anyway, I was out of it for a day. I was so thirsty ... all I could think of was ice cold beer, and kept visualizing pitchers upon pitchers of ice cold beer at the end of the trip.

I know exactly what it is to hallucinate: that night the fever broke and I was fine. No sickness, no cold, nothing but a fever; never had it since. We stopped one night at a restaurant (a train stop, like the old Fred Harvey train stops the Santa Fe used to have; like the Greyhound Bus still has). If you want to eat, you get off and go inside ... well, we did ... this one night. It was a beer hall right out of a Peter Lorry and Humphrey Bogart spy movie. One expected Marlene Dietrich to come on stage and sing "Lile Marlene". The place was full of soldiers, a scattering of civilians and two POWs. (Guess who?) Jesus! It was noisy ... singing, yelling, beer drinking ... lots of sausage, cheese, etc. I didn't know about "Octoberfests" then, but it was just like an "Octoberfest" ... in miniature, as the restaurant wasn't very big. I felt quite conspicuous with my bandaged head and ratty uniform, not to mention being a POW; but no one paid any attention. I presume they had seen POWs before. We didn't have much time; ate our meal and left. It must have been a favorite spot for soldiers to congregate (or there were other trains) as only a few left when we did ... to get back on our train. The next day, we arrived at the interrogation center where I bid farewell to the guards and to my pilot friend, as he was an officer and went elsewhere. At this point in my story, I would like to mention once again the fact that I am writing this narrative some thirty six years after it happened. I realize now that I should have done this years ago. Most of my experiences are quite vivid, some are vague, and "by jove", sometimes I can't seem to recollect at all exactly what took place as to where and when. This is one of those places now. I remember a small room. It was my first meeting with a working POW. It must have been my initial approach to interrogation. I say this because there were only the two of us. It was quite early in the morning, say about 2 or 3:00 a.m. upon arriving. We were served a cup of hot chocolate and two slices of bread, with strawberry jam. "Holy Mackerel" I'll never forget how good that tasted. We were then issued a Red Cross suitcase. A small black suitcase containing: (and here, again, I should

remember everything, but can't quite) a paperback book, a razor, soap, toothbrush, a pair of warm mittens and a black wool) sweater that had been hand knit by a Red Cross worker somewhere in the New England states. It had a tag on it ... that's how I knew. I put that sweater on right then and there; didn't take it off until months later. I wanted to bring it home, but by then it was infested with little friends that looked like grains of rice, but were by no means as dormant. Cooties they are called, or, for the uninitiated ... Lice!

I was then escorted to a large barracks similar to the one I was familiar with. It would appear, at this point, that I was becoming a part of a group ... a number ... the start of order and routine. As soon as there were enough POWs to make up a "group", we began processing. I will use the word "group" instead of platoon, company, squadron, etc., as there would be, later on, mixed POWs, i.e.; Air Force, Artillery, Infantry ... all would end up together; whereas in the early part of the war, the Air Force had their own POW camps. Anyway, after a certain number had arrived, a few each day, we began the "routine"

Interrogation consisted of a very informal type of questioning. It was done in a very small cubicle, just enough room for the interrogator on one side of a small table and myself on the other. I was seated in a chair and left alone for quite awhile. Anyone suffering from claustrophobia would have found these cubicles quite exciting, to say the least ... all part of the plan I must say. The interrogator came in, after what seemed like hours ... (probably only 15 minutes) ... We both played the game; I said, "I can only give you my name, rank, and serial number, ... you know that." He said, (incidentally, he spoke perfect English) .. "OK, you and I both know that, so let's do it this way". He brought out several thick books, about the size of a San Francisco Phone Directory, and said, "Look, I know you aren't supposed to tell me anything, so don't, just point to the tail markings on your plane." Jesus! ... you wouldn't believe what he had! He knew more about the 15th Air Force than I'll ever know. There were photos of all the groups (planes, that is), squadrons, names of squadron commanders, locations — on and on it went. I was astounded! Needless to say, it was quite a shock, and I almost succumbed to the attitude of saying, "Hell, he knows more about the 15th AAF than I do; what little I would tell him won't make any difference", but, I didn't. I did, however, stray a bit and, in light of what he knew already, divulge the names of the rest of the crew as I was very concerned with their locations and outcome. The only one I had seen or heard of was Tom Noesges.

Well, that was the so called "dreaded interrogation", and I was out within the

hour and back at the barracks. The others came straggling in. It had been rumored that if you didn't come back in about an hour or so (some didn't show up for a day or two) you were talking. So, all of us who ended up back in the barracks that day were of the opinion that no one had "squealed". But, who's to know for sure.

Now, I can't quite remember for sure but, I met Tom Qualman and Ed Kasold in a hallway (Navigator and Co-pilot, respectively). We met briefly, and that was that. I never saw Tom Qualman again (we do, now, correspond however). I did meet Ed Kasol briefly in Santa Monica, California later, at R&R around August 1945; never saw or heard of him again.

In a few days, enough POWs had arrived and been interrogated, and now there was a big enough "group" to travel to our next destination. It was an intermediate camp where we spent a week or so. We were now meeting POWs from the other branches of the service. Most of them were in pretty good shape. I must have presented quite a sight with my bandaged head and burned and blackened jacket. I hadn't given it much thought, but to most of the fellows I was quite a "character". I hesitate to use the word "hero" because of my inherent modesty and shyness, but you could see that I made quite an impression and would always be asked to tell "all about it". They didn't realize how much I held them in awe (infantrymen, tankers, artillerymen, etc.) I suppose we each had seen too many John Wayne movies and really didn't know exactly what the other person actually did; however, it made for good camaraderie as we all respected one another and knew for damn sure some kind of action had taken place or we wouldn't have been there.

It was a good compound. I didn't realize just how good it was until later. The food was ample and after practically nothing but black bread, jam and cocoa, it tasted delicious. There was also a library, courtesy of the Red Cross & relative freedom to roam, within the confines of the camp, of course. I remember, with humour and amusement, the air raids. Approximately at noon each day the sirens would wail; we could hear and see the bombers overhead. We then had to leave our comfortable rooms for the dark and dismal damp bomb shelters where we mumbled and grumbled amongst ourselves for such a useless and wasteful half hour or so. Finally, a few of us would hide under our bunks when the alarm sounded. They would always have a so called "bed check" to make sure everyone had answered the call, and supposedly weren't goofing off. We had just simply gotten tired of running down to the air raid shelter for nothing. Well, this one day, the alarm had sounded, we hid, the fellow checking stuck his head in each room, passed on. Soon it was deathly

quiet. One by one we snuck out of our hiding places and resumed the prone position on our bunks and commenced reading. All of a sudden someone yells ... "Jesus Keerist!, This is a real one, head for the shelter."

"Goddam," I never saw such a flurry in all my life; I hadn't realized just how many had been ditching the raid. You can't imagine the noise, yelling, doors being slammed open and everyone running for their life! ... At least we thought so at the time. The funniest sight, (it was funny even then) was a poor bugger on one leg with crutches. Jesus, you should have seen him go! Literally, flying down the hall. One foot on the ground, two crutches, one foot on the ground, two crutches ... Boy! He was really making time, about 6 feet each thump. We all just couldn't keep from laughing, it was so comical and ridiculous. Needless to say, it was all for naught as it turned out to be just another false alarm.

Finally, the day arrived when the "group" had achieved sufficient proportions to warrant a full troop train to take us to our final camp ... where we would stay until freed by the Russians.

The "troop train" was quite long, composed of box cars filled with tiers of bunks and a coal stove in the center. "Side door pullmans", we called 'em. It, of course, was still the midst of winter and colder than "a bat's ass in an ice house". I don't remember for sure exactly how long the trip was, but it was close to a week, with all the shuttling around we took. We were always shoved in a siding while the more important trains went by. The trip was one I will never forget due to three memorable events; one being an air raid. We had been sitting in a big rail yard on the outskirts of Berlin. We didn't know it at the time, but we were only 20 miles from our destination. It seemed like we had been there for days ... it had been quite a few hours anyway; then came the air raid sirens. *Shit!* no place to go ... couldn't even run! We heard the drone of the planes; an even, *Carr-umph! Carr-umph!* ... "Jesus" they're dropping 'em this time!! They were getting closer and closer ... *Carr-umph!* The box cars shook and rattled now. Someone says "Aw, you don't need to worry until you hear one that sounds like a "ssssss". Just about that time we heard one coming, ... no loud whistle or screaming like in the movies, but just like a shell going over, ... a long mournful "whoosh" ... only this was not passing overhead horizontally --- this sound --- THIS "whoosh" was coming straight down, and getting louder every tenth of a second. "Son-of-a-bitch", this was it-we all thought! Everyone had the same idea at the same time ... we all dove for the center of the car and ended up pilot atop of one another. What a ludicrous sight we must have presented. That is the only time in my life I can say I was really scared "shitless". It had hap-

pened so fast, with no place to go; the sound was terrifying, and it seemed that "this was it!" The bomb landed not far away, but for some reason didn't do anymore damage, or sound as loud, as some of the others. We sheepishly picked ourselves out of the tumble of arms and legs and quietly resumed our former positions. No one spoke for a few minutes ... by then, the bombers were passing over, and it grew quiet again.

Another event I'll never forget, and which was the cause of the third event, was the manner in which we relieved ourselves. The train would stop and we were all herded outside to stand or squat along the side of the train on the tracks. Now, if you can, imagine hundreds of POWs about 6 inches from one another, squatting in the open ... with their pants down trying to do their "business". You could look, it seemed, for miles in each direction to the right or left, and all you saw was lily white asses staring you in the face ... and to make it just a bit more uncomfortable, you could look up and straight ahead and, nine times out of ten, you would be staring back at the back yard of someone's house or farm and, most of the time, someone was staring back at you. Well, needless to say, I just couldn't do it. I wasn't the only one, however, so I didn't feel so bad. The infantrymen were accustomed to slit trenches so were not the least bit self-conscious. I don't know why the train always stopped on the edge of a town, but thinking back on it now, that's where the sidings were. Anyway, by the time we reached our main camp, Luckenwalde, near Berlin, I was, as the saying goes "Quite bound up". I figured it up, and it had been 8 days since I had a bowel movement. With the help of some little red pills, the grace of God, and a finger, I managed to clear it out. Yes indeed, quite a relief. I knew then how pool ole "Dan McGrew" must have felt.

The prison camp at Luckenwalde, about 20 miles from Berlin, was not a typical US Air Force compound. In the early years of the war, Air Force personnel were kept in camps of their own; the infantry and other support groups were also in their own camps. Besides, the Armed Forces camps, which consisted also of other Allied countries, there were political or civilian camps housing dissidents of the Hitler regime. These various types of camps had been segregated ... but now, because of the war situation, Germany was losing and did not have the space, nor compounds to keep everyone apart ... therefore, as Germany retreated to Berlin, so did the POWs. Consequently, I ended up in a camp near Berlin which was composed of soldiers from all branches of service, plus political prisoners, most of whom were Russians, with a smattering of Yugoslavians, French, etc. I will describe the camp and the daily routine, and then tell about some of the

memorable events that made life in a POW camp quite interesting, to say the least.

The camp was probably an Army post at one time. It contained many good sized buildings, permanent, made of brick, and reminded me of any typical old Army post in the U.S., Presidio of Monterey, Fort Ord, etc. However, we were housed in barracks made of wood, temporary structures which were like the war housing in the U.S. ... they were long, low, one story. There were bunks, 3 high, in rows, one row along each side, then an aisle, then another row, (always 3 high) then the main aisle, and then same thing; another row of bunks, an aisle and the last row of bunks of the opposite wall. So ... there were 4 rows of bunks, 3 high, extending the full length of the barracks. There was a pot bellied stove in the center which didn't do much good ... so we stayed in our sacks to keep warm. The bunks were wood, with 1 x 6 wood boards for "springs". Each man was given a long gunny sack which we stuffed with straw. This was our mattress. It would eventually mat down and then you felt the boards, so you would dump it out and re-stuff it; and then you were all set for another week. The latrine was located in a separate building about 50 yards from the main barracks. We had 2 barracks. Between the 2 barracks was an old shower room, with broken down basins and showers, etc. If you really were fastidious, you could manage to find a faucet somewhere and take a freezing cold wash towel bath. For the most part, the majority of us would wait for our monthly shower. The daily routine consisted of nothing really. We usually just stayed in our bunks, trying to keep warm, talking about food. Food and warmth. It was still winter, and snow and ice were everywhere. We had 2 meals a day. Not much! The first was thin soup and a piece of bread. Later on in the day, we had more soup, bread and, if we were lucky, 2 or 3 potatoes about the size of gold balls. I lost about 35 pounds during my stay. We were always hungry, and talked incessantly about food. That is about all we did talk about, that and what we were going to do and eat when we got home. One fellow, a little more perceptive than most of us, made the remark after we had spouted off about the fantastic

and enormous meals we were going to eat, saying, "You guys are nuts, hell, it won't be two days after you're home ... with your guts full ... and you won't want anything more". He just about got killed. Here we are starving to death ... we thought ... didn't think we would ever have a full gut again, and he's telling us the truth. Anyway, at the time, it didn't go over very well, and he was not a very popular person for awhile. For some strange reason, we never talked about sex, or thought about it. I never thought I would not have an interest in that, as that's one thing I've thought about since I was four years old and found out what my "dickie" was for; anyway, none of us thought about it there in prison camp for we were just too darned hungry. I know no one was thinking about it because no one said anything about it. You get two or more men together for 5 minutes, and if a sexual innuendo or statement doesn't crop up, you know you're either in church or the minister's in the crowd.

So this was our daily routine, lying around in the sack, trying to keep warm and talking about food. Braving the cold air to walk from the barracks across 50 yards of more of snow covered ground, always "holding it in" and waiting until the last minute so you wouldn't have to make too many trips to the latrine. You see, most of us were just "poor old city boys" and weren't used to the "outhouse" that so many rural folks used, and course the POWs from the rural areas couldn't understand our attitude.

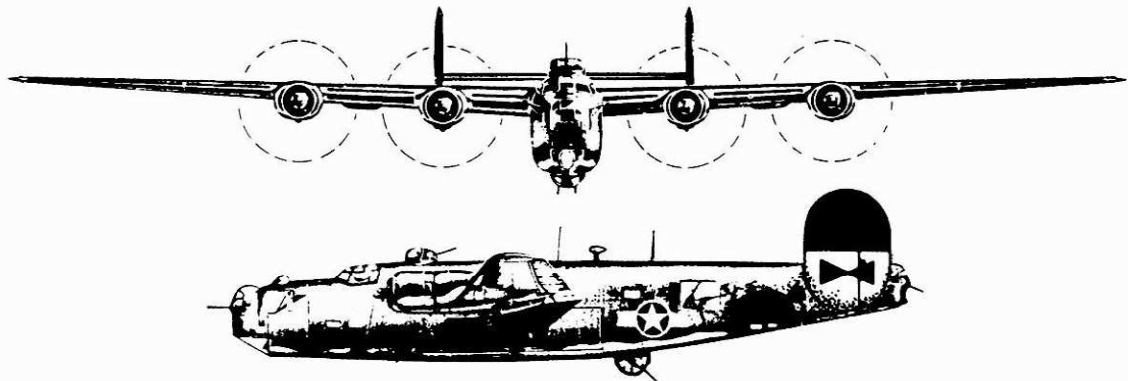
The weather finally broke and one day we found it was actually spring!! Being from California, I was not familiar with seasons. So it was quite a revelation, and a distinct change. The day broke sunny and became quite warm by afternoon. Everyone was affected by it. Windows were opened, a few cold showers braved. Clothes and bedding hung out, people began to stir; walk around, exercise; it was the beginning of a new life. Of course, we had a few more dismal days of bad weather, but "Spring had sprung" and from now on the weather would be beautiful!

This was about the time an announcement had been made that all those in need of clothes sign up and state what you would like or need. It would

appear they had received a shipment of clothes, all kinds, probably from dead soldiers, dead civilians, etc. Anyway, they were clean and more important, we needed them. As luck, or fate, would have it, there was a most surprising and happy occurrence. I was lying on my bunk, after signing up, and not long after, I heard someone calling "Ross, Ross.. hey! Where's Ross?" I, of course, sat up and acknowledged my presence. It turned out that the fellow shouting my name was Carl Groshell ... from my hometown, Richmond, California. Just by chance, he had been about 3 back in line and when he signed up he saw my name. We had also written our home towns down ... for what reason, I can't remember ... so when he saw "Richmond", he came looking.

Needless to say, it was a warm and grand feeling to meet someone from home, and we began to jabber. The interesting part was that we both had grown up in Richmond, went through the same schools (High School), had numerous mutual friends; our parents both worked for the Santa Fe Railroad, etc. ... but we had never met as Carl was a little younger, and was a class or two behind me in school. We talked for an hour or so, reminiscing, and comparing notes, and then decided to stay together. As I have mentioned earlier, in the previous camp we POWs had made friends and chosen who to buddy up with, so now there were the three of us ... Frank Powers, from Los Angeles, Carl Groshell, and myself from Richmond, California. We would remain together until liberated by the Russians, at which time Frank and I would take off on our own.

About this time, Red Cross Food parcels began to arrive. Ah! ... Yes! I'll never forget! It was to change our whole way of living. Keerist! I can't remember for sure whether it was once a week, or once started, we received them regularly. They were in cardboard containers, approximately 1 foot square, and about 8 inches deep. They contained meat, cheese, powdered milk, coffee, sugar, chocolate, cigarettes, a few other minor items; the above mentioned were the important ones because they were not only the "goodies" but became our "money", or means for barter.



Mission No. One!

That first morning — we were living in a barn with about 25 other fellows. Little me - well I went to bed at eight o'clock the previous evening so I would be really sharp - this was it! But I woke early around two o'clock and just could not sleep anymore. Was it butterflies in my stomach or thoughts in my mind, or tenseness, - perhaps a bit of it all? Soon after hours of restless waiting, the officer of the day came to wake us—but not me, I was a veteran. The boys told me not to get up right away because you only stood around and waited. So I stayed in the warm sack, then hurried like the devil at the last minute to get chow.

We piled into trucks in the darkness of the early morning, and bounced along the road to briefing. What emotions filled my body! Yet, I wanted to sing. Several fellows aired morbid thoughts. And I was so mixed up; I didn't know what to think. We stopped and men hurriedly jumped off the trucks and jammed a doorway to see the briefing board. I was quick to find out their motive and adopt their crude technique-Get a glimpse of "target for today".

Vienna - it meant so little to me. Many were the comments but none apparently registered. I was all nervous. Excitement, combat, jolly voices. No one showed what was deep in his heart though there were many and varied expressions on the groups of fellows. In the movies, I had seen pictures like this - but I never was a part of it.

Came the briefing, target, weather, code words, time tick, and special briefing for the Bombardier. We were again jammed into trucks and headed for personnel supply. So many things had to be drawn -chutes, harness, muffs, mae wests, ear-phones, electric heated suits, gloves, shoes, etc.

Then we were at the plane, number 56 Cherokee, the sweetest ship on the field, because this was our first mission and so our pilot flew as co-pilot. Lt. Garner flew as pilot.

We checked bombs, equipment, and loaded chaff and flak suits. I was busy checking the turrets and oxygen equipment. Then once again those old reliable Pratt & Whitneys were fed the fuel and our aluminum home became a living animal. We taxied out to the strip and soon were "in the Blue". About that time, I piled into the combat equipment. Into a heated electric suit, then came the heavy flying suit, the a Mae West, my gun, heavy boots over electric heated shoes, and a parachute harness on top-Wow, I was like a little round ball (but later I put on more - a flak suit and a flak helmet).

About that time we were at 10,000

feet and I armed those twin fifties that wreak destruction on the Krauts! I worked and worked and so did the engineer. I checked the bomb bay doors and "No Buona". One side would open but the other refused to budge. We decided to wait till the I.P. (Initial point of bomb run) and tackle them thru. If it wouldn't open, we'd kick it open. But the one we had open would not go shut, and we were up to 23,000 feet and it was cold with the doors open. The engineer resorted to tricks practiced by his ancestors, and banging like a monkey risked his life to enable me to close the doors. Little did we realize what dumb sad apples we were.

About that time I was called on the interphone. The Ball Turret operator's electric heated suit had failed. He was so cold that when he got out of the turret he was unable to switch oxygen lines and had passed out. Larsen to the rescue. The pilot told me to go back and see what I could do. We installed a new fuse, engaged some heated muff and got him warmed up and quieted down. Later he went out again due to oxygen deficiency, as did the engineer. Oh what a day! Fifteen minutes before I.P. I called the navigator and with him at the middle, the engineer at the far end and me at the handle, and foot on the front end, we jarred the doors open. Then the flak came, and it was plenty heavy. I was really scared but mostly about doing a good job. I was eager to see everything but saw very little except the flak. Then "Bombs away" and they went O.K. except a couple seconds late. They did not hit the target, but landed in the town. So maybe we got several hundred krauts. We peeled off and headed for home. Somehow our squadron lost the wing formation and so six planes flew alone toward Italy. When the excitement and tension wore off, I called the navigator and asked where we were. He said, "Just passed Gioia!" Bang, bang, flak - accurate. The whole plane shook. "Wow", yelled the navigator, "they got our hydraulic system. I'm all full of oil!"

"Waist to crew - flak holes. I've got a piece - darn thing nearly hit me!" We continued on our way, a little worse for wear, - little did we realize how bad off.

On arrival in our area the pilot called the engineer and told him to lower the landing gear manually. We worked and worked but no buona. We decided to try and fix the hydraulics and get the gear down, the engineer and I went forward with tape and rags. A gasoline check showed us that we had about one hundred and fifty gallons. That was enough an hour's flying. The sight gage was correct. So we worked against time at an impossible task, but then we are

airmen, cream of the crop. I worked and sweated and it began to get dark. Oh my mind and body were so tired. Our efforts were futile as we could not hold the 500 lbs. pressure. I went back to the flight deck and the pilot realized that it was either crash landing or bail out. He said, "I'll ride her in - Nix what about you?" Nix agreed to fly her in and the engineer decided to ride her in. So I said, "I'll get the crew ready for bailing out." At that moment, the controls stiffened and there was a crashing noise and the radio gave out!

Now we had about 120 gals of gas and I was not for finding out how correct those sight gages were. I got my parachute all tightened up, slipped the first aid kit into my jacket, then my flashlight and finally my 50 mission cap. I found my way thru the catwalk and to the waist. There I was greeted by a group of very quiet serious E.M. Gave them a few last minute instructions, "Jump out, straighten out, count three, then pull." No sooner was I finished talking then the ball turret gunner went out. Every three seconds a body plunged out and into darkness! They seemed to slide right out and disappear into the black. I was the last to go. I was so tired I just wanted to get out of that plane. No scared feeling, no emotions, this was a necessity I had been emotionally begging for the last two hours. I sat down on the camera hatch opening and dangled my feet outside. Then a lunge and I was outside. Sure I knew what I was supposed to do, but I do not recall if I did just that. My hand was on the rip cord handle and I was scooting along in the air in a sitting position. I remember slowing down and a lovely rocking feeling. And that there was no sensation of falling. It was a wonderful feeling. "Let's keep this handle for a souvenir" and into my pocket it went. Gee is that parachute open?" Then I got my hand on my hat so I put it on - next I got a hold of the flashlight and so I turned it on and looked up. What a wonderful sight that open canopy was. I saw lights below and realized it was an airplane on the ground and someone was working on it. So I started flashing my light in that direction, in a semi-code fashion. Another plane was parked below me and I was worried less I hit it, but fortunately the wind blew me away. By this time, I stopped swinging like a pendulum on an old stairway clock. I was drifting and the wind was against my face. I tried to get turned around but no luck. So I flashed my light toward the ground and bent my knees ready for a soft landing. It seemed I was coming down so slow and smooth. Wow I hit hard! My feet buckled and I landed on my rump. In a dazed manner, I

picked me up, gathered in my chute and looked around. Golly, was I thankful kid. Even old Italy looked very very sweet. I landed in the middle of a revetment - a strip for parking planes - all steel - but so is my head. The men from the adjacent plane came running over, they just couldn't understand the blinking light! They laughed when they saw me. We stopped a passing truck and the driver on seeing me, asked if anyone else had bailed out. I informed him in the affirmative and he said he thought he had heard some calls of help back the road a way. I hurried over to personnel supply and called the squadron and told them about the situation. Then we piled into a truck and looked for the distress call. Soon we found our tail gunner laying in an open field. He said calmly, "I think my leg is broken." We called for the doctor and put crude splints on after giving him a shot of morphine. He was bundled into an ambulance, the meat wagon, and taken to the hospital. I asked to be taken to the Squadron. I was tired, hungry, and emotionally upset. Those three men were still up there and five boys still to be accounted for. But the Doc. (Cpt. Sproul) piled me into a jeep and buzzed me over to the control tower. Many men were there; the Colonel, Group operation officers, and they plied me with questions. The plane was still circling the field and tower was sending them the blinker "Bail out" - "Bail out", but the boys evidently were not able to decipher it. The Group Op. Officer Capt. Roberts said, "Give them the red light!" to the group, "God damn - save their lives, to hell with the plane." The Colonel in a quiet commanding voice said, "Give them the green light." So the tower complied with the higher orders. The plane circled the field and started its approach to land. Millions of thoughts ran through my mind - "Roger's wife soon to have a baby - our first mission. Corp. Burns he's married

too - darn good pilot, never another guy like Rog. Gee, I'm down already, poor Irma."

Then the plane was coming into the runway - down-down on came the landing light like two fingers searching for a soft spot to land on that cold steel mat. Like a bird it swooped lower and lower - now so close - then all the lights went out - complete darkness - not a sound - not a stir, just the whisper of the wind talking to me. "They'll be ok, they are going to be all right." Then a loud screeching, scraping sound filled the air. The sparks flew and a lifetime passed in those brief seconds. Again quiet - waiting - expecting an explosion or flame. Then rudely, I was grabbed and someone pushed me into a jeep and many cars and people roared to that runway to that wounded iron bird. There she lay in a circle of light. Eager automobile lights eating up the sight, when out popped three scared but happy lads. Capt. Roberts (G.O.O.) walked up and grabbed the pilot's hand, shook it, and said, "My boy that was the most beautiful landing I ever saw. Congratulations!" Salutations over, four happy boys hopped into a jeep and regardless of equipment, questions, or inspection, headed for chow.

Next morning we went out and saw a demolished B-two dozen. The service squadron had really wrecked our iron bird in hauling it off the runway. Flak holes were found in all spots, in our mortally wounded airplane. A big hole in the wing had demolished the auxiliary landing gear and one hole thru Cherokee's head had ruptured our hydraulic lines. We learned that the raft in our wing had been released and had torn away the radio antenna. All the boys were OK except Bill. In the town hospital his leg was set and later he had it reset and steel braces put in to brace the severed bones. He got the purple heart and a free ticket back to the States. He told us his para-



#56 Cherokee in the bone yard after the mission.

chute did not open and clawed it into action. Then at a low altitude he thought he was going to land on a plane so he dumped his chute a bit and consequently he hit the ground plenty hard. We all wanted to keep our chutes as souvenirs but a shortage made that impossible. Souvenir for the Bombardier was a rip cord handle and memories.

Conclusions: Our first mission, first plane wreck, first wheels up landing, two months flying pay (\$150) and a world of experience. Veteran!

So the Bombardier does no work on a mission, well, I like that!

EDITORS NOTE: Amos Larsen, Bombardier 766th Sq., received a rude introduction to combat operations but was lucky to survive this, his first mission. For many crews the normal trepidations are heightened because, as in this case a combat-experienced pilot takes over the left seat displacing the first pilot to the co-pilot's side. Most likely the new pilot's flying abilities are unknown to them breaking the trust that a combat crew has in each other. This trust is built up slowly during the long months of training, as each learns from experience to depend on each other. It happened so often that nine lives depended on each other. Jay Garner flew as first pilot while Roger Nixon flew as co-pilot.



Crash of "What's Up Doc" 825th Squadron Ship. Reader comment is requested. (Robert A. Harrison photo 825th Sq.)

Mail Call

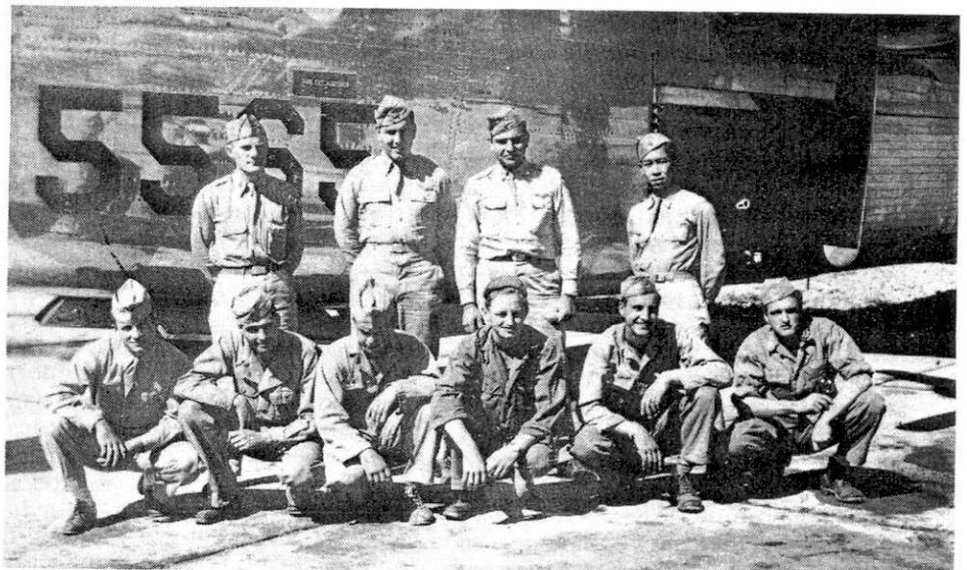
Dear Bud -

Re: Your letter dated 11/8/83: Requesting info on the "Little Mac" if I recall correctly, the incident took place late January or early February. We, (Richard Woidich, Harold Moynihan and myself) were standing outside the armourment shack, that was located just off of the field. We watched as Little Mac landed. The field was muddy. It was late afternoon. As the plane (ship) reached the 3/4 mark evidently the pilot applied pressure to the nose with the use of the controls. We noticed the tail higher than usual and the nose much lower than in a normal landing. Approximately just opposite ship 32 parking pad, which was near the runway end "Little Mac"'s nose wheel collapsed. It skidded forward - and plowing a short distance off the runway before it came to a stop. We immediately ran to the plane just before the props stopped spinning. Soon after, the emergency vehicles arrived. "Little Mac" was not returning from a sortie. It just returned from an engine check and had a skeleton crew. Pilot, co-pilot, engineer and radio operator. None were hurt. Little Mac lived to fly more sorties. We flew her after the crash and after the end of ETO campaign it was flown to Gioia, Italy, and then to Bradley Field, Conn. I do not recall the crews' names, but a short time later the radio operator, on returning from a sortie, bailed out over the field, his chute, stroud lines were entangled in his leg and he was headed earthbound, head first. Approx. 500 feet he was able to cut the entangled line and made a landing. Unfortunately, he did hit the earth hard enough to break his leg. If I recall correctly, we called him "Shorty." (The photo in the last Flyer may be one of us). You can check later with my photo.

Each Christmas, I flash back to Christmas Day 1944. We took off for a sortie - it was a big target. However, due to the snowstorm, we were forced to abort and return. We landed safely but others did not. There were mishaps. Only 1 ship made it to the target and dropped its bombs. They were not given credit. S/Sgt. Frank Korell of Bohemia, L.I. was its waist gunner.

Dear Bud -

Enclosed is a check for my 1984 dues. The News Bulletins are great and very informative. In News Bulletin #8, the picture of Plane #39 of 825th Sq., I am sure that picture was taken after it landed from a mission. There was about four inches of snow on the runway. It got caught in a light crosswind causing it to slide off the runway. The plane was towed back onto the runway with damage to one nose wheel door. The plane returned to service in 2 days. Also #14 of the 824th



Crew of Walter Bondarchuk 825th Sq. From left, top row: "Rush" Horton (B), Al Graff (C/P), Bert Johnson (P), Terry Lee (N). Bottom Row: Bob Lytle (Eng.), "Wild" Bill Harris (G), D.J. Lizette (R/O), Walter Bondarchuk (Ball/G), Richard Woidich (Nose/G), and Harold Moynihan (Tail/G). (Walter Bondarchuk photo 825th Sq.)

The last reunion was our first. Both my wife and I did enjoy it very much. For once, she was able to share my WWII experience. I wonder how many wives are unaware of the experiences of their husbands. Perhaps at the next reunion you could schedule a story teller to help enlighten our wives on the aircrewmens' experiences. We all enjoy telling about the fun we had, however, the fun was the time between missions. The time when we drank ourselves silly in the NCO Club, or our monthly ration - 6 beers, cigars, and a copy of Mediterranean Poop Sheet by Col. Scott or Elly Mae donuts (R.C. Girls). Not to mention unforgettable Rest on Capri (Easter Week 1945). Time flies by, but now and then, we do stop to remember. Silly incidents, like fools using 100 octane gas to heat our huts. Payday was a big day. Some, winner take all, others it was a trip to Cerignola or Foggia. Our sorties were something else. It wasn't fun. A job had to be done not by men but by kids. Our tail gunner was just 19. Kids, who were pilots were not 21. If you were 25, you were an old man. It was hard on the married crewmen. I was one of the lucky ones. As it was not until much later

that I met my wife and got married. War takes its toll. My electrical suit shorted and due to the extreme cold both of my hips were frostbitten. It worsened and years later, I received 2 hip transplants. So much for the past. Take care -
WALTER BONDARCHUCK 825TH. SQ.



Walter Bondarchuk 825th Sq.

Sq. had the same thing happen within a few days and ended up within 50 feet of the same spot. #14 sustained nosewheel damage and twisted nose and was taken to hack area and junked. These accidents happened in the winter of 44 & 45 because we had snow from mid-December till mid-January.

I enjoy the Bulletins very much and have made contact with Raymond (Pappy) Grenz from Sioux Falls, S.D. He was the generator and small engine man for the

824th Squadron.

I don't know if this information is much help. I know that they happened in the 1944-1945 winter because it was the only time we had snow. Also the crash on page 13 of Bulletin #9 was caused by a flat tire on landing. The plane ended up right where they built the second tower.

Again thanks for the good work and I hope some day to attend one of the reunions.

Sincerely, **DAVE MITCHELL 824TH SQ.**

Dear Bud-

Enclosed you will find some pictures from Italy 1944. They are the only ones I could find. After 30 moves while on active duty in the Air Force, things disappeared and my WWII pictures were no exception.

The crew picture is as we started out from Boise, ID., and joined the 826 Sq. of 484th B.G. in Nov. 1943. We were in the first bunch of crews to arrive in the 484th. The initial cadre of 826th were there i.e. J.B. Payne, Gus Trotter, Abner McDaniel & Dowd to name some.

Our crew stayed together thru the first several missions and then Bartlement was replaced by Rudolph as bombardier. Mike Porter left us to take his own crew shortly thereafter and Bob Goble

took his place.

Our first airplane "Umbriago" was shot down over Ploesti, flown by another crew - I believe it was a Lt. Roses' crew. We then got a silver replacement that came with "Cover Girl" already on the nose.

We finished our missions in fall of 1944, although not necessarily all together. Several crew members flew extra missions and finished ahead - but we all finished at about the same time - and all rotated back to the States.

I have lost touch with all of my crew members, but would like to hear from them or know something of them.

Hope this adds a little bit to our unit history. Yours truly,

C.T. (TIM) IRELAND Maj. Ge. USAF (Ret.)



Sgt. Robert Paine with "Cover Girl" (C.T. Ireland photo 826th Sq.)



Left to right standing: Norman D. Jagers-Radio/Op, Lloyd Hume-Nose/Gun, Donald L. Mathesius-Tail/Gun, Robert Pain-Ball/Gun, Lawrence Koenig-Top/Gun, Frederick Howland-Waist/Gun, Front row, kneeling, L to R: C.T. Ireland-Pilot, M.J. Porter-Co-pilot, Thaddeus Obstarczyk-Nav, and Donald L. Bartlement-Bomb. (C.T. Ireland photo 826th sq.)

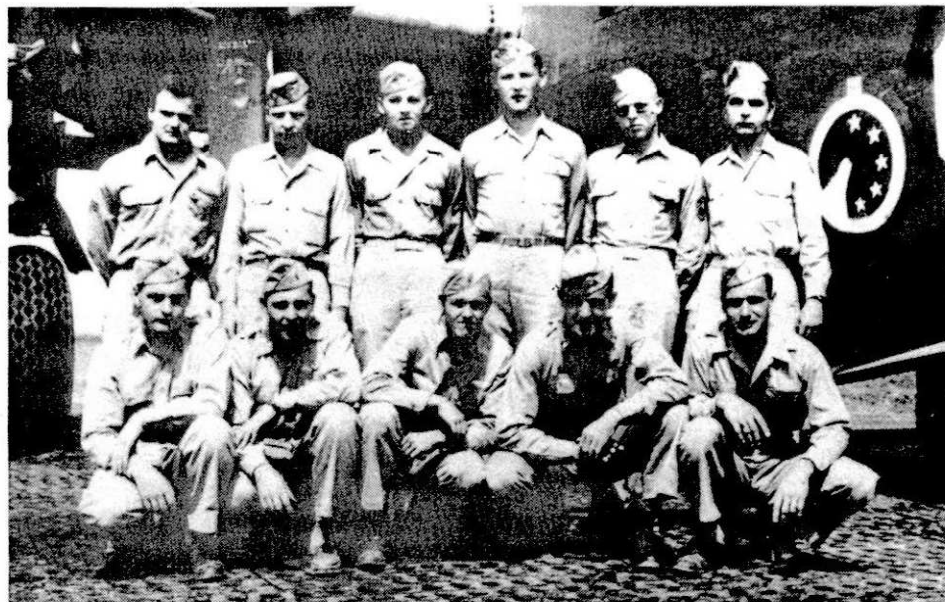
Dear Bud -

One story that caught my eye was the Escape Statement dated 20 March 1945 as told by a pilot, in the 484th Bomb Group, named Alva M. Schick. His airplane was shot down 7 Feb. 1945 on a mission to the Florisdorf refinery.

You have a chronological list of the missions flown by the 484th Bomb Group and this list shows that two airplanes were lost on that mission on 7 Feb. 1945. Schick's airplane was one of the two and the other was ours! Incidentally, that mission was flown 39 years ago today!

Thank you for helping my friend here in Denver, Ralph Branstetter, get started with a proposed reunion of his Bomb Group.

Again, thank you for a very well-written Torretta Flyer. Afraid we can't make the reunion in Orlando this year but we are looking forward to next year! Sincerely, **W.M. (Mike) HENDRICKSON** 824TH SQ.



Bob Swinehart 767th Sq. crew photo-standing from left: Frank Chema, Charles Westfall, Dick Roberts, Harry Place and Robert Swinehart. Kneeling from left: Larry Dixon*, John Vanrette*, Art Kenjorski, Russell Landis, replacement Radio Operator, and Jacob Herman, (killed in action) *=Deceased (Bob Swinehart photo 767th Sq.)

Dear Bud and Bea -

First of all, I want to say that my wife and I enjoyed the Williamsburg reunion immensely, and I enjoyed the renewal of old friendships most of all. I had not seen any member of my unit for thirty-nine years, although some of us have corresponded. I would like also to congratulate you on the outstanding job you did in putting the reunion together. It must have taken many hours of hard work. As of now, it looks like we will attend in '84 in Orlando.

I am enclosing an account and a

photo of a mission as I saw it, which you may possibly want to use in the *Flyer*. Last spring, I sent a crew photo and a nose art photo of our ship "Puss n Boots."

As to the aircraft on the front cover of the *Fall Flyer*, it is a Japanese Zero. On the back cover is the B-15, the only one of its kind. I saw this airplane many times in early 1945 when I was stationed at Wright Field as (of all things) a helicopter mechanic. On page 28 you have a picture of a Consolidated B-32 which I saw daily at Wright Field. I do not believe that many were manufactured, as the Air Force

seemed to prefer the B-29. For one thing, the B-29 had remote centrally controlled gun turrets as opposed to local turrets on the B-32, thereby eliminating one or two crew members. Hoping to see you again and wishing both of you all of the best, I am

Yours truly,
JOHN HICKS 826TH Bomb Sq.

Editor's Note: Refer to the preface to German Air Force story. The Plane on the front cover of the Torretta Flyer No. 9 was a FW190.

This was part of a highly successful group effort by the 484th B.G. The bridge was completely destroyed. The Germans had much mobile flak in Southern France at that time. During the bomb run, the flak was intense and extremely accurate. Almost all aircraft were damaged. In our ship, T/Sgt. Thomas Key of San Marcos, Texas, our engineer gunner was killed by flak which penetrated his flak suit as he manned the right waist gun. T/Sgt. Alvin F. Petrillo, radio operator, of E. Orange, NJ was severely wounded at the other waist gun position. After coming off the target, we proceeded to an air base on the island of Corsica where we obtained first aid for Al Petrillo before returning to base.

Just a footnote to this mission. For several years before and after WWII, I was employed here in my hometown by the Vaucanson Silk Co., a subsidiary of the Bianchini & Ferrier Co., a French firm with headquarters and main plant in Lyon. In late 1945, a young executive of the parent company, visited our plant. When he learned that I had been on this mission, he said to me, "Please do not think that we are angry at you for bombing our city, for while you were keeping the Germans busy, we were out shooting them. This man was a member of the FFI. S/Sgt. **JOHN HICKS** -826TH Bomb Squadron



Var River R.R. Bridge, Nice, France June 7, 1944.



Picture taken at Torretta Field during early spring of 1944. Crew #17-S12, 766th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group. Back row from left: Edwin Baumann, (Pilot); Galin (Gunner); Forester (Gunner); Griffin (Gunner); Millet (Flight Engineer); Laughlin (Radio). Front row from the left: Hilmer W. Larson (Co-Pilot); Joseph L. Coffey (Navigator); Louis (Gunner); James English (Bombardier). (James English photo 766th Sq.)

Dear Bud -

Perhaps I should add for historical reasons that this crew flew very few missions. Our first was Bihac, Yugoslavia on 2 April, 1944. During that month we got to the target a few times but in the process made several aborts. I thought we had a good crew and felt that Bau mann was a good pilot. It seemed to me that we were just having a little bad luck. Nevertheless, the idea was to get to the target and I guess we turned around one too many times. The crew was broken up. Baumann the pilot and Larson the copilot were transferred to other squadrons. Coffey the navigator was returned to the Z. I. I, the bombardier finished my missions with other crews, and I don't know what happened to the enlisted men. I am of the opinion that Baumann and Larson were killed in action but don't know for sure. **JAMES ENGLISH** - 766th Sq.

Escape Statements

13 February, 1945

ESCAPE STATEMENT

On 15 January 1945 Sources: **Cpl. Noon**, ball gunner; and **Cpl. Farris** nose gunner, were on a mission to bomb the south M/Y at Vienna. Sources' aircraft, a B-24, was flying in last position of last box. It was hit, probably by flak, halfway between the IP and the target. Sources do not know extent of damage but say that No. 3 engine and then No. 2 engine cut out, the aircraft began to lose altitude. The bombardier salvaged his bombs and the pilot headed for Vis. Over Lake Balaton, more flak was encountered and another engine cut out. at 1415 hours, at 15,000 feet, in the vicinity of Brod, the pilot, **Lt. Bolmgren**, gave the order to bail out. The whole crew left the aircraft which Sources heard crash and explode below them. They were never in the hands of the enemy.

Sources, **Monjian**, radio operator **Pursell**, tail gunner, landed on southern bank of the river Sara about 20 miles SW of Brod. Within 20 minutes all four were gathered in a Chetnik house and were just getting some food when there was some shooting and a Partisan patrol arrived and hurried them away. They plodded through deep snow and that night reached a Partisan house whose owner drove them in a sleigh. The next day, 16 Jan., at Projavor where they met three of their officers, Lts. A.W. Boyle, D.A. Hill and H. Bell, who told them that the pilot, Lt. Bolmgren, had been killed. Parachute did not open. On the 18th all 7, with a few Partisans guides, traveled first by sleigh, then by train to Teslic where on the 19th, there was a clash between Partisans and Chetniks. Six Partisans were wounded and 22 Chetniks killed. Sources merely heard shooting. On the 20th all started for Jacjace by sled and reached Jajace on foot, after some difficult

mountaineering in deep snow, on 24 January. Meanwhile they had picked up four members of another crew. They stayed in Jajace at a Partisan transit mess till 4 February when they went by train to the village of Minestra, and walked 6 miles further to a house where they spent the night. In the morning they returned to Minestra, spent the day there and on the 6th plodded through a blizzard to Glamdc. On the 7th they reached Livno and on the 8th were brought by Partisan motor/transport to Sinj. There they were quartered in different houses with the result that Lt. Hill, Lt. Bell and Cpl. Pursell were left behind when they caught a train to Split on the 10th. Sources, Monjian, Lt. Boyle and 16 others, were at Split, left the harbor on an LC 1 on the 11th reaching Bari at 0900 on 12 February 1945.

DOUGLAS L. FOX, 2nd Lt. Air Corps.
Interrogator

ESCAPE STATEMENT

The following document is reproduced from a micro film supplied by Maxwell Airfield Archives.

29 March 1945

PILOT - HOWELL, JOHN S. 1st. Lt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 - 20 March 1945 Missions-20

CO-PILOT - TULLEY, EDGAR J. 1st. Lt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 - RTD 20 March 1945 Missions-19

NAVIGATOR - O'SULLIVAN, THOMAS 1st Lt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD 24 March 1945 Missions-20

RADAR NAVIGATOR - FERRIS, JOHN O. JR. 1st Lt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD - 20 March 1945 Missions-14

BOMBARDIER - DOWNS, THOMAS A. 1st Lt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD 20 March 1945 Missions-19

ENGINEER - METZLER, RHIO T/Sgt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD - 20 March 1945 Missions-16

RADIO OPERATOR - EASH, ERNEST E. T/Sgt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD - 20 March 1945 Missions-20

NOSE GUNNER - PELL, JOHNNY L. S/Sgt. 824th B.A.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD 20 March 1945 Missions-19

TAIL TURRET - BROCK, PHILLIP J. S/Sgt. 824th B.S.

MIA - 1 Feb 45 RTD - 20 March 1945 Missions-19

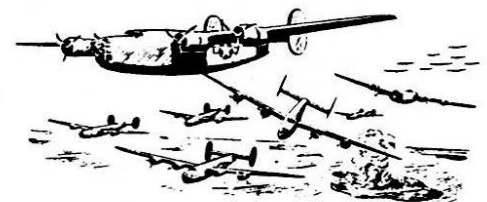
ESCAPE STATEMENT OF CREW

Mission was to MOOSBIERBAUM, 1st February 1945. On the bomb run, just before bombs away, and in the rally, the aircraft was hit by flak and very heavily damaged. Number 2 engine was knocked out and a piece of flak jammed the controls. The cross feed was cut and gas was leaking into the bomb bays, but Lt. Howell managed to stay with the formation, losing altitude fairly slowly, for about five minutes, and finally with number 2 and 3 both feathered and his instruments out he went into a dive in the clouds and pulled out, taking up a heading for Lake Balaton. The Lake was crossed at 12000 feet and when the aircraft reached PECS at 9000 the crew bailed out South of the town, then the pilot made a 180° turn and he and the co-pilot bailed out in the same area. All landed safely, although the upper turret gunner broke his leg on landing and is in a Russian hospital. The aircraft went down in a series of gentle turns, then hit in open country and blew up. Although two single shots with a submachine gun were fired at the pilot by Russian guards, no difficulty was experienced in identifying themselves as Americans by the crew members. No bad treatment was received by any of them, and they were all brought together promptly at a hotel in PECS, where they stayed for sixteen days, when they were taken to CSAVOLY. On the 23rd they were taken to BAJA, where they took a train for BUCHAREST and reported to the American Mission. They left there on the 19 March 1945 by R.A.F. C-47 for BARI.

SUGGESTIONS

1. If possible, crew members should avoid bailing out close to the battle line, since forward patrols are "trigger happy". It is best to go as deep into Hungary or Northeastern Yugoslavia as the conditions of the aircraft permits.
2. Keep your parachute if you bail out behind the Russian lines. It will prove useful to you in many ways.
3. A little basic knowledge of German and French will be very helpful. Some time spent studying phrase books in these languages would amply repay the time spent.
4. If you carry a lighter, be sure to carry extra flints, since matches are almost unobtainable.
5. More instruction should be given to crew members in correct jumping procedure. These crew members had been lectured by an ex-paratrooper, and found the information derived from the lecture invaluable.

JOHN F. HOLSTIUS
Captain, A.C.
Escape Officer



HEADQUARTERS 484th Bomb Group (Heavy)

28 February 1945

ESCAPE STATEMENT

Mission 134

Florisdorf Oil Refinery

PILOT - PARKS, RALPH E. 484th B.G.
824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-7

CO-PILOT - BOVARD, WILLIAM F. 484th
B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-6

NAVIGATOR - NESBY, JAMES B. 484th
B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-6

(NO BOMBARDIER - MAY BE RALPH
DENLINGER - FROM HENDRICKSON'S
INFORMATION SHEET)

ENGINEER - VOBRADZ, RICHARD E.
484th B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb 1945
Missions-6

RO GUNNER - HENDRICKSON, HAROLD
N. 484th B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-6

BALL GUNNER - KOCH, WILLIAM 484th
B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-6

NOSE GUNNER - SNODJASS, RAY S.
484th B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb 1945
Missions-6 Now in hospital. Not inter-
rogated

UPPER GUNNER - ALBERT, HERBERT B.
JR. 484th B.G. 824 B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-6

TAIL GUNNER - PARTBAIN, LEONIDER P.
484th B.G. 824th B.S.

MIA - 7 Feb. 1945 RTD - 25 Feb. 1945
Missions-7

Mission was to Vienna, Austria, 7 February 1945. On the bomb run intense and very accurate flak knocked our #1 and #2 engines, punctured gas tanks and shot out control cables, so that even C-1 would not give proper control. Pilot headed for safe territory behind Russian lines, flying through heavy clouds and as soon as they felt they were in safe territory the pilot ordered his crew to bail out. All parachutes opened successfully and the crew landed over about a fifteen mile area, the center of which was approximately 35 miles north of Budapest. This territory was principally occupied by what they believe were Hungarian Cossaks, since most of them wore a yellow insignia rather than the regular Red Russian star with hammer and sickle.

Three men were shot at by tommy guns, fired by mounted Cossaks, as soon as they landed and one man, the nose gunner, Ray S. Snodjass, was hit and wounded severely in the right leg. He is in a hospital in Bari and has not been interrogated. Although they made no motion toward their own weapons and kept their hands up, most of them were roughly treated by the soldiers and almost all of them were roughly treated by the soldiers and almost all of them were robbed of some or all of their possessions. All crew members agree that as soon as officers of the Russian Army arrived, their treatment was satisfactory, and shortly after landing, they were brought together and officers took over the handling of them. Some attempt was made by these officers to recover some of the property that had been taken from them, but this was not entirely successful. Considerable difficulty was experienced in establishing the fact that they were American Airmen, but this was assisted by an AGO card carried by the co-pilot. The co-pilot also found it assisted him in the treatment received from the Russian soldiers when he repeated several times that he was an officer, which they seemed to understand.

In charge of a Russian officer, they were taken to the town of CSOD (which is not marked on available maps) and thence to ASZOD, Hungary (47° 39'N - 19° 30'E). The treatment was excellent while in the hands of the Russian officers, and transportation was arranged to Bucarest, where the American Mission was informed of all details including the location of their crashed aircraft.

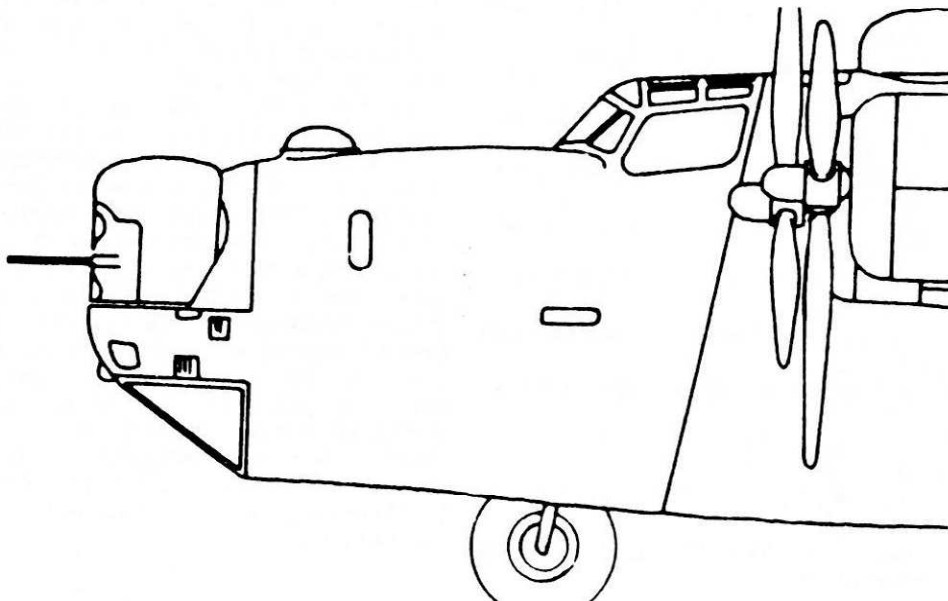
Cpl. Albert landed in a tree, and found that a pocket knife, which the undersigned instructed all crew members to carry, was valuable in enabling him to cut himself out of his shroudlines. Some of the crew members followed briefing instructions and carried toothbrushes which they found important, and sulfa guanadine tablets, another recommended escape aid, assisted one man suffering from the GI's. Two crew members also followed instructions by carrying extra socks and shorts, which were appreciated. Halozone tablets from aid box were used, since water from well was unsanitary.

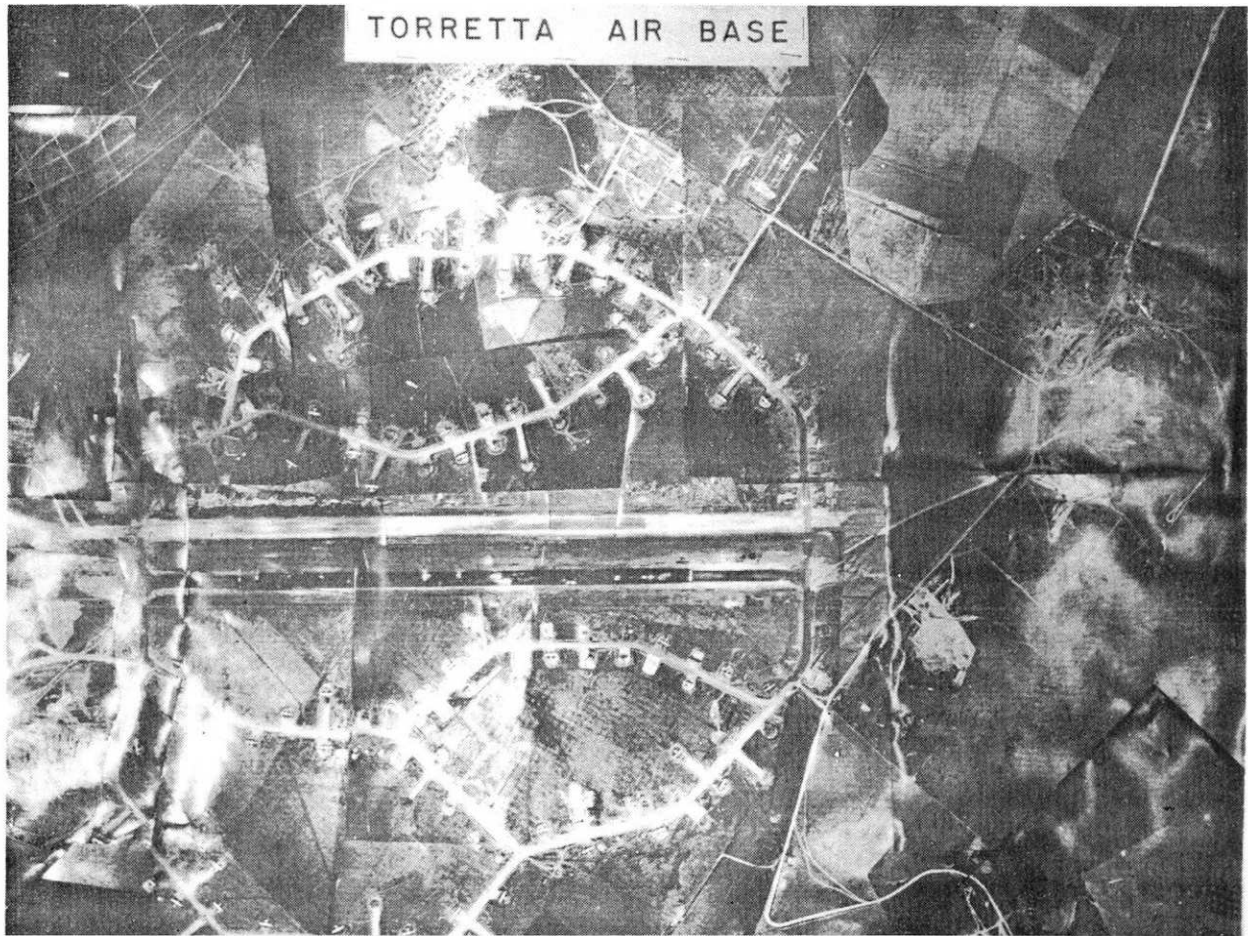
SUGGESTIONS

1. Crew members believe that the new kits containing razors should be issued as promptly as possible.
2. Emphasize no discussion of political or religious nature.
3. Believe new "passport" will be helpful when issued, but recommend big American Flag painted on jackets.
4. Do not talk with civilians in occupied territory.
5. Recommend carrying flashlight or candle.
6. Recommend carrying chapstick. Some crew members had badly chapped lips and cold sores.

JOHN F. HOLSTIUS.

Captain, A.C.
Escape Officer





TORRETTA AIR BASE

Composite photo of Torretta Air Base, Cerignola, Italy, Summer or Fall 1944. In winter the circular area just below became a lake. The top side of the lake skirted the 827th Enlisted Quarters, while the bottom side fronted the 825th Sq. bone yard.



Adolph Marcus, 824th Sq. shows how his parachute harness stopped a German 20mm shell, saving his life. (Robert A. Harrison photo 825th Sq.)



Member Donald E. Lundberg (L) 764th Sq. sent in this photo in hopes someone can identify the airman on the right. Taken at the end of their tour. (Donald E. Lundberg photo 764th Sq.)



The flight crew of pilot J. Roedel* (2nd from right) Back row from left: Carl C. Frasure, Radio Operator: J. Suddarth, Nav.: F. Rosseler, Co/Pilot: M. Fischer, Eng.: Roedel: and unknown crew chief. Kneeling from left: W. Bardin, Ball Gun.: R. Lewis, Nose/Gun: A. Bennett, Jr., Tail/Gun: W. Watts*, Bomb. (killed in action) and J. Heleman* - Top/Gun.
(Marvin Fischer photo 827th Sq.)



With reference to the photo in Torretta Flyer No. 8 of "Little Mac" here is a crew photo, the names painted on the fuselage. From top to bottom are: W.E. McCoy, R.E. Patheal, Y.T. Lew, D.W. Shea, A.W. Cooper, E.L. Tanksley, J. Derbak, R.L. Sturtz, and C.A. Pendelton.
(Robert A. Harrison photo 825 Sq.)



Hammer Field, California Dec. 1943. An unnamed Hollywood starlet (to right of landing gear) christens a B-24 assigned to the 764th Sq. The crew from left are: Arthur D. Carter, Co-Pilot: Joseph F. Meyer, Bombardier: William E. Nelson, Gunner: Robert O. Guidon, Radio Operator: Henry P. Curcier, Navigator: Starlet: Robert A. Weir, Pilot: Albert Ray, Engineer, and Orville G. Short, Ball Gunner. (Orville Short photo, 764th Sq.)



Crew of Roger Nixon 766th Sq.
(Amos Larsen photo 766th Sq.)



The crew of #63 Malfunction Sired By Ford. Back row, standing from left: Cecil Smith-Nav.; Otto Lepic-Bomb; Robert W. Walters-Pilot; and John Fitzpatrick-Co-Pilot. Kneeling, left to right: Peter Beversluis-Eng.; Jeffry Helms-Tail/Gun; Dennis Cheek-Radio/Operator; Walter Ashbrook-Nose/Gun; Francis Lucas-Ball Turret; Edward Farrel-Waist Gunner (killed in action-Steyr, Austria)
(Francis Lucas photo 767th Sq.)



Walter Dunn 766 Squadron, sent this photo of the 461st B.G. musicians taken Dec. 1943 Fresno, Calif.



Torretta, Italy, Summer 1944. A B-24 of the 766th Sq., 461st Bomb Group takes off on a practice mission.

**461st & 484th
Bomb Groups Association**

1122 Ysabel Street
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

*Address Correction Requested
Forwarding and Return Postage
Guaranteed*

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TORRANCE, CA
PERMIT NO. 259