

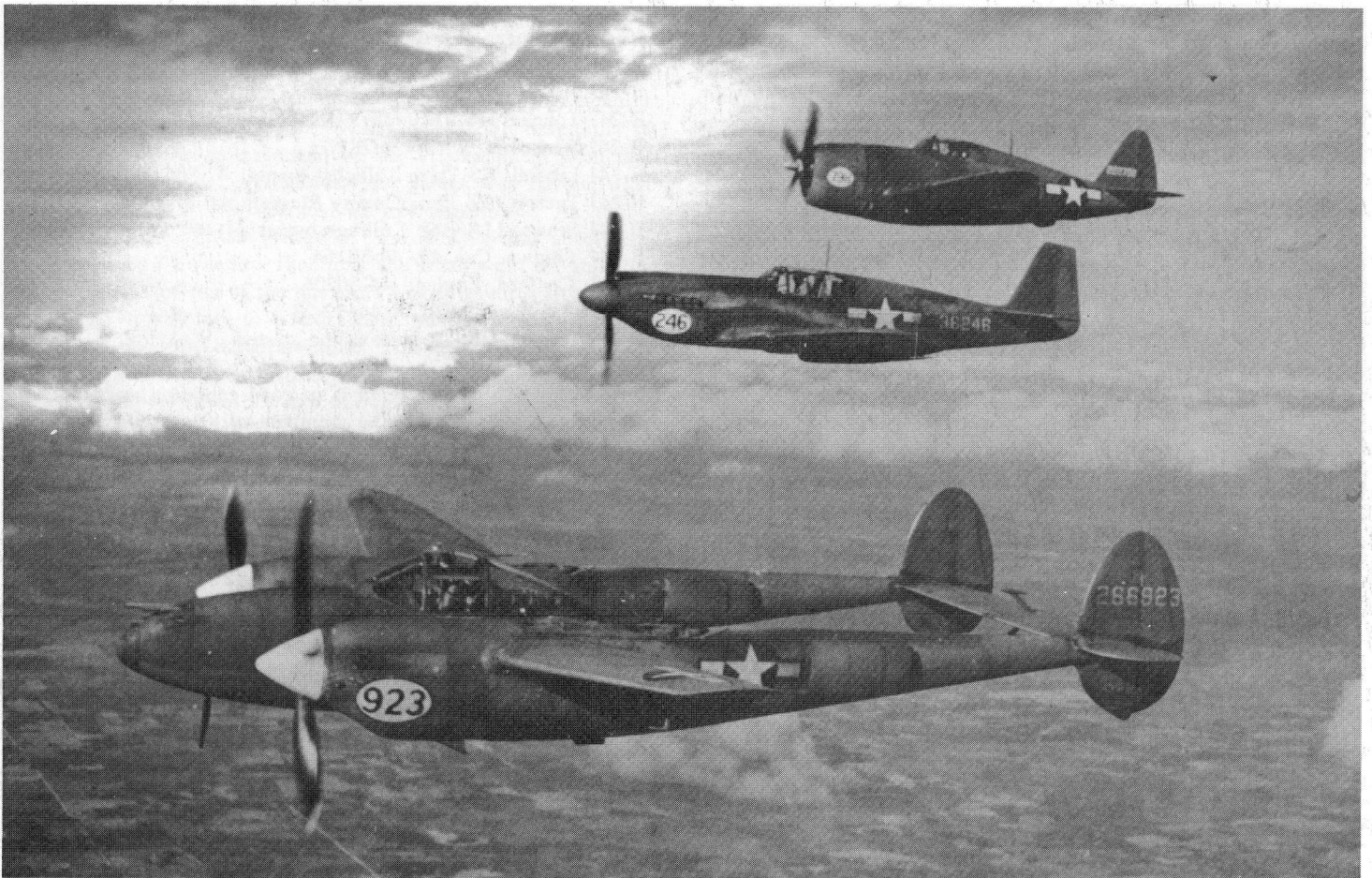
THE TORRETTA FLYER

Torretta Flyer No 16

Redondo Beach, California

Fall/Winter 1988

NEW ORLEANS SELECTED FOR THE 1989 REUNION, FALL DATE SET (See Pages 2 & 4)



Three fighter types used to fly escort for the Bomber Formations of the Italian based 15th Air Force. Top P-47, middle P-51, and bottom P-38

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1989 reunion

NEW ORLEANS

Come Join us in the Fun City of Jazz, Jambalaya, River Boat Rides, French Quarter, and the St Charles Street car

Association News

AAF History Is This Issue's Theme.

The main story in this issue is the eleven page History of the Army Air Forces 1907 to 1947 which was sent to us by Adolph Marcus 824 Sq. We thought it would be in keeping with the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the B-24 scheduled for next year. Reader comments are always welcome.

Photo Credits

The photos used on the front and back covers and to illustrate the History of the Army Air Forces 1907 to 1947 story are from Bob Waag of Torrance, California. Photos used in the Letters to the Editor section come from members submitting the letters. The exceptions are noted under the appropriate photographs.

Dues Reminder

Please check the address sticker for the last year that dues were received and remit all dues owing through 1988. For members not currently paid up through 1988, this will be the last issue of the flyer mailed.

Needy Fund

For the 1988 reunion in San Francisco a needy fund was started for those members who wished to attend the reunion, but could not for financial reasons. Members wishing to help in this project for the 1989 Reunion may send contributions to the Association by using the tear slip included in this issue.

Scholarship Awards

Because of severe hot weather and drought conditions in Italy, the start of the fall school year had to be delayed. As we go to press, information regarding the names of the three candidates for 1988 had not been received.

Correction to Torretta Flyer No 15

The cover painting of issue #15 should read, "Winter Scene Torretta, Italy 1944". It was done by Ben Turner (deceased) as well as the one on page 12. Ben was studying art when the war interrupted his schooling and he ended up in the 484th. His work influenced much of the early nose art displayed on the 484th's aircraft in early 1944. Today his work is being recognized by art critics with the result that his paintings are highly valued. Paintings sent by Bill Keese CO 484th BG.

Meeting Calender

May 19-21, 1989 50th Anniversary of the first flight of the B-24 Fort Worth, Texas. For Information call Project Office at 505/821/4484 or write to Project Office 6424 Torreon Dr Albuquerque, NM 97109

August 13-17, 1989 15th Air Force Reunion Las Vegas Riviera Hotel

September 20-24, 1989 50th Anniversary Celebration of the First Flight of the B-24 Liberator San Diego, California. Write the International B-24 Liberator Club, PO Box 841, San Diego, CA 92112

The 1989 Reunion

1989 Reunion Set for New Orleans

The 1989 Reunion will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana August 31 through September 3, 1989 at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel 555 Canal St New Orleans, LA 70140. Phone (504) 581-1000. Room rates are \$60.00 per night Single, double, triple, and quad.

The Last of the Liberators

Virgil W Falkner, (394th Bomb Squadron) USAF Ret, from the Pima County Museum, Arizona (adjacent to Davis-Monthan) sent this list of Liberators presently known to be in existence. They are:

LB-30 Harlingen, TX owned by the Confederate Air Force
B-24 D Dayton ,OH Air Force Museum
B-24J New Delhi, India 44-44213
B-24J Topeka, KS Yesterday's Air Force 44-44272
B-24J Barksdale, LA 44-48781
B-24J Liberal, KS Dave Tallichet owner 42-50551
B-24J Tucson, AZ Pima County Museum 44-44175
B-24J Stowe, MA Bob Collings owner 44-44052
B-24L Ottawa, Canada 44-50154
B-24L Cosford, England 44-50206
B-24M Lackland AFB, TX 44512-28
B-24J Castle AFB, CA restoration started

The B-24 at the Pima Museum is in good condition and to further preserve this aircraft, the members of the 394th Sq, 5th Bomb Group have started a fund to build a hangar for it. Contributions can be sent to the Pima County Museum, with a notation "B-24 Memorial Fund" and mail to Vigil W Falkner, 8936 Calle Kuen, Tucson, AZ 85715. He reports also that volunteers from the 394th squadron come out to the museum to work on the B-24 in helping to preserve it. Additional volunteer help would be most welcome as the job is never ending.

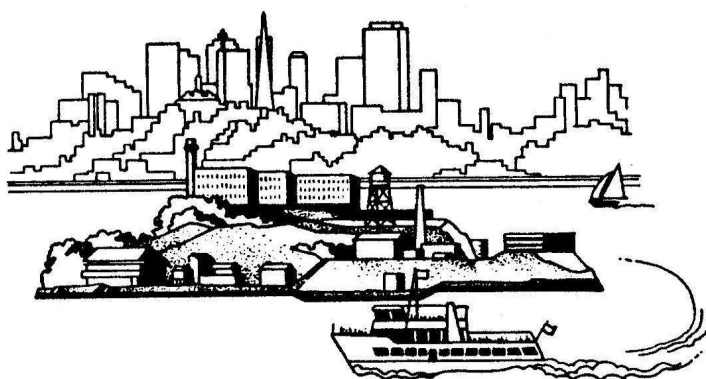
The Torretta Flyer

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& 484th Bomb Groups Association
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to members of the Association.
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Editor: Bud Markel
Associate Editor: Beatrice Markel

The Association welcomes stories,
and photographs dealing with the Air
War over Europe during WWII. Direct all
inquiries to the Editor, Torretta Flyer,
1122 Ysabel St. Redondo Beach, CA 90277
Phone (213)-316-3330





REPORT OF THE 1988 SAN FRANCISCO REUNION

The San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel, the site of the 1988 reunion, has to be the best of all of the hotels this Association has ever used over the years. While the Marriott hospitality is world famous, the management of this establishment went that extra mile to insure the comfort of our guests, way beyond what was guaranteed in the contract we had negotiated. As anticipated for this particular weekend, the weather was absolutely beautiful and the reunion functions and tours went off smoothly. Departure of one of the bus tours was delayed to afford everyone the opportunity to board. There was not enough time to announce the new departure time. This was the first reunion where more than one tour was operated, in fact there was a wide range of choices, from the city of San Francisco, Muir Woods, Napa Valley, Carmel/Monterey, Yosemite, United Air Lines Maintenance Base tour, Ames/Nasa Research Center, and included a post reunion tour to Hawaii, and members and their guests took advantage of the opportunities provided to see this part of our country.

Our guests were able to enjoy the luxury of a word class hotel at a substantial savings over the regular rate. The Indian Summer weather and the resort like accommodations made for a very pleasant stay. "This 1988 reunion was the best ever", was the report we heard most from our guests as they departed for home.

On Friday evening, the squadrons met for dinner in separate break-out rooms, as has been the practice at past reunions. This year many of the squadrons initiated a new format. After dinner, each guest stood to introduce himself, gave a brief history of himself, and told of his most interesting or frightening war experience. He would then introduce his wife or guest and she would talk about their life and family. As the stories began to unfold a feeling of family unity began to emerge and the common experiences brought on by the war was bringing the members and guests closer together. Everyone wanted the emotional high to last longer because it is the true essence of what a reunion is all about. It was a most successful evening. Some members suggested that in the future as this part of the reunion agenda, any member of a squadron with a VCR camera might wish to record these meetings for use as an oral/video history. The Saturday night banquet began with the presentation of the colors brought in by a color guard company from Travis Air

Force Base under the command of S/Sgt Harold L Ballance. In the presentation were the flags of the United States, the State of California and the United States Air Force, as well as the flags of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups. After the pledge of allegiance led by Tom Javaruski (764th Sq.), Chaplain Terrell E Hamilton, Travis Air Force Base, gave the invocation. Following the roll call of the squadrons by Leonard R Cole, 461st Hqtrs, and Peter Drill 484th Hqtrs, Chris Donaldson 765 Sq gave a most appropriate and moving toast to our departed comrades. The complete text follows:

SO HERE WE ARE IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE CITY BY THE BAY-OAKLAND BAY, I THINK. I LIVE IN ST PAUL, WHICH BEARS SOMEWHAT THE SAME RELATIONSHIP TO ITS FAST TRACK NEIGHBOR, MINNEAPOLIS, AS DOES OAKLAND TO SAN FRANCISCO. GERTRUDE STEIN, A STRANGE LADY, WHOSE WRITING I NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD, ONCE SAID ABOUT OAKLAND "THERE IS NO THERE THERE".

WHICH BRINGS ME TO "THERE". SOME HAVE BEEN BACK THERE -THERE BEING EUROPE, ITALY, CERIGNOLA, TORRETTA. THE FIRST TIME I WAS BACK THERE A FEW YEARS AGO DRIVING THROUGH PLACES LIKE MUNICH, INNSBRUCK, THE BRENNER PASS, BOLZANO, ROVERETTO, MY WIFE OBSERVED, WHAT A PITY WE DROPPED BOMBS ON SUCH ATTRACTIVE PLACES. I COULD ONLY REPLY THAT IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.

WELL, IT WAS A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME. WE WERE CALLED AND WE SERVED - IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND, ON THE SEA AND BENEATH IT AND LATER WE BASKED IN THE LUXURY OF A NATION'S GRATITUDE, A REWARD NOT ENJOYED BY SERVICE PEOPLE IN LATER CONFLICTS.

BUT BACK TO "THERE", WHERE AT TORRETTA ANCIENT STONE BUILDINGS STILL EXIST WITH FAINT MARKINGS OF OUR TRANSITORY OCCUPANCY- AN OCCASIONAL FENCE INCLUDES METAL RUNWAY PLANKING, A LONG FLAT STRETCH OF FARMLAND SUGGESTS A ONCE BUSY RUNWAY SYSTEM.

WHAT WAS THERE IS STILL THERE ALBEIT FADING WITH

THE PASSING OF TIME. BUT IF YOU LISTEN WITH YOUR MIND'S EAR AND A BIT OF IMAGINATION YOU CAN HEAR FAINTLY ACROSS THE YEARS: THE ROAR OF A HUNDRED ENGINES, THE VOICES OF MEN BORNE ALOFT INTO HOSTILE SKIES AND THE SOUNDS OF ALL THE OTHER ENGINES OF THEIR CRAFT. LISTEN, AND YOU CAN HEAR AND REMEMBER OTHER TIMES, OTHER PLACES AND THE FACES OF FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ONCE YOUNG, SOME FOREVER YOUNG, AND OTHERS WHO TARRIED WITH US FOR A TIME.

GRATEFUL MEMORY FOR THEIR LIVES AND THEIR DEDICATION TO COUNTRY AND CAUSE PROFOUNDLY PERVADES OUR THOUGHTS ON OCCASIONS LIKE THIS, AND WE AND THEIR LOVED ONES SEEK COMFORT AND HOPE AS IN THE PROPHETIC BIBLICAL WORDS -"AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH, NEITHER SORROW NOR CRYING; NEITHER SHALL THERE BE ANY MORE PAIN; FOR THE FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY."

UNTIL THEN, LET US ALWAYS REMEMBER THOSE WHO WERE AMONG US THERE- AND WHO HAVE NOW GONE FROM OUR PRESENCE - AS WE NOW STAND TO LIFT THIS TOAST IN THEIR HONOR.

<><><>

A complete prime rib dinner was served which concluded with a dessert presentation of trays of individual French Pastries.

Our guest speaker Ary Hobbel, a United Airlines pilot, was introduced by Frank Valdez (826 Sq).

Ary Hobbel, who as a boy grew up in occupied Holland, told us what it was like to live under Nazi oppression. After serving with the Royal Netherlands Air Force, he came to the United States and eventually joined United Airlines. He told us of what it was like to fly a modern jet liner as compared to our primitive B-24's. He told us that the major job of today's pilot is to monitor the aircraft's systems. While modern aircraft are still hand flown, the INS (Internal Navigation System) for example, can navigate an aircraft to any pin point on the face of the earth. The key element to the function of the INS is a very precise gyro that does not precess. Pilots will remember having to reset the directional gyro at regular intervals because the card would precess (move away from the true heading) due to friction of the gyro bearings. He closed his speech by thanking the audience for its part in shortening the war and allowing him to regain his freedom from German occupation. There was a lingering pause after the speech, before the first sound of applause was heard.

He had been speaking from the heart and for that long moment everyone was trying to control the emotional outpouring that was triggered by his presentation. Then quite suddenly guests were on their feet giving Ary a standing ovation. It was the right speech for the right time, given by the right person.

The speech was followed by music of the Al Cunningham band. Their music was appreciated by the crowd as the dance floor filled up time and time again. It was another successful evening.

On Sunday morning a memorial service was given by Chaplain Terrell H Hamilton. He read the names of those who passed away since the last reunion. The memorial booklet distributed at the opening of the service listed all of the known deceased since the last publication of the Torretta Flyer. The buffet breakfast followed the service.

Post Reunion Tour to Hawaii

A seven day post reunion tour to Hawaii was the last event of the 1988 reunion. All had a good time. See the next page for a photograph of the tour group.

Included in this year's registration packet handed out to members on registering was a set of 4 coasters with the original 461st and 484th Bomb Group Association logo imprinted in gold on each coaster. We do have additional sets. Members wishing to order these coaster sets, should use the tear slip included in this Flyer.

For those of you who could not make this year's reunion for whatever reason, don't put up off joining us at the coming 8th reunion in New Orleans, Louisiana, the fun city of Jazz with a year round Mardi Gras spirit. **Dates are August 31 through September 3, 1989. Place: New Orleans Marriott Hotel, 555 Canal St New Orleans, LA 70140. Phone (504) 581-1000.** Time is passing much too quickly for most of us, and now is the opportunity to once again meet comrades and friends from that bygone era.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING REPORT

At the business meeting, on Saturday morning, after the minutes of the last meeting and financial report were approved, and the Scholarship Committee's report was given, the election of directors for the coming year took place. The directors are: Bud Markel, Bea Markel, Frank Valdez, Tom Javaruski, and Chris Donaldson.

The Scholarship Committee's report was given by Ed Goree, and after some discussion on the suggestion of awards being given to other entities in addition to the awards presently being offered, members voted unanimously to continue the Scholarship Memorial Award program in substantially the same manner as has been practiced in the past.

Some other matters of importance to all of our members were dealt with at the annual meeting.

1) Members voted overwhelmingly to maintain the organization as the two groups Association has been and presently is constituted.

2) The Association's policy of holding annual reunions was upheld when the question of the site of the 1989 reunion was brought up. The sites that were listed in Torretta Bulletin No #14 were named as possibilities for 1989. Of the seven cities named, there was no doubt that New Orleans is where the members wish to go next year. The 1989 reunion of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association will take place August 31, 1989 through September 3, 1989 in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana.



The post reunion tour to Hawaii. The enclosed photograph was taken on the evening of the Luau at the King Kamehameha Hotel. The post reunion tour (after the 1988 reunion in San Francisco) went fine with no hitches. They are from left;

Alice Goodell, Ellsworth Goodell 826 Sq , Betty Aldene, Arthur Aldene 827 Sq, Barbara McCarthy, Vernon Garrison 765 Sq, Edith Garrison, Tom Javaruski 764 Sq (Group Leader) Dolores Love, James Love 767 Sq , Marjorie Shaw, Arthur Shaw 827 Sq, Mary Bush and Clarence Bush 824 Sq. Hawaiian report by Tom Javaruski, 764 Sq.

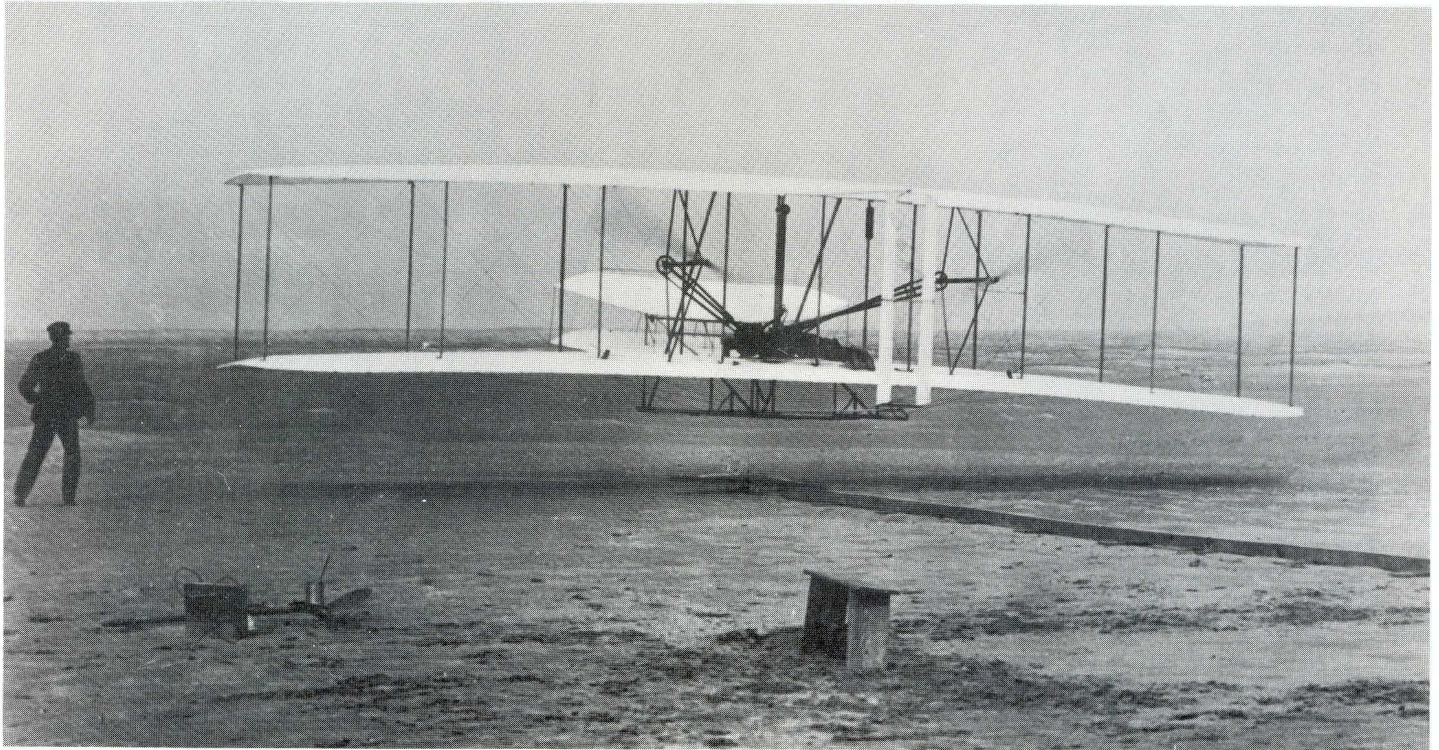
List of donators to the Scholarship Fund from January 1988 to September 1988

Carl R Adams 826
 Robert W Bell 825
 John M Billings 825
 Marion Blair 764
 Joseph C Bott 825
 George Bouras MD 824: **Given in
 Memory of Richard Kime**
 Leonard Brodsky 827
 Clarence L Bush 824
 Ralph W Carr 825
 James T Chafin Jr 825
 George Christie 765
 Arthur P Coogan 827
 Earl W Depue 827
 Peter Drill 484
 Colin E Dye 826
 Simon P Faherty 767
 Angelo L Ferrara 767
 Bill Franklin 766
 Vernon W Garrison 765
 William F Gaskill 824
 J Jordan Glew 826
 Ellsworth Goodell 826
 John A Grimm 825

Mrs. James Gough Jr 826: **Given in
 Memory of Ray Foss and
 Ken Monsell**
 Grant V Hansen 824
 Robert E Harrison 767
 Joe Hebert 826
 Mike Hendrickson 824
 Eugene R Hetzel 765
 John Hicks 826
 Raymond H Johnson 766
 Mike Karwoski 824
 Robert M Kelliher 765
 Paul W Kerr 826
 William T Kesey 766
 Edward F Kiernan 461
 Bill Kinyoun 496
 Milton Klarsfeld 765
 Robert H Koenig 765
 John F Konop 824
 Fred Kuhn 826
 James D Mackin 767
 Leo V Matranga 825
 Lloyd C McKenzie 825
 Bud McRorie 765

Judson W Moore 766
 Edward Prendeville 766
 Harold D Pressel Jr 825
 Harold I Reeve 766
 Fred Roessler 827
 Alma H Rudel 764: **Given in
 Memory of Chester H Rudel**
 M J Schaus 824
 Walter H Scheurs 825
 Ed Schrader 767
 Claude F Schroeder 827
 Arthur T Shak 824
 Alfred J Solomon 826
 Clifton J Stewart 765
 T V Stradley 764
 Raymond M Strand 827
 Charles E Trinkle 826
 Carl H Voss 826
 Monroe J Wall 496
 David R Ward 826
 Ross J Wilson 824
 William F Wilson 826
 C V Winter 766
 John Yount 765

HISTORY OF THE "ARMY AIR FORCES" 1907 to 1947



December 1903 First Wright Brothers flight (AF via UAL)

INTRODUCTION

The Army Air Forces, its immediate predecessor, the Air Corps, US Army, under which most of us served, ceased to exist on September 18, 1947. On that day the United States Air Force was created. This short history deals only with, the Air Service, Air Corps, and the Army Air Forces when they were a part of the United States Army. It reflects the thinking of the author, (who is unknown) during the 1947-1950 period when this report was probably prepared. The mimeographed manuscript of which we have a copy was shown to be the property of Lt/Col H W Farrell. If per chance Col Farrell should see this issue of the Torretta Flyer and could shed light on the name of the author, we would be most pleased to give him or her proper credit for the article. Member Adolph Marcus 824 sq. found the manuscript while researching the history of Mitchell Field, NY, and forwarded it to us as part of the Airbase History Project. This is a historical document presented exactly as we found it with only minor grammar and spelling corrections.

On August 1, 1907, an Aeronautical Division was established under the supervision of the Chief Signal Officer, Signal Corps, United States Army. This division was to have charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects. Captain Charles Chandler was placed in command.

But long before the War Department had acknowledged aeronautics as a military potentiality, the US Army had been active in aerial work. As far back as the Civil War, when observations were made from balloons for the Army of the Potomac, far seeing officers realized the possibilities of aerial warfare. In 1898 an Army Observation balloon directed artillery fire during the attack on San Juan Hill, Cuba. In 1906 an Army balloonist won the first international balloon race. Later, the Army Signal School at Fort Leavenworth set up a course in ballooning for its student officers. Until 1907 however, the only work in military aeronautics had been with free and captive balloons. Except for the Wright Brothers, whose claims had met with a good deal of skepticism on the part of the American public, no other heavier-than-air craft had ever flown which could be called practical from a military point of view.

< < < The Story Continues > > >

Even after the founding of the Aeronautical Division, the balloon was still considered the prime medium of military aeronautics. In 1908 a contract was awarded to Captain Thomas S Baldwin for the development of a dirigible balloon. Specifications called for a speed of 20 miles per hour and endurance of 2 hours. In its trial that summer, Baldwin's airship averaged 19.61 miles per hour and stayed aloft the required two hours. The dirigible cost \$6750 less a 15% penalty for Baldwin's failure to meet the speed requirements by 39/100 of a mile.

But interest was mounting in heavier-than-air craft, and on February 10, 1908, the Air Service signed a contract with the Wright Brothers of Dayton, Ohio, for what was to be America's first military airplane. The contract called for a plane to carry two men in continuous flight one hour at a speed of no less than forty miles per hour. The Wrights fulfilled both conditions with a speed of slightly better than 42 miles per hour and a sustained flight of one hour and twelve minutes. The speed attained, earned for the Wright Brothers a bonus of \$5000 over the contract price of \$25,000. The final acceptance flight was completed on July 30, 1909.

For a time in 1910, it appeared that military aviation would not survive. In the summer of that year, the Army put two officers and nine enlisted men on aeronautical duty; one airplane, one airship and three balloons. Aeronautical development was at a standstill. The Chief Signal Officer had repeatedly urged congressional appropriations for military aviation without success. By an act of March 3, 1911, however his efforts were rewarded. Congress voted its first appropriation of \$125,000 for aeronautical development. This appropriation permitted the purchase of new equipment for training and reconnaissance work, and enabled the Aeronautical Division to participate as a strategic force in division maneuvers at San Antonio, Texas, from March to July 1911. An aviation school was started at College Park, Maryland; experiments were conducted in aerial photography for reconnaissance work; and in 1911, tests were made firing machine guns from planes. Experiments were also conducted with the Riley Scott bombing device, the invention of a former Army officer. By the summer of 1911, eight officers held airplane pilot certificates and equipment included five airplanes and three balloons. There was now money available for the development of our air arm, but the War Department could not detail the necessary officers to be trained as aviators, due to personnel shortages.

The first airplanes purchased by the Army were necessarily of a commercial type, since the inventors had not applied themselves to the development of a military plane. However it is the opinion of the flying officers that these commercial types lacked sufficient power, speed and carrying capacity for military purposes. Accordingly, specifications were prepared and manufacturers went to work on the development of military aircraft. In 1912 the first machines to meet the new specifications were accepted by the Army.

From June to November 1912, experimental work with an automatic gun (camera) photography and radio was carried on at College Park. By the first of November of that year the Air Service had grown to twelve airplanes housed in eight hangars at College Park., 12 officers, and 39 enlisted men. There were also hangars at San Antonio and Fort Leavenworth.

In February, 1913, College Park, which thus far had been the center of aerial activity, was abandoned in favor of Texas City, Texas. The primary reason for the change was to carry on aviation experimentation close to troop concentrations, in order to practice coordination of air ground maneuvers. Another school was opened at Fort McKinley in the Philippines on March 10, and a third at Hawaii on July 14. On September 30, 1913,

there were 23 officers, and 91 enlisted men on air duty, and the aerial force had grown to 15 airplanes. Meanwhile congressional action of March 2 had provided for 35% extra pay for flying and had limited flying officers strength to 30.

During 1913, several bills were introduced in Congress to elevate the Aeronautical Division to branch status, on a level with, rather than subordinate to, the Signal Corps. The last bill met with violent opposition from Signal Corps officers who appeared before the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives and was subsequently defeated. In its place an act was passed and approved on July 18, 1914, which established, still subordinate to the Signal Corps, an Aviation Section, charged with the operation of all military aircraft, pertinent appliances, signal apparatus installed on aircraft, and training in aeronautics. The strength of the Aviation Section upon passage of the bill was 18 officers, and 104 enlisted men. The act authorized a strength of 60 officers and 260 enlisted men, and established ratings of "Military Aviator", and "Junior Military Aviator", with increases in pay 75% and 50% respectively. A pay increase of 25% was allotted for student flyers. This new law definitely raised the status of military aviation, but restrictions imposed as to marital status and age presented serious difficulties in attaining the authorized strength.

With \$600,000 provided for aeronautical development, Army aviation underwent a period of rapid expansion, An unprecedented amount of flying was accomplished during 1914, and great strides were made in adapting the airplane to military use.

The First Aero Squadron, actually the first United States tactical aviation unit, was organized at San Diego, California, in December, 1913. It consisted of 16 officers, 77 enlisted men, and 6 airplanes.



Curtiss JN-4, WWI (Marv Mayo photo)

In the latter half of 1914, Europe was aflame with war, and unprecedented attention was being given to military aviation. An extensive experimental program was started. Testing was conducted on lubricating oils, on various types of propellers, signalling from aircraft by means of Very pistols and smoke bombs for air-ground liaison, the use of radio telegraphy from airplanes, parachutes, bombing and spotting submarine mines. New flight records were made. A portable airport for field use

complete with machine shop, reserve fuel, extra equipment and parts, and even a tent-type hangar, was developed.

On June 1915, the Aviation Section had a strength of 31 officers and 177 enlisted men.

On March 15, 1916, the first Aero Squadron, consisting of 11 officers, 82 enlisted men, and one civilian mechanic began operations at Columbus, New Mexico, under the command of Captain Benjamin D Foulois, as part of the expedition to the Mexican border. Its equipment consisted of 8 of the 13 airplanes then in commission all of which were in poor shape.

America's first air operation was a dismal failure. The 8 plane squadron was ordered, on its initial mission, to the Mexican city of Casas Grandes, for immediate operations. One plane turned back to Columbus with a defective engine. Three more became lost and were forced to land near different Mexican towns; one of the three crashed on landing and the pilot walked to Casas Grandes. The other four were forced down by darkness. A reconnoiter on the following day encountered further difficulty. One plane was unable to attain sufficient altitude to cross the Sierra Madre mountain range; another got caught in wind gusts, cracked up while landing. The Aviation Section's first venture into tactical operations had not met expectations.

The First Aero Squadron remained at the border for a month, carrying mail and dispatches between Columbus and Colonia Dublan, and scouting for friendly and enemy troops. Finally on April 22, the entire squadron returned to Columbus, its first war service over, 6 of the 8 airplanes had been abandoned or destroyed; the other two had to be condemned.

The border incident proved the need for higher powered aircraft, and with a new appropriation of \$500,000, the largest ever received up to that time, the Aviation Section was able to purchase 12 planes of considerably more horsepower than had been in service.

On May 20, 1916 Lieutenant Colonel George O Squier assumed command of the Aviation Section. A field officers' course in aeronautics was established at San Diego. A new flying school was opened at Hazelhurst Field, Mineola, New York, and others at Chicago and Memphis. Certain civilian flying schools then in operation were also given contracts to train Army flyers.

On June 3, 1916, the National Defense Act was passed. One of its provisions strengthened the Aviation Section to 148 officers, the enlisted figure to be set by the President over a period of five years. At the end of June, the Aviation Section had 61 of its allotted 148 officers and 248 enlisted men.

The year 1917 was one of expansion for the Aviation Section, occasioned by World War 1. It was also a year of problems, for there were numerous obstacles in the way of aeronautical growth. Aeronautics had progressed in America very little from the first Wright flying machine up to the end of 1916, largely due to lack of government support and public apathy. There was little in the way of an aviation industry; in the 8 years which passed since the Army's acceptance of the first plane,

the industry had delivered only 142 planes to the Aviation Section. None of the Army's few flyers had enough flying experience for combat flying, and the Army's 55 planes were totally unsuited for battle. No officer was sufficiently familiar with aircraft guns or bombing mechanisms. But mothered by the necessity of war, ways and means were invented to surmount all of these obstacles.

At the outbreak of War in April, the Aviation Section consisted of 131 officers, only 78 were flyers, and slightly more than 1000 enlisted men, divided into seven squadrons. Two of these squadrons had not been completely organized.

On May 23, 1917, the French government requested that the United States reinforce air power on the Western Front by providing 5000 pilots, 50,000 ground personnel and 45,000 airplanes by early 1918. It was a staggering request. It meant turning out 12,000 service planes, as well as 9900 training craft, a stupendous total of 21,900, which would require 43,800 engines. Even these totals were shortly increased. This was truly a tremendous program, but after careful deliberation, it was decided that its accomplishment was possible. The request was approved on June 27, 1917, and on July 25 Congress promptly appropriated \$672,000,000 and America's air potential went to work. The same act authorized an increase in personnel, modified flying ratings and pay, and provided for the officer and enlisted reserves.

American Flying units began arriving in France in the fall of 1917. The First Aero Squadron, now commanded by Major Ralph Royce, arrived on September 3, and was followed shortly thereafter by 8 other squadrons, and balloon companies. These squadrons took combat training under the tutelage of the experienced French pilots, Amanty, and Epiez. They flew in French aircraft while awaiting the delivery of the latest combat planes.

The Aviation Section's first combat action came on April 12, 1918, when the First Aero Squadron was attacked by enemy planes while on a reconnaissance mission. Two days later, Americans won their first victory, when Lieutenant Alan F Winslow and Lieutenant Douglas Campbell shot down two German planes over the Toul airdrome. On June 12 the 96th Squadron entered action with a bombing mission against the railroad yards at Dommary-Baroncourt, near Metz, the results of which were highly successful. The 96th Squadron continued its daylight bombing activity until July 10th when the squadron was reduced to only one plane after an unfortunate landing of a flight at Coblenz. However, a supply of new French Brequet planes was obtained on August 1 and the 96th resumed operations. On September 10, the 1st Day bombardment group was formed, with the 11th, 20th, and 166th Squadrons joining the 96th. The new squadrons used De Havilland 4 type aircraft, powered by Liberty engines.

In addition to the French aerial offensive, a number of flying officers were sent to Italy, and after undergoing training in the Italian Caproni machines, 96 American pilots saw service with the Italian squadrons. From June 20, 1918, until November 2 of that year, these pilots flew a total of 587 hours over enemy lines and participated in 65 bombardment missions.

America's greatest aerial offensive did not get underway until the closing months of World War I. Under the American 1st Army, the greatest aggregation of the air forces ever assembled during the war was massed for the September, 1918 drive against St. Michel. A fleet of 1481 planes, American, British, and French, under the command of Colonel Billy Mitchell commenced a series of strategic attacks on the German railway centers, communications and troop concentrations. The Air Service also participated in the tactical operations, observing, photographing, directing artillery fire and ground strafing against enemy troops and supplies. These attacks were highly effective.

On October 9 more than 200 American bombers, accompanied by about 100 pursuit craft and 53 three-place planes, smashed a German counter attack by dropping 22 tons of bombs and knocking out a dozen enemy fighters. The bombs in this instance, were released electrically from mounts underneath the fuselage, a decided improvement over the earlier bombing methods, when bombardiers carried their bombs in a bucket in the cockpit and tossed them over the side by guesswork aiming.

When the war ended on November 11, 1918 there were 45 squadrons with 767 pilots, 1481 observers, 23 gunners, and 740 airplanes assigned to the various armies. American aviators flew more than 35,000 hours over enemy lines, approximately 3,600,000 miles. In all, American airmen made almost 13,000 pursuit flights, more than 6,600 observation flights, and over 1100 bombing missions, dropping 255,000 pounds of explosives. The American aircraft loss was less than half that of the confirmed enemy loss. The Air Service had proved the French theory that our support could be most effective by strongly reinforcing allied air power on the western front.

World War I gave the United States several war heroes, "aces" they were called. Among the greatest of them was "balloon buster" Lieutenant Frank J Luke. Lt. Luke ran up a phenomenal total of 18 air victories, (14 of them balloons) in two weeks during September 1918, finally meeting his death on the 29th of the month. The Air Force's Luke Field located in Lt Luke's home town, Phoenix, Arizona, still bears his name. There was Major Raoul Lufberry of Wallingford, Connecticut, who scored 17 "kills" while with the French before joining the AEF; Major George A Vaughn of Brooklyn, New York, who had 13 victories; Captain Elliott White Springs of Lancaster, South Carolina 12 victories; and finally, the greatest of them all Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, former auto racer, who went to France as General Pershing's chauffeur and became the Air Services top flyer, despite three months of illness which grounded him. Rickenbacker recorded 25 aerial victories.

The war had proved that the Air Service definitely had a place in the Army, and, in 1919, the Air Service began to look for peacetime applications for its services and found one in flying aerial patrols for the prevention of forest fires. This service was inaugurated in June of that year at the request of the District Forester of California. The forest ranger, mounted or afoot, could not cover sufficient territory on his patrol, nor report fires quickly enough to maintain an efficient check on forest fires. Furthermore, an airplane could spot fires from

altitudes that were invisible to ground lookouts.

Aerial forest patrols were operated under the direction of Major H H Arnold, and impressive results were achieved. De Havilland planes, powered by the popular Liberty engines, were employed by the aerial rangers of the Air Service. To adapt the planes to better observation work, they were throttled down to a bare 100 miles per hour. At first fires were reported by carrier pigeon or parachute drop, but later radio communication systems were installed. During the 4 years of its existence, the patrol reported 4,000 fires, saving millions of dollars in timber.

On June 4, 1920, Congress passed an Army reorganization act which gave Army Aeronautics a new, definite status. The new Army Air Service, with an authorized strength of 1,516 officers and 16,000 enlisted men, was established as a "separate and coordinate branch of the line of the Army." Ninety percent of the officers had to be pilots or observers, and flying units had to be commanded by flying officers. At the passage of the new act there were 155 regular and 1,013 temporary officers and about 7,800 enlisted men in the Air Service.

Two wing headquarters were activated, one at Langley Field, Virginia, and the other at Kelly Field, Texas. These two wings embraced 7 groups, 4 within the continental limits and 3 outside. The groups located in this country were the 1st Day Bombardment Group, equipped with De Havilland 4B type aircraft, and the 1st Pursuit Group, flying SE-5A's, both located at Kelly Field; the 1st Surveillance Group, flying De Havillands. at Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas and the First Army Observation Corps, also flying De Havillands, at Langley Field. The extra-continental groups were the 1st Observation Group at Manila; the 2nd Observation Group at Honolulu; and 3rd Observation Group in the Canal Zone. These latter groups were equipped with De Havillands, as well as war-time leftover Curtiss, "Jennies".

The De Havilland 4 was to remain the mainstay of the Air Services for a good many years to come, insofar as combat type planes were concerned, while the ancient "Jennies" were to be standard trainers. Although many new planes had been contracted for during the war, economy measures forced contract cutbacks at the cessation of hostilities.

Meanwhile, the Air Service was exploring the use of lighter-than-air ships. By top level agreement, development work on the rigid type of airship was left to the Navy, while the Air Service procured only non-rigid types, with the exception of two semirigid type craft.

One of the first non-rigids was the Zodiac, a former French craft turned over to the Air Service early in 1920. Then the largest airship in service, the Zodiac was 260 feet long and had a gas capacity of 328,000 cubic feet. The Zodiac was rechristened the DZ-1 by the Air Service and used chiefly for experimental work in bombing, radio and aerial photography.

Later in 1920, at the request of General William "Billy" Mitchell, the Air Service purchased from Italy what was at that time the largest semi-rigid airship, the Roma. The Roma over 400

feet long and boasting a gas capacity of 1,100,000 cubic feet, and a full length external keel with a built in cabin and a box like arrangement of elevators and rudders. The ship had originally been powered by 6 Italian Ansaldo engines, which the Air Service found unserviceable. Six American Liberty engines were substituted, an operation which kept the Roma on the ground until early the following year. On February 21, 1922, the Roma met with an unfortunate accident at Norfolk, Virginia. The airship was flying at an altitude of approximately 600 feet when suddenly it dived earthward, struck a high tension line and exploded in flame. Thirteen officers, 16 enlisted men, and 5 civilians were killed and 11 survivors injured. An important result of the Roma's ill fated crash was the almost universal substitution of helium for hydrogen in lighter-than-air craft.

In January, 1921, the Air Service asked for an appropriation of \$60,000,000, only a little more than the cost of a new battleship at that time. Back in 1919, General Mitchell had made a statement that the battleship was obsolete, and highly vulnerable to air attack. The Navy took the stand that air power could not inflict permanent damage on warships. To settle the controversy a test was arranged, whereby Army and Navy aircraft were given the opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness against naval men-of-war.

In June and July, about 60 miles off the Virginia coast, the tests were carried out. First, on June 21, naval aircraft proved their worth by sinking a captured German U boat, in 16 minutes by dropping a dozen bombs from an altitude of approximately 1000 feet. Later on the 29th of June, Navy and Marine pilots conducted a successful sea search, to prove the aircraft could seek out enemy battleships. They located the U S battleship Iowa in a sea area of 25,000 miles in one hour and 57 minutes.

On July 13, the Air Service came into the picture. With General Mitchell personally directing the operations, a group of 11 pursuit planes dropped 300 pounders from 1500 feet, and sank the German destroyer G-102 in 19 minutes. Five days later a group of Martin bombers sank a German light cruiser in 35 minutes.

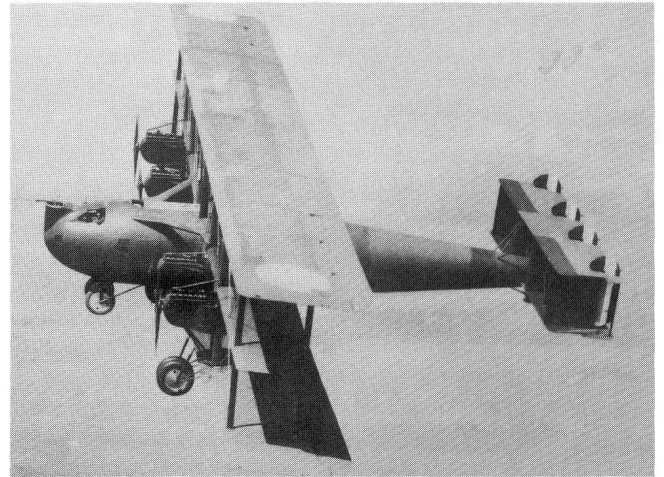
On July 21 the Air Service participated in the most important of the tests. The target this time was the giant German battleship, the heavily armed Ostfriesland. Seven Martin bombers each carrying one 2000 pound bomb, sank her in 7 minutes from the first firing designed to be effective. General Mitchell had proved his point.

The year 1921 also saw experiments in radio direction finding and spraying insecticide by air. The first paratroop demonstration was accomplished and a school for flight surgeons was inaugurated.

In June 1922, formal flight training was resumed after a lapse following the armistice. Kelly Field, Texas was selected as the site for the school for heavier-than-air training, while Scott Field, Belleville, Illinois, was employed as the lighter-than-air instruction center. The mechanics school had been previously moved to Chanute Field, Rantoul, Illinois.

In May, 1923, Lt Oakley G Kelly and Lt John A Macready made the first non stop flight from coast to coast, leaving Roosevelt Field, New York at about noon of May 2, the two Army flyers flew 2,520 miles across the continent to Rockwell Field, San Diego, California, in 26 hours and 50 minutes. Their plane was a Fokker T-2 a monoplane with a wingspan of 75 feet, which carried 725 gallons of fuel for the trip. It was the third try for the two pilots, the first two having been unsuccessful.

August of that year saw the maiden flight of the largest U S airplane built up to that time. It was the Giant Barling tri plane, a six engine bomber with a span of 120 feet across the wing with a length of 65 feet. The Barling was supposed to have an operating speed of 61 miles per hour and a range of 335 miles, but even these modest expectations were never realized. Two years later the project was abandoned.



The Barling Bomber

The flight of Kelly and Macready had touched off a succession of record flights by Air Service pilots, On August 27, 1923, Captain Lowell H Smith and Lieutenant John P Richter commenced an endurance flight that was to last over 37 hours. Flying a De Havilland 4B, the two pilots managed to stay aloft 37 and 1/4 hours, a new world record, by means of a refueling plane, another De Havilland, which serviced them while in flight.

The following year, on June 23, 1924, Lt Russell Maughan flew from New York to San Francisco in five hours less than that made by Kelly and Macready, despite five refueling stops. flying a Curtiss PW-8, Maughan covered the 2,570 miles in 21:48:30, only 18 hours and 36 minutes of which were spent in the air.

On the 28th of September, 1924, Air Service flyers successfully completed the first round the world flight in aviation history. Earlier in the year, on April 6, four Douglas bi-planes had taken off for a lake near Seattle, Washington on the flight of over 26,000 miles. Just 175 days later returned triumphantly to their starting point. They had circled the globe in 363 hours actual flying time. For this achievement the Air Service was awarded the Collier trophy.

In 1925, competing with the US Navy and foreign contenders,



Mechanic at work on Curtiss P6-E of the 17th Pursuit Squadron Selfridge Field, Michigan (file photo)

the Air Service won two great aerial speed records, the Pulitzer Trophy and the Schneider Award. On October 12, Lt "Cy" Bettis flying a Curtiss R302 racer, won the Pulitzer Trophy with an average speed of 249 mile per hour. Two weeks later, Lt "Jimmy" Doolittle used the same plane equipped with pontoons to win the international Schneider race, averaging over 232 miles per hour. Not satisfied, Doolittle flew again the following day, this time averaging 245 miles per hour, a new world record for seaplanes.



Jimmy Doolittle standing beside a Curtiss Hawk Pursuit

An act of July 2, 1926 created the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps, thereby eliminating the designation Air Service. General Mason M Patrick was named the first Chief of the Air Corps.

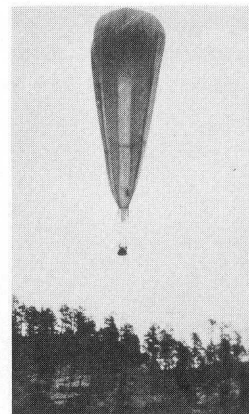
A good will mission to South and Central America was dispatched by the Air Corps from Kelly Field on December 21, 1926. The mission consisting of five two-place Loenig amphibians, toured over 22,000 of the lower Americas, returning to Bolling Field, Washington D C, on May 2, 1927, with the exception of one plane, piloted by Captain Clinton F Woolsey and Lt John W Benton, who were killed at Buenos Aires in a mid air collision with the lead plane, piloted by Major Herbert A Dargue and Lt Ennis C Whitehead. Major Dargue and Lt Whitehead were able to parachute to safety.

A month after the return of the good will mission in 1927, two Air Service-flyers completed the first not stop flight from the continental U S to Hawaii, aided by a radio beam. Lt Lester J Maitland, the pilot and Lt Albert F Hegenberger, navigator, flew a tri motor Fokker from Oakland, California to Wheeler Field, Honolulu in 25 hours and 50 minutes. The flight completed on June 29, 1927 covered over 2400 miles.

On January 1, 1929, Major Carl Spaatz and Captain Ira C Eaker destined to become commanding general and deputy commanding general, respectively, of the Army Air Forces, took part in the memorable flight of the "Question Mark," a trimotor Fokker which set an endurance record that dwarfed the earlier achievement of Smith and Richter. Taking off from Los Angeles on New Year's day, the "Question Mark" stayed aloft almost 151 hour and flew over 11,000 miles by means of mid air refueling. On January 7 the plane was forced to land when one engine cut out. Forty tons of material, including 5660 gallons of gasoline, had been transferred in 43 contacts with the re-supply ship, another Fokker.

The Air Corps' "West Point of the Air," Randolph Field, Texas was dedicated on June 20, 1930, although construction was not complete at the time. At the time of its dedication, Randolph consisted of 162 officers and 1432 enlisted men. It became the headquarters of the Air Corps training center, and in addition became the site of the primary and basic flying schools the following year, on October 25, 1931.

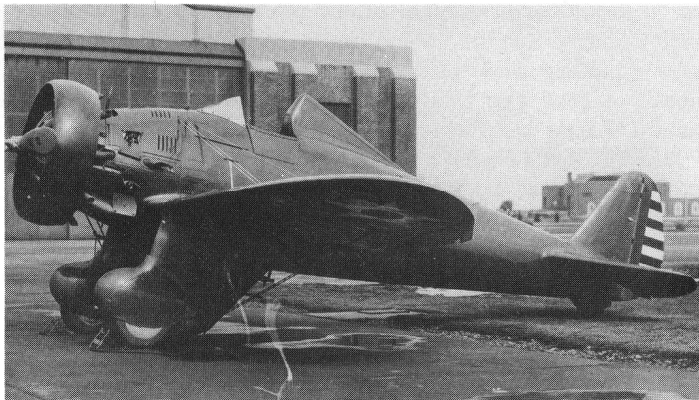
The early thirties produced the important developments in aircraft design. One was the new monoplane design, the other the growing use of all metal construction. In 1931 Boeing brought out the Air Corps' first all metal bomber, the B-9. The B-9 was a mid wing monoplane with retractable landing gear, powered by two 600 horsepower Pratt & Whitney engines. It was capable of 1888 miles per hour. Also in 1931, the Curtiss company introduced the A-8, an all metal attack monoplane.



An early Balloon Ascent (Unkn)

The following year the Martin company delivered to the Air Corps the B-10, a twin engine, all metal monoplane. The B-10, capable of a speed of over 200 miles per hour, was at that time the fastest and heaviest bomber in the world. A modified version of this plane was known as the B-12, a plane which was faster than some of the pursuit types of that day.

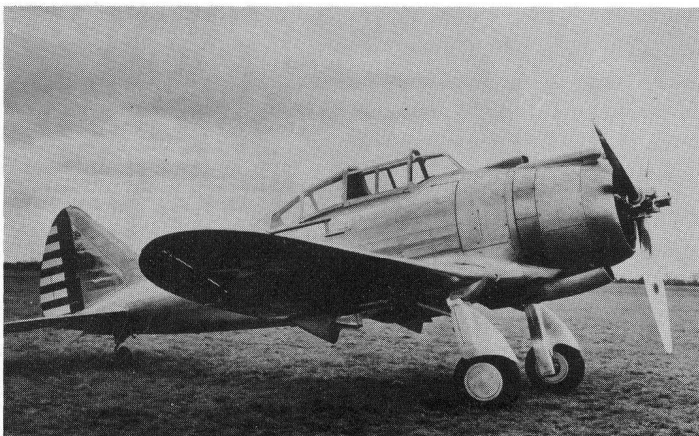
The B-10 figured prominently in the news in 1934, when Lt Col H H Arnold, with a group of 30 officers and men, flew a reconnaissance mission of ten of these aircraft to Alaska in July. The primary purpose of the trip was to determine the practicability of defending Alaska by air in an emergency. Setting up a base at Fairbanks on July 24, the mission spent three weeks photographing approximately 20,000 square miles of Alaska territory. On August 17 the group departed from Juneau, flew non stop to Seattle, then returned to Washington on the 20th.



A Boeing P-26C (Marv Mayo photo)

On March 1, 1935, General Headquarters Air Force was established under Brigadier General Frank M Andrews. This new organization was not merely a change in designation for the Air Corps, but a new unit within the Army. GHQ as it was called, was on the same level with the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps. GHQ was the operational air arm, while the Air Corps would continue to handle supply and training.

GHQ Headquarters was located at Langley Field, Virginia. The organization consisted of three combat wings, one located at Langley, the other was at various fields in California and at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. The main reason for the activation of this new unit was to provide a combat air force capable of both strategic bombing and cooperation with ground troops.

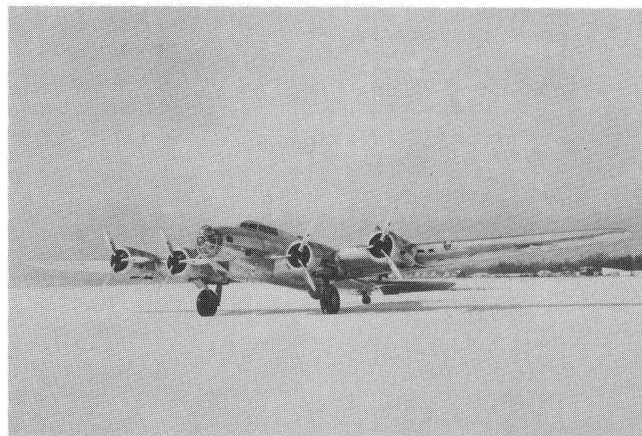


Seversky P-35 (AF photo)

The Air Corps made a contribution to scientific knowledge of the upper atmosphere on November 11, 1935, when Captain Albert W Stevens and Captain Orvil A Anderson ascended to an

altitude of 72,395 feet in the largest balloon ever built, the Explorer II. The ascension was made from Rapid City, South Dakota, and lasted more than eight hours. during which the balloon drifted some 225 miles. Capt Stevens and Anderson were enclosed by a nine foot, airtight gondola which protected them from the extreme cold at that altitude, changes in air pressure, and lack of oxygen. For their valuable scientific discoveries, which included new knowledge of cosmic rays, the sun's spectrum, and electrical conductivity of the air, the two Air Corps balloonists were awarded the Hubbard medal by the National Geographic Society.

February, 1936 saw the debut of the plane which later was to become the "guts and backbone" of the Army Air Forces, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. The B-17 had grown out of the desire of Major General B D Foulois, Chief of the Air Corps, in 1933 to produce a new, large, general purpose bomber, capable of high speed, long range, and high altitude operation. The Boeing Airplane Company submitted a design for a streamlined, four engine plane that captured the fancy of the Air Corps engineers, and a contract was awarded to Boeing for the development of what was to become the famous "Fortress."



Boeing Y1B-17

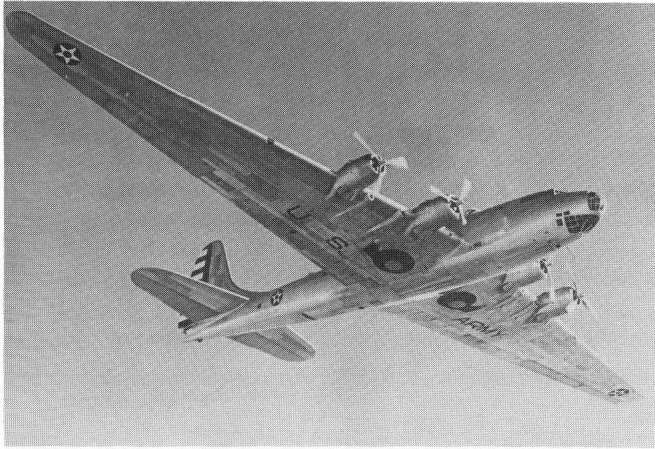
The first B-17 was delivered to GHQ at Langley Field, on March 1, 1937, where the Second Bombardment Group had been sent to to train pilots and crews for Fortress operation. However only 13 of these planes were delivered up to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939.

The Fortresses, in an attempt to prove the practicability of long distance flights, made a good will flight to Argentina, leaving Miami, Florida, on February 17, 1938. A group of six B-17s' led by Lt/Col Robert Olds, then commanding officer of the GHQ's Second Bombardment Group, made the 5,225 miles to Buenos Aires in 33 1/2 hours' flying time, with one intermediate stop at Lima, Peru. At the Argentine capital, the 49 members of the mission took part in an aerial review and attended the inauguration of Argentina's new president , Robert Ortiz. On February 27, the Good Will Flight returned to Langley Field, completing a round trip of over 11,000 miles.

The Air Corps dropped out of lighter-than-air work in 1937, when it turned over to the Navy the last of its non-rigid training airships. the TC-13, and the TC-14. The TC-13 a 200 foot non-rigid, largest of its type, had been an especially interesting

development in air ships, since it featured a "sub gondola" which dangled at the end of a 1000 foot cable underneath the ship. An observer stationed in the lowered gondola could lower himself beneath an overcast and direct movements of the ship above the clouds.

In 1939 the Air Corps paid another visit to South America, this time to Chile on a mercy mission. A serious earthquake had ruined certain sections of Chile and medical supplies from the United States were sorely needed. The giant Boeing B-15, experimental prototype of the Flying Fortress, took off from Langley Field on February 4, 1939, carrying 3,250 pounds of necessary medical equipment. The B-15 made the trip of almost 10,000 miles in less than 30 hours.



The Douglas B-19 bomber. Only one was built

On March 1, 1939, GHQ was placed subordinate to the Office of Chief of the Air Corps, in order to avoid duplication of work, but the following year, on November 19, 1940, it was again returned to co-equal status. However the need for an overall administrative command was apparent, and on June 20, 1941, the Army Air Force came into being. Major General H H Arnold, who had been Chief of the Air Corps, was placed in command. This new organization was created in an attempt to reconcile the differences which had existed between GHQ and the Office of the Chief of Air Corps, the combat and administrative branches of our air arm.

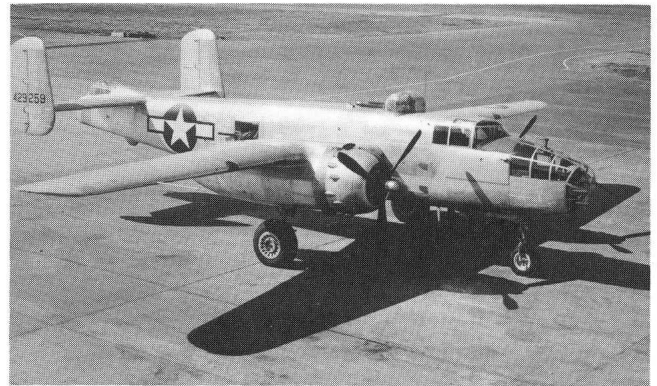


Lockheed P-38

In 1941 with war on the horizon the AAF began a great expansion program. The quota of pilots was raised to 33,000 for the year. The Gulf Coast Training Center would train

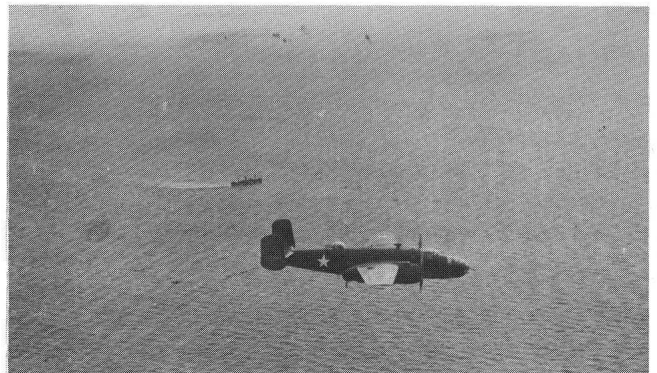
approximately 12,000 of these, the greatest single allotment going to Randolph Field, where a new class of about 400 began training every five weeks. To meet the demand for technical specialists, the technical schools at Chanute, Scott, and Lowry fields were expanded to the bursting point, while the overflow was diverted into civilian mechanic schools.

Then on December 7, 1941, the Japanese struck the blow at Pearl Harbor that was to result in the greatest expansion the Army Air Forces had ever seen, and ultimately to produce the world's greatest aerial striking force. At the time of our entry in the war, the AAF consisted of 275,000 enlisted men, 23,000 officers and 16,000 cadets, with some 12,000 planes to operate. There were eight air forces, four within the continental limits and one each in the Philippines, Hawaii, Alaska, and the Caribbean. The Hawaiian Air Force which consisted of less than 200 combat planes, was half wiped out by the Pearl Harbor raid. But even in defeat, AAF pilots proved their worth, as the 14 pursuit pilots who managed to get air borne from Wheeler Field, shot down ten attacking Japanese.



North American B-25J

The AAF swung quickly into action. Its early combat was mostly defensive work, but before the war was six months old, the AAF struck a major defensive blow, when Lt/Col "Jimmy" Doolittle led a groups of carrier based B-25s against the Japanese mainland. On April 18, at about 7:30 in the morning 16 planes left the carrier "Hornet" and headed for Japan. Eight of the planes struck Tokyo itself, the rest striking at Yokohama, Yokosuka, Nagoya and Kobe. The raid, although a small one by comparison with the tremendous blows which later were struck at Japan, proved to the complacent Japanese that no part of the Empire was safe from American air attack.



A B-25 Attacks Japanese Shipping

In June , the 11th Air Force , commanded by Major General William O Butler, went into action against the Japanese in the Aleutians, where they had made landings on Attu and Kiska Islands. Repeated air blows played a large part in stopping the Japanese northern invasion, and later in driving them completely out of the islands.

The 13th Air Force was highly instrumental in halting the Japanese advance in the Solomons, its heavy bombers pounding repeatedly at supply points and shipping up and down the island chain. Later P-38 fighter units cooperated with ground units in the Guadalcanal campaign.

Meanwhile the AAF entered the European war. The 8th Air Force made its initial assault on the enemy on June 17, 1942, when a dozen B-17s smashed the French city of Rouen. At the same time the 12th Air Force, under Doolittle, gave air support to the Allied advance in North Africa and the Italian invasion. Later, the 9th Air Force began to strike European targets.

Back in the Pacific, the 5th Air Force, came into prominence by smashing a Japanese convoy in the Bismarck Sea, in March 1943. Later the 5th gave air cover to ground and naval forces landing along the New Guinea and New Britain coasts.

The 12th Air Force assisted ground forces in the Allied break through to Tunis and Bizerte in May 1943. Its bombers hammered incessantly at German and Italian shipping in the Mediterranean. Bombers of the 12th sunk the 10,000 ton Italian cruiser, the Trieste, in a Sardinian harbor. Later, the 12th played the featured role in the bombardment of Pantelleria, which surrendered on June 11. In the July invasion of Sicily, the 12th flew both tactical and strategic missions, and even carried paratroopers for the final assault.

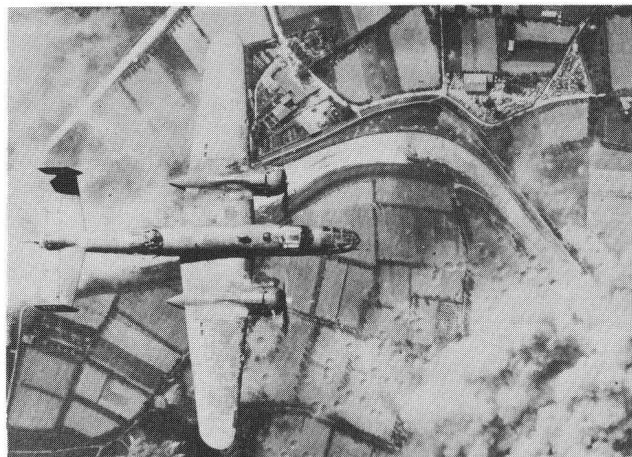
Major General Willie Hale's 7th Air Force was assigned the task of blasting enemy island bases as a prelude to invasion. the 7th struck at Tarawa, Makin, Nauru, Kwajalein and others. In November, 1943, Tarawa fell to Allied Forces, providing a base for further strikes against the Marshall Islands.



B-24's of the 484th Bomb Group fighting through flak on their way to a 15th AF target (File photo)

On November 2, 1943, the 15th Air Force entered the fight with a smashing blow against the German aircraft industry at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. It continued to strike against aircraft

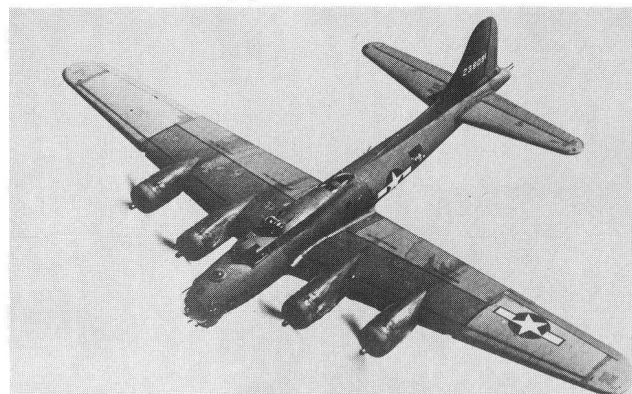
production and existing aircraft through the latter months of 1943 and the early months of 1944, its missions carrying through Germany, the Balkans, and Northern Italy. In April, 1944, with the Russian Army bearing down from the east, the 15th turned its attention to the German oil refineries and railroads in the Ploesti-Bucharest area, which helped weaken the German position in the Balkans.



A B-25 of the Mediterranean Allied Air Force attacks a bridge near Nice, France.

Meanwhile the 8th Air Force carried the fight against the German aircraft industry from another flank, striking again and again into the heart of Germany, smashing aircraft plants, and airfields, and destroying innumerable aircraft in aerial combat. In the spring of 1944, the German Luftwaffe now just a shadow of what it had once been, the 8th smashed at communications and troop concentration, softening the enemy for the impending D-Day.

D-Day, June 6, 1944, gave the AAF a chance to prove the value of air power in war time. On that day the AAF flew more than 8000 sorties, the 8th and 9th Air Forces lashing the Channel coast while the 12th and 15th flew diversionary raids against southern France. The 8th Air Force flew 2,500 heavy bombers in and out of Normandy, striking at coast batteries, communications and retreat roads. The 9th Air Force flew over 4,000 sorties, its troop carrier command dropping two airborne divisions on the Cherbourg peninsula.



A Boeing B-17G

Following the invasion, the AAF continued its pounding of the German industry, smashing factories, arsenals, oil refineries, and guided missile launching sites. A shuttling process,

between Russian and American bases, made possible longer range missions. Meanwhile the Mediterranean Air Force under Major Ira C Eaker, softened up southern France for the invasion which finally took place on August 15.

As ground troops raced across France and into Germany, the AAF demonstrated its versatility by flying re-supply missions and air borne assaults. The fight to destroy the Luftwaffe continued without let-up until finally General Spaatz announced that the strategic air war had ended and the Luftwaffe was no longer a combat force. On May 7, 1945, the Germans capitulated and the war in Europe was over.

During the the war against Germany, the AAF had reached a peak of of more than 130,000 combat planes, operated by a force of 619,000 men assigned to combat commands. More than 750,000 bomber sorties, and almost 1,000,000 fighter sorties were flown by the AAF. The AAF dropped nearly 1,500,000 tons of bombs and destroyed over 35,000 enemy aircraft, while losing about 18,000 aircraft. But statistics can not measure the contribution of the AAF to the ultimate victory, the real contribution is in the extent that its air prowess furthered the destruction of the enemy's military strength and resources. There can be no doubt that air power played an important part in the defeat of Germany.



Boeing B-29

With the war in Europe over, the AAF turned its attention to the Japanese. The mighty 20th Air Force, organized in April, 1944, had hammered incessantly at the Japanese mainland. Early attacks on Japan had been concentrated on five industrial cities, Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya and Kobe. But now, in the summer of 1945, the B-29 attacks spread all over the mainland. Sixty cities were smashed by air power, some as much as 80% destroyed. In June, following the European pattern, the raids were concentrated on aircraft production and oil supplies.

On August 1, the B-29s flew the heaviest raid of the war, more than 800 of the great bombers dropping 6,000 tons of fire and demolition bombs into industrial Japan. Meanwhile the Far East Air Force served as a tactical weapon, blasting Japanese shipping docks and warehouses.

Then, on August 6, 1945 with the Japanese on the verge of

capitulation from the fury of the air attacks, a B-29 the Enola Gay, piloted by Col Paul Tibbets, dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, destroying 60% of the city. Two days later, "Bock's Car," piloted by Charles W Sweeney dropped the second atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki. The Japanese had felt the ultimate in air attack. On the 14th of August, Japan's unconditional surrender ended the world's greatest war.

In the air war against Japan, the AAF flew over 669,000 sorties of which the 20th Air Force flew almost 40,000. Over a half million tons of bombs were dropped on Japan and its Islands, the 20th accounting for about 170,000 of this total. More than 10,000 Japanese aircraft were destroyed, while AAF losses amounted to about 4,500.

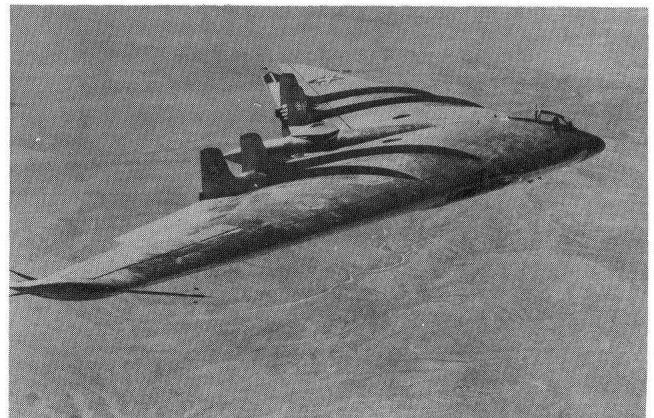
The remaining months of 1945 saw swift demobilization for the AAF. Personnel, which had reached a peak of 2,411,294 in 1944 fell off to 733,786 on January 1, 1946. At the same time aircraft fell from a war time peak of almost 80,000 to about 40,000. And the downward trend was by no means finished. The AAF continued to lose both men and aircraft for many months to come.

In 1946 the emphasis turned to aeronautical research. The speedy Lockheed P-80, the AAF's first production jet propelled fighter, had made its first flight in 1945.

On January 26, 1946, a P-80 spanned the continent in 4 hours and 13 minutes, a far cry from the 27 hour effort of Kelly and Macready in 1923.

In February 1946, on the 28th of the month, the Republic P-84, another jet, joined the P-80. And on May 17th the AAF's first jet propelled bomber, the Douglas XB-43 took to the air.

Meanwhile the AAF had a change of command. On March 1 General Arnold, who was retiring from active duty, turned over the leadership of the AAF to General Carl A Spaatz, a veteran of the early Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, and of both wars.



Northrop YB-49 Flying Wing

Jetpropulsion was not the only field in which the AAF was doing experimental research. World War II had made evident that the longrange very heavy bomber has a definite plan in aerial attack. On July 25, the first of two AAF superbombers

successfully completed its first test flight, when the Northrop XB-35 Flying Wing landed at Muroc Army Air Base after a flight of approximately 30 minutes. The XB-35 was constructed in the manner that the name implies, a wing and nothing more. The plane had no fuselage, and the entire operating mechanism was within the wing itself. The giant "Wing" had a wingspan of 172 feet, much longer than that of the war-famous B-29.

Shortly thereafter, on August 8, the second and largest of the superbombers, the Consolidated Vultee B-36, completed its maiden flight at Fort Worth, Texas. The B-36, the world's largest land based bomber was capable of carrying 10,000 pounds of bomb load 10,000 miles. Powered by six 3000 horsepower engines, the B-36 had a wingspan of 230 feet and a length of 163 feet. Its top speed was over 300 miles per hour.

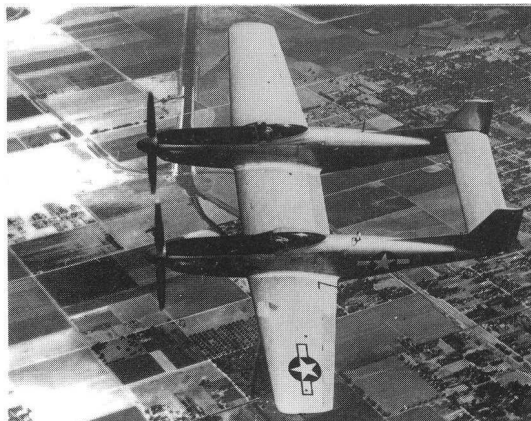
New steps in power plant development were taken during 1946. One of the most important was the General Electric J-35 jet engine, which powered the speedy XP-84. The J-35, capable of 4000 pounds of thrust, marked a definite step in the development of jet propulsion, permitting greater range and more economical operation than had been previously possible. In October of 1946, another engine was unveiled, this time a reciprocating engine, the world's most powerful, the Lycoming XR-7755. Developed to answer the need for powering long range bombers and transports, this liquid cooled engine combined high power output with low rate of fuel consumption. The XR-7755 developed 5,000 horsepower, equivalent to that produced by a modern railway locomotive.

On October 4, 1946, the AAF made one of the most significant flights in aeronautical history - a 10,000 mile non-stop trip from Hawaii to Cairo via the North Pole. The plane a Boeing B-29, the "Pacusan Dreamboat," was piloted by Col Clarence S Irvine, assisted by a crew of nine. The plane carried 13,000 gallons of gasoline, and took off with a gross weight of 147,000 pounds, 27,000 pounds over the maximum allowable weight of a standard B-29. Purpose of the flight was to test equipment over the polar regions. The "Dreamboat" flew a great circle route from Hawaii to Alaska, then to Iceland, and finally to Cairo, passing over London, Paris, and Foggia, Italy. Total flight time was 39 hour and 36 minutes.

December brought the most sensational of the year's aeronautical developments. On December 8, the AAF's first rocket propelled airplane, the Bell XS-1, successfully completed its first test flight at Muroc Army Air Base, California, staying aloft for almost 20 minutes. Designed to fly at a top speed of 1,700 miles per hour at an altitude of 80,000 feet, the XS-1 was never intended to become a military airplane, but was rather to be a flying research laboratory, the sole function of which would be to record the effect of supersonic flight on an aircraft. Power for the XS-1 was supplied by a small rocket motor known as the Model 60000 produced by Reaction Motors, Inc. of Dover New Jersey. Burning a combination of alcohol and liquid oxygen, the XS-1 power plant could produce 6,000 pounds of thrust.

On February 28, 1947, the AAF made another record flight. Two pilots flew a North American P-82 twin fuselage fighter

5000 miles from Honolulu to New York City. The pilots Lt/Col Robert E Thacker, and 1st/Lt John M Ard, made the trip in 14 hours and 33 minutes, setting a record for the route and completing the longest fighter plane flight on record.

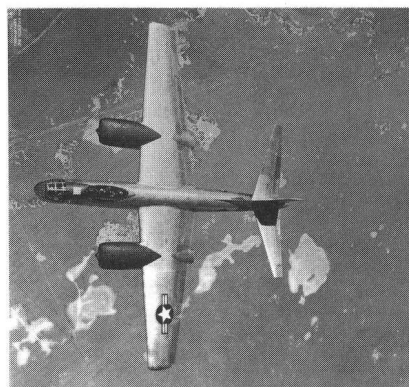


North American P- 82

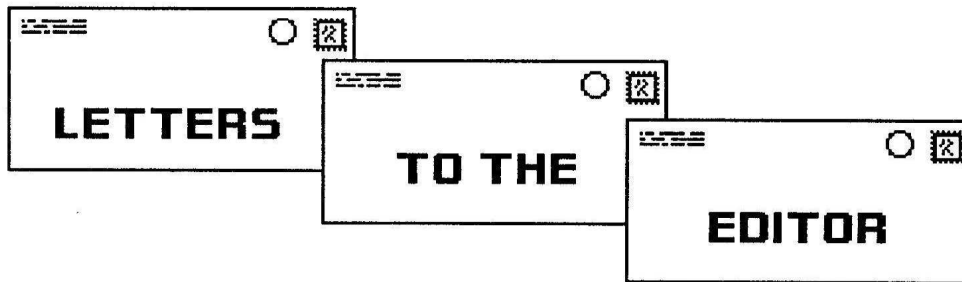
The work in research and development continued and the early months of 1947 saw a group of new bombers join the AAF's post war fleet. On March 17, the North American B-45, a four-jet bomber made its first test flight and on April 2, another four- engine bomber, the Consolidated Vultee XB-46 also flew successfully. In May the Martin XB-48 , the first six jet bomber joined the ranks, as did the B-50, a new and greatly improved version of the B-29. Many other new planes were under construction in the various aircraft plants.

The AAF had come a long way in 40 years. Although it had undergone considerable demobilization since the end of WW II, the AAF still had over 300,000 officers and men, almost double its peak strength in WW I. Its inventory of 25,000 planes (only 10,000 of which, however, were considered first line aircraft) almost doubled its WW I strength. The AAF, though small by comparison with its World War Two might, was still a good sized aerial force.

It is said that life begins at 40. This could also apply to the Army Air Forces, for after 40 years of existence, after two great wars. the AAF is on the threshold of its greatest aeronautical advancement. Further an autonomous Air Force, on a level with the Army and Navy, appears to be a strong possibility. The AAF looks to the future, confident that the years to come will be as full and as glorious as the 40 gone by. **The end.**



North American B-45



Stanford, NC

Dear Bud:

There was a Barry Jones in the 461st at the same time I was a gunner in the 484th. Barry became a POW. We did not know each other.

After the war I received a BA from Michigan State University. In that same graduation, also receiving his baccalaureate degree was Barry Jones. We still did not know each other.

In February 1988, I moved into a new home at 513 Argyll Dr, Carolina Trace, Stanford, North Carolina, which includes an 18 hole golf course. Three doors down in 509 Argyll Dr another family moved in. Name: Mr and Mrs Barry Jones (764 Sq). After almost 50 years since being in the same neighborhood in Italy, we finally met, on the golf course.

I must confess, Barry is the better golfer. It is a small world after all.

Sincerely, W. Arthur Brindle, (824 Sq) Major Ret

PS After I left the 484th I accepted a direct commission and served in Korea.

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Hyde Park, Ny

Dear Bud:

I was up until the wee hours of the morning reading the back issues of the Torretta Flyer and they brought back all of the memories of 44 years ago. In fact, I think we witnessed, "The Last Flight of Crew #14." We ourselves were jumped by Me-109's and FW-190's and were hit by 20 MM cannon, disabling number two engine which could not be feathered. Thus we had to drop out of formation and joined another group behind us, but we couldn't keep up, losing altitude all the way. Being a lone plane we were

easy pickings for a fighter attack. Our tail gunner reported a bandit closing in behind, but peeled off when he noticed the tail gun was inoperative. Fluid was all over the tail turret window from damage to the hydraulic system from the first wave of fighter attacks. We like to think the enemy fighter was a sport, but maybe his guns jammed.

We headed for home via Yugoslavia, but were running out of fuel very fast. It was a choice between ditching in the Adriatic or a chancy bail out over the rough terrain of Yugoslavia. Our pilot, Nick Sidovar asked one by one, "Ditch or Bail out?" Every one wanted to ditch, but when he finally got to me, I said, "Not me, I'm bailing out, a B-24 doesn't stand a chance in ditching." The rest agreed and out we went thru the bombay doors. Nick was the last, setting the autopilot, he jumped too. We thank God the whole crew got out alive and were picked up in a very short time by the Usachi, who turned us over to the Germans.

Hitting the silk was an experience, and I was glad that I took in the one lecture back in the states and remembered everything. I had a chest pack and I delayed pulling the cord for a long time, during which I experimented with alternately doubling up to "tumble" and then spread eagling to "freeze" into a position favorable for a safe chute opening without getting tangled or burned. This I did quite a few times before pulling the rip cord. Fortunately I landed in a muddy field which broke my fall nicely. My post mortem critique said that I kept my legs too stiff on contact.

Sincerely,
Ed Chan 766 Sq

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Pittsburgh, Pa

Dear Bud:

I am enclosing two photos, one taken last year in Colorado Springs and the other one taken in Italy in 1945. Joe Malloy,

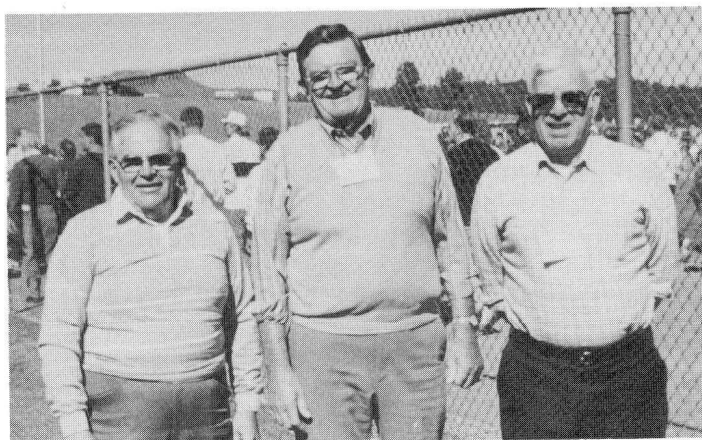
Art Aldene, and myself were the ground crew on the "Uninvited". We were assigned to ship #70 when we arrived in Italy and had her until the war's end. We were very proud of this. Bill Schwise a new member from Fort Wayne, Indiana was also one of us.

We had a great time at the Colorado Springs reunion talking with Harold Bolton and Kyle Holley also of the 827th Sq ground crew.

Best Wishes,
Bill Delanzo, 827 Sq



Italy 1945 From Left: Joe Malloy, Art Aldene, and Bill Delanzo



Colorado Springs, 1987 Art Aldene, Joe Malloy, and Bill Delanzo

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Mayville, ND
Dear Bud:

Orders from 'Fang' Hansen, "Send Bud the picture of that trip to Anzio by Us Unlucky Dummies." I am certainly not looking for any publicity, but you can use it for what it is worth.

The one who should be writing this story is my ordnance small arms Sgt 824 Sq Robert Pollack, 307 Elizabeth St Glendale, WV (Association member). After WWII he reenlisted instead of taking a job down in the coal mines. He ended up in the Korean War, heavy weapons platoon sgt, and got all shot up by the North Koreans. He has had over 50 operations, can't talk, but what a story he could write.

I'm busy helping our two boys with the farm work. I like driving

these big tractors. The big four wheelers are a lot like driving a tank. But it is frightening to see how dry it is, haven't had any rain since a year ago July.

Thank you all for the splendid hospitality last year at the Colorado Springs reunion. I really had a great time. Went up to Pikes Peak with Fang and Edith Hansen, what a delight.

Thanks again,
Ed Neshiem 824 Sq

That Illegal Anzio Mission

By (N D) Ed Neshiem 824 sq

The Ralph Hallenbeck "sore buttocks " and his slippery parachute story, (See TF-15 page 14) was caused by our crazy trip up into the battlegrounds of the Anzio breakthrough towards Cassino Abbey (mountains) north of Caserta.

This West Point pilot came to my tent after our evening chow May 27, 1944, to inquire about a jeep ride up to the Anzio Beachhead area to visit his sister who was a nurse in a field hospital. We were totally unaware of the intense action going on at that time in this area. It so happened I had received a new squadron jeep with only 5th Army bumper markings. No chance would we dare drive into a combat zone with a 15th Air Force jeep with even "closed eyes" permission from our WWI executive officer, Major Fairbanks.

We hurriedly gathered our 45 cal colt automatics, pistol belts, helmets, canteens and some "C" rations. We drove off just before dark, Neshiem, Hallenbeck, Dodd, and John Harlan. We drove through Cerignola, Foggia, and west across the mountains at night coming into the Caserta area northeast of Naples by early morning. The map told us to drive the Mussolini black topped road toward Rome because Anzio was southwest from Rome.

Of course we were in a hurry because Hallenbeck knew he was scheduled to fly again the next morning. We travelled north very slowly on this black topped road when all of a sudden we were bumper to bumper with big Army six by sixes full of combat infantry troops dressed in their OD's. They would drive off the road to the right and disperse. We could see and hear shooting and artillery exploding. The small towns and villages were rubble from off shore naval bombardment. Army bulldozers were clearing a path through to the main streets. The Italian civilians were hiding in the nearby hills. We kept driving north as if we were looking for the enemy when we experienced our best good luck. A Fifth Army MP with his motorcycle parked crossways on the black top - directing traffic to his right as we headed west toward the Anzio beachhead. I remember seeing a road sign "19 km Roma". Now we had a trail across farm land with irrigation canals using "Texas Crossings" because the small bridges were demolished by the retreating Nazis. Here we witnessed infantry casualties, half a dozen or so in groups collected by the infantry medics from early morning combat. About noon I parked our jeep alongside a big army tent, Army Hospital Evacuation unit. We watched 6 x 6 army trucks get loaded with dead G.I.'s wrapped in army blankets. A G.I. informed us they used Nazi POW's to bury the pine board caskets at the cemetery.

Hallenbeck returned to our jeep only to learn from his sister's girlfriend that she had been transferred to the General Hospital in Naples a few days before. Congested traffic and poor exit did not allow us time to stop at Naples. We headed back for the 824th Squadron in this rough riding jeep. The road was seemingly endless as we drove into our squadron area about 2:30 AM only to find the CQ with his flashlight checking tents, awakening crew members. Hallenbeck was already awake from two nights of "sit up snoozes" in our jeep. No wonder he was weak, after falling four miles on fire from the sky and his burning B-24 on May 29, 1944 over Weiner Neustadt, Austria.

My tent mate, S-2 officer Goren made me "numb" when he said "Hallenbeck's B-24 was shot down with only some parachutes visible." Supply Officer, Stan Bennett gave me the job to sort personal belongings from military properties in Hallenbeck's tent on the edge of the Italian wheat field. Hallenbeck's footlocker had letters and pictures from his wife, parents, and kid sister, a senior high student at Monett, MO. I also had the honor and privilege of being with the Hallenbecks at Lt Zeff's Officers Club at Harvard, Neb. just before we shipped overseas. After spending one year as a POW, Hallenbeck came home to his wife and son. They had three more sons. The three oldest became West Point fighter pilots and served in the Vietnam War. The youngest son was killed in action as a fighter pilot in Vietnam on his second tour of duty.



This B-24 had crashed some three hours before we spotted it on our way to Anzio. if you look closely you can see German dug outs in the side of the hill. May 28, 1944



The Illegal Mission of May 29, 1944. A small village south of the Anzio Beachhead where we stopped briefly on our way looking for Ralph Hallenbeck's sister, who was transferred to the Naples hospital the day before. Ralph Hallenbeck's crew was shot down the next day, May 30, 1944 (see pages 14 and 15 Torretta Flyer No 15). From Left : Ed Neshiem, William Dodd from Connecticut, Lt J Harlan, from Kentucky, and Ralph Hallenbeck.

Santa Maria, California

Dear Bud;

I hesitated to write about this incident because nobody believes me. But the story is true and it's worth a chuckle.

After the members of John Roedel's crew (76) finished flying the required fifty combat missions, we were restricted to base pending rotation to ZI which meant stateside- home.

We figured on a two week wait for transportation home, so rather than sit around camp and because we couldn't get official leave, our navigator Jud Suddarth told the executive officer not to look for us for a few days, and took off down the road, AWOL, to see how far we could get. We didn't have much trouble catching rides in the GI trucks so we made pretty good (if somewhat bumpy) time up the Appian Way.

We reached Naples about sundown. We were away from our base without official leave orders so we couldn't get beds in the military hotels or eat in the officers' mess. That meant we were on the local economy. We managed to get some food in a red cross snack bar, so we didn't have to go to any black market restaurant, but where were we going to sleep? We set out in search of some native hotels, but either there weren't any or we couldn't read the signs. All of the USO lounges were locked up for the night so we couldn't sack out in the lobbies.

Jud and I were just wandering the streets trying to find some way to get off them. We were sure if we were found by the MPs after curfew at sundown, we'd spend the night in jail and probably get court martialed and lose our place in the rotation roster. If the MPs missed us we would probably wind up in an alley with our throats cut. We had heard that is not an uncommon thing in Naples in those days.

Anyway, there we were meandering up the side streets and watching the merchants boarding up their shops at curfew time. All through the town we had been pestered by little boys who were hustling one thing or another, like cigarette lighters or girls or were begging for money, candy, or chewing gum.

"Hey Joe ! Chewing gum?"

"Hey Joe ! girls? You want girls?"

The penny finally dropped. We could go with one of these kids to a brothel, buy a room for the night, kick the girls out and get a night's sleep.

This was a wild idea for guys like us. Firstly, Jud and I were both engaged to girls back home. And then Uncle Sam had been feeding us propaganda movies about venereal disease until we were so brainwashed that like the Sad Sack, we were afraid to brush up against a woman on a crowded bus. Both of us were just 21 years old and pure as the driven snow-almost.

By this time the little kids had all disappeared because of the curfew I guess and there was nobody yelling "Hey Joe!" for any reason. Finally we spotted a kid way down the street and chased after him calling for him to stop. When we caught up with him he looked like he would rather have run away than wait. Furthermore, he was all dressed up in his Sunday best, he was not one of

the street urchins at all. It was not our day believe me.

When we asked him for girls, he didn't understand and when it finally sank in what we were asking for he got a shocked look on his face and shook his head emphatically. He finally agreed to take us to a place and we wandered back into the hinterlands until the kid knocked on a door of what looked like a nice respectable place. Nobody answered. After a moment, the kid turned around and walked away without looking back or saying anything. He left us at the mercy of the night.

We didn't know where we were nor could we have found our way back to the city lights, it was so dark. We kept banging on the door. What else could we do?

Finally a man came to the door and told us the girls were gone for the night and would we please come back tomorrow. We told him our problem and asked if we could just rent the room. It was OK with him. He took us to a spotlessly clean room on the second floor of the house. It even had a little patio with grapevines and citrus trees in tubs. It was a first class whore house but we still jammed a chair under the doorknob when we went to sleep. The man tapped on the door and wanted to know what time we wanted the girls in the morning. We told him nine o'clock in the morning. We left the place by seven o'clock and the road for Rome.

The rest of the trip was very interesting and exciting but it's just like any other travellog. We travelled up past Monte Cassino, and the pontine marshes and around Anzio by thumb, then all over magnificent Rome on foot.

I wonder what that little boy and the guy at the brothel thought we were.

Fred Roessler,
Co-Pilot crew #76 827th Sq

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Mayor's Office
Johnstown, NY
Mr Bud Markel, Editor
The Torretta Flyer

Dear Bud:

Ralph Hallenbeck's chronicle of his horror experience on the May 29, 1944 mission over Weiner Neustadt brought back a flood of memories. It just happened on that mission I was flying as the navigator in the deputy position, and when Hallenbeck's plane was shot down, we had to take over. One of the very vivid memories I have is that of his plane slowly spiraling downward like a leaf falling in a gentle breeze. I remember wondering if the crew could overcome the centrifugal force to be able to exit the plane.

As I recall we received some damage also. I personally had my head in the bubble in the nose of the plane directing the pilot toward the target until the bombardier could get it in his sights, I had just turned away toward the desk to make some notes in my

log, when a piece of flak came through the bubble where my head had been only a second or so before.

We were unable to close the bomb bay doors, and we had a ruptured gas line. Our flight engineer, without parachute and standing on a narrow catwalk with seventeen thousand feet of free space below him, taped up the gas line and enabled us to get back. I believe at my suggestion he got a much deserved medal, I am not sure which, but I believe it was a silver star. I don't recall now that I viewed this mission as out of the ordinary, you tended to become fatalistic and accepted the risk as a matter of course. If you didn't you ended up back in the States with a medical leave of some sort.

Since, as I recall, as a squadron navigator at the time I wasn't assigned to a special crew I can't remember the name of the aircrew men who I flew with on this particular mission, though I often flew with the squadron commanders which if my memory serves me right were Jerry Dufour and George Ponty. Also and most regrettably, with few exceptions I have been almost completely out of touch with the men who were so close for the year and a half I spent in Europe, so memories tend to become distorted and events become somewhat apocryphal.

At any rate the article itself was well worth the membership in the association. I am glad someone has the time and dedication to keep these times and memories alive.

Donald F Murphy, (824 Sq) Mayor
Johnstown, NY

Editors Note: Major Murphy received a decoration for his action on the mission of 29 May, 1944 as deputy lead navigator:

From General Orders #2591 HQ 15th AF 21 April, 1945

DONALD F MURPHY 0795288, Major, Headquarters 484th Bomb Group for gallantry in action as a navigator for a B-24 type aircraft. On 29 May, 1944, Major Murphy participated as deputy lead navigator of a group formation on a bombing mission against a vital enemy aircraft factory in Austria. Approaching the target, his formation encountered intense, heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire which severely damaged his aircraft destroying vital navigational instruments.

Assuming lead of the group formation when the lead aircraft was destroyed by enemy fire, displaying outstanding courage and determination, Major Murphy guided his pilot through the heavy enemy fire for a highly successful bombing run. Under his superior leadership, despite the lack of instruments and the crippled condition of his aircraft, the bombs from the entire formation were well concentrated in the target area, inflicting grave damage on vital enemy installations and supplies. Leaving the objective, through outstanding professional skill and determination, Major Murphy brought back the entire formation through to base without further loss.

By his conspicuous gallantry, leadership and devotion to duty as evidenced throughout 34 successful missions against the enemy, Major Murphy has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment. Buffalo, NY.

Narberth, PA
Dear Bud

It was nice to see you again at our recent reunion. We have enjoyed all of them and hope to make the one in New Orleans next year. The Airport Marriott was a nice place for the reunion. After the reunion Evelyn and I went to visit my sister and her family in Milwaukee, Oregon. We also visited with Earl Svela in Aloha, Oregon, who was a pilot in the 824 Squadron.

We plan to take a trip also to visit our tail gunner Johnny O'Neill in Neponsit, NY
All best wishes to you and your family,

Sincerely,
George Bouras, 824 Sq



The enclosed photograph taken at the San Francisco reunion shows from left: Evelyn Bouras, Lil Marcus, Eunie Brown, Dick Brown, and Adolph Marcus.

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Wilson, NC
Dear Bea and Bud:

After receipt of Torretta Flyer No 15, I called Marvin H Watson. I remember he spoke often and fondly of Major Haldeman. It is too soon after my fourth major operation for me to plan on attending the San Francisco reunion.

I think I may have been the youngest person in the 484th Bomb Group with the least amount of service to be discharged under the 85 point system. I had 8 battle stars on my EAME ribbon. There are some men in our outfit who may have had more stars but I think they would have to have been assigned to the ground crew. I was called into service December 10, 1943 just after my eighteenth birthday and was flying missions with the 484th by August of the following year. Because of several circumstances, most of my crew was delayed in finishing their tour before the war ended. The few who did, picked up some mission credit in September of 1944 by hauling bombs and aviation fuel to France to help supply Patton's army. At any rate I flew thirty three sorties which gave me the Air Medal and three Oak Leaf clusters. The remaining points were for service time and the EAME Ribbon with the eight battle stars. I was discharged from Fort Bragg on July 21, 1945 after nineteen months of service at the tender age of 19.

A few years ago I was asked to join the Veterans of the Battle of

the Bulge since I was in the EAME during that time. In filling out the application I had to list my decorations, and battle stars. The following day my recruiter came back to ask for a copy of my discharge. It seemed that he did not believe I had eight battle stars. In looking back, the system was grossly unfair, I am sure my service could not possibly equal in any way the experience of my recruiter who served overseas for 36 months including the Battle of the Bulge and was quite proud of his six battle stars.

When we were assigned to a tent in the 827 squadron, we each picked a cot at random. Chief Master Seargent Mc Queeny came into the tent and asked each one of us to give our name and where we came from. When it came to my turn I replied, North Carolina. He asked where in North Carolina and I replied Wilson. He asked me if I knew where Kenly was. This was a strange request because I seemed to remember that Sgt. McQueeny came from Texas, and why would he be asking about North Carolina. Kenly is thirteen miles south of Wilson, I said. "The very man who left this cot only this morning was from Rt #3 Kenly, North Carolina. His name was Marvin Watson, do you know him?" he continued. It just so happened that Marvin Watson and I had become fast friends in the squadron.

It was 1979 and I was in my store in Wilson, NC when Sheldon Hinnant walked into the store with another man who I did not know. I knew Sheldon was from Rt #3 Henly, NC, so I asked him if he knew a Marvin Watson. The stranger replied, "He is my brother." A follow up telephone call identified him as the same person I had known in the 827th. We have been the best of friends ever since.

Jimmy Ellis 827 Squadron

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The Osborne Agency
East Hampton, NY
Dear Bud:

The photo on page 13 of Torretta Flyer No 15 of ship #81 Knock Out, which I flew several times may be of our crew. They are to the best of my recollection, from left: Walter C Schultz (E), William K Sutton (P), or Robert B Pease (N) {bent over}, Third man from left with head down, unidentified, Charles J Osborne (C/P) smoking as usual, William W Thompson Jr (B), Henry Wooten Jr (T/G), Man with back to the camera unknown.

I have written to Henry Wooten to see if he can help with the identification. I would be interested in knowing where the picture came from.

I am now attending cardiac rehabilitation classes three days a week. treadmill bicycle, rowing, and so forth. Hopefully they will get me back in some sort of reasonable shape and help to lose some of this weight I've picked up along the way.

Hope your health is holding up.

Kindest regards to you both.

Sincerely yours,
Charles J Osborne 827 Sq

Bodfish,CA
Dear Bud:

Received Torretta Flyer No 15 and enjoyed it very much. I find on page 31 you have a picture of plane #75, "The Purple Shaft" you show assigned to the 766 squadron, but actually it was in the 767 squadron. The crew that flew "Purple Shaft" was as follows: Henry Huggard (P) St Petersburg, Florida, Ralph H Keedle, (C/P) deceased, William D Marshall (B) address unknown, Charles F Murphy (N) Pittsburg, PA, Joseph T Augustine (E), James J Boyer (R/O), Corpus Christie, TX, Kenneth A Urban (N/G) address unknown, Marlo R (Pete) Henspeter,(U/G) Bodfish, CA, Robert E Scott (B/G) deceased, Anothony J Delcello (T/G) address unknown,

We flew all of our missions on good old "Purple Shaft". Urban, our nose gunner did get hit on one mission and I lost part of the plexiglass dome on a top turret on another, we always made it back even if the engines were feathered.

But the crew we turned it over to when we finished our missions left it in a field near Foggia, I don't know if it ever made it back to Torretta, because I saw it sitting sadly on that strange field before we left Italy.

We were on many of the trips you have reported on in the Flyer, as we were operational from February 19, through August 18, 1944.

This is all I can think of so I will close.
Pete Henspeter 767 Sq

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Port Jervis, NY
Dear Bud:

I read with interest the "Milk Run" article by Fred Roessler 827 squadron in issue 15 of the Torretta Flyer. As I recall we got shot up or shot at every time we went to southern France. The first time, coincidentally, was the railroad bridge of the Var River at Nice, France on June 7, 1944. (See Torretta Flyer #10). Our engineer Tom Key was killed and our radio operator was severely wounded by very accurate flak. We did destroy the western span of the bridge and also the center pier.

On July 12, 1944 we were hit over the marshalling yards at Nimes, France. We encountered extremely accurate flak and lost No 1 engine on the bomb run, and by the time we dropped our bombs and came off the target, the No 2 engine was also gone. Fortunately there were no enemy fighters in the area.

The decision was to head for Corsica as we could not keep up with the group with two engines out. One B-24 dropped out of formation and escorted us for a while.

On arriving in Corsica on final approach, #4 engine was trailing flames, actually it was torching out of the supercharger, probably from running at full power. As we rolled to a stop Dave Ward, the bombardier, hit the runway with a CO2 bottle, but by that time the fire was out.

Our crew on that mission was: Robert R Nichols-pilot (deceased), Barrow F Neale-Co/Pilot, David Ward-Bombardier, David Brown-engineer, Glenn Ross-radio/operator, Archie Williamson-nose gunner, William Dowling (deceased)-tail gunner, and John Hicks-ball gunner. I can't remember the name of the navigator.

Yours truly,
John Hicks 826 Sq

Editors Note: The navigator could have been Carl H Voss. The crew list also shows a Alvin F Petrillo, and Albert L Krapf .They may or may not have been flying on this particular mission.

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Editor
Torretta Flyer
Sir:

In reference to Torretta Flyer No 15, page 20 the caption of my crew photograph should read. From left kneeling: Lt 1) Charles Dean co-pilot, 2) unknown, 3) Donald Herbert pilot, 4) unknown.

Keep up the good work.
Angelo L Ferrara 767 Sq

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Houston, TX
Dear Bud:

Enclosed is a photograph of Art Hughes' great crew #90. We can't find William Hart and Douglas Meifert. Taken at Topeka, Kansas about October 15-18,1944 before ferrying this aircraft to Italy.

Sincerely,
Joe Bryant 765 Sq



They are: starting at left 1) Leonard Wes Wager / co-pilot, 2) Arthur L Hughes/ pilot, 3) Bates Boles / bombardier, 4) Douglas P Meifert /ball gunner 5) Wayne W Boyce/ nose gunner, 6) Robert L Scanlon/ engineer, 7) Arthur W Bettinger/radio operator, 8) Joe Bryant/ tail gunner, 9) Dewey E Large/ waist gunner, Not shown William C Hart/navigator.

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Editor
Torretta Flyer
Dear Bud,

Enclosed you will find a photograph of three ground crew men of the 461st Bomb Group, 767th Squadron taken at our field outside

of Cerignola, Italy by our tent area in 1944.
Warmest regards,
Jack "Geronimo" Jauregui 767 Sq



They are: from left, Kenny Sprague, gun sight and power turret specialist, Jack "Geronimo" Jauregui, gun sight and power turret specialist, and unknown armorer.

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Col G V "Fang" Hansen
Little Rock, Arkansas
(Copy to Bea and Bud Markel, Editors
Torretta Flyer

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the picture of my crew chief, Walter M Rix, now deceased. While I haven't seen or heard from Sgt Rix since the 484th Bomb Group broke up in May 1945, I have never forgotten him.

Now another picture of Rix in the latest edition of the "Torretta Flyer" ,No 15, Winter1987/1988 , brought a lump to my throat. It is true, there were only three of us on the ground crew of the B-24 #11 during the most furious part of the air war in southern Europe fought by the 15th Air Force. Yes! the Torretta Flyer is correct, we worked hard to keep the motto of the Army Air Force (AAF) ground crews which was, "Keep 'em Flying."

For those who may have forgotten us, the three ground crew members on No 11, 824 squadron:

- 1) M/Sgt Walter M Rix, Crew Chief
- 2) Sgt George R Calande, Assistant Crew Chief
- 3) Cpl David E Denny Jr, Assistant

As the air war wore on, I remember that the later air crews were sometimes suspicious of our airplane because it was one of the old original ships having camouflage paint. The newer sleek unpainted B-24's without camouflage paint were a few miles faster, I suppose. Old #11 went through 56 missions, including the double ones which we marked in red. Our luck finally ran out when she caught a burst of flak in the No 2 engine. Rix had always said, "When I change one engine, I'll change them all." And so we did.

When the air war began to run down, beginning in the spring of 1945 #11 was made a supply and courier plane. Rix didn't need as many crew men after that so I was given other duties.

Strangely, we never had a name for our airplane Rix was

superstitious, so everyone just called it "Old #11." By the way, Colonel, our crew always had the greatest respect for you, Sir, as our engineering officer. You were then Captain Hansen, remember?

Cordially,
David E Denny Jr 824 Sq.

[Editors Note.] The following letter was written to Armand Bottiglia 767 Squadron in response to his letter published on pages 17, and 18 of Torretta Flyer No 15. The author Carl B Peterson was on board the crashed B-24 referred to in the published letter.

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Riceville, Iowa
Dear Armand Bottiglia:

It was good to see your letter to Bud Markel in Torretta Flyer 15. It is the first I have heard from someone who knew the score. I was the tail gunner on my fourth mission and did not get the full briefing that some of the other crew members received.

The ship which we dropped into the Adriatic Sea was a brand new B-24L and had the stinger tail instead of the Consolidated tail turret.

We prepared for an organized ditching by jettisoning all of the machine guns and ammo. The left waist gun was hung up by the release pin and couldn't be removed. Several Me 109's or FW-190's drew up along side of us. I got gun camera pictures but these were lost when the ship went down.

Suddenly all engines quit at about 3000 ft and we went in nose first. I was last to finish preparing and just before we hit the drink I didn't have time to get into the new ditching position which was on the afterdeck against a specially manufactured curtain of canvas reinforced with wooden slats, where the rest of the enlisted men were huddled.

I could observe the sea coming up at a rapid rate as the bombay doors opened just prior to impact. I had crouched in back of the sperry ball turret with my hands back of my neck. My neck was permanently injured and I still suffer to this day. I received multiple cuts and bruises as did the rest of the survivors.

The next thing I remember was an explosion similar to when the bomb dump was blown. I regained consciousness down under the water. I escaped through the left waist window. The raft from the left side was free and floating by itself and drifting quickly away. I failed on my first attempt to crawl aboard and I went down deep again, the next attempt I made it. I pulled up RC Neel to safety on the same raft and he promptly passed out on the floor of the raft. When he came around, he helped me recover William Nourse, ball gunner and Wallace D Olson, nose gunner who was fast sinking. I was cut and bleeding from the head and hands.

Ist Lt William Ungenthum was our navigator- bombardier, together, or bombigator, whichever. His father was a retired full bird colonel from somewhere in the New England States.

Thank you.
Carl B Peterson 767 Sq.

Durham, NC
Dear Bud:

I wondered whether you had seen the a copy of the article "What became of the Big Bombers" from the American Legion Magazine of September 1979. In it there is a picture of "Toggle Annie", our ship. When I was at the Association 1983 reunion in Williamsburg, I met Harry Marshall and we talked about "Toggle Annie" He said he had a few missions aboard her. I was the original first pilot on her. We picked the plane up in March 1944 at Lincoln, Nebraska and our crew #52 flew her to Italy. We put the first 30 or so missions on her. She was out of commission for a short while in Corsica. We had received flak damage to the fuel lines on a mission to Southern France and on landing the nose gear jammed and was damaged, so for a while we flew other planes.

We named her "Toggle Annie" because we were not a lead crew on the early missions. We used to toggle switch drop our bombs as the lead crew dropped theirs .

After the reunion, Harry sent me this copy. I am quite proud that she survived so successfully. A few weeks ago, my son was looking at it and noticed my wife's name "Chickie" below the pilot's window. I had forgotten I had put it there. Hope you find the article interesting.

Sincerely,
Vince and Chickie O'Shea 826 Sq



"Toggle Annie"

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Minneapolis, Mn
Dear Bud:

The photo on the back page of Torretta Flyer No 15 of the 824 commemorative squadron flag base recalls a story about Kenneth Speith, (now deceased). He had come back to camp from Cerignola in a very obnoxious mood. Several of us zipped him up in a mummy type sleeping bag and strung him on that flag pole for a while until he straightened out. It is a shame I didn't have an opportunity to confront him with this story before he passed away. We could have had a few laughs over that. Perhaps he can hear me and is having the last laugh after all. I hope so.

Dexter Shultz 824 Sq

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Morris, Mn
Dear Bud:

I do enjoy getting the Torretta Flyer and all the other mailings about the Association and buddies from the group.

I was especially interested in Ralph Hallenbeck's story on pages 14-15 as I was flying in my usual nose gunner position in the deputy lead ship piloted by Major Jerry Dufour, who was our squadron commander. I saw the plane get hit and pull out of the formation on fire. I heard Major Dufour say over the interphone, "They got our leader, let's get going" and so we did.

That same evening Axis Sally announced on the radio that Col Hendricks was a POW.

I was a member of Capt. Bill Abbey's (now deceased) crew and we often flew some big wheels. He was a careful and skillful pilot and I had a high regard for him. May he rest in peace.

Now that our partner son is married, we have left the farm. Farming has been good to us in spite of what you hear in the media. Sorry we can't make the 1988 reunion, perhaps we'll see you at the next one.

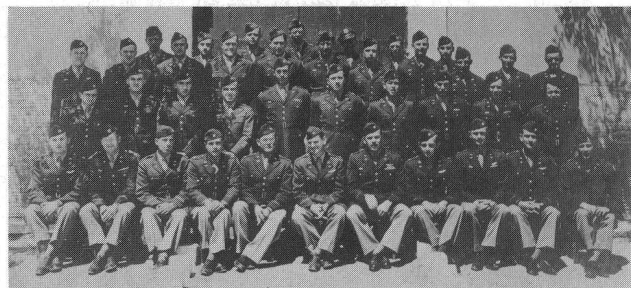
With best regards to you and Bea.
Bernard R Schneider, 824 Sq.

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Washington, DC
Dear Bud:

In regards to the photograph of the 461st Bomb Group Headquarters staff that is enclosed, I don't know the date this photo was taken nor do I know all of the personnel shown.

Hope you can find who the rest are.
Sincerely,
Carl H Peter 767 sq



Bottom row: Third from left /Wilcowitz 767 sq, fourth from left /Zuckor 767 sq, fifth from left / Bennett 767 sq. (May be Lee Lott), third from right Jim Knapp 767 sq. Second row; First on right/Peter Drill 484th Third row from the bottom: third from right/ Jack Sheppard 767 sq Fourth row for the bottom: third from left Carl H Peter, 767 sq

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York, PA
Dear Bud:

Enclosed is the story of my parachute jump. February 6, 1945 . At briefing that morning we were told that the weather was bad all the way to the target. We would have to wait to see if the mission was on. It was scrubbed later.

While waiting for the go no go signal I was checking out my guns and moving around the airplane with my parachute harness on. After moving about for some time I noticed that the straps that go around the legs had come unfastened. I redid them and worked around the airplane. I found they had come unbuckled again. I went over to operations supply and got fit for a new harness. I did not have time to sew on a snap to hold my shoes and escape kit.

February 7, 1945. Our target for the day was a little north of Vienna, the dreaded oil installations at Moosbierbaum. We were assigned to a B-24H with the nose marked "OL-45". Close to the target we got hit or had mechanical problems. We were losing altitude and the engines were running bad. When the bell rang to abandon aircraft I left the tail gun position and put on my chest chute. Before jumping, I put my escape kit in my shoes and hand carried them out as I left the airplane. When I jumped at 14,500 ft I counted to ten and pulled my rip cord. The chute did not come out. The rip cord had pulled through without unsnapping the snaps. I threw away the rip cord and shoes that I had been carrying in my left hand. I used both hands to tear open the flap. After a long agonizing moment the pilot chute came out dragging the main chute with it. I was close to the ground when the chute popped open with a loud report. I landed in German occupied Hungary and was soon made a prisoner of war.

I was taken to a farm house where I met seven* other men from my crew. We were interrogated by a German officer. Afterward we were put in a local jail to await transportation to a POW camp. The crew was split up and spent the rest of the war in different camps.

The pilot and co-pilot stayed with the plane until the last minute. They got across the Russian lines and one month later made it back to the outfit.

I often think what would have happened to me if the mission of February 6, 1944 had not been scrubbed. I had two strikes against me, a faulty parachute harness and a bad chest pack.**

As always,
Harold D "Bud" Pressel Jr 825 sq.



My crew. Top row from left: Jim Calvert/co-pilot, Alva Merle Schick/pilot, Neal Spiering/navigator, and Ken Limbocker/bombardier. Second row from left: Harold "Bud" Pressel/tail gunner, Claude Torgerson/engineer, and Bob Paul/radio operator. Bottom row from left: William Holmes/gunner, Ernest Thyberg/ball turret, and Walter Sysko/nose turret.

[Editors Note] * The normal crew complement was ten, but it was not unusual to have an eleventh man on board such as a photographer.

** Chest packs were stowed in any convenient place in the aircraft and were subject to damage during action either from the results of battle or ordinary wear and tear which could be quite severe at times. As space in turrets, bomb bays and nose tunnels were at a premium, chest packs could not be worn during flight. The only exception was seat packs that were sometimes worn by the pilot and co-pilot when the aircraft was equipped with coffin seats. The coffin seat was fabricated out of curved amour plate so that the pilot literally wore the seat. They were very popular naturally, but could get awfully cold at altitude. The parachute pack served as the seat cushion, as no other padding was provided.

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Brooklyn, NY
Dear Bud

My service in the Army Air Forces began with basic training Miami Beach, combat training Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, then on to Salt Lake City, Utah, for two week check out and familiarization, then picked up a brand new B-24 and flew it to Bangor, Maine. Ferried aircraft direct to Belfast, Northern Ireland then was transferred to a secret base in England for B-24's. They were stripped of ball turret, nose turret, and painted black, and equipped with flame arresters for night missions. Before we flew any missions they broke up the crews and sent them to various 8th Air Force Bases. I believe about this time they stopped the night mission operations assigned to the 8th Air Force, 34th Bomb Group 4th Bomb Squadron.

First mission was to Hanover, Germany to bomb an enemy air base. About 5 minutes before entering the IP, I reported seeing this huge black cloud. I called it out as a thunderstorm and heard chuckles over the interphone. The pilot said it was antiaircraft fire. I had never seen it before and it was very heavy right at our height. It was scary all right.

Then bombs were away and the aircraft lifted a little and then rocked all over. The pilot called me that we had been hit. I got down from the upper turret, with a portable oxygen bottle in hand to inspect the bomb bay. Most of the cat walk and bomb racks were gone from a direct hit. The bomb bay doors were flapping in the breeze. There were numerous fuel and hydraulic leaks. The self sealing tanks began to hold but there was no hydraulic pressure and no contact with the rear of the ship. I took my "dike" pliers and safety wire, and using the pliers like a fish hook was able to snag the bottom of each bomb bay door after much maneuvering and pull them closed. I then wired them shut. We were very lucky the shell went off where it did, because the fuel booster pumps and fuel lines were spared. Had to hand crank the gear down all 360 turns.

Flew two missions on D-day, short ones of about 3 hours each. Had a few missions when ME-109's went through our unit. Saw a German rocket plane fly through our squadron shooting all the time. It looked like it was on fire. My turret was too slow to track him.

Completed 16 missions when the group was converted to B-17, got checked out on a seventeen but preferred the good old B-24, (my first love), and told them so. There were some who stayed with the 34th Bomb group, but about 200 of us from the 8th Air Force B-24 units were put on a ship for Naples.

In charge of us was a Major. The ship was English and loaded with their troops. We were put down below under the water line. The Major informed the Captain of the ship that the U.S. was paying for 1st class passage for us and demanded that we be relocated to higher decks. We were ordered to stay below and not to appear on the promenade decks. We went upstairs with our 45's and demanded that the English Officers make amends. This resulted in the loss of our 45's from the English troops, who were sent below to take them. It was then that the ship's captain found out that there were no anti-aircraft gunners on board, and wanted us to do it. We refused once again and so our trench knives were taken away as some of the guys went after the English officers. The captain was about to charge us with mutiny, but with a change of heart finally let us come up the stairs. There were no more incidents.

I was assigned to the 484th Bomb Group and helped build the chapel with "tufi" (See note#1 below) block stones, blocked up 4 sides of our tent with stone, and cemented the floor. We added a P-38 drop tank for wash water. We then cut down a 55 gallon drum for the heater, and hooked up a fuel supply drum outside of the tent. Each cot had a headset hooked up to a radio somewhere within the squadron. The squadron tents were to the left rear of the headquarters building.

When not flying I would sometimes walk around the area just looking at the countryside. One day I met an old Italian with a mule and wagon, and said, "Hi" to him and he replied in English. We continued to talk, then he paused, and looked at me quizzically, "You come from Brooklyn, I too." It seemed he had retired three years before the war and had returned to his native Italy. He took me in the cart to the base of the mountains where he furnished me with fresh eggs, and bacon (See note #2 below) I would go up there many times for a big meal and bring back provisions for the guys.

One time we flew up to Rome and walked around in the cleared areas. We were soon bored with this so we ventured into the off limits part of town and spied a brand new MP motorcycle. We kicked up the stand and rolled it all the way back to our aircraft and tied it up in the bomb bay. We used to run back and forth from the flight line to the squadron area a distance of about two miles.

Flight time was spent flying missions, doing slow time after engine changes, and other test flights. I remember missions to Trieste, Yugoslavia, Innsbruck, Bleckhammer, Brenner Pass, and the Po Valley, some 26 missions before the end of the war.

One mission we headed for Yugoslavia over the Adriatic Sea and were just off the Yugoslavian coast when the lead element ran into a thick haze resulting in some midair's. The mission was a shambles and we returned to base.

There was a maximum effort mission that stands out in my memory. We were climbing and just about up to the alternate target,

when we lost our superchargers. The amplifier was replaced and the superchargers picked up again, but we were way behind. One bomb was dropped. We were just about back in the slot when the same thing happened and the formation left us in the dust. This was repeated three more times until there were no bombs left. Each time the superchargers let go the plane would fall off on one wing in a deep stall. It looked like the wing tip was touching the mountaintops. We were reported going down in the Alps when the rest of the group returned. We came in last and the brass did not believe our combat report so we were all reduced in rank, enlisted to private and so on.

The factory representative inspected the airplane and found that the supercharger wiring harness was badly corroded. We were all promoted back to our previous rank.

We were up on a test flight, slow timing an engine with just the pilot, co-pilot and myself. We were flying north following the coast line. The pilot wanted to listen to music and exchanged places with me so he could fiddle with the radio, but showed me on the map where the enemy lines were. I was so busy looking at the map that we sailed over the lines, when a flak shell popped nearby. "Where in the Hell are we?" I heard a shout. "Get over the water", which I did quickly. Both pilots got in their seats and aimed for a tramp steamer they spotted in enemy waters. It tried to get away, and did, as we had no ammo or bombs. Next they buzzed a fishing boat and headed over land and spotted a farmer piling hay on a large stack. They buzzed that and there was hay all over the place. Back at the base when the bomb bay doors were opened, a lot of hay fell out.

I believe there was a Captain Charles A Marshall (See note#3 below) who was the operations officer at the time.

Ed Lawler 484th BG

[Editors Notes]

(#1) Tufi (Caliche) block was a very soft sand stone that could be cut with an ordinary saw. Its use goes way back to Roman times. Once cut and in place it would harden with exposure to the elements.

(#2) Italian bacon or ham is called prosciutto, a type of uncured ham that is often thin sliced and served with melon. It would fry up very crisp to the American taste.

(#3) The Association has a Charles A Marshall (ASN 0-797570) listed in the roster who last lived in Salinas, California. He was shot down and listed MIA on 21 February, 1945 but returned to duty 1 March 1945. Listed MIA also at the same time were JD Cummins /navigator(current member), Robert F Anderson/ bombardier, Charles A Harford/engineer (current member) and John R Gross/co-pilot.

The crew of Charles A Marshall (P), John R Gross/co-pilot (LKA Alabama), Alfred Denault (current member) Robert F Anderson/ bombardier(LKA Ardsley NY), Charles A Harford/engineer (current member), Joe Cataldo/radio operator, (LKA Milwaukee WI) Pete Regelman (D)/nose gunner, Rollo Richmond (D), /tail gunner, Bob Powers/upper gunner (current member), Bob Sorenson/hall Gunner (LKA Kenosha, WI (LKA=Last known address

1989 Reunion Attendance

[For planning purposes]

I/We Plan to attend the 1989 reunion in New Orleans
Yes _____

Number in our party _____

Previous Reunions Attended

81 Torrance _____ 82 Dayton _____ 83 Williamsburg _____
84 Orlando _____ 86 San Antonio _____
87 Colorado Springs _____ 88 San Francisco _____

Past Dues 1986 (\$15.00) 1987 (\$15.00) \$ _____
Dues for 1988 (\$15.00) \$ _____
Scholarship Fund \$ _____
Needy Fund (See page 2) \$ _____

Baseball caps (\$8.00 Ea) \$ _____
Pins (\$5.00 includes decal) 484th BG Pins \$ _____
Pins (\$5.00 includes decal) 461st BG \$ _____
Coasters (\$7.00 for a set of 8, blue and red tinted precision cast plastic with Association Logo hot stamped in gold). \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Questionnaire and Tear Slip for Torretta Flyer No. 16 Fall / Winter 1988

Future Reunion Sites

The 1989 reunion site was chosen by mail ballot and by unanimous vote at the 1988 reunion. We will continue the practice for 1990. You may check off any one of the suggested sites or write in your own choice.

- 1) Atlanta, GA _____ 2) Nashville, TN _____ 3) Omaha, NE _____
4) Boston, MA _____ 5) Philadelphia, PA _____
6) Niagara Falls NY _____ 7) Valley Forge, PA _____
8) Washington / Baltimore _____ 9) Detroit, MI _____
10) Milwaukee, WI _____ 1) Indianapolis, IN _____

Write in choice _____

Personal History

Name of spouse _____
MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) /Duty _____

Army Serial No (ASN) _____ Rank _____

Flight crews: Name of Pilot _____

Ground Crews: Name of CO or NCO _____

Names of those sharing your tent: _____

New Members

Military personnel assigned to duty at Torretta Airfield, Italy 1944, 1945 with the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups and support units are eligible for membership in the Association.

Please send membership applications to the following individuals

Please do not tear or cut any part of this tear slip and Mail this **entire page** to:

461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association
1122 Ysabel St.
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

THE LAST MISSION

THE LAST MISSION

THE LAST MISSION

The names of the deceased shown below come from members or members families, and represents names sent to us since the last edition of the Torretta Flyer. If there are any omissions or corrections to this list please advise the Association office.

The 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association honors a person's memory by publishing their history in this section of the Torretta Flyer called "The Last Mission." To honor that memory the individual's history and achievements should be recorded. Unfortunately during the time of a family's bereavement it is difficult to obtain the material because of the emotional adjustments the survivors and family are experiencing. You will note that more is written about some of the members than others. This is because more material was available at the time of the writing of this edition of the Flyer. Surviving spouses, and family members are invited to send additional material, so that a proper history can be prepared for the deceased that will appear in the next edition of the Flyer.

A complete deceased list will be included in the supplement to the membership roster to be issued next year.



Robert S "Boxy" Simkins 826 Sq

Member Robert S Simkins a decorated bomber pilot of the 484th Bomb Group has passed away. Bob had a passion for flying, during WWII he flew 47 combat missions. He was shot down twice and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying

Cross. After the war, he served in the Air Force Reserve at Mitchell Field and later in the Air National Guard, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He was born in Orangeburg, South Carolina. During the war Bob piloted a B-24 Liberator bomber and logged more than 700 hours of flight time, in which 190 were combat hours.

Assigned to the 484th Bomb Group he flew bombing missions into Germany and on November 1, 1944 was shot down near the Yugoslavian border. He managed to escape capture and was protected by partisans fighting against the Axis Powers. He flew five more missions, serving as a wing leader, but again was shot down. This time he was captured on January 23, 1945 and sent to prisoner of war camp. He was freed on April 29, 1945.

Following the war's end, Bob went into electronics. After working for RCA and others he eventually opened his own business, Coastal Communication, which specialized in designing and selling emergency mobile communication units.

He is survived by daughters Valerie Higgins, and Lori Cone, a son Robert S Simkins II, and four grandchildren.

His flight crew knew him as "Boxy".
Bob was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Member **Ben Murphy** 765 Sq passed away Dec 28th, 1987 in Texas. Ben was the bombardier on the first crew that I was on when I served as co-pilot. He was also the first squadron bombardier of the 765th squadron and was of the original air cadre of the 461st when we went to Orlando, Florida, to the School of Applied Tactics in August 1943. Ben lived in Spring Branch, Texas.

Reported by:
David P McQuillan 767 Sq.

Member **Newton D Lewis** 824 Sq. I am writing to inform you that my brother Newton D Lewis died on April 22, 1987.

Sara K Smith, sister
Greenville, PA

July 1988
Dear Mr Markel:

Sorry I have to report some bad news. My husband **James R Philpott** (484th BG) died July 9, 1988, from an apparent heart attack, so they tell me. He was in good health and feeling fine.

Respectfully,
Regina Philpott

Member **Vernon R Hood** 827 sq , Portland Oregon. Last Christmas I missed getting the ever faithful Christmas card from our crew's navigator. In January 1988, I received a note from his daughter that he had passed away in September of 1987, and was preceded in death by his lovely wife in April of 1987. He tried twice to attend a reunion but was knocked down by cancer both times. He is survived by two children, Barbara and David. He was a mathematician and an educator He was head of the math department of the Portland Public School System.

George P Agnost, 827 Sq, San Pablo, California crew nose gunner died in the summer of 1986 from heart problems. He was a lawyer and a city attorney for the city of San Francisco, CA

The crew list is as follows: Woodrow Wilson (P) Killed in a ground accident while the crew was on tactical assignment in France September 1944, William L Schneider (C/P) Later made first pilot, Carl Williams replacement (C/P), Michael P Goodman (B), Vernon N Hood (N), James O Clemons (E), Edward Wilcox (R/O), Joseph H Wythe (U/G), George P Agnost (N/G),

Burton Thompson (T/G), and Kenneth White (deceased) (B/G)

Our crew was lucky to survive, for on a mission to Munich in cooperation with 8th Air Force units, the weather closed in just as the two Forces arrived at the target at the same time. It was a time to think fast and execute a perfect vertical turn before the lights went out.

Reported by:
James O Clemons 827 Sq
Tulsa, OK

Member **Richard Kinman** 827 Sq passed away March 30, 1986. Dick flew in the now famous airplane of the 827 squadron, "Knock Out". His crew consisted of Edgar T Keffer (P), John H Bolen (C/P), Richard E Kinman (N), William Bryan (B), Lious J Hutana (E), Robert F Blank (R/O), Charles R Connelly (U/G), Oscar L Johnson (B/G), and Harold C Christenson (T/G) (Killed in Action)

Reported by his wife
Mrs Richard Kinman
Grand Island, NE

Member **Jim Sarros** 827 Sq passed away July 5, 1986

Reported by
Barbara B Sarros
Biloxi, MS

Member **Andrew R Kelly** (ASN 15119731) 766 Sq passed away April 13, 1987. Andrew attended the 1982 reunion in Dayton, OH. He served as an MOS 911 aircraft armorer.

Reported by
John J Kelly Jr
Cincinnati, OH



Harry F Solis 824 Sq

Member **Harry F Solis** 824 Sq Died November 26, 1987. Harry was one of the crew members who was picked up by a German Hospital ship after their airplane ditched in the Adriatic Sea. They were given the choice of being taken prisoner or being put back in their raft and taking their chances with the elements. The crew voted unanimously for freedom. They were

later picked up by an Allied rescue vessel and returned to the squadron. He and his wife Mable attended the 1984 reunion in Orlando, Florida



Member **Rudolph H Wild** 766 Sq. (ASN 17159390) He passed away April 12, 1988. He served as a replacement gunner and was Missing in Action July 12, 1944, over Nimes France. He was taken prisoner and was placed in Stalag Luft IV.



Paul Lawrence Jr 766 sq

Member **Paul Lawrence Jr** 766 Sq. Born November 2, 1922, died February 7, 1988.

He was a successful businessman in Los Angeles, and was preparing for retirement having turned over most of the company operations to his son Paul III before his untimely death. He leaves a wife, Sally and two children, a daughter, Katherine and a son, Paul Lawrence III.

[The editors personal note] Paul was a high spirited man, he was a man who could be heard, because if he had anything on his mind, you certainly were soon aware of his booming voice. He was likable because of his straightforwardness. You knew where he stood without pretense. What you saw was the man himself. He was an ardent supporter of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association from the very beginning. He was a member of the late Bob Faulkner's crew.



Member **George L Guidmore** 827 Sq. passed away March 6, 1987. He was very proud of his service with the 15th Air Force and I too was equally proud. His service medals hang on my living room wall.

Reported by his wife
Mrs C Virginia Guidmore



Member **Jay W Lehman** 766 sq passed away Jan 26, 1986. He attended several reunions and would have been to more if death had not overtaken him. He was a member of the late Bob Faulkner's crew.

Reported by his Wife
Thelma Lehman
Elizabethtown, PA



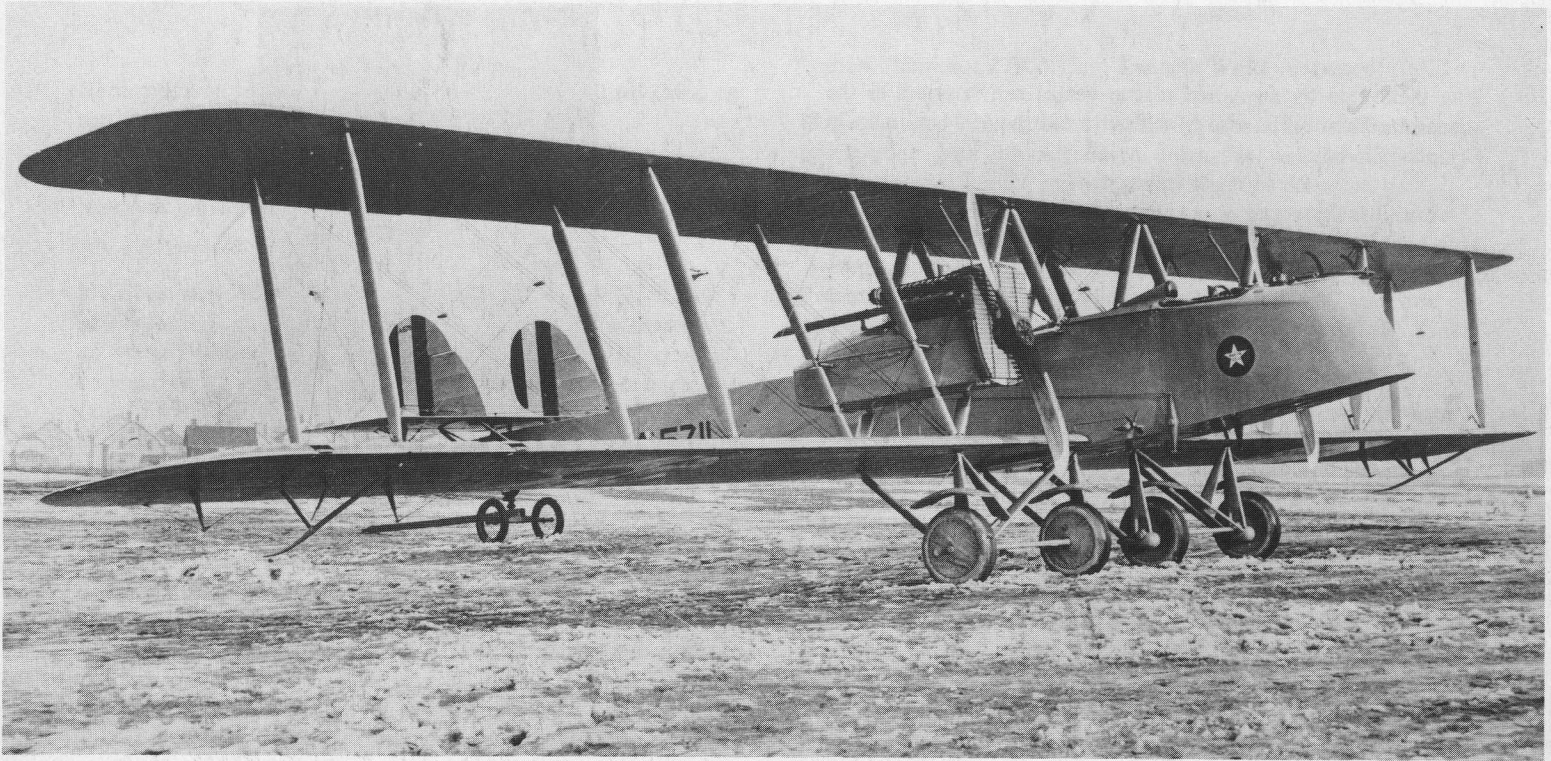
Bob Myers 826 Sq

[Personal notes of your editor] Member **Bob Myers (C/P)** 826 sq. Cancer finally claimed this strong and proud man. He was a charter member of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association and was of great help with the first reunion in Torrance, California in 1981. While he was trained as a bomber pilot, he would slip away from Torretta to fly missions with the P-38's on his day off. This was totally forbidden and you'll find no records to show this. In his later years, he and his wife Juanita belonged to a trailer club. Each free weekend he would load his big Ford pickup truck and trailer for a trip out of the city to meet other members of the club, where they would sit around and talk about heavy iron, - their trucks. Yet, this man had great sensitivity, he made very beautiful stained glass windows and individual pieces, many of which became the windows and decorations of his home in Torrance, California, as well as prized possessions of many of his friends.

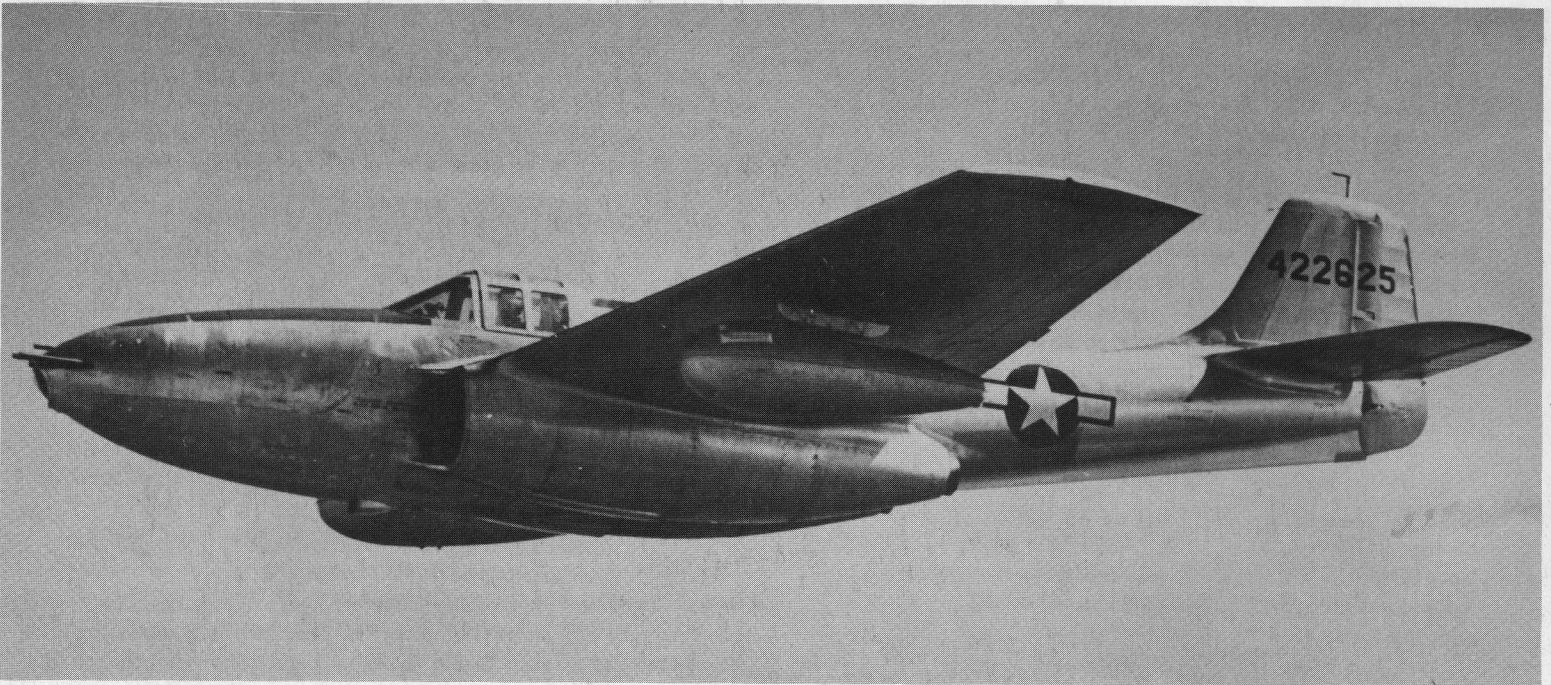


Gretta Roffman Ostrovsky

Gretta Roffman Ostrovsky beloved wife of member **Sidney Ostrovsky** 827 sq. of Fort Lee, NJ. This lady was devoted to her work, as a teacher, and as an educator. She was much more than that, she was an inspiration to her students. Her students were her family as she had no children of her own, they all received special attention before class, during lunch, and after class. She had such a profound influence on her students, that they would come back long after graduation to visit with her. She was able to fabricate a bond between student and teacher that was more like parent and child, with both wanting to share their lives with the other. This is a rare quality not often found in professional ranks these days. She will be greatly missed, but her legacy lives on because some of her students have become teachers themselves. Gretta attended many of the Association's reunions together with **Sidney Ostrovsky**.



Martin MB-1 A post WWI Bomberd designed by Donald Douglas



Bell P-59 Army Air Force's first jet fighter

**461st & 484th
Bomb Groups Association
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