

Dear Bud

Carm and I took off for a mini reunion in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.



Photo (above) There we met Mike Karwoski ( top left)from St Louis, Joe Ercole (top center) who came in from New York, myself Charlie McKew (top right), Bill Harned (bottom left) and Jake Grim (bottom right) in the enclosed photo.

Bill and Jake brought their wives also. We stayed in a small, but comfortable motel and just enjoyed being together once more. We talked a lot and agreed to meet again at the forthcoming reunion.

Charles McKew 824 Squadron



Oquossoc, Maine  
Dear Bud

Here are a few of my personal stories.

### Steel Mat Runway

One a very hot day while waiting for our planes to come back from a mission, I sat on box shaded by the tail of a B-24, I spotted a red and white German plane.

The German plane flew very low (about 12 feet) above our steel mat runway. He dropped a bomb to destroy the runway and subsequently cause destruction of our planes returning from a mission and could not land safely. The bomb was torpedo shaped about 4 feet long and about 9 inches in diameter. It hit the mat and bounced about 6 feet up and exploded with not much of a noise. It did no damage to the runway. The plane kept right on going. I heard it was shot down later.

### My Flight to Mt Vesuvius

One day while riding my motorcycle around the base, I stopped at a lone B-24. A flight crew of pilot, co-pilot, two gunners approached the plane for a flight to Naples. They were from another squadron. They refused to take me along. When I told our crew chief Sgt Jones, he grounded the plane. So they allowed me to accompany them.

While in the air, the gunners informed me that three genera-

tors were not working. I knew the Ford shafts must be broken. I tried to start the APU ( Auxiliary Power Unit) It had no fuel. It was necessary to obtain fuel from one of the bomb bay sump drains. Then it started OK.

On this flight I was able to look down on Mt Vesuvius. The sight was awesome, then I was once again called to the bomb bay to fix a hydraulic leak. When we were ready to land I had to fix the nose gear, it came down jamming the door. The noise level was too great to hear voices so I communicated with the pilot by pulling his pant leg to raise the gear, as the nose wheel came up I cranked the door open, then the nose wheel came down normally and locked.

This old olive drab ship never flew again and was scrapped shortly after landing. I really earned my flight ticket that day.



Photo (above) Mt Vesuvius

### G I Shoes

Sgt Walter Mann from New York lived in our tent. He was a flying photographer and was shot down. Somebody who knew of his winnings at card games took his money, about \$150.00. I took Walter's candy bars. About thirty days later Walter returned. I said, " Holy God Walter, where have you been? I'm sorry about your candy, I ate all three."

How Walter got home was top secret, but he did say his "G I" shoes saved his life. You don't walk very far in flying boots and as a evadee he walked much of the time he was away.

In civilian life he had shown his athletic endurance by participating in six day bicycle races. He also continued to develop his artistic talents by attending art school.

One day near graduation from art school, a restaurant manager requested art students to create menu designs for his restaurant. He offered employment to the artist creating the best menu. When washing his paint brush after completing his menu design, Walter found he had sprayed a number of spots on the newly finished work. Walter painted each little dot into a star. The star menu landed Walter the job.