

Celebrating The End of the War



Torretta, Italy May 1945. Troops of the 49th Wing engage in a "Tug of War Contest."

The Torretta Flyer

Torretta Flyer No 20 Spring-Summer 1991
Redondo Beach, California

Official Publication of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association



Negotiations to bring the B-24J "All American," to Kansas City for the reunion of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups have begun..
See page 3 on how you can help.

Endings

*A Special Issue Devoted To
The End Of The War In
Europe May 1945*

"Project Green" Flying the troops home
after VE Day See page 14

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« ABOUT THIS ISSUE »»

THE GULF WAR AND WWII

It should be recognized that the success of the Gulf War was possible because of lessons learned during WWII and Viet Nam. It is important to remember also that air power during WWII shortened the conflict considerably, and almost won the Gulf War single handedly, and probably could have if air power were employed against all Iraqi forces. The difference between then and now are the armaments, the use of today's smart bombs against the dumb bombs of WWII. Dumb or smart, the delivery system still requires smart and well trained aircrews.

The recent ending of the Gulf War is compared to the ending of WWII. This idea sets the theme of this issue. It is about endings, and the completion of mission assignments. The material comes from several sources: from members, reprints from other publications, and from the Association's archives such as historical documents, and micro films.

Also of great importance to readers is the section called "Last Mission" We can only write what we know, and this comes from members who knew the individual and from family members. The editor feels it is most important to honor those who have passed on before us by recording their deeds because it is historically important, and to recognize the individual's part in the war effort to defeat Nazi Germany. When notified of a member's passing, please send any information about the individual to the editor of the Flyer. The Torretta Flyer exists to record the history of accomplishments of the two groups.

In this issue we are revising the introduction of new members. We are asking new members to send photographs of themselves to facilitate their recognition by readers of the Flyer who may have known them during the war. Their letters and photos are published for the first time in this edition. In addition the new member list includes more information taken directly from the data base records.

Micro film excerpts are included in this issue as related to the end of the war in Europe. We hope to publish more stories from this source in future issues.

Your suggestions are welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Association is most grateful to our contributors in this issue of the Torretta Flyer. We extend a special thank you to Dr Theodore R Jamison who graciously granted permission to reprint his story Project Green previously published in the Journal of the American Aviation Historical Association. We also want to thank Robert A Long for his story on the Swiss internees.

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by Theodore R. Jamison, Ph.D. The Redeployment of American Troops to the United States after VE Day. Reprinted by permission of the American Aviation Historical Society. Page 14

2ND REPORT OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL by Hap Arnold Commanding General, Army Air Forces dated February 1945. Page 20

EXCERPTS FROM MICRO FILM

These reports deal with the end of the War in Europe. Selections were taken from 49th Wing history. Page 22

SWISS INTERNEES

by Robert A Long, This is a follow up to the story that appeared in Torretta Flyer 19 regarding USAF Aircraft landing in Switzerland. This story is about the internment of the airmen. Page 27

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BIG FENCE A special 15th Air Force VHF radio call service for lost pilots.

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The Torretta Flyer

Issue 20 Spring -Summer 1991

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The Torretta Flyer is the official publication of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association. Normal distribution is limited to members only. Requests for additional copies should be directed to the editor.

Contributions of stories, articles, memorabilia, and graphic materials to the Torretta Flyer are always welcome. Clean typewritten manuscripts and Microsoft Word disks (Macintosh) are preferable. Other forms are acceptable also. Please contact the editor for further information.

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» NEWS OF THE ASSOCIATION «

1991 Scholarship Ceremony. The awarding of the scholarships for the year 1990 took place April 19, 1991 in Cerignola, Italy in accordance with the selection criteria set by Professor Umberto Albanese. There were no representatives of the Association present this year at the ceremony. In accordance with the criteria set by Professor Albanese, and the Scholarship Committee, awards of \$500.00 each were given to:

- 1) CHIARA MASCIAVEO,
- 2) GIUSEPPE ACELLA,
- 3) MARIA FONSDITURI,
- 4) MARCO DEGIMMIS

Micro Films Printing of the micro films was finally made possible by the generous donations of members in attendance at the Nashville reunion. (See page 2, Torretta Flyer 18 for preliminary report) After the reunion 50% of the films were reproduced successfully into hard copy (8 1/2" by 11" sheets). A new optical technique is being perfected whereby the films are scanned directly from film to computer memory. A firm in Torrance, California has reported encouraging progress using this device.

Italian Tour. Because of the Gulf War's effect on air travel, the Italian tour set for this spring was cancelled. The data base of members interested in this tour will be retained. If demand for a new tour develops April 1992 is suggested (timed to coincide with the presentation of the Scholarship awards).

1991 Reunion. The Kansas City Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza (Formerly the Kansas City Marriott Plaza Hotel) will host this year's reunion September 26-29, 1991. Reunion bulletin to follow for detailed reunion information.

1992 Reunion. The 1992 reunion site has not yet been determined.

T Shirts The Association has a few medium size T shirts left over from the 1990 reunion. These are white "Hanes" 100% cotton shirts with a blue winged version of the the encircled B-24 logo printed on the front.

They are priced at \$15.00 ea. To order use the tear slip page 37.

Back Issues of Aeronautical Magazines Back issues of aeronautical publications, such as Air & Space magazine, Aviation Week, Air Combat, Air Classics, Air Progress to name a few are being solicited by your editor for use in the Flyer.

The All American A spanking new Liberator has been flying around the USA exciting B-24 veterans where ever it stops. One member of the Association suggested we invite this wonderful old bird to our Kansas City reunion. He made a generous contribution toward paying for the expense of bringing the plane to Kansas City.

To bring the aircraft to Kansas City we will need to raise \$4000.00 total. We feel that this goal can be reached with your support. Members planning to attend this year's reunion who want to renew their acquaintance with this grand old lady of the skies may also contribute to the expense fund. Use the tear slip on page 37.

This aircraft, a B-24J-85-CF S/N 44-44052 has been completely restored and carries the name "All American" and was named for another aircraft of the same name from the 461st Bomb Group which on a July 25, 1944, mission shot down 14 enemy fighters.

The original All American was lost over Yugoslavia October 4, 1944. All of the crew survived.

I talked with Bob Collings whose foundation found the aircraft in pieces in an old warehouse in Britain., shipped it to the USA and restored it to Zero time. He even improved the fuel system so the aircraft can be flown with the bomb bay doors shut.

Association members who can contribute information about the original "All American." should contact the editor. (Note photo on back page)

Nashville Reunion Report Close to 400 members and guests attended the 1990 reunion. One third were members coming to a reunion for the first time. Another third were new members, and the last third consisted of members who had been to previous reunions. Two thirds of the guests elected to drive to Nashville while the rest came by air.

The reunion was held at the Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel. One of the activities of the reunion was to see the country music show at the "Grand Old Opry."

At the banquet the colors were brought in by an ROTC company from Vanderbilt University led by Gunnery Sgt. Jacob Wills. The invocation was given by Chaplain (Capt) Ron Lowery of the Tennessee National Guard.

Richard M Kinney, VP Nashville Visitors Bureau, the guest speaker at the banquet presented a slide show on the history of WWII. After dinner-dance music was provided by the band "1941."

Danny Countess, a Nashville country music singer and entertainer was the attraction at the ladies event. His performance was enthusiastically received.



Country singer and entertainer Danny Countess

The warm and sunny fall weather that held for most of the reunion days, the hospitality of the people of Nashville, and hotel staff added to the enjoyment of all who came to Nashville.

We want to thank all of the helpers for their assistance in making the Nashville reunion a success: Doris and Clark Ecton, Ralph Carr, Audrey and Harold Toomey. Also, thanks to Gordon Graham for his efforts in raising the matching funds needed for the microfilm printing, and, of course, a special thanks to our anonymous donor for a most generous contribution, as well as all of the attendees! A preview of the benefits are being reprinted in this issue.

Scholarship Committee Report.

This report was given by Chris Donaldson at the business meeting Nashville Reunion October 1990.

The scholarship committee was authorized to provide four scholarships of \$500 each during the 1989-1990 academic year. The criteria remained the same - students in the Cerignola/Torretta area who have excelled in their studies and for whom the scholarships will represent encouragement to continue their academic careers.

In October of 1989 scholarship awards were presented in a ceremony in Cerignola to these four young Italian students: Umberto Massafra, Tiziana Gentile, Maria Sgaramella, and Assunta Davenia. Miss Davenia was unable to be present, and the award was accepted on her behalf by her father, Matteo Davenia, who was a houseboy and laborer at the 764th Squadron area. He, in turn, re-donated the award to the Cerignola community's school for orphaned girls.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the association: Alexander Azary and W. D. Donaldson and their wives.

The members present were aided by the services of a young Italian student translator, Miss Tiziana Perla of Cerignola.

The scholarship committee has been authorized by President Markel to offer four additional scholarships for the 1990-1991 school year. At the request of the local academic authorities in Cerignola, the scholarship awards henceforth will be made in the spring of the year. It has been agreed that the date of the next awards ceremony will be Friday, April 19, 1991. This date has been selected to coincide with the planned association tour of Italy next spring and the date that those participating will be in Cerignola.

The committee continues to be composed of Edwin Goree, co-chairman, Ross Wilson and myself. It is, as Mr. Goree initially proposed, a "no-load fund." (i.e. all scholarship funds received by the association are spent on scholarship grants; Their administrative or other expenses are borne entirely by the committee members themselves.)

The actual selections are made by a committee of academic and civic representatives from the Cerignola area headed by Professor Umberto Albanese. A carefully established set of criteria guides their decisions. These committee members, too, serve without compensation.

Scholarships to date

To date, the association has awarded 13 scholarships of \$500 each to the following Italian students:

April 1986

Ripalta Scalzo
Luisa Marinelli
Lucia Nigro

October 1987

Rosario Conversano
Dario Grassi
Antonietta Lotito

December 1988

Assunta Lepore
Antonella Cicinetti
Paolo Conversano

October 1989

Umberto Massafra
Tiziana Gentile
Maria Sgaramella
Assunta Davenia

Ever since the first awards were made, the Italian media has carried full and detailed reports of the association's scholarship program. It has received wide attention throughout Italy as well as in the Foggia-Cerignola area. The committee continues to solicit advice and suggestions from the membership as to the conduct of its activity.

Annual business meeting
Nashville, October 13, 1990 at 10 AM. 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.

Important Matters Other matters of importance were discussed at the annual meeting, including a report on the current membership status of the Association, and a report on the funds needed for printing of microfilm reels of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups history.

1992 Reunion Site A Midwest site for the 1991 reunion, was chosen by popular vote. The choice was Kansas City.

End of Report

Contributors to the Memorial Scholarship Fund

Since the List published in Torretta Flyer #19 Summer-Fall 1990)

Melvin I Albert 824
Robert Arnholt 764
William Aubel 827
Albert P Bakutis 827
Lewis Brunner 827
Robert P Bush 827

In memory of Jimmy Ryan,
William H Young, & Malcom W McAfee

George Christie 765
John K Clark 764
Aaron F Corbin 825
Charles D Crowe 764
Chris Donaldson 765
Peter Drill (2) 484
Jay K Dudley 764
Colin E Dye 826

In memory of Keith Hamilton Dye

Angelo Ferrara 767
George S Flamand 825
Bill Franklin 766
J Jordan Glew 826
Robert W Goble 826
Ellsworth Goodell 826
Edwin T Goree 764
Robert E Harrison 767
Joe Hebert (2) 826
Mike Hendrickson 824
William P Hettinger Jr 767
John Hicks 826
Dan Joba (2) 826
Paul E Johnson 826
Thomas F Johnson 827

In memory of James Ryan-N/G.,
William Young-E, & Malcolm McAfee-
B/G

Robert M Kelliher 765
William T Kesey 766
Burnett King 827
George E Kolbe 826
Frederick D Kuhn 826
Edward J Latal 767

In memory of Joseph M Howie

Charles Lowell 827
James D Mackin 767

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**Contributors to the
Memorial Scholarship
Fund**

Since the List
published in Torretta
Flyer #19
Summer-Fall 1990)

Adolph Marcus 824

In memory of Robert Hughes

George Bouras,

Robert Kime, &

John B O'Neill

Leo V Matranga 825

Devere McRorie 765

Judson W Moore 766

Leland J Ogle 826

Edward J Oresky 764

D R Perkins 767

Mrs. Walter Rix 824

In memory of Walter Rix

Albin A Rogers 824

Ernest M Ryan Sr. 826

Paul J Schiappacasse 825

Raymond L Snyder 826

Howard R Sossamon 767

Reed Sprinkel 825

Harold T Toomey 824

Ed Trenner 764

Charles E Trinkle 826

John E Tynan 824

Thaddeus Walker 825

David R Ward 826

John A Whitacre 825

Norbert Wholeben 824

Jack A Williams 825

William F Wilson 826

In memory of Ray Foss

Bernard Young 827

In memory of Joe Natoli

Richard A Yunghans 826

List of New Members

New members joining since TF-19 was published

First Name	Last Name	Unit	MOS	Pilot/CO	Remarks
Henry H	Baker	766	B	Ted Ahlberg	Crew #42 "Ten Aces & A Queen"
Frederick A	Baldinger	824	E	A C Wiggins	
Walter	Basford	826	747		Crew Chief "Puss N Boots, & Salvo Sally"
Lloyd A	Bjerge	825	C/P	Harry Schultz	
Henry	Bugajski	824	U/G	John E Trechter	
Robert P	Bush	827	G	Thomas F Johnson	Shot Down Maestre, Italy
Clarence E	Causey Jr	827	T/G	Amos S Pollard	
Floyd P	Churchwell	827	G/C		Radio Mechanic
John K	Clark	764	T/G	Roland H Stevens (D)	Hit by ME 109's
Armando N	Colangelo	824	G	Frederick W Carter	"Pontiac Squaw"
James A	Crawford	827	060		Aircraft maintenance
John F	Douglas	767	LC		Line Chief "Tail Draggin, & Malfunction"
David H	Douthwright	826	Son	C/P Clarence B Odle's	Son of David L Doughtwright-C/P (D)
Al	Freedman	824	R/O	Ralph Hallenbach	"Benny Hevans HO!"
Julius A	Hollis	824	014	Refueling Crew	Refueling crew
Dan	Hurley	827	R/O	Thomas F Johnson	Shot down Maestre, Italy
Donald W	Jackson	767	E	Kelton G Bush	Crew #61
Thomas F	Johnson	827	P	Thomas F Johnson	Shot down Maestre, Italy
Robert J	Kieber	825	P	Robert J Kieber	
Charles W	Killen	825	G	Rua L Petty	"Flak Strainer"
Joseph C	Krimm	825	Cryp	Cryptologist	Cryptologist, transfered to 15AF HQ
Michael	La Rock	766	P	Michael La Rock	
Charles	Lowell	827	E	Edmund J McLaughlin	
G J	Miller	826	G	John C Nowacki	
Robert C	Moberly	824	T/G	Wilson B Wilkes	
John J	Mobley	824	E	Harold L Churn	"Rum Runner & Rum Hound," crash landed
Charles H	Monnig	824	P	Charles H Monnig	
Leonard A	Nucero	824	G	Vincent G Demaio	"DeMaids Delinquents"
William J	O'Malley	825	R/O	James J Ahearn	
Leland J	Ogle	826	Med	Jack Shepard MD	
Albert	Padovani	824			
Thomas F	Parker	824	G	J E White	
Harold R	Rigg	827	P	Harold Ralph Rigg	"Big Ass Bird"
A Lee	Robinson	825	C/P	Thaddeus H Walker	"Damned Yankee," Hit Szolnok 8/20/44
Wilson D	Rowland	826	N	Clarence L Lollar	Crew #57, Hit Munich, crash landed Vis
Harry	Sarmanian	824	555	William C Fairbanks	Sheet metal mechanic
Wilson G	Sloyer	827	GC		Administrator
Ernest	Stedman	826	T/G	William H Dowd	
Andrew	Toth	825	R/O	Arthur H Watts	
Charles L	Walling	826	G/C		Radio technician
Manuel	Weber	764	R/O	Edgar M Trenner	Crew #18
Robert J	Wehner	827	P	Robert J Wehner	

INTRODUCTION OF

NEW MEMBERS

◇◇1◇◇

Floyd P Churchwell, 827 squadron

Dear Bud:

As you requested, I have included a photo of the other guys living in our tent. We all had the same MOS (754)



Floyd P Churchwell, (MOS 754) From Left Joseph D Crump Jr/ Memphis, Tennessee; Francis S Shehan / Council Bluffs; Iowa, Theodore J Mickowychock/Tower City, Pennsylvania; Anthony Fularz/Arnold, Pennsylvania; Floyd P Churchwell/ Leakesville, Mississippi.

◇◇2◇◇

John C Clark 764

Dear Bud

I arrived at Torretta Army Airfield as a tail gunner in October 1944, just after the last major mission to Ploesti was flown. Our crew flew our first mission on Friday the 13th of October over Vienna, Austria. Our pilot was Roland H Stevens, whose home was Hazelhurst, Mississippi. The most serious injury was frost bite to ears and fingers of our ball gunner William Estipa while on the bomb run over Ottertal, Austria after an attack by newly graduated fighter pilots of the Luftwaffe. We had to make an unscheduled fuel stop on the Isle of Vis on the way home.

I completed 32 sorties on April 26, 1945 when the war in Europe ended.



John C Clark

I flew with my pilot on food missions to POW camps near Spittal, Austria. During our tour our crew was assigned as one of the lead crews of the 764th squadron.

I am now retired and live with my wife on a farm near Salem, the capital of Oregon. We have a place near Mesa, Arizona where we spend the winters. We both dance and play golf and travel as much as we can.

Take care

John K Clark 764 squadron.

◇◇3◇◇

James A Crawford 827 squadron

Dear Bud

I was a electronic technician in the 827 squadron, and took my training at Hastings, Nebraska, Herrington, Kansas, Salt Lake City, and Kerns Field, Boise, Idaho before assignment to the 484th Bomb Group. As part of the ground crew I went to Italy by boat and returned the same way. My tent mates, all electronic technicians, were James D Ashky/Martinville Virginia, Don A Tuck/Richmond Virginia, William A Phillips, Davis Sheridan/Baltimore Maryland, and Frank E Sonnenberg.



James A Crawford

◇◇4◇◇

John F Douglas 767 squadron

Dear Bud and Bea:

Thank you for the recent packet you sent and the huge effort you and Bea make to keep the organization going. My wife and myself are looking forward to meeting you and all of the rest of the fly boys at the next reunion. I am enclosing a few photos .

Again, thanks a million

John F Douglas 767 squadron
Cave in rock, IL



Photo left: Getting ready to go to town. From Left: Sgts John Douglas, Odess O Loven, and Richard D Mosiniak.

◇◇5◇◇

**Dan Hurley,
827 Sq**

Dear Bud

Thank you so much for the pin, membership card and the flyers. The latter was very enlightening. I recognized the crew of Ruben Kaiser. I believe their enlisted crew lived next door to us in their tu-fee block tent. I hope that I don't have them confused with another. If my memory serves me right, Charles Shanklin was nicknamed "Pop", because he was an old man of 27 years. I thought this same crew ditched in the Adriatic and all survived.



Dan Hurley R/O crew of Thomas F Johnson

This was the first & last crew to ditch and all survive. Perhaps some member of the association can correct me if I am wrong.

When I last wrote to you I planned to attend the reunion, but have since changed my mind. I no longer fly and there is no Am-track service to Nashville. My arthritis would not allow me to sit for 12 hours on a bus. Perhaps another year the site will be more convenient for me. I am enclosing a recent photo of myself and a very grainy and partial photo of our crew. Absent was Robert Bush, tail gunner and Ed McLeod, navigator. I must reiterate my thanks for the wonderful work you are doing in our behalf. If I can't attend the reunion, I will still be informed of the happenings in the association thru the Flyers.

In Friendship and Unity,
Dan Hurley, 827 Sq

◇◇6◇◇

David H Douthwright

Dear Mr Markel

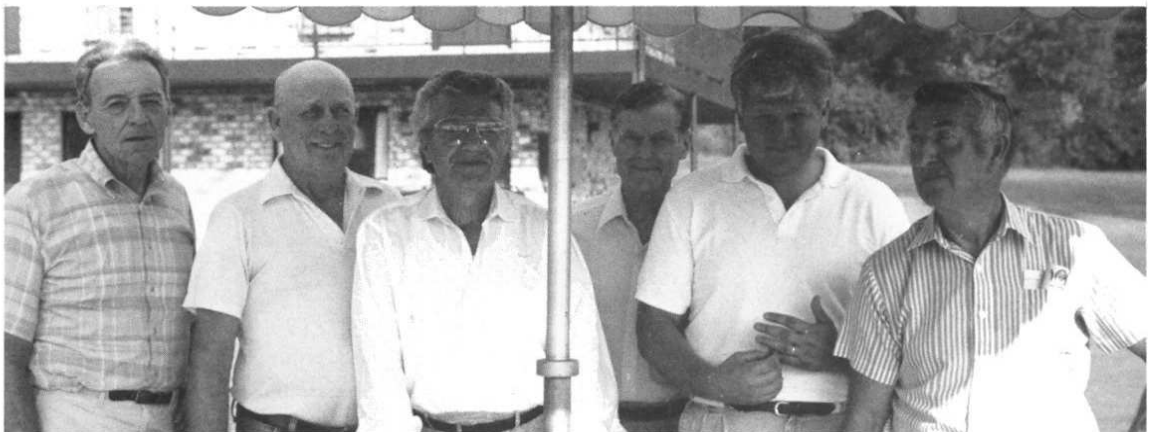
Myself, David H Douthwright son of David L Douthwright, (now deceased) 826 C/P on Clarence Odle's crew and some of mynion in Nashville.

I was only three years old when my father was killed in Alaska in 1952 so this was a wonderful opportunity for me to be with dad's crew and to get to know them better. We had a great time at the Nashville reunion.

Note the enclosed photographs. Thanks again,
David H Douthwright



Photo above; Sa Wrong Gal painted by Arlo Matney.



From left: Willie Owens Jr-E, Howard Burnett-T/G, Charles G Angelo-R/O, Newman McMurtre-N/G, Son Dave Douthright, and Arlo Matney-B. Not shown are: Clarence B Odle-P, Fred E Fayard Jr-N, Andrew Whitaker-B/G, Donald E Bowersmith-U/G.

◇◇7◇◇

Harry Sarmanian, 824 squadron.

Dear Bud

On your request, I am sending you a photo of myself and my dog, "Blackie" taken on our tenting site up on the hill where the 824th squadron was located. It isn't a very clear photo but I am sending it along with one purpose in mind. Time does funny things with our memories after 45 years. If my former buddies saw this picture today, chances are that they would not recognize or remember me, but most of the ground crew would remember my dog "Blackie" whom I had for over a year. Blackie came to the flight line nearly every day. We were inseparable. So maybe this picture will bring back some memories to my ground crew buddies.



Harry Sarmanian & Blackie

Take care pal,
Harry Sarmanian, 824 squadron.

◇◇8◇◇

Ernest R Stedman, 826 squadron.
Dear Bud

It was nice talking to you recently. After Capt. Dowd went to the hospital after being injured on the June 11, 1944 mission to Giurgiu, Romania, Capt Stone became our pilot I flew several missions with him. I am enclosing two photographs



Photo above: From left, S/Sgt Ernest R Stedman-T/G (Crew 62), Euel Stone-P, S/Sgt Everett R Stedman-B/G (Crew 60), and Charles Smiley-R/O. Taken October 1944. At the time we were told that we were the only twins in the 15th Airforce. I don't know how true it was, but we believed it.



(Continued from Ernest R Stedman letter) Photo above Crew 62s airplane. It was later shot down with another crew.

◇◇9◇◇

Charles Walling 826 squadron

Dear Bud

Just a line to let you know my physical condition prevents me from travelling far from home. Just got out of the hospital after having a lower GI overhaul. It isn't likely that I can make the reunion.

Leon Usherson used to live in my tent when we first went overseas until he got on a flying crew. I think the photograph on the back page of Torretta Flyer No 18 lowerright is Al Rubin from Los Angeles, a man lucky at cards and one hell of a crap shooter. From the 826 squadron roster, I knew Keith Berger, John C Nowacki, Louie Odom, John B Paine, Raymond Platt, Leroy C Sheirich, Raymond L Snyder, Ernest Stedman and his twin brother. they were gunners on different crews.

My wife Evelyn and I have 5 children, and 8 grandchildren during our 47 years of marriage. I retired as a chemist in 1984.

Your friend
Charles Walling 826 squadron



Charles Walling, 826 Squadron area

<><10>>

Robert (Bob) Wehner
827 squadron

Dear Bud:

Recently Russ Hawes, the first of my crew to join the 461st/484th Assn. wrote a lengthy letter to all of the old crew, having tracked down the three or four who had long been lost. He explained the Assn, pitching membership and about getting the crew together at the next Assn. reunion. I hope his pitch was successful, it was with me. Russ also updated information about the crew. I have added this information to the crew list which you provided me. Russ should be decorated for having located everyone of those who had not been heard of in 30 years. Five of us had maintained contact regularly over the years.

I stayed in the service and retired from the USAF as a Major in 1963. I further retired at age 62 as a professor of Political Science from Springfield (MA) College.

Sincerely
Robert (Bob) Wehner



Bob Wehner



(Continued from page 8, Charles Walling letter)
Charles R Spencer, at the 826 sq. switch board



Top row from left: Bob Wehner-P, Vic Watson-C/P, Russ Hawes-N, Ed Carlock-B. Kneeling: John Taylor-E, Mark Zerr-R/O, Hap Glasser-B/G, Smitty Smith-N/G, Jim Edmondson (D)-U/G, and Pinkey Byford-T/G



DIARY OF 51 MISSIONS

Ship #69
By Wally W Robinson
T/G 767 Squadron
(37) Sorties

2 April, 1944

Mostar, Yugoslavia. Dropped frag bombs on German airdrome. This was the first mission flown by the 461st. No enemy opposition. Two Liberators collided, and we flew through the debris. Saw several parachutes.

3 April, 1944

Nis, Yugoslavia. "Milk Run".

5 April, 1944

Lescovac, Yugoslavia. Marshalling yards. 500 lb. demolitions. Few enemy fighters in area but none near us.

7 April, 1944

Bologna, Italy. Marshalling yards. 500 lb. demos. Moderate flak. No fighters.

20 April, 1944

Trieste, Italy. Our first real taste of combat. The M.E. 109's were up in large numbers, and the flak was quite heavy. Our escort (P-51's) kept most of the fighters away from our group. What a way to celebrate my 21st birthday (also Hitler's).

21 April, 1944

Bucharest, Rumania. Marshalling yards. While standing in the chow line for breakfast before the mission, one of our planes caught fire and blew up. It was fully gassed and bombed up, and made a terrific concussion which we could feel a mile away. Messed up a couple of other planes nearby. Moderate flak over the target. Nose turret holed. Rollins got the "Purple Heart".

24 April, 1944

Bucharest, Rumania. Enemy action same as last trip here. Heated suit went out again. The temperature gets to be down

around 20-50 below at 20,000 feet and when the heated suits aren't working the protection is about like wearing an ordinary dress suit.

30 April, 1944

Milan, Italy. Marshalling yards. Routine mission.

2 May, 1944

Faenza, Italy. R. R. bridge. The weather kept getting worse as we neared the target. We finally had to scatter the formation when we could no longer see our wing men. When we broke out of the weather we were alone. Proceeded to La Spezia, our secondary target. Made our bomb run over the harbor and dropped the bombs among the many ships. There was no enemy opposition.

6 May, 1944

Campina, Rumania. Marshalling yards near Ploesti. Eight 500 lb. demolition bombs were loaded and our crew was lounging around outside the plane waiting for the green flare from the tower. One of the bombs fell out of the open bomb bay and hit the hardstand with a loud clatter. Instinctively we all ran away from it, and then came back rather sheepishly. The armorers took care of the bomb and we went to Campina. The mission was a milk run.

10 May, 1944

Weiner Neustadt, Austria.

Messerschmitt factory and airdromes. Our group hit the North airfield with frags. About 30 enemy fighters were concentrating on our group as we approached the target, attacking from the front and rolling away to the rear. By the time I saw them from the tail turret they were practically out of range, the combined speed of the fighter and the bomber being well over 500 mph. When we got to the target the fighters left and the flak was there. The sky over the target was full of it, and it didn't seem possible that we could fly through it. We started taking hits all over the plane. Shrapnel came through the bottom of my turret and rattled around me but wasn't hit. The track carrying the ammo to the turret was cut off, but didn't realize this until we got out of the flak area and the fighters came at us again. I started shooting and after firing a few bursts the guns quit. I kept the guns and turret moving anyway to make the fighters think I was still in business. The B-24 on our right dropped back and started down. I counted ten chutes. Another was spinning and burning. There were no chutes from this one. Our P-51's were coming in now and there were dog fights all around us, and a lot of the fighters were going down too. A few P-38's were out there also, and I saw one turn into a ball of fire. The ME 109's had left us by now thanks to our escort. A Liberator from another Group slid in behind us with an engine out. We were having engine trouble too and were dropping behind the formation so we "escorted" the other B-24 back to Italy and luckily weren't spotted by any of the Luftwaffe. Jug made a remark back at the base that I'll never forget. He said when the IO9's were coming in their guns looked as big as G.I. cans. We got 33 new holes on this mission.

13 May 1944

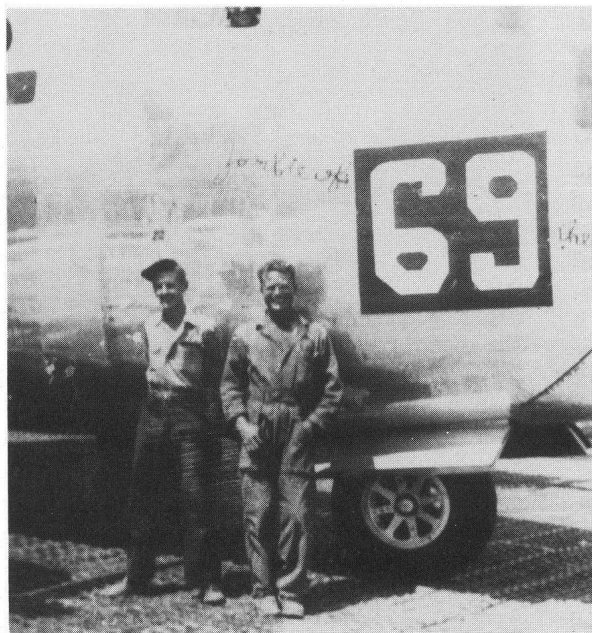
Bologna, Italy. Marshalling yards. Milk run.

17 May, 1944

La Spezia harbor area. Light flak. No fighters.

18 May, 1944

Seven hundred heavies were sent out to make the first direct attack by the Fifteenth on oil refineries at Ploesti. The weather was bad and although some got through and hit the target, our Group and some others hit the secondary target of



This is the second #69. The first went down with a replacement crew aboard. I never found out who they were. Wonder if our ex POW's flew #69 on her last mission. Jim Mackin claims to have seen this plane "Zombie of '69" The First at Smyrna. Ball Gunner Jim Mackin is shown in the co/pilot's seat, Tail Gunner Wally Robinson is at left and Seth McKinney Crew Chief is at right.

Belgrade. Only fourteen bombers were lost. A good percentage.

22 May 1944

La Spezia. Carried 40 incendiary bombs. Moderate flak, although we got a hit in the wing that damaged the main spar. I don't wear my flak vest in the customary manner anymore. After that Wiener Neustadt raid the other day where the flak was coming up all around me, I decided that I'd sooner sit on the vest.

25 May, 1944

Toulon, France. Marshalling yards. Milk run.

27 May, 1944

Southern France. Airdromes. Heavy accurate flak in two areas. Lost another plane full of friends today. Three tents out of four in our area are empty now. I hear some new crews are coming in tomorrow. We got holed through the waist and bomb bay door today. Nothing serious.

29 May, 1944

Wiener Neustadt, Austria. The flak was still there and just as terrifying as our last trip there. Our fighter escort did a much better job this time however in keeping the Germans away from the main formation. We watched the dog fights, and saw the planes falling, and the parachutes from some. Three of our Group went down but I could only count about five or six chutes from them. We came back without a scratch.

31 May, 1944

Ploesti, Romania. Concordia Vega oil refineries. Heavy flak and much Luftwaffe. Two of ours went down in the mountains shortly after leaving the target area. We took only one hit. The top turret got holed but the Greek wasn't hurt. There were stragglers all over on the way home, and after landing we watched them come, with their red flares arcing. One Lib. came in real nice but as soon as the wheels touched the ground we could see the one tire shred off, and the main gear collapse. She ground looped and spun down the field with parts flying off. There was no fire so I guess most if not all survived. The last straggler came over the field about a thousand feet or so and the crew bailed out. I never found out what became of the pilot or the plane.

*There is a much published photograph of this mission, and also a Department of Defense painting taken from the photo. (I have an original photograph.)

2 June, 1944

Marshalling yards 55 miles east of Budapest, Hungary. The flak was light and there were no fighters.

4 June 1944

Northern Italy. R.R. bridge. Missed the target (the bridge was too small). The Germans must have known we were going to miss because they didn't send up any opposition.

6 June, 1944

Ploesti, Romania. Oil fields. The usual heavy flak and many fighters. Jug got hit in the foot, and had to turn the plane over to Lt. Utley. Allen (the bombardier) helped out in the other seat, and they got us back without any trouble. I should add, we sweated a lot. We got to land right away because of wounded aboard. Looks like the foot isn't too serious, but we'll need another pilot, and it will no doubt be a green one which none of us are looking forward to.

9 June, 1944

Munich, Germany. They say Munich has as many flak guns as Berlin, and it sure looked like it, but we were only hit once. Our crew flew another plane today and had a replacement pilot who had washed out of fighters. Under the circumstances, I should have snapped on my chute when I got out of the turret, but as it turned out I'm glad I didn't.

Our new pilot flew us into some kind of thunderhead on the way home. We were all pinned to the floor from the "G" force and when the bell rang to bail out couldn't get my chute, which I had left back by the tail turret. It wasn't long before the plane straightened out and the pilot called back to see if anyone was still with him. He seemed happy to hear that we were all still there. So much for washed out fighter pilots.

10 June, 1944

Trieste, Italy. Oil refinery. Moderate flak. No fighters. No losses.

25 June, 1944

The B-24's hit targets in southern France: Sete, Avignon, and Toulon. They are all in the same general area, and I don't know which one we hit. It must have been Sete however, because there was no flak. Nine hours. No losses. Some enemy fighters.

26 June, 1944

Target Vienna, Austria. Had engine trouble on the way out. The group got ahead of us somewhere northeast of Zagreb and we aborted. Kept losing altitude. Threw out much of Uncle Sam's equipment to lighten the load. Salvoed the bombs in the Adriatic. Came on in without further incident.

28 June, 1944

Target Bucharest, Romania. Got all the way to Hungary in lousy weather, where the Group was recalled.

3 July, 1944

Bucharest, Romania. Heavy flak. No enemy fighters. Routine. Received a few small holes. Eight hours.

5 July, 1944

Toulon, France. Docks and subs pens. Feathered number one on the way to the target but managed to keep up with the formation. Part of the oxygen system went out and Palmer had to go to the flight deck for some walk-around bottles. He almost passed out before he got there. Heavy flak over the target but we weren't hit.

Our bombs failed to release by the usual method, and had to be salvoed, consequently missing the target by a mile. Allen (the bombardier) called me (aircraft armorer) and said there was a bomb hung up and for me to see what I could do. About the same time another engine started acting up and we were told to throw out some more of Uncle Sam's equipment.

While the guys were doing this I went into the bomb bay to check the hung-up bomb. It was hanging by the rear shackle with the arming wire out and the rear shackle jammed. It was a 500 pounder and there was no way I could release it. I finally got up enough nerve to defuse it, and we left it hanging.

When I got back to the waist they were still tossing things out, and in the meantime one of the servos went out. We were still in formation though, no doubt because the Group was descending. I have a photo of our plane returning from this mission.

6 July, 1944

A milk run to northern Italy. R. R. bridge I think.

7 July, 1944

Bleckhammer, Germany. Developed a rough engine on the way, but we were deep into enemy territory by this time and didn't want to turn back by ourselves. Were jumped by the Luftwaffe over Hungary, and they stayed with us all the way to the target. We were doing a lot of shooting and there were tracers all over the sky. Most of the time the Germans came in two or more abreast from the front, but one loner came in and knocked out the plane on our left. Joe was letting off a long burst as the fighter went by, and he put six holes in our left rudder. He and Smitty were throwing out the "window" (to confuse the Flak guns) between fighter attacks. This probably saved Joe's life. He was bent over getting an armful of the foil when a shell (or Flak) entered the bomb bay, through the bulkhead to the waist and out the top, making a large hole where Joe's head would have been if he were standing up. Had to shut down the bad engine over the target, right after releasing the bombs.

We were able to stay in formation (again due to the fact that the formation was letting down). The fighters hit us again but didn't stay with us long. About an hour later Jug called us on the interphone to tell us we probably wouldn't make it to base because we were too low on gas, and for us to start tossing out the excess weight again.

I wonder what the people down below think when all that equipment is seen raining down? Pretty soon Jug called again and said we had better maintain ditching procedures.

B-24's don't ditch well. Every one I saw broke apart. I only saw two try it though.

We made it to the Italian coast, however, and put down at Amendola, about 10 miles inland. The 2nd and 97th Bomb Groups are located there--both B-17 outfits.

Took a terrible ribbing about our "Banana Boats" and "Flying Coffins". Some of their people fixed our engine and put some gas in, and we took off for home. Today was quite a tour: Italy,



Our Crew From Top Left: Nick Rockawich-N, Allen-B, William Wright-P, Paul Utley-C/P, and Wally Robinson-T/G. Kneeling from left: William Smith, Jonas Plamer, F McNarney, Socrates Delianadis, and Jim Mackin. McNarney was replaced by Bill Rollins about December 1943.

Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Germany--and return. All this in nine hours.

11 July, 1944

Toulon, France. Subpens. No fighter opposition. Picked up a few flak holes.

12 July, 1944

Martialing yards. Southern France. Ran into heavy flak over the French coast and took a lot of hits. A hydraulic line in the bomb bay was ruptured and the fluid ran back and covered the tail turret. When the enemy fighters came in had to kick out the turret's glass in order to see out. That must have been the coldest spot in the plane, with the glass out, and there was a lot of oil whipping in. Back in Italy the weather was terrible and we couldn't find the base. It was so rough that we couldn't stay on the deck. There are no seat

belts to hold one in place, and we kept rising up and then slammed down.

The bail-out alarm went off about this time and we all put on our chutes and opened the escape hatch. The plane seemed to be flying O.K. and so nobody volunteered to go out first. It turned out that during a particularly hard bounce the pilot hit the alarm by mistake. We flew around trying to find a place to land and

then an engine quit. The gas was about gone so we went down under the weather and found an emergency strip. There were horses running around us as we landed--no other living thing was in sight. Found a road, and pretty soon a truck came along and we rode in to some sort of an Army base where they fed us and made arrangements for getting us home. Got back at 4:00 A.M. When Lt. Utley took off his heated suit a piece of flak fell out. Lost four of our Group.

15 July, 1944

Ploesti, Romania. Not too bad a mission for Ploesti. The usual flak, but no fighters. Lost one plane. Received Presidential Citation.

16 July, 1944

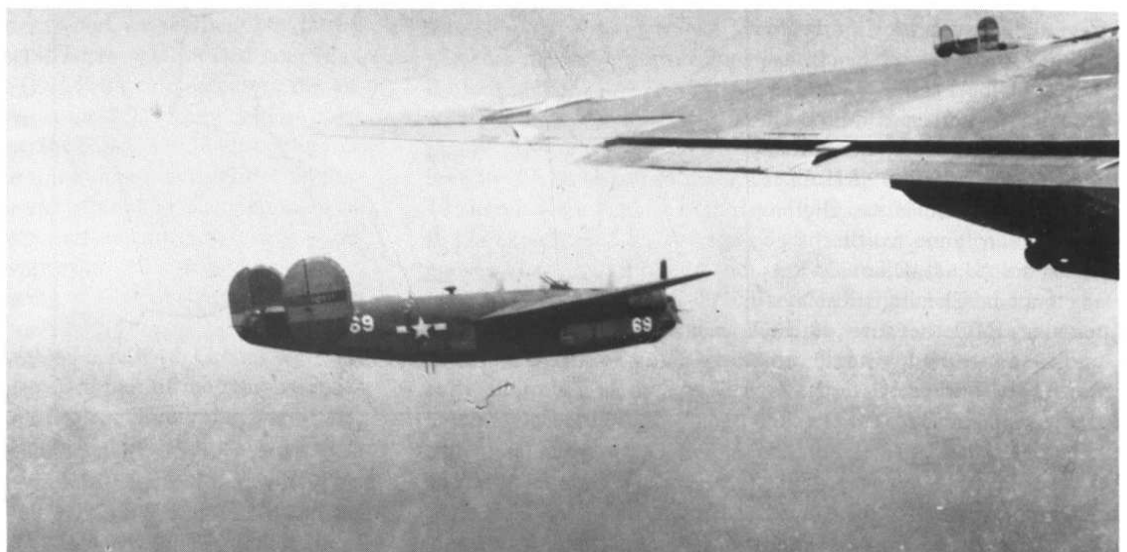
Vienna (Weiner-Neurdorf). Carried five 1,000 lb. demos. Lots of opposition. One lost.

18 July, 1944

Friedrichshafen, Germany, Jet aircraft plant. Very scary. Wanted to watch the bombs hit (can't tell from tail). Missed the target. Bombs landed in Lake Constance. Switzerland is on the other shore.

This was my last mission.

The End



July 5, 1944 Toulon, France. The original #69 in which we flew most of our missions. It went down with another crew and we got a replacement which we called "Zombie of 69 the First."

Project Green

The Redeployment of American Troops to the United States after VE Day

Shortly after the German surrender on 8 May 1945, by direction of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, there was a massive redeployment of troops from the European Theater of Operations (ETO) to the United States. A large portion of that redeployment was accomplished by unconventional means with the utilization of non traditional modes of air transportation. Eisenhower's staff acknowledged that his rotation quotas were impossible to meet with the traditional Air Transport Command (ATC) assets alone, and it was decided to employ ETO's considerable heavy bomber resources in the redeployment effort. Project Green was the result of that innovative decision by the Supreme Commander's staff. (1)

Actually, General Eisenhower and General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, had begun developing a troop deployment plan a full six months before VE Day. Anticipating an imminent German surrender, they devised a two dimensional plan for the rotation of a large number of troops from Europe. At first, General Marshall called for the redeployment of at least one and one-half million troops from Europe to the Pacific Theater. With the German capitulation in May 1945, there were approximately three million American troops scattered throughout Europe and North Africa. (2) General Marshall, shortly after VE Day, revised his redeployment figure to 408,000 troops to be transferred to the Pacific. A further review by Generals Marshall and Eisenhower revealed that there were 600,000 personnel in the European Theater eligible for rotation home for discharge under the Adjusted Service Rating system. The logistical systems of ETO, because of the enormous redeployment, accordingly, were essentially thrown into reverse.(3)

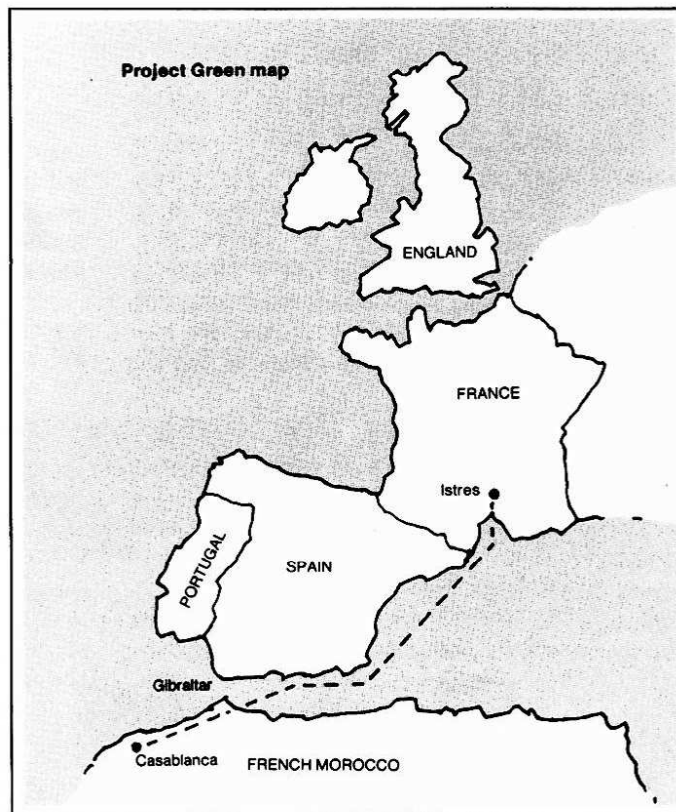
The Adjusted Service Rating, which had been in effect since September 1940, was the rigid guideline for rotation of personnel from the theaters of war to the United States and discharge. The rating called for a minimum of 85 points for enlisted soldiers for redeployment to the Zone of Interior (United States). (4)

The Army's redeployment plan was announced shortly after

VE Day, and it called for an immediate rotation of 240,000 troops to the United States. General Eisenhower directed that the redeployment would be accomplished by complete units, with a reshuffling within the Theater of those personnel who had less than 85 points.(5) Those troops remaining in ETO with fewer than the minimum points, It was added, would either serve as occupation forces or be sent to the Pacific Theater.(6)

The pressure caused by General Eisenhower's redeployment quota for June 1945, as well as subsequent monthly quotas equally large in numbers of personnel to be rotated, caused a reassessment of the existing available methods of moving such huge numbers of soldiers. Out of that reassessment, Headquarters ETO established several assembly areas throughout Europe and North Africa capable of handling up to 60,000 personnel destined for rotation to the United States. Embarkation points were created at Le Havre, Antwerp, Marseilles and Casablanca. (7)

In the wake of the establishment of the embarkation points, General Eisenhower's staff directed the extensive use of heavy bombers to move thousands of high-pointers to the United States. There they would transfer to other transportation which would take them to their new assignment in the Pacific Theater. Another method of utilizing ETO heavy bomber resources was the directive that the 40th Bombardment Wing (H) in England would provide two B- 17 groups to augment the redeployment effort. Their task was to transport troops on the first leg of their long journey back home to the embarkation point at Casablanca, Morocco. From Casablanca, it was understood that the Air Transport Command would be given the responsibility of carrying the veterans to the United States, as well as overall coordination control for the entire project. On one hand, the redeployment of over 4,000 bombers from Europe to



the Pacific, carrying high point passengers to the United States en route, would be supervised and managed by ATC. That mission was labeled Project White. On the other hand, the use of the 40th Bombardment Wing's aircraft for transportation of troops to Casablanca, was likewise placed in ATC's hands and called Project Green. (8)

Project White began without delay. Bombers flew westward



Army Engineers clearing rubble at Istres, France, June 1945.

across the Atlantic with full crews and varying numbers of passengers who were scheduled for discharge upon reaching home. In its five months of existence, Project White transported 33,850 high-point passengers as well as 50,764 crew members back to the United States.(9)

Project Green proved to be equally successful. The 40th Bombardment Wing moved the 92nd Bombardment Group (H) and the 384th Bombardment Group (H) from their home stations at Podington and Grafton Underwood respectively to Istres, France, in June 1945. The base at Istres was located near Marseilles, in the south of France. (10) Prior to conducting the airlift of high pointers from Istres to the ATC embarkation point at Casablanca, 850 miles distant, the 92nd and 384th Groups' B-17s were stripped of all armament, modified, and refitted as passenger aircraft. Each Fortress was altered to accommodate 30 passengers. In addition, the experienced, mission-weary pilots of the two groups, despite their proven skills in bombing raids, were subjected to a brief training period designed to convert them into transport pilots. (11)

The officers and men of the 92nd and 384th Groups were advised that they were to be an important part of the massive redeployment of troops from Europe. Project Green, they were told, called for round-the-clock airlifts of high-pointers from Istres to Casablanca. There, it was added, the Air Transport Command would continue the airlift to the United States. An ancillary responsibility for the two groups' air crews was to return from Morocco with French citizens who had been in exile during the war. (12)

General Eisenhower's selection of the 40th Bombardment

Wing's units made sense. The 92nd and 384th Groups' war records were impressively identical, and the "can-do" attitude of the personnel in both groups revealed the highest level of dedication and commitment needed for the task at hand in Project Green. Highly decorated as units, with a great record of individual acts of heroism, the two groups, Eisenhower's staff believed, would carry out their duties with precision and the highest measure of safety. (13)

The advanced parties of the two groups arrived at Istres, a former Luftwaffe base, in early June. They found a depressing scene of destruction and chaos. The Germans, who had occupied the base during the war, had destroyed everything in sight, and had thoroughly mined the area. By the time of the arrival of the advance parties, the engineers were in the process of cleaning up the rubble and most of the mines had been swept. German prisoners of war were everywhere, assisting the engineers in their task of rebuilding the base. (14)

It was acknowledged among the men of the 92nd and 384th Bombardment Groups that no French travel folders described the region around Istres, for it was an arid, dusty wasteland that, upon first view, shocked the new inhabitants. Thirty-five miles north of Marseilles, the town of Istres sits in the middle of a desolate, flat desert that is exposed to the miserable weather phenomenon known as the Mistral. The Mistral, a northerly wind that blows an average of 110 days a year, causes the air to be filled with a fine brown dust that penetrates everything. It not only caused great discomfort for the residents of Istres, but the Mistral was a menace to the B-17 engines and vehicles on the base. (15)

The logistical problem of moving the two bomb groups from England to Istres in June 1945 was a challenge of endurance and commitment. The air base at Podington and Grafton Underwood were, the wartime homes of the 40th Bombardment Wing, was literally stripped of all its men and equipment and they were transferred to their new home in southern France. The vehicles packed with crates and personal belongings, crossed the English Channel in LCTs from Southampton to Le Havre. From Le Havre, it was a 710-mile cross-country journey to Istres. Because of the maximum effort emphasis placed on Project Green by General Eisenhower's staff, the convoy wasted no time in reaching its destination. The caravan of trucks averaged 10 hour days on the road, with the men sleeping in the open along the route and eating C Rations. (16)

The first convoy arrived at Istres on 5 June after eight days of steady driving. Over 500 vehicles from both groups reached the base by 17 June, and in the midst of those arrivals, an average of 40 aircraft were landing each day. The 92nd Bombardment Group's B-17s experienced an average of 40 flat tires per day as a consequence of the rough runway not yet repaired by the engineers. (17)

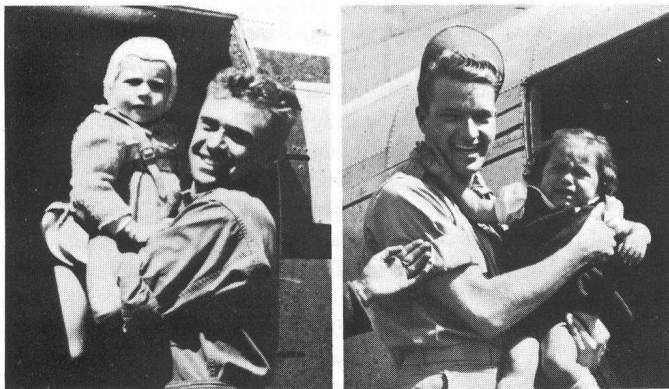
Once the transfer of the units and their planes and equipment was complete, their problems at Istres were threefold: sanitation, dust, and a lack of suitable quarters. The Germans had been typically thorough in their destructive exit from Istres. They had blown up all buildings, poured concrete into the drainage systems and wells, and the runway was pockmarked with holes caused by explosive charges. During Germany's occupation of Vichy France from 1940 to 1945, the field had been a major Luftwaffe headquarters for fighter and reconnaissance units in southern France. When they were forced to evacuate the area, the Germans were determined to render Istres useless to the Allies. As a consequence of the destruction, the engineers were faced with enormous sanita-



Red Cross ladies at Istres Airfield 1945



French refugees arriving at Istres from North Africa.



92nd Bomb Group crew members with French refugee children.

tion problems and an acute shortage of quarters for the 92nd and 384th Groups. As the units arrived from England, the engineers were drilling for water, laying drainage pipes, constructing prefabricated buildings, digging latrines, and carving out new roads. Because of the solid layer of rock that lay a foot beneath the dusty topsoil, the engineers were forced to use dynamite in most projects. Until the prefabricated buildings were set up, the men of the 92nd and 384th Groups pitched tents as temporary quarters. No sooner were the tents raised than a treacherous Mistral swept

through the base in late June, lasting four days, and over half of the shelters were blown down. (18)

Project Green was officially under way by 15 June 1945. Three aircraft with 92 infantrymen left Istres at 0700 hours for Casablanca. The flight took five hours and 20 minutes to complete. From Casablanca the aircraft were flown to nearby Port Lyautey, where the crews and planes remained overnight. They returned to Istres the next day, loaded with French refugees. During the first week of Project Green's existence, the 92nd Bombardment Group's 325th Squadron, the only fully operational unit in June, flew three missions per day. By the second week, six aircraft were being dispatched daily, and by 30 June the 325th Bombardment Squadron had airlifted 2,029 Army personnel to Casablanca and had returned 311 displaced Frenchmen to their homeland. (19)

On the whole, Project Green was a remarkable accomplishment for the 92nd and 384th Groups. From June 1945 until September 1945, over 100-million passenger miles were flown without a single accident. A total of 39,397 veterans were transported from Istres to Casablanca, and another 6,000 former French exiles were returned to their homeland. August was the peak month for Project Green with 16,792 troops carried to Casablanca, 1,170 over Eisenhower's monthly quota. (20)

The commanders of the two groups, Col. James W. Wilson of the 92nd, and Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish of the 384th, were, from the time of their arrival at Istres, deeply concerned about the morale of their officers and men. From the time of the announcement of Project Green at Podington, many of the personnel grumbled that they were "sidetracked on a branch road that led only to a dead end." And, they lamented, that road "reached from England to southern France to North Africa and back, and no place else." The 85-pointers and over-40 veterans of the groups, equally as eligible to return home as their passengers, justifiably yearned to return home. But they found themselves living in a depressingly miserable environment of wind and dust, and no hope of seeing the United States until their job was done. Morale, then, was a great concern to the group commanders, and they went to great lengths to ensure that their officers and men were busied with a variety of recreational activities during their off hours (21)

Despite the extraordinary methods devised to improve morale, there was a typical amount of GI griping. For the most part, however, it was good-natured complaining, and Project Green was carried out flawlessly. A base exchange was opened, a weekly suggestion bulletin was published with the commanders and their staffs personally responding to the troops, a 4,000-book library was made available, and everything was done to remedy what could have been a hopeless, dreary assignment. Each week the personnel at Istres consumed 12,000 bottles of Coca-Cola and 9,000 quarts of beer in "Cagney's Cellar" and other recreation clubs scattered throughout the huge base. Every night the echoes of "The Dust Bowl Blues" could be heard:

"Got sand in my shoes a-rubbin' in my feet, but the only time I mind is when I go to eat. Got the hey-rey ra-dee da da,
I got the Dust Bowl Blues,
I got the Dust Bowl Blues." (22)

The schedule of activities, designed to both ease the pressures and hardships brought on by the demands of Project Green



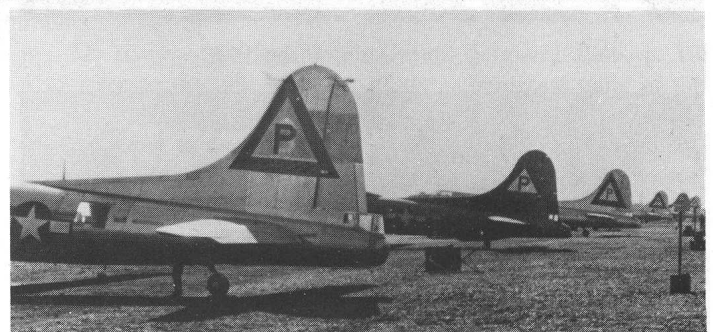
B-17 interior redesign for Project Green passengers.

and to compensate for the dismal environment at Istres, was packed with variety. The daily bulletins announced countless dances, USO shows, movies, daily transportation to the Riviera beaches and Marseilles, and quotas of enlisted men selected to stay in leased villas near the seaside resort of Sausset. The highlight of recreational activities was the daily liberty run. The B-17s transported group personnel, on a daily basis, to either Rome, Paris or London. A disturbingly high price was paid for these activities, particularly for the daily runs to Marseilles, for there was an alarming increase in the rate of venereal disease among the men. (23)

The flights from Istres to Casablanca were tricky and dangerous from beginning to end. Because of the acute dust problems, there was always the low-lying threat of dust contamination of the engines, and it was virtually impossible to change the B-17s' cylinders in the midst of the frequent mistrals that blew through the base. As a consequence, the commanders of the 92nd and 384th Bombardment Groups agreed that their maintenance shops should be located at Port de Bouc, eight miles from the field. Maintenance crews were indeed kept busy throughout Project Green's tenure. In addition to the routine maintenance problems, they were required to change an average of 40 tires per week because of the unimproved runway at Istres. (24)

Project White, meanwhile, was proceeding at a commendable pace. In July alone, the Air Transport Command was given a quota of 50,000 passengers, and, augmented by the redeployment of heavy bombers to the United States, was able to exceed Eisenhower's quotas with its C-46s, C-47s, and the new four-engined C-54. In total, by October 1945, after five months of ferrying troops to the United States, ATC could boast that 166,000 passengers were flown home without one fatality. (25)

The Air Transport Command was not without its problems, particularly in the area of morale. The command itself was full of homesick airmen who unselfishly watched as others deplaned in Miami and other disembarkation points in the United States, and then they were required to return to Casablanca for another load of passengers. ATC personnel morale was also stung by sneering remarks by combat veterans who labeled them "allergic to combat" or "terrified civilians." There was even a



B-17s in line at the airfield at Istres France 1945.

song dedicated to the noncombatant nature of the Air Transport Command called "To Hell with the ATC!," often sung by the battle star veterans of the bomber commands. Fights, accordingly, were not uncommon among the soldiers. (26)

But the Air Transport Command subsequently redeemed itself among the combat veterans. The visible efficiency, courtesy, and safety witnessed in the hundreds of flights gave the command its finest hour. The flights from Casablanca to Miami (the southern route) averaged 72 hours, while the northern route to various bases in the northeastern United States rarely exceeded 36 hours. Passengers were treated with hot meals en route, blankets were provided for high-altitude flying, and base exchanges were available at all stopovers. The exchanges carried popular souvenirs and other items for the soldiers to take home. At the end of the journey, passengers were always given the opportunity to write down criticisms or comments about their flight home. The comments were, for the most part, favorable. One infantryman, for example, wrote that "the air crews are courteous regardless of rank." Further evidence that ATC met the challenge of Project Green was its development of a 75-page Standard Operating Procedures manual that spelled out the responsibilities of all personnel associated with the project. Out processing paperwork was, according to the SOP, to be cut to a minimum, excessive roll calls and formations were forbidden, and Project Green passengers were to be, as much as was possible, treated as individuals. The passengers wore green tags on their uniforms, and their luggage was likewise identified. The "Green Manifest," as it was called, had been initiated at Istres, leaving ATC few processing responsibilities. Other bases located in Italy, responsible for transporting high pointers to Casablanca, followed the example set by Istres. (27)

Perhaps the final flight of Project Green, which occurred on



USO troop at Istres 1945.



Photo Actress Betty Hutton with USO show at Istres posing with 92nd Bomb Group personnel in the mess hall.

11 September 1945, best typified the hundreds of other flights since June. The last truckloads of 85-pointers rolled into Istres before dawn. The troops were welcomed by the Red Cross ladies and the awaiting crews of the B-17s. Crew members assisted the veterans in the fitting of their parachute harnesses and Mae Wests amidst the shouts of "Hey Mac, help me on with this thing, will you?" There was the inevitable final roll call before takeoff, and as the planes taxied and began their liftoffs, the passengers relaxed and took naps, visited with the affable crew members, or craned their necks to see the landscape below. The planes leveled off at 6,500 feet, keeping the coastlines of France and Spain in sight. Once aloft, the pilots usually walked back into the passenger section and chatted with the soldiers. Project Green had witnessed thousands of returning combat veterans lining the sides of the B-17s in their webbed benches, but the crew members never tired of hearing stories from the GIs, most of whom had seen over 40 months of continuous fighting. For example, there was the moving story of the First Armored Division corporal. Soft-spoken and stoic, he told the story of thousands who had been in combat:

"When you first get into action, it's fun, an exciting adventure; after a while, after you've survived a lot of your pals, you get a little scared sitting in your foxhole and listening to the

shells whistling around you; you've been lucky so long. And then after that, you just don't care. It isn't fun; you're not scared; you just don't care."

Silence fell over the listeners as the soldier continued. He had not heard from his wife since the battle for Cassino in 1944. "I don't blame her; I've been away a long time," he murmured (28)

As the plane neared the last leg of the journey, the pilots traditionally circled lower so that the passengers could catch a glimpse of Gibraltar, "the Rock." Soon, Casablanca came into view, and the planes landed without incident. The soldiers shouted their thanks to the B-17 air crews, and were rushed away on trucks by Air Transport Command personnel so that they could board the awaiting transport planes ready to take them back to the United States. Without delay, the B-17s were in the air again, on their way to Port Lyautey, 35 miles away, so that they could pick up the final load of French refugees and return to Istres. (29)

The return to Istres was equally as interesting for the air crews. From the beginning of Project Green, the 92nd and 384th Bombardment Groups' crew members had been under strict orders to do everything possible to ensure that the passengers, soldiers and French refugees alike were not frightened or nervous about their flight. Hence, the crews always made it a point to move among the passengers, conversing with them, and reassuring them that they were safe. On the return flights from Port Lyautey, the crew members visited with the refugees in broken French and English, played with the children, and called attention to the points of interest along the route. There were some instances of airsickness during times of turbulence, but most flights were uneventful. (30)

Project Green's termination on 11 September 1945 was a direct result of the end of the war in the Pacific Theater. The transport planes operating between Casablanca and the United States were abruptly transferred to the Pacific for use in the evacuation of recently released American prisoners of war and the wounded. (31)

Unfortunately for the officers and men of the 92nd and 384th Bombardment Groups, Istres would remain their home until 28 February 1946. For a brief interim, shortly after Project Green ended, the groups were assigned the task of transporting Greek refugees from Munich, Germany, to Athens, Greece. That mission, labeled Project Blue, was short-lived, and by mid-October the two groups found themselves out of work. For the remaining four months they were forced to endure the hardships of the mists of

Istres, boredom, and homesickness. Finally, in February 1946, both groups were inactivated and returned to the United States. Within six months the 92nd Bombardment Group was activated and assigned to the new Strategic Air Command. The 384th Bombardment Group was activated three years after its return to the United States, and was likewise assigned to the Strategic Air Command. (32)

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2. Robert W Coakley and Richard M Leighton. *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943-1945* Washington, D. C. Page 185
3. Ziemke, *US Army in the Occupation* pp 328, 539, *Ibid* p 586
4. Ziemke, *U.S. Army in Occupation*, pp. 328-329. The Adjusted Service Rating Program provided that points would be accumulated on the basis of one point for each month of service since September 1940, one point for overseas service, five points for each decoration or battle star, and 12 points for each dependent under the age of 18 up to a maximum of three children. Officers were not included until the surrender of Japan in September 1945, and women in the services, since 1940, needed only 44 points for rotation to the United States.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 329 Concurrent with General Eisenhower's directive, the War Department announced a new policy whereby all men over 40 years of age would be rotated with the high-pointers. There were nearly 90,000 personnel shipped from ETO to the United States in May 1945. Also see *History of the 92nd Bomb Group*, June 1945, n.p.
6. Ziemke, *U.S. Army in the Occupation*, p 329, and *History of 40th Bomb Wing*, February 1946, p. 1.
7. Ziemke, *U.S. Army in the Occupation*, pp. 329-330.
8. Maurer Maurer, ed., *Combat Units of World War 11*, Washington, D.C., 1983, pp. 160,271-272, *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, June 1945, pp. 1-2, and *History of the 334th Bomb Group*, June 1945, pp. 1-3. Also see Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army An forces in World War 11*, 8 Vols., 111, Washington, D C., 1 983, pp 21 6-21 7.
9. Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces in World War 11* pp. 21 6-21 7, 224. 10. Maurer, ed., *Combat Units of World War n* pp i60 271-272.
11. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, June 1945, pp. 3-5 10 Also see *History of 384th Bomb Group*, August 1945, pp. 2-3. It appears that during the early days in May, shortly after VE Day, rumors of Project Green reached the ears of personnel in the 92nd Bomb Group. "There was some sub-room whispering," it was reported, "and it seemed to be connected with transport."
12. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, August 1945, pp. 11-12, and *History of 384th Bomb Group*, July 1945, pp. 1, 5.
13. According to USAF Establishment of Linage and Honors, Headquarters United States Air Force Research Center, 1 October 1985, n.p., and Maurer, *Au Force Combat Units in World War 11*, pp. 160, 271-272, the 92nd and 384th Bomb Groups participated in the raids against the ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt, the steel works at Magdeburg, supported Operation Overlord and the St. Lo breakthrough, and flew missions in support of the Battle of the Bulge. The 92nd Bomb Group finished the war with 310 combat missions and the 384th Group ended with 316 missions. The 384th boasted that it had dropped the last bombs on Germany before VE Day. Both groups had the best safety records among the 8th Air Force Units in England.
14. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, June 1945, pp. 3-5. 15. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4, 6-8.
16. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, June 1945, pp. 3-5. 1 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. 1 8. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8 19. *Ibid.*, pp. 8.
- 20 *History of 40th Bomb Wing*, February 1946, p. 1, *History of 545th Bomb Squadron*, July 1945, pp. 1-2, and *History of the 544th Bomb Squadron*, July 1945, p. 1.
21. See all unit histories of the 92nd and 384th Bomb Groups, June 1945 through February 1946, for discussions of the recreational activities provided to the officers and men of the units.
22. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, February 1946, p. 10. Also refer to the unit histories of the subordinate units of the 92nd and 384th Groups, July 1945 through February 1946.
23. Refer to the histories of the 92nd and 384th subordinate units July 1945 through February 1946, for a variety of medical bulletins advising personnel of the increased VD rate. For further description of the liberty runs, see *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, June 1945, pp. 9-11.
24. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, February 1946 p. 8.
25. *Message, 40th Bomb Group to 92nd Bomb Group*, 11 September 1945, n p., and Craven and Cate, *Army Au Forces in World War 11*, VII, pp. 217, 224, and *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
26. Craven and Cate, *Army Au Forces in World War 11*, VII, p. 219. 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-224, 277.
28. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, February 1946, pp. 4-5.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
31. *Message, 40th Bomb Wing to 92nd Bomb Group*, 11 September 1945, n.p., and *Ibid.*, p. 2. Flights from Casablanca to the United States continued until mid October 1945. See Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces in World War n Vil*, p 227
32. *History of 92nd Bomb Group*, January 1946, and Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces in World War 11*, VII, pp. 159, 272.

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Credits All photos—92nd Bomb Group History, 1945; Hq USAF Historical Research Center; Reference Division; Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

*Dr. Jamison's publications include a monograph entitled **Victory Without Bloodshed**, numerous U.S. Army technical publications as well as a history of the Army's Medical Records Division and several scholarly articles*



2nd report of the Commanding General

Notes from the editor: The success of the Gulf War was a result of lessons learned from all previous wars the United States has been engaged in. But the strongest lessons it seems were learned during WWII as documented by the accompanying 2nd report of the Commanding General, Army Air Forces. It was signed by Hap Arnold and dated February 1945.

This report is written at the end of the third year of a long and bitter struggle. We enter the fourth year with full realization that the end is not in sight and that unnumbered months of all-out effort throughout the world and of grim fighting on all fronts are necessary to final victory.

This report would not, however, be complete if, after 3 years of war, the AAF did not record now for the American people the lessons learned both before and during this period which have required and also made possible the air superiority which has been established. It is impossible to set forth all of these lessons in detail. New ones are being learned every day. But certain basic principles underlying our air power needs and on which our air superiority rests must be known and understood by every American. It is on these principles that the AAF's planning and operations have been conducted in this war and its responsibilities will be sustained until the day of Axis collapse. It is also in full recognition and application of these principles in a fast-changing world that the long-time security of our country and the peace of the world must rest.

1. Air power is the weapon with which the aggressor in this war first struck and with which future aggressors will strike. The range, speed, and destructive capacity of a powerful air force is such that given sufficient air superiority, the aggressor can by sudden action disrupt the life of the attacked nation and make difficult the taking of defense measures. Moreover, in this field which the present war has shown to be subject to revolutionary advances, we can only dimly visualize the possibilities of such sudden action in the future.

2. We must recognize that the only certain protection against such aggression is the ability to meet and overcome it before the aggressor can strike the first blow. In the past such blows were waterborne: traditional naval power was our first line of defense. From now on successful aggression must come by air. The defense lies in adequate air power with all its manifestations, and our first line of defense must be in the air.

3. The foregoing principles can mean only one thing to the United States. In two world wars, the aggressor has moved first against other peace-loving nations, hoping that the United States would remain aloof, or that other nations could be defeated before this country's power on land, sea, and air could be brought to bear against

him. Luckily, in each war there has been time for the mobilization of such power, and the United States has been the determining factor in the defense of civilization. The lesson is too plain for the next aggressor to miss: The United States will be his first target. There will be no opportunity for our gradual mobilization—no chance to rely on the efforts of others.

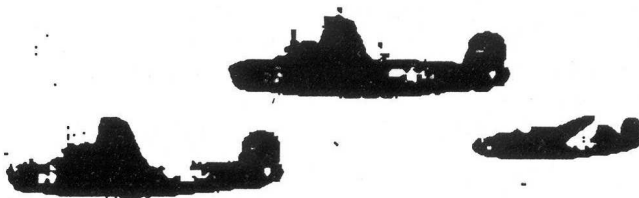
It is of the utmost importance that our first line of defense, in the air, must be ably manned and fully supplied with modern equipment. We must be able to provide time for other parts of the national defense machine to mobilize and go into high gear. The United States must be the world's first power in military aviation.

4. Air power and air supremacy are terms which require careful definition. Their full significance must be understood by the American people. The Nation must also understand that, due to the revolutionary developments of science and the world's inventive genius, they may have entirely different meanings for successive generations or within any short span of years. In 1918 air power was built around the Spad, the Handley Page, the Gotha, and the Caproni. In 1944 Allied air power was built around the Spitfire, the P-51, the P-47, the Hurricane, the P-38, the C-47, the B-17, the Lancaster, the B-24, the B-29, and others. In 1945 or 1946 it may mean other as yet undisclosed types. In 1952 it may mean far different equipment with destructive power and accuracy of which man has not dreamed.

5. Thus, the first essential of the air power necessary for our national security is preeminence in research. The imagination and inventive genius of our people in industry, in the universities, in the armed services, and throughout the nation—must have free play, incentive, and every encouragement. American air superiority in this war has resulted in large measure from the mobilization and constant application of our scientific resources.

Comprehensive research, both within and without the air services, must be expressed in inclusive and continuing programs. Only in this way can our air forces reflect at all times the rapid advances in aerodynamics, physics, chemistry, electronics, the sciences basic to rockets, jet propulsion, radar, and revolutionary developments as yet unconceived.

6. It must also be fully understood that scientific research and development will not of themselves keep the United States in the lead. Scientific and tactical advances must go forward hand in hand and be reflected in the aircraft, armament, equipment, and weapons actually being used by our air forces. All of our present aircraft, our power plants, and many items of essential equipment are in a sense "obsolete" in that they are or may shortly be



surpassed in utility or performance by other equipment, in the blueprint or mock-up stage, but not yet in production. Unless our air forces can continually improve the equipment in use, we will find ourselves subject to attack by others with no answer except to "take it on the chin" until we have created modern equipment through overtime methods. That is a very expensive practice.

The American people must never again assume—as after the last war and as the French did up to the break-through in 1940 that numbers of aircraft and quantities of equipment make an air force. A second-rate air force is worse than none because it gives rise to a false sense of security—which bombs may quickly demolish.

7. Even an up-to-date air force in being may not constitute air power. Preeminence in the air implies maximum ability to maintain and expand existing establishments. There must be a strong and healthy aviation industry, building thoroughly modern aircraft and equipment, and developing, testing, and experimenting with advanced designs for tomorrow. Segments of industry must be capable of and ready for rapid conversion to quantity production, and certain Government owned plants and production equipment not subject to rapid obsolescence should be kept in stand-by as a war reserve against the potential aggressor.

The importance of a progressive aviation industry cannot be overstated. One way to keep it progressive after final victory is promptly to sell, salvage, or scrap excess or obsolete planes so that they will not hang over the Air Force and the aviation industry retarding development. This happened after the last war, but must not happen again. The AAF is already taking steps to meet this situation by declaring planes and equipment surplus as they are currently worn out or no longer useful, and turning them over to the Surplus Property Board for appropriate disposal.

8. Air power must be employed from large, fully equipped, strategically located bases. Our air forces must be able to meet and overpower the aggressor's air threat as near as possible to its source. It is obvious that air operations are already global. Our air forces have learned in the stress of war to operate in all climates and under all conditions.

These lessons must not be forgotten. Air power in the future will depend on the possession by our air forces of the knowledge and experience required for immediate and continuing world-wide operation.

9. In all-out war the Army tactical air force and the Navy air force teams must work closely together with our Army and our Navy. Each must understand the techniques, tactics, capabilities, and limitations of the other. This can only be secured by actual service together in tactical exercises and maneuvers during times of peace.

10. We have learned and must not forget that from now on air transport is an essential of air power, in fact, of all national power. The undreamed of development of our fast air transport and the way in which it was used has been set forth in this report and in the report which preceded it. We must have an air transport organization in being, capable of tremendous expansion.

Another lesson taught in this war is that a healthy, self-sustaining commercial air transport industry is vital to the realization of effective air power. The contribution to the military of our competitive civil carriers in equipment, trained personnel, operating methods, and knowledge have been of first importance in this war. The AAF and the Nation as a whole have a very real interest in

the preeminence of our civil air transport structure.

11. Troop carrier operations are present-day actualities, as we have seen in Crete, New Guinea, Italy, Normandy, Southern France, Holland, and Burma. The American people must visualize that the aggressor's blow may be attended by dropping of large bodies of troops to seize our vital centers. Similarly, to assure our security, we must be prepared to counter this employment of the airplane and to employ it more effectively ourselves.

12. None of these essentials of air power will be effective without adequate trained and experienced personnel. In this war, with a very small nucleus, we were forced to start from the bottom with raw material. The AAF Training Command has done a tremendous job in turning out large numbers of navigators, bombardiers, pilots, aerial gunners, glider pilots, liaison pilots, WASP's, and others. It has trained thousands of technicians and specialists essential to air power. All this took time, but we cannot always count on having time.

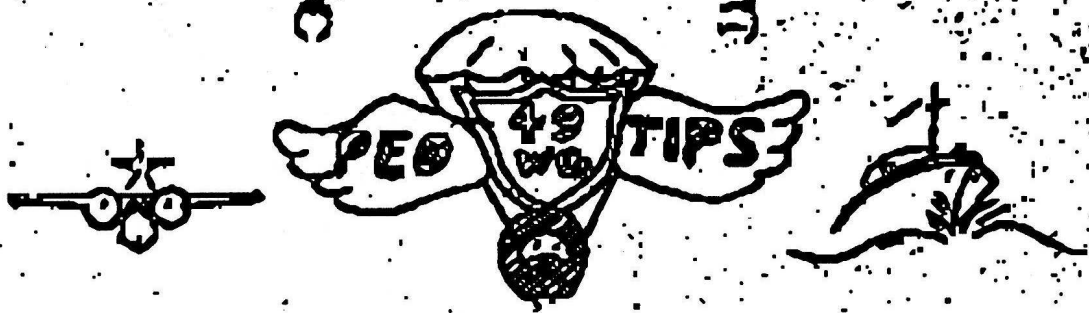
There must be in continuous operation an up-to-date training establishment fully supplied with the latest aircraft and equipment. The AAF and the Nation must encourage private flying. We must make available to educational institutions aircraft and equipment that can be spared to help familiarize American young men and women with the fundamentals of aviation, for it is obviously upon youth that the Nation must rely for its protection against attacks of aggressors. So much for some of the lessons war has taught.

At this writing, the struggle in Europe is far from won, yet we are increasing AAF operations in the Pacific to the limit of our ability. With eventual victory in Europe, it will be no simple matter of flying our men and planes from Europe to the Far East and promptly bringing Japan to her knees. Bombers can fly to the Far East, but fighter planes will go by boat, and this takes time. Planes must have modifications. Where possible, AAF men will be granted leave in the United States, but many and possibly most of them will have to go direct from Europe to the Pacific. The urgency of war may demand it. Crews will have further training after they reach the Pacific.

The vast distances and the geography of the Pacific call especially for aerial offensives, but they also put great burdens on organization. Up to the present, with comparatively limited numbers of men and aircraft, and working closely with the Ground Forces and the Navy, we have cut Jap lifelines, and we have established new strategic bases. But we must build airbases closer to Tokyo, and we must bombard the Japanese mainland on an unprecedented scale. We must bring the maximum amount of air power to bear against Japan with the least loss of time, so that Japan will be defeated with the minimum loss of American lives.

The AAF can take pride in what has been accomplished in the past 3 years, but these accomplishments have cost the lives of many brave men. Air Force men have been in violent combat every minute since Pearl Harbor. Individually, they have crossed enemy lines to carry the fight to the axis 6,500,000 times through 31 December 1944. Our men overseas have done their utmost, and we shall not forget. It is with sober determination that we of the AAF undertake to increase our contribution to the total war effort of the United Nations. H. H. ARNOLD, Commanding General, Army Air Force--.

The End



Excerpts from Micro Film reels

The following material was taken from the 49th Wing micro film reel. As reported in News of the Association, the Association's collection of film reels has been printed in part. We have selected this portion for this issue as it seems a fitting tie-in with the end of the Gulf War.

Part 1 is a copy of a mimeographed newsletter that was distributed to pilots from 49th Wing Headquarters Vol 1 No. 2, dated 10 April 1945. This would be only the second issue.

Part 2 is the condensed history of the 49th Wing's operations for April, 1945, the last month of combat operations in WWII.

DITCH OR BAIL-OUT???



In the month of March there were no reported ditchings in the 49th Wing. There is a possibility that one B-24 of the 461st Bomb Group ditched after aborting, but nothing was ever heard from this A/C. The Air Force had an average of 9 ditchings a month which has decreased tremendously since the emergency fields opened up. These fields are for your use when you run into trouble, and no one will ever criticize you for using them in an emergency. However, remember that they are not for casual visitors and their facilities are limited.

Air Force had 3 A/SR incidents in the month of February, two of the aircraft ditched and one crew bailed out. Of the two ships that ditched one was from the 49th Wing and all 10 men were rescued within an hour. The other ship was from the 304th Wing, all 10 men got out of the ship alive but one was not rescued. The Mae-West that he wore practically every day (but probably didn't inspect to see that there were CO2 cylinders, the caps securely closed and mouth valve closed) just didn't work and he drowned. LOOKS LIKE A MAE WEST IS SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST EXTRA EQUIPMENT TO CARRY AROUND.

The third incident happened when a B-24 was running short of fuel and headed for Zara. At Zara a new check was made and they figured they had enough to reach Vis. Over the Curra Vela Islands the plane ran out of gas and the pilot ordered the crew to bail out at 6000 feet. All ten chutes were seen to open, 2 of the crew landed on an island and were rescued, the rest were blown out to sea and never seen again.

Total score for February in B-24s; 2 men that bailed out over water were saved out of 10. 19 men out of 20 were rescued in ditching the aircraft. WE REPEAT what we have said last month, Practice your ditching drill until it is perfect and then practice to keep it that way. Had the crew that bailed out over water practiced their weekly ditching drill as required by regulations (they practiced it only twice in the last five months) the pilot may have executed a more successful ditching. At the present B-24's lose half of their crew on average when forced to make a water landing. Better yet, why not land at the first emergency field, refuel and go merrily on your way home.

THE SECOND ISSUE OF PEO Tips is 10 days late in order that we may assemble all available material up to date for the preceding month. Succeeding issues will be printed on the 10th of each month.

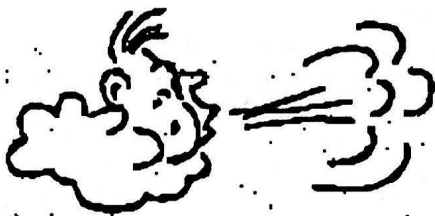
Compliments and congratulations received on the first issue were very gratifying with each Group asking for more copies. This month we are making enough copies for each crew. Pilots can step right up and have one free, no strings attached. Our intention of getting it out to the pilot is that he can pass it around

to the other crew members and maybe some one along the line can pick up a few pointers. At the same time we would like to know your problems and any ideas for remedying them.

Many gadgeteers get bright ideas, meditate over them and then just give it up as a bad idea. Might sound screwy but most brain storms started that way. A long time ago some old gent figured that he could sail down from a second story balcony with an umbrella. He tried it, the bumbershoot turned inside out and the ground met him with a bang. Today we have a fool proof parachute that has saved thousands of lives. When the boys in the 8th heavies were getting banged up pretty bad by flak, a "Doc" investigated the armor that the knights of old wore. It looked pretty discouraging at first, who could he get to wear the heavy stuff around that is so uncomfortable? How many times have you thanked your lucky stars that you wore a flak suit or helmet?

We could list many more but what about the countless ideas that never materialized because someone never thought of letting anyone know about it. Don't worry if it sounds a little screwy, most good ones start that way. If you can't develop it yourself, jot it down on paper with any photographs or illustrations and we'll send it through channels with your name, rank and serial number.

Incidentally the best ideas that really amounted to something usually originated in the field by the one using and handling the equipment.



FROSTY

HITS A NEW LOW!!!!!! BUT IS STILL AROUND Word got around that the 49th Wing is again the lowest in frostbite cases per 1000 man sorties but we don't have any figures

to prove it. If true, this will put us in the lead of the Air Force in the lowest number of frostbite cases for two months in a row. The 461st Bomb Group had one case of frozen toes (the man wore GI shoes at altitude). The other case occurred in the 484th Bomb Group when a photographer was supposed to have taken his glove off to work the camera. He has been in the hospital since the 10th of March with second degree burns on four fingers.

Temperatures have been much warmer than last month, but last year has proven to us that "Old Frostbite" will still be around until June. There's plenty of electrical equipment around for every one why not use it rather than spending a month or two in the hospital.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR ALTTITUDE ?????? To date anoxia has claimed two victims in the Wing. Death is usually the result of carelessness or ignorance in the use of Oxygen. The B-17s had a higher number of deaths due to anoxia. An intensive campaign on the use of oxygen was initiated and while still flying higher their deaths are lower than those of B-24s now. It all goes to show you that it can be learned on the ground.

Anoxia creeps up on you slowly, you just don't pass out. Your efficiency gradually declines and you're unaware of it. Some throw a jag as if drunk and go tearing off their mask and become

violent.

It isn't the fact that you go to altitude, but the fact that you are lacking oxygen. What can you do to combat it? First: Have your oxygen mask fit every 3 missions. The new leak testers only take a half minute of your time, is it worth saving a life? (2) Have an Oxygen quick disconnect safety on your mask and use it. (3) Take care of your self when going to the aid of another.

The small walk around bottles are emptied in 2 to

3 minutes at 20,000 feet. (4) Always use Oxygen above 10,000 feet. (5, Recharge the turret before the pressure drops to 100 lbs.

LIFE VEST INFLATION Experimental tests are being made on an automatic inflation gear for life vests which work on principle of solution of a water soluble pellet which releases an automatic mechanism for puncturing the CO2 cylinders.

This character was introduced to us by Sgt. Sons (A draftsman from the 451st Bomb Group Headquarters) who has been doing a fine job of making up posters and cartoons that are displayed throughout the Wing. With all bouquets and laurels going to Sgt. Sons we introduce "Willie the Dope" to you.

PARACHUTE SENSE Enough has been written on this subject to fill countless volumes of books, yet we see many crew men returning over their home field, bailing out and getting into trouble. Many men have proven that you can learn all you have to about parachuting simply by reading and knowing what to do at the right time, yet we see men spinning through the air with their knees tucked up as in a diving one and a half (The only bad body position that you can get into). 50% of the men bailing out get away with it, why can't the other half do it?

Most of the deaths are caused by not clearing the aircraft or jumping too low. The injuries are caused by improper landing technique. Let's go through a bail out procedure to show "Willie" the proper procedure, which isn't merely pulling the rip cord and then hoping that fate is with him.

The preliminaries are that you check your parachute, and your harness is fitted properly. The first jump will probably be your easiest, paratroopers always find the next jump much harder, so don't get jump happy and go running out of the ship when it's possible to return to the base. On the other hand, in an emergency don't wait too long, make up your mind and do it. In leaving the ship use a lower hatch, dive out head first, being sure to protect your head. It at an altitude delay pulling the rip cord until the earth appears green or you can distinguish large objects. At 400 m.p.h. a five second opening delay is needed with a minimum of 600 feet. Before you pull straighten out with your feet together look at the rip cord and then give it a quick jerk. On approaching the ground face the direction you're moving and cut your oscillation. Land with feet together knees slightly bent, and you'll stand a better chance of walking back.





PACK ON UP SIDE DOWN LOOK BEFORE YOU PULL
THE RIP CORD

DITCHING DRILL This training is figured on the percent of available crews performing their weekly ditching drill. Air Force some time ago saw the necessity of practicing ditching drills weekly with so many planes flying over the water daily. Does this weekly drill pay off? Well! Air Force started out with 18% of crew men rescued from planes that ditched and today it's up to 72%. This 72% is for B-24s and covers the month of December, January and February. The February total of crew men saved being 95%. Think it over, is it worth 15 minutes of your crew's time once a week to go through a complete ditching drill. Regulations require every crew to practice a ditching drill every week and in the month of March there were only two Squadrons complying with the regulation 100%. Here's how the outfits stand for the month of March:

451 BOMB GROUP 461 BOMB GROUP
484 BOMB GROUP

SQDN.	PCT	SQDN	PCT	SQDN	PCT
724	90	764	82	824	93
725	95	765	92	825	82
726	98	766	100	826	93
727	95	767	100	827	87

EARLY RETURNS The primary purpose of heavy bombardment is to get into a target. Everything imaginable has been sent to this theater to enable us to do that job. Everything comes from

the production line in the states and occasionally we fail in the last step by having an early return.

One early return represents a tremendous waste of man hours, sweat and blood in getting material from the production line to operations. When the return is due to personal equipment it is indeed regrettable, since the majority of them can be avoided.

The early returns due to PE in the month of March were due to Oxygen failures. Yes, line crews perform inspections and maintenance of Oxygen equipment in A/C but a primary duty of the PEO is to indoctrinate and train flying and maintenance personnel in the proper use and maintenance of oxygen equipment. It is his duty to supervise the maintenance and make frequent inspections of oxygen equipment.

GROUP EARLY RETURNS

451	1
461	1
484	4

LIFE RAFT CHANGES On investigation of ditching reports and inspection of life rafts it was found that the rafts were not releasing properly. The 49th and the 55th Wings attacked the same problem from two different angles which will result in Air Force issuing two new Memos soon.

The 55th Wing found out that the stowage of items listed in the T.C. resulted in undue pressure on the compartment doors causing a binding at the pins. A new list of necessary items was worked out to decrease the contents of the raft and permit easy, uncrowded stowage of the compartment rafts.

At the same time the 49th Wing PEO and Capt. Volz, 451 Group PFO found trouble in the release mechanism. Out of 9 releases pulled 3 were found binding. The trouble was found in the inside release mechanism which works through a phenolic block. The binding in the 3 malfunctions was eliminated through 3 or 4 times. PEO Section at AF was notified immediately, they in turn had an Engineer in the field working on it the next day, who confirmed our procedure for remedying it. Word is already back in the states that a simpler mechanism is necessary to eliminate the malfunction.

The new Memo on life raft release mechanism will outline the procedure for inspections. The compartment doors must be released by the two handles on the outside of the fuselage and the CO2 cable disconnected. The inside release is then pulled and if there is any binding it will be necessary to reset the mechanism and pull the release through until it works freely. Maybe you have had some problem and found a way to remedy it, why not let us know so that we can pass it around and maybe eliminate someone else's headaches.

Part 2

April 1945 49th Wing Operations report

April- for the Forty Ninth Wing- was a big month, a fitting climax to the operational close of the air war over Europe.

A multiple array of tasks, extending to strategic bombing behind four individual fronts, and the finest individual bombing performance in Fifteenth Air Force history-- these were April's high points for Brigadier General William L Lee's Wing.

Sands, Wing Navigator and PRO respectively, became majors on the 17th of the month.

The principal personnel change affected the vital A-3 task as a former assistant, Col. Brooks Lawhon, took over, relieving Col. Raymond Todd who became Deputy Commander of the 451st Group. Col Lawhon came overseas with the Wing as Ass't A-3, worked his way up to become C.O. of the 461st and returned to the Wing upon completion of his 35 missions. Col. Craven C. Rogers replaced the departed 461st commander.

As Assistant A-3, Col. Robert Worden, a recent arrival from the U.S., took over on 17 April 1944.

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING
GENERAL
A.P.O. 520
201.22 12 April 1945
SUBJECT: Commendation

1. The following cables have been sent from the Commanding General, Eighth Army and the Commanding General, Fifteenth Army Group, respectively, to the Commander-In-Chief, MAAF, who has passed same to this headquarters with his congratulations and appreciation.

"Much appreciated is the wholehearted support of the Fifteenth Air Force on 9 and 10 April. The carpet bombing in front of our assaulting divisions, I am convinced, has been one of the decisive factors in our rapid advance to the Santerao River. The degree of success attained shows how enthusiastically all personnel tackled these close support missions. I fully realize the special and intensive training that this task demanded of all bombing crews."

"I want you to know how fully I appreciate the splendid and effective air support which the air forces have already given us in the current attack. The excellent cooperation we have received from all air force personnel starting with the early planning phase has been a source of special gratification. I am confident of your all-out support in the future. Our air-ground team is now a great success."

2. I am particularly gratified to pass these well-earned commendations to all units of the command and to add my own praise for an outstanding demonstration of successful coordinated effort between air and ground forces.

N.F. TWINING
Major General, USA
Commanding
DISTRIBUTION 'H' PLUS AOC,205 GROUP, RAF

HEADQUARTERS 49TH BOMBARDMENT WING(H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

28 April 1945

SUBJECT; Bombing-Navigation-Pathfinder Analysis for
26 April 1945.

TO: C O, 451st Bomb Group, APO 520, U.S. Army
C O 461st Bomb Group, APO 520, U.S. Army
C O 484th Bomb Group, APO 520, U.S. Army

1. Bombing Analysis.

a. The 451st, 484th, and 461st Bomb Groups were briefed to attack the CORTINA AMMUNITION STORES DUMP employing normal effort, Colonel Stefonowicz of the 451st BG was the Combat Wing Commander.

b. The 451st BG led by Colonel Stefonowicz, with Lt White as bombardier, bombed SACHSENBURG M/Y, AUSTRIA, as an alternate target. One ship, the flight lead in Charlie flight, bombed KLAGENFURT M/Y as a target of opportunity. Good results were observed. All boxes had long smooth runs, but a thick ground haze impaired visibility. Able box had a good concentration of bombs on their briefed bombsight malfunction, however, the deputy was setting up rate, and the wing men toggled on his bombs. This pattern started on the M/A and extended over in a very long pattern. Dog flight's bombs started at their briefed MPI in a compact pattern. Fox flight's bombs were on their briefed MPI and extended over in a fairly long pattern. They bombed with four boxes in trail, seven to nine aircraft to a box. A total of 32 aircraft flew over the target.

c. The 484th BG, led by Major Trotter, with Lt Laver as bombardier, bombed the M/Y at SPITTAL, AUSTRIA as an alternate target. The first attack unit bombed with boxes in trail. On the first run the target was overcast, so they made another run, at which time it could be picked up visually. Able flight's bombs were squarely on their briefed MPI in well concentrated pattern with the bombs from two aircraft extending over due to late toggling. Baker flight's bombs were on their briefed MPI, starting a little short and extending through the yard. The second attack unit was separated from the first in weather and was unable to bomb any target visually. They returned their bombs to the base. There were six and seven aircraft in Able and Baker box, respectively. A total of 13 aircraft dropped their bombs.

d. The 461st BG, led by Colonel Rogers, with Lt Connelly as bombardier, bombed the M/Y at LIENZ, AUSTRIA as an alternate target. Able flight's bombs were generally to the right of the briefed MPI. Baker flight's bombs were on their briefed MPI in a fairly long pattern that started at the near edge of the yard and extended through the yard to the extreme edge of the yard. Dog flight's bombs were in the vicinity of the target, being slightly over from the briefed MPI. Easy flight's leader had trouble with both the C-1 auto pilot and the PDI, and was forced to talk the pilot on course. He did not quite have all of the drift taken out when the bombs went away, and the resulting pattern was over and to the right of the briefed MPI, with some hits in the vicinity of the target and many hits in the town immediately adjacent to the yard. They bombed with four boxes in trail, seven to eight aircraft in each box. A total of 30 aircraft flew over the target.

PERCENT WITHIN 1000' OF MPI

451ST BG - 53.1% (SACHSENBERG M/Y)
461ST BG - 66.1% (LIENZ M/Y)
484TH BG - 94.3% (SPITTAL M/Y)

Bombing-Nav-PFF Analysis for 26 April 45 dated 28 April 45 Cont'd

2. Navigation Analysis.

a. Departure Point - BOVINO

BRIEFED	ACTUAL
451 - 0906B- 10,000 ft	0906B - 9,000 ft
484 - 0938B- 10,000 ft	0938B - 10,000 ft
461 - 1006B- 10,000 ft	1009B - 11,200 ft

b. The 451st BG followed the briefed route to TP#3. From here course was corrected twenty-five (25) miles right of TP#4 to IP to primary target. Bombs were not dropped due to complete undercast. A 180 degree turn was made back to the IT (LUGGAU); which was used to bomb Alternate #9 SACHSENBERG M/Y (46-50, 13-22). Bombs were dropped at 1153B from 20,000 ft. The axis of attack flown was 70 degrees. No rally was made. The briefed route was then flown back to base.

The 484th BG followed the briefed route to IP to primary target. The target was abandoned due to complete undercast. Attempts were made to bomb BRUNICO M/Y (46-48, 11-56) without success. Able and Baker boxes bombed SPITTAL M/Y (46-48, 13-30). DELLACH (46-44, 13-05) was used as the IP. Bombs were dropped at 1259B from 19,700 ft on a heading of 80 degrees. The rally was right and course altered for base. After the primary target was abandoned Dog and Easy boxes became separated from the rest of the group. An attempt was made to bomb BRUNICO M/Y (46-48, 11-56), however, clouds obscured the target. Course was then altered to base.

The 461st BG followed the briefed route to the IP. Here it became apparent it would be impossible to bomb the primary target, LIENZ M/Y (46-50, 12-46) was then chosen as a target of opportunity. Bombs were dropped at 1321B from 12,000 ft. The axis of attack flown was 280 degrees. The rally was right and the reciprocal of the route out was flown to base.

c. 12 P-38s intercepted each group near TP#3 and provided escort on PTW.

d. RATINGS

451st BG- Lead Navigator Lt. Reisch.
Navigation Good. Log Excellent.
484th BG- Lead Navigator Capt. Adair.
Navigation Good. Log Excellent.
461st BG- Lead Navigator Lt. Williams
Navigation Good. Log Excellent.

e. WEATHER:

Bases: TORRETTO - CAVU.
CASTELLUCCIO - CAVU.
ROUTE; ADRIATIC - CAVU.

ALPS - 6/10 Stratus tops 10,000 ft to 18,000 ft. Cirrus 6/10 to 8/10th bases 21,000 ft. Layers of haze.

PRIMARY TARGET;
10/L0 Stratus tops 13,000 ft.

TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY:
451st BG and 484th BG - Hazy.
461st BG- 10/10 stratus bases 13,500 ft.

f. COMMENTS: Navigation on this mission was extremely difficult due to weather. Lead navigators did a good job of avoiding all flak areas. All group leaders did well to get through the weather and find a target to bomb.

Bombing-Nav-PFF Analysis for 26 April 45 dtd 28 April 45 Cont'd

3. Pathfinder Analysis.

a. 451st BG.

(1) Pathfinder Officers:
Able 11- Lt. Igiolski.
Able 12- Lt. Young.

(2) PFF was used for navigation aid only; 25 fixes were given to the DR navigator and 30 fixes were given to the deputy lead DR navigator.

(3) Able 11 set was reported in excellent operating condition; with maximum range sixty-five (65 miles, sensitivity and definition very good. Able 12 set was reported in very good operation; maximum range sixty (60) miles sensitivity and definition good.

b. 484th BG.

(1) Pathfinder Officers:
Able 11 - Lt. Nostdal.
Baker 11 - F/O Gilbert.
Dog 11 - Lt. Vinther.
Easy 11 - Lt. Tynan.

(2) All PFF operators assisted in navigation over the partially undercast route.

(3) Dog 11 and Easy 11 had excellent returns. Baker 11 set went out in target area and could not be restored to use. Able 11 set was reported as good except that the operator experienced trouble with a wandering PPI picture.

c. 461st BG.

(1) Pathfinder Officers:
Able 11 - Lt. Panagiotopoulos.
Able 12 - Lt. Wilson.
Dog 11 - Lt. Thalen.

(2) PFF was used as aid to navigation with approximately 30 fixes given to lead DR navigator. PFF was also used around target area obscured by undercast.

(3) There were no malfunctions reported and ranges of sets averaged sixty (60) miles.

BROOKS A LAWHON, Colonel, Air Corps, A-3.

End of report

The Truth About Swiss Internees

By Robert A. Long,
President of the Swiss
Internees Assn. Inc.

Editor's Note This is a follow up to the story that appeared in issue no 19 of the Torretta Flyer by Robert M Fosse, regarding USAF Aircraft landing in Switzerland during WWII. This piece deals with the experiences of the flight crews who were forced to land in Switzerland at great peril. Most of the interned crews were treated very poorly by Swiss authorities.

During WWII, the air war over Europe resulted in many battle damaged USAAF aircraft and high losses. Numerous damaged and malfunctioning aircraft, which could not return to base, believed they could reach Switzerland. An unknown number did not make it. Those who did wish to make the truth known!

In 1944, an American Diplomat, assigned to Sweden wrote to the US military that USAAF aircraft in Sweden and Switzerland were undamaged. He also made allegations of cowardice and desertion.

Since the end of WWII and on up through the years many books and magazine articles have been written. There have been unfounded and derogatory comments made about those who interned in Switzerland.

One magazine published a series of 13-17 pictures from the Swiss Archives. The author stated the ships appeared to be undamaged. The Group markings, date of entry, place in Switzerland, and ship's serial number assisted in the identification by the ship's pilot and/or crew numbers. the angle a photograph is taken can hide damage. In one example the photo was taken from the right side. What it didn't show was the left wing was in shreds, the number one engine was feathered, and number two was burned. The fuselage was ripped and only thirty (30) minutes of fuel remained on board.

Other authors have stated most aircraft feathered a good engine and went to Switzerland. There have been many comments and insinuations that internees had the great life, were shackled up in their apartments, and could travel all over Switzerland at will.

Another profound lie was that internees could leave Switzerland any time they wanted to. These statements were made by people who were not there. There have been a couple of escape stories by internees that have raised questions by other escapees as much of the stories were not commensurate with the facts.

A Fighter Group was briefed to shoot down USAAF bombers headed for Sweden or Switzerland.

There were other Americans in Switzerland who were in the same war. However, they had been shot down over Nazi territory and managed to evade the Nazis. God bless them! They reached and walked across the Swiss border. They were called Evadees and were accorded entirely different arrangements than the internees. The internee arrived in an aircraft and parachuted, crash-landed or landed in Switzerland.

Many internees were told and many signed statements that they would not tell what they witnessed or about events in Switzerland. Now, they are telling their truths!

Now let's go back and look at what followed our Diplomat's charges. General Spatz termed the statements slanderous and absolutely untrue. He demanded U.S. military men be allowed to examine the airplanes. A Lieutenant Colonel and ground crew examined all the aircraft in Switzerland. In September, 1944, there were no USAAF airplanes in that country without justifiable cause. The volumes "US Air Forces in WWII" also carries that statement. Furthermore, the Lieutenant Colonel remained in Switzerland and checked new arrivals. He remained in Switzerland and supervised the repair of disabled aircraft until well after the war ended.

U.S. and Swiss records state: 176 USAAF aircraft entered Switzerland. 96 of the planes were salvaged as junk. 11 were repaired after 15,600 hours were spent repairing them. They were then flown to Burtonwood, England for salvage. One L-5, one P-51, thirty B-17's and thirty-nine B-24's were flown back. Does this represent no damage?

What really happened when a crippled airplane crossed the Swiss border? Numerous ships were jumped by Swiss ME-109's or Moranes. There are Swiss newspaper accounts about the shooting down of USAAF aircraft by Swiss fighters also from American crew members in those airplanes. Many others were shot at by Swiss Antiaircraft batteries. One incident was witnessed by two USAAF crews at the Swiss Air Force Base, Dubendorf. Furthermore, a USAAF Captain was in the tower, a Captain who had been ordered to teach Swiss pilots to fly B-17's and B-24's by the U.S. War Department. Some of the B-24s and B-17's had been repaired by the Swiss cannibalizing other ships. The Captain was an internee.

A B-17 started his approach to land and only one wheel of the landing gear came down. An AA gun fired at point blank range and the plane fell into the Griefensee. The Bombardier was the only survivor. He had been thrown through the plexiglass nose upon impact and was picked up in the water by a Swiss in a boat. Of course he was seriously injured.

Regardless of how an internee landed; by parachute, crash-landing or landing on an airfield (all Swiss runways were too short for B-24's and B-17's), the Swiss army appeared quickly, brandishing bayoneted rifles and machine guns. Each crew member was interrogated, photographed and finger printed. They were under armed guard 24 hours each day.

They were transported under armed guard to villages high

up in the Swiss Alps. There, they were placed in stripped-down hotels some of which were dumps while others were adequate. After a week or two in quarantine, they were permitted to be on the streets but had to be in by dusk. There were limits as to where they went and they had better know those limits as they could be shot by the guards if they exceeded them. There were one to three bed checks nightly, depending on where one was assigned.

Food varied according to the hotel they were placed in. All portions were considerably smaller than normal. Monotony was the by-word. Some of the hotels had bad food while in others, the food was palatable.

Pay was doled out in small sums and was controlled. Many received sizeable checks upon their return to the States to settle their payroll accounts. But in 1945 the men received full pay and allowances due them each month.

Some applied for and received paroles to attend Swiss schools, work at the American Legation (Embassy) or with the International Red Cross. There were eleven men granted paroles to construct the American Cemetery at Munsingen. One internee was granted a parole to star in an International Film produced in Switzerland while he was interned. The parole permitted the men to leave the internment camp and participate in the activity selected. However, if one sought to escape and was successful, the US would return him to the Swiss. He would then serve a sentence but not in an internment camp.

Adelboden was the primary camp named Camp Maloney. It was named after Joseph Maloney, the first American to die in Switzerland. In 1944, the enlisted men were sent either to Adelboden or Wengen, just below the Jungfrau and the officers were sent to Davos.

Orders were issued by the American Legation Military Attache (an Army Cavalry Brigadier General) that no one was to try to escape. In spite of this order, many did try to escape, particularly after D-day and the invasion of southern France. If one was caught by the Swiss, he received a Swiss Tribunal sentence to Wauwill or Hunenburg confinement camps.

The confinements were similar to Nazi concentration camps and many said they were worse. The barracks were wood frame with single sided walls. There was no heat and the men slept on straw or on the ground. Only one blanket was given to each man. Sanitary facilities consisted of a two-holer out-house. The compound was surrounded with a fence of two rows of barbed wire. The area was patrolled by guards with guard dogs and was lighted at night. Medical care was non-existent. The food was not edible and was served from slop pails into tin cans. The abominable conditions are only briefly outlined here.

Any small infraction of the rules resulted in solitary confinement for extended periods.

War Crime Reports of the events in these camps were ignored by the U.S. All records of the confinement camps are sealed by the Swiss Government until 1995.

Included in the confinement camps were other Nationals: French English, Polish, Yugoslavs and Russians.

Escape from the internment camps was possible as was escape from the confinement camps. This was not easy and was fraught with risk. It is known that some were wounded while seeking to escape. There was an underground, but it couldn't accommodate all who wanted out. Some took off on their own. There was

a chance some friendly Swiss would help. Civilian clothes, rail tickets, etc., could be obtained along with directions where to go along the route. There was danger in this approach. There were those who were called "Coyotes." They would charge the going rates of \$100.00 to \$800.00 to assist in the escape. They would assure escapees they would get them across the border and as soon as they did, arriving at the place where they were instructed, the Nazis were there waiting for them or they would appear shortly after the Coyotes departed.

One internee had five operations for appendicitis. He escaped with stitches and an oozing incision along with another internee with a leg in a cast. The hospital where they were staying was on Lake Geneva. One night they sneaked out and stole a row-boat then crossed the lake and walked to the French border. Other internees dressed as women and escaped. One Sergeant at Wengen wondered if the guards regarded him as a "ladies man," because he saw so many ladies off on the train.

To walk out of the three main internment sites was difficult. The very steep rock mountains are impassable without special equipment and skill. There was only one road to and from Adelboden, a cog-rail to and from Wengen and the only road through Davos. They were guarded at numerous points. Remember too that every Swiss over eighteen was in the military and had his weapon at home or with him.

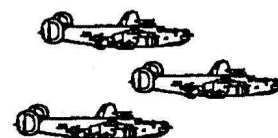
Repatriation was possible by exchange for Germans. The exchange ratio was two Germans for one American. We must have been held as hostages. If not, how could we be exchanged?

According to the records, we left behind 61 Americans who were buried at Munsingen cemetery. Checking the official records; One was a civilian American Embassy employee. Yet another was killed in October, 1944 while delivering aircraft parts to repair interned aircraft at Dubendorf. And, two other internees were suicides. If everything was so great, why were there suicides? Therefore, there were 57 Americans who were buried due to combat, crashes (into mountains) and due to the AA and fighter attacks on crippled aircraft. In 1948 the Department of Defense and the State Department disinterred the dead. Some were returned to the States while the remainder were reburied in Epinal, France.

Americans were interned in Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and even Russia. Was not Russia an ally?

The Swiss Internees Association, Inc. became a non-profit corporation in New Jersey, on February 21, 1986. The statements made in this article and many other facts, not stated here, are documented and a part of our files. These truths refute the statements and innuendos from writers who have utilized their position to further their own interests without regard for the truth concerning combat aircrews who were interned in Switzerland. We abhor these statements and our truths stand! Albeit, we are forty-five years late but the truth is still there.

From The Air Forces Escape and
Evasion Society 1990-1991 Edition



Letters to the Editor



Photo above from left: Steve Rossi, Katie Blackwell, and our own Marty Allen

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Marty Allen 824 squadron

Member Marty Allen (Morton Alpert) reports that he has moved to Las Vegas where he has a lifetime contract at Vegas World. He is teamed up with his longtime partner singer Steve Rossi and Katie Blackwell who in private life is Mrs Marty Allen. He can be seen in the Celebrity Room.

◇◇2◇◇

Dear Sirs:

I just heard about the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association. As a former member of the 826 squadron, 484th Bomb Group, I would like information about the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association.

At present, ill health prevents me from attending the next reunion, but I would like to hear from anyone who was associated with ship No #51.

I would like to hear from anyone who can help identify the guys in the photo.

Thank you.

Eugene W Blood 826 Squadron
Wisconsin Dells, WI



Photo above: Eugene Blood is shown 5th from left. Others in the photograph are unidentified.

◇◇3◇◇

Mandelieu, France
Dear Mr Markel

I am a 32 year old Frenchman living on the French Riviera. I have been interested in researching the history of American heavy bombers that fell in region of the Alps Maritime, a French Department. During my research I have found some pieces of a B-24 that crashed on May 27, 1944 on the mountain, "Pic De L'Aigle" near the village of Thorenc. After some additional research I found that the plane belonged to the 767 Bomb Squadron flown by 2/lt Gerald J Maroney. It was a B-24H 42-52399.

The Crew members from my reseach are:

Gerald J Maroney-P, (Deceased 3/31/83)
Winston J Lawrence-C/P, (Deceased)
Paul A Golden-N, (Deceased)
Warren R Mudge-B, (POW) (Deceased 6/4/78)
Harold C Steele-E (Deceased 10/3/81)
Donald E Ellis-R/O 84 Chapel Dr, Zepherhills, FL 33599 Phone 813/973/1238
Benjamin H Norrid-N/G (POW) 4628 San Jose, FL 33609
Alvin L Raines-T/G (POW)
Owen B Streeper-W/G 916 E Lincoln, Chenoa, IL 61726. Phone 815/945/7246
Leon Zimmer-B/G (POW) Deceased 10/15/68

I have document MACR #S416 (Missing Air Crew Report), the narrative and tactical mission report. I am seeking the following information:

1) Nose art or nickname



Photo above: Here is a picture of myself with the main landing gear strut.

- 2) A photograph of the airplane or of a 461st Bomb Group aircraft in flight or in the base area.
- 3) A crew photograph

Sincerely,
Phillippe Castellano

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Zepherhills, Florida
Dear Bud:

Very appreciative of your call last evening and amazed at the news of our wreckage still being intact on Eagles Peak near Eglin, France. Quite fascinating but when I think of it, there would not be too many people climbing a mountain to get a look at a B-24 in that area. It was north of Nice about 25 miles. Some of the French people traveled to Nice on their bicycles to do the shopping they were able to do.

Will get my thought process working this week and send some photos and more information both on crew members and people in Southern France whom I had contact with during my sojourn there. Have an address book which would have been taboo carrying around as I did for three months while wearing civilian clothing. Had I been captured it would have been a wealth of information on the FFI, however it never crossed my mind of the danger it could present at that time.

Wanted to get this letter off to recognize the fact of you calling and giving me the information.

Yours truly,
Donald E Ellis 767 squadron

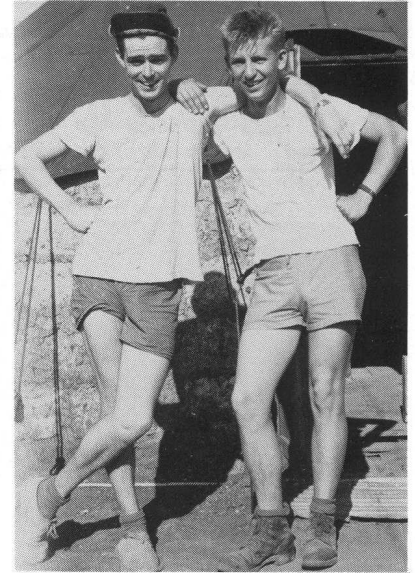
Editors Note: Crew photograph was not forthcoming.

◇◇4◇◇

Dear Bud:

I have enjoyed reading the Torretta Flyers.

The 1988 Fall-Winter edition had an article written by Ed Lawler of the 484th Bomb Group. I am enclosing a photo of Sgt Lawler and Zapaka. Both Lawler and Zapaka flew several missions with Lt Kaiser's crew.



Sgt Lawler and Zapaka.

Sincerely,
Albin Frigo, 825 squadron

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Ellicott City, Md.
Dear Bud

Enclosed are photos of my crew and others who trained at Tonopah, Nevada from late-September to December 8, 1944. The photos taken at Tonopah, show (1) the ten members of my crew (306) of which I was navigator, (2) the officers in my crew, and officers of the other crews at the same stage of training.

We left Hamilton Field, CA, on or about December 13, 1944, for the POE, Camp Patrick Henry, Hampton Roads, Virginia, where on 28 Dec we departed for Italy in convoy on the Liberty Ship SS Lyman Abbott. Twenty-two days, later we arrived at Naples. After several days at the Caserta Replacement Depot, we rode in a boxcar to Bari and finally reached the 827th Squadron at Torretta on 28 Jan. 1945 as a replacement crew.

When I joined the association, and received the membership list, I was struck by the fact that I didn't recognize one name on the roster. As replacements, we were stationed at Torretta for a relatively short time, from the end of Jan. to mid-May. Additionally, I contracted pneumonia there and spent 3-4 weeks in hospital at Cerignola and off duty. While off duty, my crew was disbanded. The pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, and radioman were shifted to duty flying low level night missions supplying Italian



Russell L Hawes-N.

partisans. Several other crew members ended up in another squadron in the group. Only the engineer and I remained in the 827th.

As late replacements we missed the chance to bomb Ploesti, probably fortunately. But we flew the same planes, we were shot at, we endured the same mud, we suffered the same Spam and lima beans, and we drank the same vile vino. In fact several of our crew were shot down and bailed out. Crew 308 (Pilot Anderson & Navigator Johnson) was forced to abandon its ship and was brought out by partisans. I must admit, however, our chance of survival was probably much greater when our crew participated in operations in 1945 than the previous year.

I'm trying to round up my crew for a reunion. Thus far the pilot, Bob Wehner, and I are agreed. Perhaps we'll see you in Kansas City.

Sincerely,
Russell L. Hawes



Photo above: Tonopah, Nevada December 1944. Standing from left: Robert J Wehner-P, Victor Watson-C/P, Russell L Hawes-N, and Edwin B Carlock-B. Kneeling from left: John E Taylor-E, Pius M Zerr-R/O, Howard F Glasser-B/G, Glendon F Smith-N/G, James H Edmonson Jr-U/G, and Marshall L Byford-

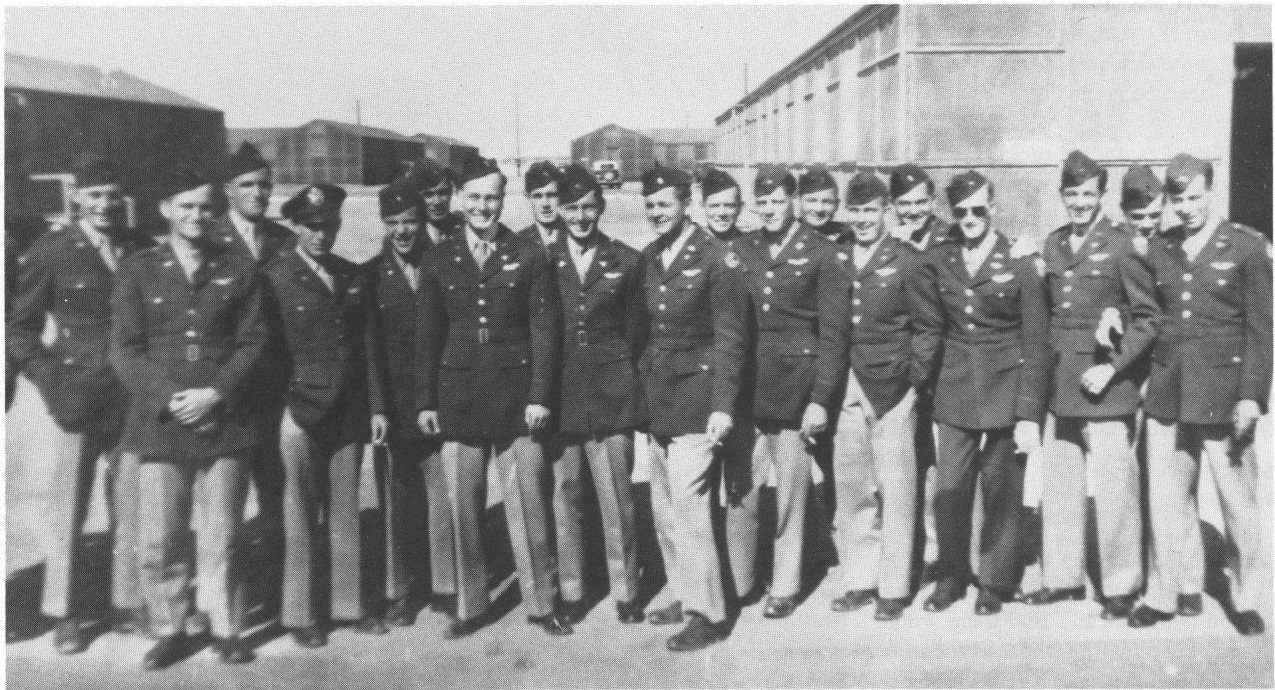


Photo above: Officers of crews who trained at Tonapah during late September to December 8, 1944. They are from left: Funk, Howard J Barcus-P, Joseph M Mahon-P, Tony S Bakes-B, Henry C Wiedmaier-C/P, William L Hulslander-N, Henry A Hain-N, Kenneth W Anderson-P, Ferdinand Wiederspahn-P, William C Meyer-C/P, Thea J Easterwood-B, Victor Watson-C/P, Edwin B Carock-B, Robert J Wehner-P, Allen F Patterson-C/P, Russell L Hawes-N, William H Gardiner III-B, McNabb, and Walter Baran-P crew 309.

><6<>
El Toro, Ca
Dear Bud,

The article "How I Got To Tent 39 And Back" brought back some fond memories. First off, I flew many of my missions in #700, "A Broad Abroad". Secondly, Master Sgt. Ray Juhl was mentioned and here I must tell you a short story about my association with Sgt. Juhl.

The day I reported to the 41st Bomb Sq. (Westover Field, Mass.) later to be named the 5th Anti-Sub Sq., I met Sgt. Juhl. The 5th was subsequently broken up to form the cadre for the 484th Bomb Group. Sgt. Juhl and I were assigned to the 827th Bomb Sq. of the 484th.

After we lost Don Halderman, Jim Lyle became Sq. Commander and I became Operations Officer and promoted to Major. The day after my promotion Sgt. Juhl appeared at my tent and said, in his old soldier fashion, "If the Major doesn't mind the Sgt. would like to make a statement. I voiced my approval and he said "I knew you when you were a snotty-nosed second Lt. and I never thought you would make it".

We were good friends and if anyone knows what happened to Sgt. Juhl I would appreciate a letter or a phone call.

Sincerely,
Henry B Hewett

<<7>>

Dear Bud

First off I want to thank you for the invitation, and second, thanks for a first class reunion, and best of all thanks for the opportunity to be with old and new friends of the 461st & 484th BG Assn. It was wonderful seeing them after 45 years. Looking forward to the 1991 reunion.

Ed Kabasa

<<8>>

Dear Bud

I feel ashamed at having taken so long to thank you for the last reunions. We enjoy them all. Without you two, Bea and Bud there would be nothing, so keep eating those Wheaties. We're hanging in there, I have a few problems, however we keep busy. Note the enclosed photograph that was taken at the Nashville reunion.

All best wishes
George Rands 824 squadron



Photo above from left: Ed Kabasa-C/P (Hitzing crew), Gordon Graham ground echelon 824 sq., Cylde Barr-N/G (Frazier Crew), Harry Hubertz-C/P (Frazier crew), Albin Rogers-E (Hitzing crew), Bill Crawford-N (Hitzing crew), and Dick Brown-C/P (Kime's Crew)



Photo above from left: Bill Crawford-N, Ed Kabasa-C/P, Al Hitzing-P. Picture taken prior to deployment overseas.



Photo above from left: Lowell K "Doc" Davis-P, Arthur T Shak-N, George W Rands-E, and Thomas R Woolcott-C/P.

Dear Lord, in other days these determined fighter sat by dim lights and glowing fires.

They dreamed of home, freedom and unknown tomorrows.

They ate when food came their way and when their nerves cooperated.

They fought freedom's cause from dawn into the deep darkness.

Some made it into your welcoming arms.

Others, throughout the years, have flown their lives into this very room.

Tonight we feast and enjoy the glow of candles and the abundance of this banquet. We celebrate the absolute joy of living under the flag of these United States and with the light of Liberty's torch.

For all this we are thankful.

In this we recognize you as being our God.

This invocation was given at the Nashville reunion banquet by Chaplain (Cpt) Ronald D Lowery. Tennessee National Guard.

◇◇1◇◇
Howard Hatch
827 squadron

Howard Hatch, belly Gunner on Ed Eibs's crew passed away March 28, 1990.

The 484th Bomb Group was hit hard by very aggressive fighter attacks on June 13, 1944. Old #71 (42-53661) piloted by Ed Eibs and was forced to land at Dubendorf, Switzerland. Belly Gunner Howard Hatch was interned in Switzerland with the rest of the crew. Internment was not easy, crippled airplanes of the Allied Air Forces were often shot at by attacking Swiss ME109's, loss of the aircraft and life was not uncommon. Internment camps were often located high in the Swiss Alps to hinder escape attempts. Conditions were quite similar to POW camps in Nazi Germany. Thin walled unheated huts offered little protection from the elements. Food given to the internees was barely edible.

He was released after 8 months of captivity. Returning to the States he went into construction work, married and raised



Ed Eibs(L) and Howard



Back of Howard Hatch's A-2 Jacket, "Sinful Cynthia."

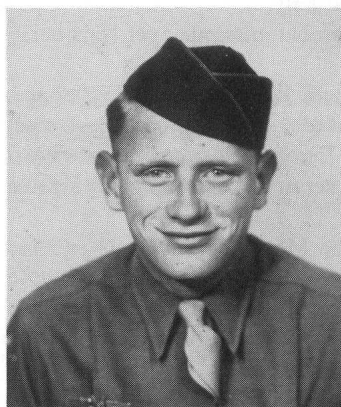
THE LAST MISSION

two sons. Howard and his wife Betty kept in touch with other members of his crew over the years and were close with Ed Eibs, and Frank Hamilton.

He is survived by his wife Betty, and three grandsons.

Editors Note See page 32 Torretta Flyer 18 Ed Eibs Obituary for the story of the forced landing in Switzerland.

◇◇2◇◇
Thomas M Hagie
764 squadron.



Tom Hagie

Thomas M Hagie 68, passed away December 25, 1990 after a long illness. Tom was the nose gunner on the crew piloted by James H Spencer. Tom flew 35 missions, and earned three oak leaf clusters to his air medal. The crew's co/pilot Herbert H Hartford who was killed on the crew's second mission was replaced by Allen H Anderson. Their plane "Miss Kaye" was named for the Group CO's daughter. It was assigned to Spencer's crew later. He was discharged with the rank of

Staff/Sgt.

After separation he went back to his job at Lettery Kenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, Pa. He retired as Supervisor of the electric division in 1980. During his later years there he started an after hour and Saturday electric service business and had it established when he retired. He worked on sawmills, Dairy equipment and silos. He worked at this business full time after retirement and up to six months before he passed away. All of his customers respected him because he always responded to their calls.

Tom was a great guy, and was an asset to the crew. He was a great family man. He had three children, one boy and two girls and they loved their Dad.

◇◇3◇◇
Charles Elessi
824 squadron

Charles Elessi passed away June 30, 1990. Notice received from Edward J Bernhardt

◇◇4◇◇
David J Thomas
766 squadron

David J Thomas, pilot died September 3, 1990 in tragic accident when he fell from a tractor that got stuck in the mud at the edge of a pond and drowned. He had suffered from multiple sclerosis which may have been a contributing factor in his death.

◇◇5◇◇
Paul B Vatterott,
 484th Bomb Group.

Paul B Vatterot MD, flight Surgeon St Louis, Missouri passed away June 30, 1989 after practicing medicine for 35 years. He leaves a wife, and nine children, three of his children are also physicians.

◇◇6◇◇
James G Erwin
 766 squadron

James Gill Erwin, 66, 766 squadron died August 28th 1989 after a period of failing health. James Erwin served in the Army Air Corps during World War Two as a gunner with the 15th Air Force based in North Africa and Southern Italy.

Staff Sergeant Erwin flew 23 combat missions over Nazi occupied Europe and over Nazi Germany itself. For his meritorious service, the Army awarded him the Air Medal (with one Oak leaf cluster), the Good Conduct Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with seven service stars) and other service awards.

In 1950 Mr. Erwin moved to the Monterey Peninsula and became a loyal employee of Holman's Department Store in Pacific Grove, California for 36 years. He served most of this period as the Buyer/Manager of the Housewares Department where he was known for his caring customer service.

He is survived by two sisters, Mildred Louise Suarez and Ann Connors, both of the Chicago area, three brothers, David Erwin of Chicago, George Erwin and Michael Donovan, both of Las Vegas, Nevada, his wife, Ann, stepson, MAJ Mark Brown, daughters, Annette Keip and Heather Erwin and grandson Mathew James.

His flight crew consisted of Arthur Farnham-P, Paul Lawrence-C/P, Mel Hahns-N, Robert Eckman-B, Tom Connerly-E, Pete Peterson-R/O, James Erwin-N./G, Henry Sahy-T/G, Franz Holscher-B/G.

◇◇7◇◇

Herbert S Weber
 767 Squadron

Herbert S Weber 72, tail gunner, passed away August 22, 1990. He was born November 12, 1919 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, but lived most of his life in New York State. After retirement he and his wife Elizabeth moved to Ocala, Florida. He served as a tail gunner on Robert Loubke's crew, 767 squadron, from July 1944 to February 1945. He was proud of the United States



Herbert S Weber

and his WW II service.

Just before his death Herbert learned that he was to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for which he had waited 45 years. It was to be presented at a formal ceremony at McDill Air Force Base Tampa Florida, but he died before this took place. Upon his wife's request the medal was air mailed from Randolph Field, Texas arriving just 10 minutes prior to the start of Herbert's memorial service. Although Herbert never saw the medal he waited for so long, it was at his funeral service. He was buried in the National Cemetery at Bushnell, Florida. He leaves his wife Elizabeth, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

The members of his crew are: Armand Bottiglia-N, Graydon E Dahlen-U/G, Lee J Fitzpatrick-B/G, George H Hart Jr-N/G, Donald R Hilgart-E, George I Iubelt-R/O, Robert Loubke-P, Jack Mc Caulley-C/P, and Herbert S Weber-T/G.

◇◇8◇◇
Robert G Andrews
 766 squadron

Robert G Andrews, (MOS 755) passed away in 1972. He is survived by his wife Lettie Andrews. Notice given by Leroy Duke.

◇◇9◇◇

Bert J Lange
 824 squadron

Bert J Lange Intelligence officer assigned to the 824 squadron died January 9, 1991. He and his wife Jean operated the Pinchpeny Gallery in Mt Kisko, New York.

Bert was born in Philadelphia, son of Charles Frederick and Rose Falk. He was graduated from Central High School and later attended Tulane University. He and his wife were married at the Washington Cathedral in Wash. D.C. in 1939.

In WW II he served as captain and was intelligence officer for the 484th Bomb Group in Italy. He received the bronze star, silver star, purple heart, and the French Croix de Guerre.

After the war he worked as advertising manager for several advertising agencies and the Merchandise Mart in Chicago and Life magazine.

In 1966 Bert decided to leave the advertising and merchandising business and go into business for himself. So he established art galleries in Mt. Kisco, N.Y. and Boothbay Harbor, Maine. These both proved to be successful. One of his greatest pleasures was boating. The family boat was moored just 50 feet from the gallery in Maine so he was able to be out fishing for a couple hours every day.

He is survived by his wife, Jean, daughter Patricia, son Peter, sister Susan and 9 grandchildren.

◇◇10◇◇
John M McCormick
 765 Squadron

John M McCormick, navigator on the crew of Johnson S Miller passed away on August 11, 1988.

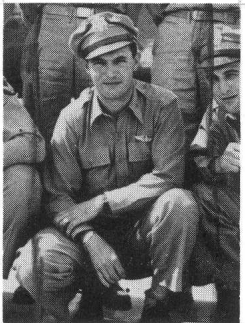
◊◊11◊◊
Alfred Stuedler
 825 Squadron

Alfred Stuedler, radio operator on Robert R Neville's crew passed away March 16, 1984.

◊◊12◊◊
Joseph C Kvedera
 764 squadron,

Joseph C Kvedera flight-engineer crew 8, died June 21, 1990.

◊◊13◊◊
Jacob R Lebsack
 767 squadron,



Jacob R Lebsack

Jacob R Lebsack, Bombardier Clyde L Boyer's crew, has passed away.

◊◊14◊◊
Joesph Natoli
 827 squadron,

Joesph Natoli, Co/pilot Gussie L Willett's crew passed away in January of 1990. Joe grew up in Passaic, New Jersey where he met his wife Bett. He was an athlete competing in cross country races. Initially deferred as sole support of his family, he entered the armed forces in late 1943. He always talked of his WW II service with warmest memories.



Joesph Natoli

In 1945 Joe opened Riverside Sportswear, a manufacturer of ladies coats and was its president until retiring in 1986. In retirement he enjoyed family life with daughter Gail, her husband Michael, and their two golden retrievers.

Arthur Barkley writes of an incident during the war when Joe's crew was given

the task of slow timing (breaking in run at low RPM) a new engine on ship #85. They flew to Sicily and circled around Joe's grandparents house. The neighbors wondered what all the fuss was about, but the grandparents knew what it was all about. The slow time crew consisted of the pilots, engineer and often the crew chief, in this case Arthur Barkley. Alex J "Red" wise was the Engineer.

He was a member of Riverside Veterans, Inc. This is a group whose members became dear friends of the Natoli family providing support and companionship that sustained them during Joe's passing. Besides daughter Gail, he is survived by his wife Bett.

◊◊15◊◊
Frederick C Rodgers
 766 squadron

We have received notice that Frederick C Rodgers passed away February 1, 1991.

◊◊16◊◊
Robert L Dunn
 766 squadron

Robert L Dunn died in Lindenhurst park, Florida near Leesburg in October 1987. Bob was a mechanic, 766 squadron, and was from Brevard North Carolina, He attended The University of Georgia and majored in forestry.

For several years he was a member of the Drifters, a trio and band that specialized in songs of the American cowboy. He appeared on stage, radio and TV and personal appearances. In 1949 the Drifters appeared on the Horace Heidt Youth Opportunity Program that was the old Phillip Morris talent scout show. Bob was also an outdoor writer. He had many articles published in Field and Stream and other outdoor magazines. He is survived by a daughter Linda and his wife Betty.

◊◊W◊◊
Margaret Moore

Margaret Moore, wife of member Judson Moore, 766 squadron. Judson writes "I am devastated. She had worried and taken care of me for the last 10 years. I have heart problems, bypass, and pacemaker."

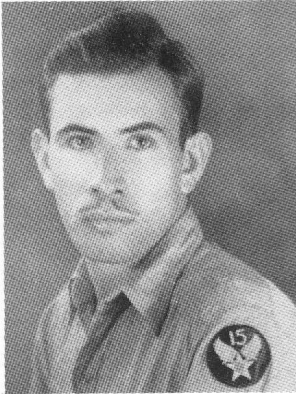
Mrs. Moore was born in East Haven. Besides her husband. she leaves two sons. Judson W. Moore Jr, David Moore Jr , daughter Joanna Barra, a brother, and five grandchildren.

◊◊W◊◊
Lavone Johnson

Lavone Johnson, wife of Raymond Johnson 766 squadron died May 18, 1989.

◇◇17◇◇

Leon Usherson
825 squadron



Leon Usherson Leon Usherson,
Gunner on Arthur

Watts crew, died suddenly just before the Nashville reunion on October 1, 1990, he and his wife Harriet attended the San Francisco and New Orleans reunions. He was interested in finding the rest of his crew and worked hard at this when death caught up with him.

◇◇18◇◇

James P Spalding

827 squadron.

James P Spalding co pilot on Wilburn Kitchen's crew passed away in February 1990. His widow passed away January 1, 1991. He leaves three children, Jean, Neil, and James Jr.

On one mission to Munich right after bombs away the ship was hit by flak knocking out two engines making a forced landing in Switzerland almost an inevitability, but after an anguished discussion the crew elected to take their chances and to straggle back alone to Torretta.

Members of his crew were: Wilburn Kitchen-P, James P Spalding-C/P, John J Dunn-N, Edward H Cornell-B, Marvin Watson-E, Willie Wong-R/O, Lawrence A Moxely-B/G, Robert W Day-U/G, Patrick M Layne Jr-T/G, Robert Martin-N/G. Bill Miles served also as co/pilot for a short time, but was killed in action after getting his own crew. Radar Navigator Evan Houseworth flew some missions with the crew.

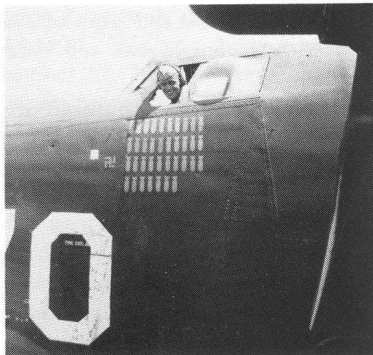
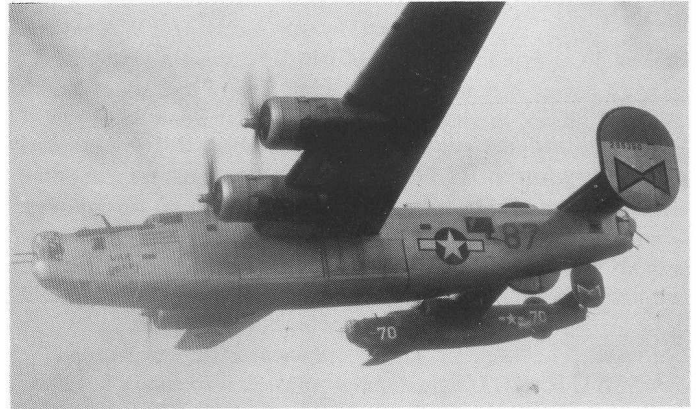


Photo (left) James Spalding in ship #70 note the patch in front of the swastika where flak entered the aircraft injuring pilot Wilburn Kitchen on May 7, 1944.



(Above)Ship #70 " Hot Rocks." (Shown in background) When Wilburn Kitchen (P) was wounded on May 7, 1944, James P Spalding (C/P) became the crew's first pilot and finished up the missions in that capacity. They flew also in the ship named Broad Abroad.



(Above) Bombs falling on the Szegeo R/R bridge, Hungary (not shown) 484th Bomb Group photo, September 29, 1944. from 19,000 feet,10:25 AM .



Spring 1944 Torretta Italy Standing in front of Broad Abroad are from left Evan Houseworth served also as 827 squadron Radar Navigator, and Edward Cornell who served as 827 squadron Bombarrier too.

◇◇,19,20,21◇◇

David L Douthright
co-pilot, 826 Squadron

Ernest S Thyberg
825 squadron

Ernest S Thyberg, ball gunner, Alva Schick's crew has died.

Joseph W Doody
764 squadron

Joseph W Doody 764 squadron passed away December,3 1983.

Tear Slip Torretta Flyer No #20, Spring-Summer 1991
1991 Reunion Kansas City, Missouri September 26-29, 1991
Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza

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 Membership No _____
 Wife's Name _____
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 Name of NCO (Ground Crews) _____
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BIG FENCE

By Sgt August Loeb
Yank Staff Correspondent

With the 15th Air Force, when in doubt, call *Big Fence*. That's the custom among 15th Air Force pilots needing advice or information to pull through a tough spot. Like the B-24 pilot over the Adriatic whose bombs were stuck and he wanted to find a way to get rid of them. He called Big Fence. The first sergeant of Big Fence put in a call to an ordnance outfit and had the information relayed over the air. The bombs were released and the bomber came in without further difficulty.

Big Fence is a VHF (very high frequency) outfit that specializes in getting planes out of trouble. It operates in high isolated spots where a few GIs, working entirely on their own, pick messages out of the air and relay them to a headquarters, just as remote as the out stations where bits of information are pieced together and are put into a form that pilots can understand and use.

Pilots and others in the 15th have done considerable guessing about the meaning of Big Fence. But Lt. Lloyd C. Willrecht of Campbell, Minn., communications officer, says the name is just a call sign and means nothing. It was chosen in North Africa two years ago when the 12th Air Force set up VHF operations under Capt. Donald P. White of New York City, who is still the CO of Big Fence. The name has stuck because it is easy to remember and easy to understand on the air.

The pilots have become so well acquainted with Big Fence procedure by now that the average conversation is terse and matter-of-fact but when you overhear it in the busy plotting room of headquarters it hits you with a dramatic impact.

The talk runs like this:

"Hello Big Fence. This is Restless, D for Dog."

"Hello D for Dog. This is Big Fence." "Hello Big Fence. This is D for Dog. Have two engines out and I am low on gas. Give me a steer to nearest base."

"Hello D for Dog. This is Big Fence. Transmit for homing."

"Hello Big Fence. This is D for Dog. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten."

"Hello D for Dog. This is Big Fence. Steer 180 degrees for Fireplug. You have about 80 miles to go."

"Roger, steer 180 degrees for Fireplug."

PILOTS looking for a steer to their home base are the main clients of Big Fence. But the VHF outfit also does a large business in "fixes" (giving locations in reference to some known point) air-sea rescue, weather relays and May Day messages. A May Day call (from the French, "m'aidez," meaning "help me") is the Big Fence equivalent of a four-alarm fire: It makes every-one around the place leap into action. Things move so fast that air-sea rescue has reached some pilots 30 minutes after the May Day signal was given.

"Most pilots surprise you by their calm," says S/Sgt. Lester Dolgoff of New York City plotting room chief. "They talk about low fuel and engine damage in a quiet conversational tone. I know

of only one case where a pilot got excited. He signaled, 'Hello Big Fence, I'm lost,' without giving either his name or the name of the plane."

Lt. Clarence J. Cole of Des Moines, Iowa, a former B-24 pilot now with the unit, points out that pilots often imagine a situation to be worse than it is and that Big Fence tries to put them at ease. "The main reasons for a plane's calling in are lack of fuel or shot-up controls. By giving them exact information, we try to make them take a brighter view and help to keep them from ditching when it isn't necessary. Emergencies frequently come under control."

In one rare instance Big Fence had vital information for a fighter pilot but no way of getting it to him. He made an emergency landing on a small island in the Adriatic and signaled his position. It happened to be the place where a group of heavies was headed for a practice bombing run. The fighter pilot had bombs exploding all around him but came through unhurt and was picked up by air-sea rescue.

NERVE center of the Big Fence system is in a 13th century castle that looks as isolated from the world today as it was in the Middle Ages. The men live near the castle and work so many shifts that hours for messing and sleeping follow no definite pattern.

Life in the out stations is even less regular. GIs assigned to DF (directional finder) duty often get snow-bound in trucks and have to exist without water and on slender rations until the weather clears. Cpl. Harry J. Burke of Kansas City, Mo., recalls the time snow was banked almost to the top of his truck and he had to break a window to start the DF motor. Another DF operator, Cpl. Joseph P. Cavalli of Detroit, Mich., remembers sweating out the mule packs that used to bring rations.

T/Sgt. Leon M. Taylor of Leesville, S. C., wire chief and acting first sergeant, points out that getting roads through to mountain tops and keeping them cleared is one of the unit's toughest jobs. When new stations are opened, everyone pitches in on this and other details.

Looking after all the VHF equipment is 41-year old M/Sgt. Frank H. Kessler of Ridgely, Md., who had his own radio shop for 14 years. Sgt. Kessler has built many intricate gadgets to keep Big Fence on the air at all times. He put together remote control units and rewired panels when the regular equipment was not available; he used a soldering iron to repair matching stubs and coaxial cables damaged when the wind blew down an antenna mast, designed and perfected a visual bearing meter for the DF stations, and eliminated a type of static caused by the beating of rain drops against the antennas.

Big Fence is without a TO. All its men are on DS from fighter squadrons and so many ratings are held open for the VHF unit. A paper transfer must be put through every time a man gets promoted, piling up work for S/Sgt. Donald E. Talley of St. Louis, Mo., chief clerk in the orderly room.

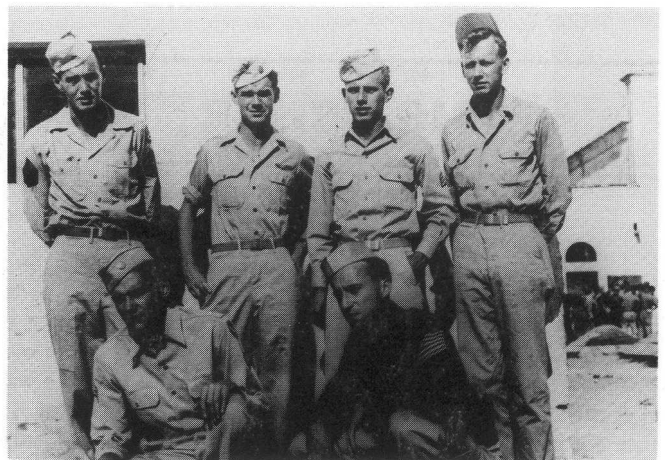
Lack of a TO and living in isolation might be expected to produce bitching but it's held down by the compensation the men find in their job.

"When pilots call in and thank us after completing a tour of duty," Sgt. Dolgoff observes, "we feel pretty good."

The End



Crew of "All American", Pilot Lt Arbuthnot flew this airplane on the mission to Linz ,Austria on 25 July, 1944. This was one of our rougher missions. Standing: L to R is Warren H Marsh, nose gunner; Hugh G Baker, upper turret, third person unknown. Kneeling L to R: Eliza S Massie, tail turret Eric C English, waist gunner Robert L Molyneux, waist gunner: Roy M Walkama, ball turret. Others kneeling are unknown ground personnel. (Hugh G Baker Photo)



Hugh G Baker also sent this crew photo, but they are not identified.



"All American" B-24. Tail Gunner Eliza S Massie Crew #16 Peering out of his turret. Date July 25, 1944. (Eliza S Massie photo)



"The Rover boys," probably of the 825 Squadron (William A Moncrief 824 Sq photo)

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