
The Torretta Flyer



The Torretta Flyer

Redondo Beach, California

Summer Fall 1994

No. 26



Jim Pool Photo

About This Issue

With this issue we return two features omitted from the last issue, 1) Letters To The Editor, and 2) The Last Mission. Also included is the report of the scholarship awards ceremony. Note that this issue is 44 pages long, the biggest Torretta Flyer to date. The collection of stories for this issue is somewhat eclectic, that is, the themes are diverse.

The stories in this issue came from several sources: the association's library, members, micro films, other bomb groups, and The Wall Street Journal. With regard to micro films, while visiting Atlanta to attend a convention, Bea and I drove down to Montgomery, Alabama to visit the Air Force Historical Research Agency located on the grounds of Maxwell Air Force base. We went to the agency to find more micro films for future purchase. Much of the material of interest to us is indexed on library cards and not always available on computer files. Our manual search through the cards was very time consuming. But even with just a short visit we succeeded in finding many microfilm reels. We were very appreciative of the help the library staff provided making our visit a memorable one. These films will provide material for future issues of the Torretta Flyer.

The information and photos of the Scholarship awards ceremony (pages 4-5) came too late for inclusion in the last issue. Communications with Italy are still a problem. Four students were honored last year, we will again award four scholarships in 1994.

The list of contributions to the Scholarship Fund (page 6) is continued from TF- 24. Contributions to date for the Plaque Fund are shown on page 6.

The "Tribute to my Engineer" (page 15) was reprinted by permission from the 2nd Air Division (all B-24s) publication, "Journal."

"Mission to Stuttgart" was sent to us by one of our members Joe Shugrue, 827 Sq. It is a strange tale almost unbelievable, but true as proved by the accompanying documents in the story. We are most grateful to Joe for providing the story.

"Attack on Flak Batteries" (page 22) was instigated by a letter from Austria by our dear friend Felix Rameder.

"The Business of Precision Bombing" (page 25) was first published in Straight and Level, a wartime publication of the 15th Air Force A-3 Training Section and Operations Analysis Section.

"B-24 Publications" is a listing of books and pamphlets in the Association's library. It can be used as a guide for acquiring publications dealing with this famous aircraft.

"Know your B-24 Series" is based on the information contained in US Army Aircraft 1908-1946 by James C Fahey.

A future issue of the Flyer will feature a story on the June 13, 1944 mission to Innsbruck. This mission earned the 484th Bomb Group its first Presidential Unit Citation. Members who flew this mission are urged to send in their remembrances to the editor.

Photo Credits: unless otherwise indicated, photographs were supplied by the authors, additional photos 484th Bomb Group Association.

Table of Contents



Torretta Flyer No 26. Summer -Fall 1994

Scholarship Awards for 1993.	4
Contributions to the Scholarship Fund.	6
Contributions to 484th Memorial Plaque Fund.	6
A Typical Mission, by T/Sgt Robert J Schaefer, 825 Sq.	7
Our Longest Mission, By Jack Robson, 826 Sq.	9
My Mission List, by David Ward 826 Sq.	13
Tribute to my Engineer, By T W Tikey 566 Bomb Group, 8th Air Force	15
Mission to Stuttgart, By Martin Andrews 306th Bomb Group, 8th A F.	16
Attack on Flak Batteries, from Micro Films	22
Safety of Demolition Bombs, from Straight & Level	24
The Business of Precision Bombing, from Straight & Level	25
B-24 Publications, from the 484th BG Assn. Library	27
Know your B-24, by James C Fahey	29
Letters to the Editor	30
We Have Not Forgotten, Reprinted by permission from the Wall Street Journal	37
The Last Mission, Obituaries	38
Poem by Al Solomon	43

News of the Association

Summer of 1994 finds the 484th Bomb Group Association going strong in spite of the medium age of our members and some losses due to ill health and passings. We are still finding new members but not at a complete replacement rate.

The 1994 Cruise Reunion

The 1994 Cruise Reunion leaves the port of Miami November 7, 1994 on board the "Ecstasy" There are still some good staterooms left, all outside cabins. There have been some slight rate adjustments since the last flyer was published. See the enclosed Cruise reunion bulletin for details. The cost of attending a land based reunion about equals the cruise price. The real difference is that one has to commit earlier for a cruise.

The 1995 reunion

The 1995 reunion will be held at the Dayton, Ohio Marriott September 13-17, 1995. Room rate is \$67.00. The Marriott is located just across from Carillon Park. The big event will be the installation of a memorial plaque at the Air Force Museum Memorial Park. Donations to the plaque fund are still in order. The association held a reunion in Dayton in 1982.

Committee Members

The Association is pleased to welcome Dick Muscatello to head the Scholarship Committee. Chris Donaldson will remain as advisor to the committee. Adolph Marcus has volunteered to work on the Membership Committee along with Charlie McKew.

CD ROM Drives Can Help Find New Members, volunteers needed

We would like to find more volunteers for the membership committee who have computers with CD-ROM drives. The search for new members has been made easier with the recent inexpensive release of a two CD disk set that contains all of the listed phone numbers in the United States. Of the approximately 4500 personnel that at one time or another attached to the 484th Bomb Group we have located approximately 1000 members, which leaves a good 3500 to contact. If you wish to join the membership committee's phone search and are suitably equipped, please contact the editor at 310/316/3330. Your help could make a big difference in keeping the Association healthy and growing. The disks are available for both the IBM and Macintosh computers.

The 484th PX List

- 1) 484th Bomb Group Association Pins: The pins display the new logo, an adaptation of the 484th Bomb Group design which first appeared on the face of the monthly reports and was later adapted and worn on the A-2 jackets of 484th Bomb Group personnel. Please Specify: ladies stick pin or men's tie tack \$5.00 each
- 2) 484th Bomb Group Association Patch. An embroidered shoulder patch of the 484th BG Insignia (Same design as the pin) is available at \$5.00 each
- 3) Antiqued B-24 Tie Tack pins are now back in stock at \$5.00 each
- 4) A new 484th Bomb Group Association baseball type cap in red and white displaying a side view of a silver B-24 on the peak is available for sale. \$10.00 each

Torretta Flyer Number #26 Fall-Winter

The
Torretta
Flyer



Issue No 26 Summer -Fall 1994

Copyright © 1994. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.

The Torretta Flyer is the official publication of the 484th Bomb Group Association. Normal distribution is limited to members only. Requests from non-members for 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 are preferable. Other forms also are acceptable. Please contact the editor for further information.

The Torretta Flyer reports primarily on the history of air warfare during WWII and the accomplishments of members of the 484th Bomb Group during WWII. From time to time the magazine will cover other subject matter related to aeronautical events as material becomes available. Readers are encouraged to submit their own stories or material from other sources.

Editor, Bud Markel
Associate Editor, Bea Markel

Board of Directors 1993-1994
484th Bomb Group, Bud Markel,
Bea Markel, Frank Valdez, John Billings,
and Charles McKew.

Scholarship Committee,
Dick Muscatello, Chairman, Joe Hebert,
Ross J Wilson,
Chris Donaldson, Advisor

Membership Committee
Charles McKew, Adolph Marcus

Publicity Committee, Clark Ecton
Adolph Marcus, Harold Toomey, Bud
Pressel, John Billings, Jack Robson.

Direct all inquiries to the Editor, Torretta
Flyer, 1122 Ysabel St. Redondo Beach, CA
90277-4453-13, USA Phone (310) 316-3330

1993 Scholarship Awards

The scholarship awards for the year 1993 took place on October 23, 1993, in Cerignola, Italy. The ceremony commenced at 6 PM in the auditorium of the Commercial Technical Institute. No association members were present at the ceremony. Scholarship awards of \$600 each were given to four students. They are: Stefania Costa, Rosmunda Bufo, Antonietta Gisario, and Davide Borrelli. The ceremony was attended by: Felice Grassi, Minister of Education, Foggia District, Professor Umberto Albanese, the Administrator of the scholarship program and honorary member of the Association, other dignitaries, the press, and families and guests of the awardees. This brings to a total 21 scholarships awarded by the Association since the first awards given in 1986. We continue to be grateful for the assistance of Professor Albanese of the Cerignola Technical Institute, who with his Associates, selects and recommends the Scholarship winners, and arranges for the media's continued prominent mention of the Bomb Groups' Scholarship program. The Scholarship Fund, from its outset has been a "No-Load Fund" and all contributions are designated solely for the scholarship awards.



From Left to right: Davide Borrelli, Stefania Costa, Professor Umberto Albanese, Antonietta Gisario, and Rosmunda Rufo.

The Letters From the Scholarship Awardees

The letters from the Scholarship recipients on this page are shown as received, and not edited



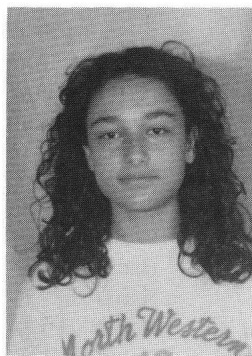
Dear members:

I'm very happy for the honor received from your association. This recognition is very important for me. In fact, it's difficult to work always with no gratification. You have given me an important satisfaction and your confidence gives me more self confidence. I hope always to be worthy of this scholarship. In fact, I'm still very young and today's life is difficult, but your confidence will help me to face my future problems in school and in other areas of life.

I don't know now what profession I'll start but I want and hope to be a good person like your predecessors who fought against Germany in my city. They were exemplary men and we must be their worthy successors. I thank you very much and I shall not forget your confidence in me.

Thanks.

Stefania Costa
Via Fratelli Bandiera II
71048 Stornarella, (FG) Italy
P.S. I'm sorry for my errors.



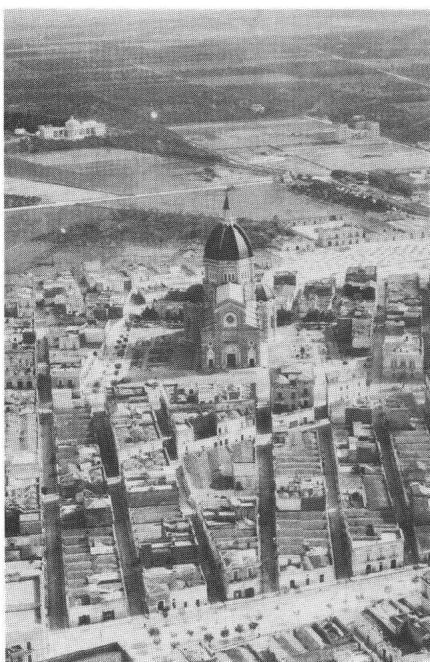
Dear members:

I'm very happy for the scholarship received and I'm filled with pleasure by your initiative in favor of the students of my town.

I think, in fact, that it is very good to motivate young people, not only by the scholarship recognition, but also by the example of the great values such as friendship, solidarity and the gratitude which still unites you with our people. I'm sorry for my possible errors which I hope to eliminate by studying in depth your beautiful language. I'll use your dollars for this) so that I can come to America.

Thank you very much.

Rosmunda Bufo.
Via XXV Aprile 3
71042 Cerignola
P.S. In the photo I was fourteen.

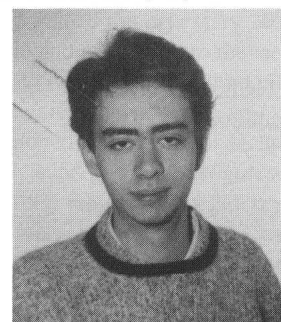


Dear Members:

The ceremony on October 23 was beautiful and it caused a great stir. It was a demonstration that friendship is a universal value. I thank you whole-heartedly. In our territory we have a pleasant recollection of you. If you will come to Italy, I should be glad to meet you. I enclose my photo and my address.

Yours sincerely

Antonietta Gisario
via Jolanola 110
71047 Stornara (FG)



Dear Members:

I thank you for the opportunity that you have offered me. In fact, I regard this scholarship very important for two reasons. At first, because it represents a particular moment of Italian and American people connected in one way by the war, but for another by the solidarity and friendship. Shakespeare asserts that "the good is often interred with their bones" but this grant is a demonstration that altruism is a universal value. Secondly, I consider this grant as a gratification for my study effort. With this scholarship I can pay the entrance fee to the college at Rome, but also as a personal satisfaction.


With my kindest regards.

Davide Borrelli

**Scholarship Contributions Received Since
the List published in Torretta Flyer No 24**

Abraham A	Abramoff	824	Ellsworth	Goodell	826	Lynn	Pennington	825
Melvin I	Albert	824	Tillman J	Gressitt	827	Louis A	Peterson	826
Arthur	Aldene	827	Donald G	Hanson	826	James D	Pool	827
Clyde S	Barr	824	Earl F	Harrison	825	Dennis W	Posten	824
John M	Billings	825	Russell L	Hawes	827	Harold D	Pressel Jr	825
Thomas J	Bolt	825	Joe	Hebert	826	Harold Ralph	Rigg	827
Robert L	Boone	825	Howard U	Heller	827	Mrs. Walter	Rix	824
Lee E	Boydston	825	Mike	Hendrickson	824	<u>Given in the memory of husband</u>		
Leonard	Brodsky	827	John	Hicks	826	<u>Walter Rix</u>		
John C	Brown	824	Eugene W	Hildebrand	825	Albin A	Rogers	824
Chester C.	Busch	484	John D	Jacobs	827	Ernest M	Ryan Sr.	826
Kelton G	Bush	767	Dan	Joba	826	Arthur J	Scholl	825
Ralph W	Carr	825	Mike	Karwoski	824	James B	Schoonover	825
George	Christie	765	Paul W	Kerr (S)	826	Edward	Schwartz	826
<u>Given in memory of Seymour Tenner</u>			George E	Kolbe	826	<u>Given in the memory of Alice Goodell</u>		
Richard E	Conroy	826	John F	Konop	824	Charles G	Shaffer	827
Arthur P	Coogan	827	Frederick D	Kuhn	826	Charles G	Shaffer	827
William J	Delonga Sr	824	James C	Langdon	825	Raymond L	Snyder	826
Robert J	Dieker	824	Charles	Lowell	827	Reed	Sprinkel	825
Frederick A	Dierksmeier	826	Joseph F	Malloy	827	Robert W	Tissing	824
Chris	Donaldson	765	Adolph	Marcus	824	Harold T	Toomey	824
Peter	Drill	484	<u>Given in memory of George Bouras.</u>			Frank J	Valdez	826
Ginny	Dudley	764	<u>Robert Kime, John B O'Neill, and</u>			David R	Ward	826
Colin E	Dye	826	<u>Robert Hughes</u>			Leonard P	Waterman	824
<u>Given in memory of brother</u>			Harrisburg	Marriott		Harry R	Watkins	827
<u>Keith Hamilton Dye</u>			Loe V	Matranga	825	Robert	Wehner	827
Franklin S	Ennis	824	Charles A	McKew	824	Edward J	Whalen	827
Bill	Franklin	766	Walter A	Menn	826	Orville L	Wildman	826
William G	Freeman	825	Dave	Mitchell	824	William F	Wilson	826
Anthony	Giammattei	827	Arnold P	Nagelhout	825	Thomas R	Woolcott	824
J Jordan	Glew	826	Edward M	Neafsey	827	Merle P	Yanney	824
J Jordan	Glew	826	Barrow F	Neale	826	Richard A	Yunghans	826

**Contributions to the 484th
Memorial Plaque Fund**

Arthur D	Aldene	827	Charles A	Harford	825	Robert C	Quinlan	825
Arthur C	Barkley	827	Harry K	Hubertz	824	Mrs Walter	Rix	824
Charles H	Bell	825	Mike	Karwoski	824	Ernest M	Ryan Sr	826
Keith	Berger	825	Edward J	Lechtanski	826	Harry	Sarmanian	824
Robert	Boone	825	M Lois	Locke	827	Arthur J	Scholl	825
Bernard	Bossick	824	Adolph	Marcus	824	Bill	Smoke	825
Jack F	Breen	824	Lloyd C	Mckenzie	825	Raymond L	Snyder	826
Robert P	Bush	827	Charles A	Mckew	824	Raymond M	Strand	827
Fred A	Dierksmeier	826	Dave	Mitchell	824	Robert J	Swanson	825
Peter	Drill	484	Robert J	Neid	826	Robert W	Tissing	824
Clark W	Ecton	825	Louis W	Odom	826	Frank J	Valdez	826
Skipper	Ellis Farkas	827	Lynn	Pennington	825	Carl H	Voss	826
Joseph	Ercole	824	Richard W	Peters	826	Robert	W Goble	826
E Harold	Fischbein	824	Louis A	Peterson	826	David R	Ward	826
Howard F	Glasser	827	Dennis W	Posten	824	Harry L	Watkins	827
Ellsworth E	Goodell	826	Reed	Sprinkel	825			

A Typical Mission!

By T/Sgt. Robert J. Schaefer

It was a cold, damp morning in February 1945 when Boone's Crew was awakened by Lieutenant John Roe, Navigator at 0500. The crew was scheduled to fly a mission that day.

After the usual complaints and groanings the crew moved through the Italian mud to the mess hall for early morning special breakfast for crews that were on call. We then assembled in the flight room for briefing of today's target. After preliminary comments by the Commanding Officer, he then drew the curtain aside on the large wall map which indicated that today's target would be Linz, Austria. Reaction from the crews was a large moan. This was because only Vienna, Austria had a greater concentration of over five hundred anti-aircraft guns than Linz, Austria. We were in for a rough ride. The weather was forecast for clear skies which increased the possibility of enemy fighters in the area.

We then picked up our heated flight suits, insulated boots, parachutes, oxygen masks, 45 caliber pistols, survival kits, etc. and we were off to the flight line. Some of us got lucky and hitched a ride on a fuel truck rather than the usual G.I. trucks. The fuel truck was a much smoother ride and it dropped us off on the hard stand reserved for number 35 B24G airplane called Stud Horse. This was the oldest plane on the base and had survived the most missions. We felt our luck was holding firm.

The flight plan called for starting engines at 0730. So just before the time most of the crew took a last minute breather to relieve themselves in the grass adjacent to the hard stand, as this was to be an eight hour mission.

The crew chief responsible for Stud Horse gave us a last minute thumbs up OK. Everything was in order. The gas tanks were topped off and the plane was as ready as it was ever going to be.

This was to be Boone's crew thirteenth mission. By this time our flight desk crew of Pilot Boone, Co-Pilot Sumerlin, Engineer Schaefer and Radio Operator Neutzlinger had become a little cocky or over confident feeling that we were experienced flyers. As a consequence we rushed through the prescribed pre-flight check lists.

While taxiing for take off Navigator Roe was doing his usual thing in the bomb bays. He was throwing-up green bile. This was a ritual with him but once we were in the air his stomach returned to normal. This particular day we were carrying four one thousand pound bombs which were going to be dropped on Linz Marshaling Yards.

Just before we were lined up for take off Top Turret Gunner Kelly switched off the put-put (the auxiliary ground electrical generator) Thank heavens as it smelled like hell while in operation. We then received the go ahead signal from the tower. Pilot Boone pushed the four engine throttles forward and we began our take off run.

Seconds later the heavy loaded plane was gaining speed for "Lift off." Pilot Boone pulled back the column for raising the nose but nothing happened. "The controls are locked." Sure enough! We had forgotten to release the safety strap which locked the controls while the plane was on the ground. To make matters worse, in our haste to rush through the pre-flight check we also did not set in 20 degrees of flap to increase lifting power of the Davis wing foil. Luckily being young and still having good reaction time we were able to unhook the control strap at about the time we were approaching ninety miles per hour and three quarters of the way down the runway. We were also able to crank in some flap. From the ground it looked like a normal take off. We on the flight deck knew better.

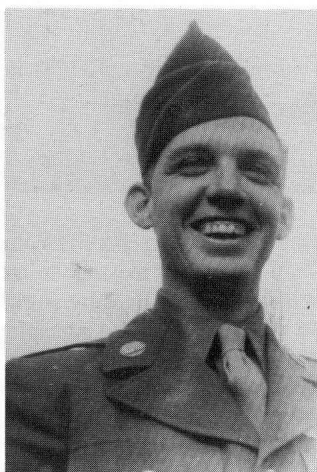
From then on, for awhile, routines took over. We gained altitude and assumed our assigned position as tail end Charley in D flight. After hours of circling we gained the necessary 20,000 plus feet of altitude and proceeded to the target. This was a large raid of over one hundred planes.

As we neared the target Radio operator Neutzlinger moved from the flight deck as he was assigned to fly a .50 caliber waist gun as was the Engineer. Shortly thereafter I began my journey through the bomb bay to the waist. To this day I don't know what prompted me to take a large oxygen bottle rather than the smaller oxygen bottle which I usually used.

Half way through the bomb bay my parachute harness got caught on the cat walk. Try as I might to wiggle loose I couldn't. I was really stuck. Just about then the bombardier opened the bomb bay doors. Immediately the wind caught my oxygen bottle, which was now flying loosely in the air but fortunately didn't rip off my oxygen mask. The temperature also seemed to drop about fifty degrees.

While I was stuck in the bomb bay it was time for "bombs away". I saw three of the bombs released and seconds later they exploded in the marshaling yards. But the fourth bomb got hung up and was not released. Luckily I was close enough to give it one swift kick and it finally left the plane. At the same time that extra effort seemed to loosen my stuck parachute harness and I was finally able to move back to the waist. The only trouble was that I was completely exhausted. I laid on the floor just able to hook up into the planes main oxygen supply as my walk around bottle was now completely empty of the life giving oxygen.

As I laid there on the floor Tail Gunner Porter was motioning frantically to me to plug in the inter phone headset in my helmet. Doing so I heard Pilot Boone requesting me to return to the flight deck immediately. I said "give me a break, I'm pooped, I just spent an eternity stuck in the bomb bay". He said with emphasis, "Get



your ass up here now, number two engine is on fire from a flack hit." Needless to say I recuperated fast and proceeded post haste back to the flight deck. We were able to put out the fire and feather the prop.

We were now alone but found our way back to base without any further mishaps. At the de-briefing session one of the crew said he saw a German jet plane off in the distance. But no one else saw it so that sighting was discounted. Upon examination of the damage done to Stud Horse it was found to have a big hole caused by flack in the floor of the plane and up through the top of the plane. That hole was in the exact same spot where I should have been standing had I not been stuck in the bomb bay. The damage was eventually repaired and "Stud Horse" was to fly again and eventually survived to the end of the war.

Later that night and subsequent nights when we had time to relax and think about the day's happening, I prayed to the Lord. I said, Lord, please get me out of this mess in one piece and I will let my life take any direction which you might want me to go." I thought, "How stupid can a man get?" Here we had ten good men on our plane dropping bombs on other human beings and they in turn are trying to shoot us down. Surely there were also other good men on the ground. How foolish! I vowed at that time to try to do something more positive in the future to help correct this folly of man's inhumanity to man.

Some months later the war in Europe ended. We were shipped home, given a month's furlough and we were then scheduled to be sent to the Pacific for the war with Japan. In the meantime President Harry Truman made the right decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Shortly thereafter Japan sued for peace. The war was over and we were all discharged.

Somewhere along the way something in my conscience told me to go to college and become a teacher. This I did. After thirty-eight years as a teacher and



school Principal, I look back and honestly believe this was God's message to me to give back to society something of myself. Perhaps by working with young people trying to help them to get a good education we will realize that wars are for losers and World War III cannot happen under any circumstances.

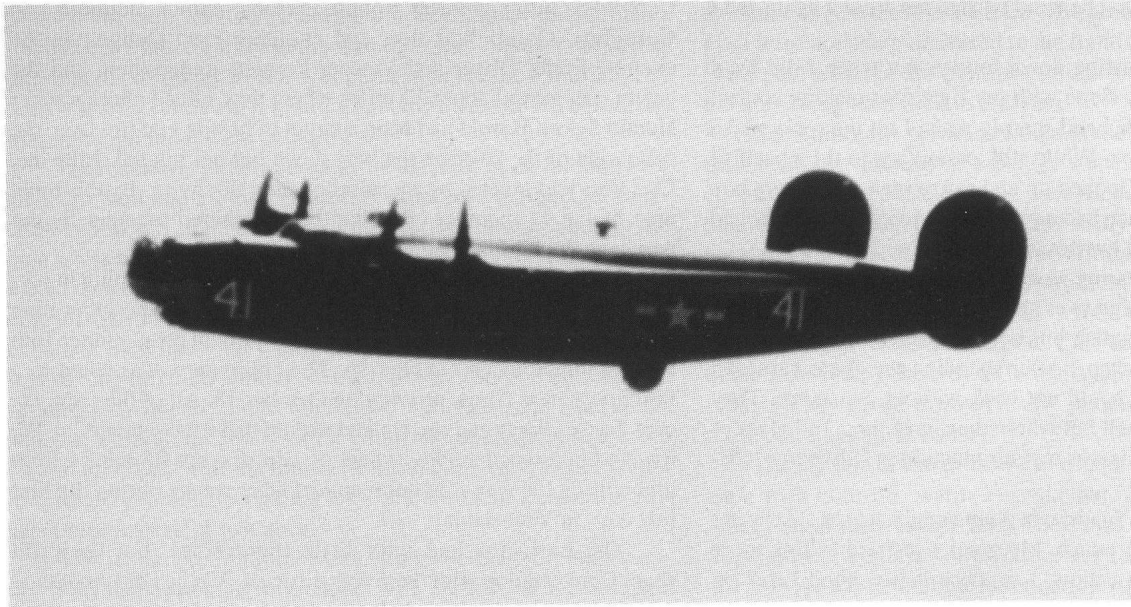
I also would like to think that the fourth bomb, which was hung up finally landed about fifty miles outside of Linz, Austria in some farmers' pasture creating a large hole in the ground which then filled up with water and fish. Now the local young kids and possibly their grandfathers have an ideal fishing hole for summer afternoons of fun and laughter. Is that wishful thinking?



Photo 1 April 2, 1945 St. Polten Marshaling Yards, Austria, axis of attack 310 degrees. Altitude 19106 feet. Time of attack 12:48 PM. 826 Squadron.

Our Longest Mission

by Jack Robson



The October 14, November 23, 1944 Mission

As I left the tent that morning for the mission briefing, I remember Ken Dowdy stirring in his cot and saying to me, "See you later this afternoon." Bob Warne and John Dooley, the other members of my original crew bunked in the same tent, were not awake. None of them would fly that day. It was October 14, 1944.

I remember too, the usual buzz when the wall map was uncovered at briefing. The line on the map traced our route across the Adriatic, then past Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia to the southeastern section of Germany. It was a long mission. For our crew it was especially so. It lasted 39 days.

Our crew that day was described later by Carl Voss, our navigator, as a "potpourri" crew. Carl meant that most of our people were from several different regular crews and were flying together for the first time. However, nine of the eleven had flown twenty or more missions and four of us had a mission count over forty.

The assignment was to bomb the Odertal oil refinery in the Blechhammer area of Germany. Takeoff was scheduled to begin at 0756 and estimated return was 1536; we all departed a little late due to weather. Events proceeded routinely for us until approximately 1210, (about five minutes before the IP) when a runaway prop problem developed. Repeated efforts to toggle back did not help. Finally, it was necessary to feather the engine. Although power was increased in the other engines we were not maintaining our proper formation position. (Charlie 21). With three other planes flying close formation on us, it was important to relinquish our place by dropping down and back. As we made that move the other pilots properly adjusted filling up the spot we vacated. I attempted

to tag to the rear of the flight but by then we were below and behind the formation and we were not maintaining altitude or distance. I decided to return to base. It was the first time in over 40 missions that I had to abort other than with the total group due to bad weather.

(We learned much later that the Group also did

not carry out the original mission because of weather cover over the target but bombed an alternate target in Hungary.)

After leaving the group we continued to have problems maintaining constant altitude with our full load of bombs so we jettisoned two of them. Later, Frank Oliver, bombardier spotted a small factory on course ahead of us. We decided to make a bomb run on it as we passed over and the crew reported that Frank had straddled the target with several hits.

Although we were flying alone deep in enemy territory we did not encounter any enemy fighters and only light flak along our early route back to base. Somewhere in Hungary we received radio contact from a P-51 flight leader of three planes who indicated he would provide cover for us. We never did spot these escorts but their radio contact did help to relieve crew tension. The relief did not last.

Around Lake Balaton our flight engineer, Fred Dodge, and Carl Voss, navigator, reported that we had only about 20 minutes fuel remaining. We were still at least one hour away from the Yugoslavian coast. It was clear then that we would not be making it back to base that day and I would not be seeing Ken Dowdy later in the afternoon. I advised the crew of our situation and told them to be prepared for bailout on short notice. We also evacuated "Chief" Waukolee from the ball turret.

Shortly after this another solo B-24 from the 461st group joined us. The 461st crew watched us bail out over Yugoslavia after another engine cut out. When they returned to base they reported the event and our position (near the point where the Sava and Una rivers join SW of Zagreb). Eleven of us (including a photographer) were scattered around the hills about 45-55 miles south-southwest of Zagreb.

When I bailed out, I pulled the rip cord quickly, too quickly.

As my chute jerked me around when it opened and I could see a shape that looked like an ME 109. I also heard gunfire and cursed myself for opening my chute too soon. At first, I believed I was under attack. However, this was not so. I concluded the plane was a P-51 whose pilot had observed us bailing out, counted the chutes and then began firing at our B-24 to assure the bombsight would not fall into enemy hands. The wind twisted me around again and I lost sight of both planes.

It seemed I was floating down forever but when I did hit it was hard and on a rocky slope with my right foot making contact first. I felt my right ankle bend sharply when I hit the rocks and a sharp pain shot up my leg. While still attempting to rid myself of the parachute harness, I looked up and saw a man and young boy standing over me. The man had a pitchfork pointed at my chest and jabbed it in my direction but not touching me with it.

This fellow was wearing an army hat with a red star insignia. I immediately began saying over and over, "I am American." They could not understand English but both of them responded favorably to the word "American." After shedding the chute harness I tried to rise but found I could not walk without assistance. They helped me move to a small hut where they gave me a full glass of water-or so I thought. This was my introduction to "Slivovitz." (Sljivovica).

Slivovitz is a potent Yugoslavia plum brandy. It looks like water but it packs a whale of a punch. My greeter insisted I drink more than that first choking swallow. I suppose it was good I did sip some more because I still was not sure of what he might do with his pitchfork. Besides, my ankle and leg were really beginning to throb. That stuff helped me significantly as my journey continued.

Two other young people joined us and all of them helped me to a farmhouse. After dark the first boy brought a small cart with two large wooden wheels pulled by an ox. He indicated I should get into the cart and we began to move away with the large wooden wheels of the cart bouncing over the rocks. We were not moving very fast, but every time we hit a rock and the cart jerked to one side or the other, my ankle felt like it was coming apart.

My memory of exactly where I spent that first night in Yugoslavia is dimmed after all these years. I had no idea then where I had come down nor how far I traveled in the cart or in what direction. It seemed like we traveled for hours in the dark.

However, I remember well my introduction to a much larger group of Yugoslavians-about 20 very rugged looking individuals at a cabin in the hills. They were well armed. Oil or kerosene lamps were being used for illumination at the cabin. There was an immediate controversy in this group with some of them acting very hostile while others were friendly.

The leader of the group began questioning me in broken English and told me that some of them thought I was a German spy and wanted to execute me immediately. He began to ask me questions about Pennsylvania which I apparently answered to his satisfaction because he ruled in my favor explaining he had worked there some years earlier in a coal mine. Then he informed me I would be staying with them the rest of the night and part of the next day. In the morning he also told me that other Americans had been picked up in the surrounding area, but he did not know how many.

Meantime, Frank Oliver had landed near a river, was dazed from hitting a tree, tore a ligament in his knee and could not move very far. Frank did see several people searching the hillside and when he spotted one wearing a "Red Star" he hailed him.

Frank was taken to partisan troops nearby where he joined

radio operator, Vincent Fornieri. Frank was given a horse to ride. They traveled to the area of Buzim where the rest of the crew, except Reimer and me had been collected by partisans. Copilot Henry Walrond was picked up immediately upon landing. It was his 21st birthday and his 1st mission.

Two to three hours later Henry was reunited with navigator Carl Voss, turret gunners Robert Parsons, Arthur Dunmire and Cornelius (Chief) Wakolee, and engineer Fred Dodge. In the evening Frank Oliver and Vincent Fornieri joined them and the group was moved about 12 miles where they joined photographer Herald Sykes. Harold had been a target of hostile gun fire from the other side of the river on the way down but not injured. Like me, Carl Voss was greeted by a peasant bearing Slivovitz. By this time, nine of the 11 member crew had been gathered together by the partisans. It was late October 14, 1944.

The first day ended with these crew members sleeping in partisan homes. On October 15, I was reunited with the other nine crewmembers and we traveled to Kladusa where nose-gunner Tom Reimer joined us on October 16. The entire crew was taken to a farmhouse near Glina, arriving on October 18. All of the crew except Frank Oliver and me walked during these movements. We traveled in a wooden two-wheel ox cart. Except for apples from orchards on the way I do not recollect what we ate during the first few days in Yugoslavia.

The partisans had very little themselves, but they did share. Conversation with them was difficult. We just did what they signaled we should do. I do know they favored moving at night. We really had no idea how many miles we traveled while being collected together or in the group movement later. The farmhouse was near a partisan headquarters. Some of the later records obtained from archives at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama indicate that members of the crew were picked up near or traveled through such Yugoslavian villages as Pecigrad, Kladusa, Topusko, Buzim, Gospic and Bihac.

Two days after arriving at the farmhouse all of us were taken to a relatively flat area which had been cleared of rocks. We were informed we would soon be picked up and flown back to Italy. It had turned dark when we were dazzled with fires lit by the many partisans with us and almost simultaneously a plane approached a makeshift runway area outlined by the fires. Just about the time the plane was about to land, the partisans began firing their weapons into the air, creating a tumult of noise and glow of tracers in the night sky. It looked like a fourth of July celebration. The pilot of the incoming plane gunned the engines, aborted his landing and took off into the night. That ended the attempt to evacuate us by air.

We learned later that the weapon firing was a joyous celebration by the partisans of the news that Belgrade had just been liberated by a joint Russian/Partisan force. It was October 20, 1944.

The aborted incident on October 20 was the last attempt to move us out of Yugoslavia by any means for some time. Days began to pass at the farmhouse with no news of what was happening, although our group did grow larger. Three black P-51 pilots joined us. However, unknown to us, the group to be evacuated was growing by significant numbers elsewhere.

Apparently, several collections were taking place because by the time we actually were on our way out of Yugoslavia by land our travel companions numbered: 62 Americans, 26 British, 29 French, two Belgians, one Dutch and one Greek. Many of these people were former prisoners of war who had escaped a prison camp at Ljubljana during a bombing raid. Enroute, we were also joined by

additional Jewish refugees. This information comes from declassified escape reports in the archives at Maxwell Field.

In the meantime my ankle was slowly getting better and by the middle of November, I was able to move about with minimum help. Frank's knee had also mended. We began to know and appreciate our hosts at the farm. Sam Mitic was, I believe, the prewar owner of the farm, and Goraje Seliste was his daughter-in-law. Sam's son had been killed earlier in the war. Sam was 76 years old at that time and his daughter-in-law was perhaps in her mid-thirties. The farm was small and I am not sure what crops were raised before the war, although there were orchards.

The rocks everywhere certainly would have made farming very difficult. Sam had a long broomstick-size pole he used for exercises and would stand in front of us with both hands holding the pole while twisting himself around this pole in complex ways. He would then challenge any of us to repeat his contortions and whenever we failed he would laugh heartily at us and swear in Serbian-Croatian. Sam had a very long grey-white handlebar mustache. It was so long he could wind it once around his ears and he was fond of doing so frequently. Frank Oliver also had a mustache. But Frank's was pitch black and short with a Groucho appearance. When the "old man" would curl his mustache around his ears, Frank would immediately simulate wrapping his black mustache around his own ears twice instead of just once.

This would prompt some more violent Serbian-Croatian cussing. Sam also owned his own copper still. On at least one occasion I recall, Sam began his production of Slivovitz. He was extremely disturbed over a decision by the communist commissar to confiscate the only cow Sam had left.

The cow was butchered and only a very small part was returned to Sam. It was a very thin animal and almost appeared to be diseased. I advised our crew not to eat any of it. But back to the distilling of Slivovitz. Throughout this particular day, Sam was collecting the distillate in a glass and drinking it as fast as it was being produced. He kept drinking all day, offering a drink now and then to us. By evening he was thoroughly looped and was cussing anything and everything in sight, especially the communists. This was dangerously unhealthy for Sam and so his daughter-in-law put him to bed.

During our stay at the farm we were fed whatever Sam and his daughter-in-law had to eat - practically always boiled cabbage and very dark black bread. I don't believe any of us lost weight on this diet, but I do remember the arguments we would have over the excess "gas" that would float over our long common sleeping bunk.

While we were in Yugoslavia we were aided significantly by the ability of Harold Sykes to understand some of their language. Harold was a native born Czechoslovakian and although he was not fluent, we did manage simple conversation with his help. Some of the language spoken probably was Arabic or Turkish because some of these people were Muslims.

We were never quite sure who had what background. I learned only recently from an escape report I found at Maxwell AFB that the partisan group near Glina was a Muslim brigade. I think it was the communist commissar who let it be known early after our arrival that for the duration of the war a policy had been put in place directing that any Yugoslavian woman who got pregnant would be executed and the man responsible would join her. We did not test the truth of his statement.

As the ranking officers of our crew, Frank Oliver and I drew the questions and criticisms of some of the partisan leaders. They

would ask us why they were not getting more help from the Americans to fight the Germans or to supply their troops. Generally, Frank and I could offer very little response to them because it was true they were operating without most of the necessities. Their weapons generally were taken from the enemy they killed. Later, when we approached the coast of Yugoslavia, we did observe physical evidence of America's assistance. The problem was that these supplies were not being delivered to the fighting men but instead were in the possession of the "politicos". Additionally, much of the material was being identified as Russian.

Sometimes the partisans would invite us to go along on one of their forays to ambush or sabotage some enemy activity. We declined each time, explaining we were trained as fliers, would get in their way more than help them, and really needed to return to our base as soon as possible to resume efforts we were trained to do. We apparently were not too far away from enemy activity because the partisans would frequently leave for a few days and return, occasionally with walking wounded. Carl Voss reported he and some of the crew were strafed by a German plane while walking to Glina village. They saved themselves by jumping off the road into the ruins of a stone farm house.

During one of the trips to the village, some of the crew came back with colorful, warm Yugoslavian blankets purchased with money from their escape kits. They sure came in handy because the nights at the farm were getting very cold. Frank Oliver and I did not visit Glina until the latter period we were at the farm due to our leg and ankle problems. We talked while the other crew members were gone and he helped me a lot when my mind would start a retrospect debate of "good decision/bad decision" about the bailout and how much further we could have flown. These discussions would usually end with Frank assuring me all the crew members agreed the right decision was made at the right time and no one wanted to tangle with the coastal range in front of us, either in a plane or parachute, or risk ditching our B-24 in the Adriatic.

Essentially, we seemed to be in a safe area controlled by the partisans who were making an attempt to return to normal life. For example near the farmhouse where we were being kept they had started a school and required the children to attend, a sharp contrast to prewar policy in that country. We saw no first hand evidence of German activity or of the notorious Ustase (the German-Italian sponsored radical Croatian nationalist group). The Ustase reputation for horrible atrocities was a verified fact and even the Nazis had repudiated them by this time in the war. One of these atrocities took place in the village of Glina before the partisans successfully seized control of the area. In this instance all the male inhabitants of Glina were herded into the church which was set afire while the Ustase waited with guns and shot any who tried to escape the flames.

Sometimes we would see vapor trails as our planes crossed over Yugoslavia bound for targets. JU-52's flew regularly over us, probably between Zagreb and Sarejevo, in the morning hours. Other than that and news of partisan exploits, the war for us had effectively stopped during the month at the farm near Glina. We kept pondering when and how we were going to get back to Italy.

After a time, in addition to the gaseous problem mentioned earlier, we all started having trouble with lice and had to take turns picking them off each other. When we returned one of the first actions was a thorough delousing.

Yearning for home and a desire for resolution of our status was in our minds constantly. Sometimes tempers grew a bit short. We kept wondering what was happening in the war. At home, our

loved ones were profoundly affected by the October 14 mission. My wife of six months (now 50 years) received a "regrets" telegram on November 2, followed later by confirming letters. I am sure the other crew members' next of kin received similar messages. We had it easy, at least we knew we were alive and well. Robert Bell-one of the P-51 pilots with us at the farm-provided some much needed diversion for all of us, including the Yugoslavians. Bell would sing and tap dance and he attracted some visitors from the local area.. He was very likable, talented and very black. For most of the Yugoslavians, our three P-51 pilots were the first black people they had ever seen. I guess Bell especially aroused their curiosity because the word Bell means "white" to them. (So I was told).

On November 18, 1944 we were advised we would be leaving for the Yugoslavian coast and began our move to another location where we joined some of the 120 plus people who would eventually make up our party. We left there crammed into three trucks, one of which was reserved for the partisans who were escorting us. There was no room to sit and whenever we were in the truck we stood packed together in the open area behind the truck cab. As I remember it was a very large Italian truck and very old.

As it turned out we did not have to stand very long at a stretch because soon we were on an unpaved twisting, turning mountain road filled with ruts and shell holes requiring us to get out of the truck almost constantly. Much of the trip was walking up the mountains or hills and then down again and then up again. Nobody much cared because we were on our way.

We were unloaded at most of the shell holes so that the trucks could be cajoled past each one. In some cases there were steep drop offs at one side and I remember watching with amazement as the partisans piled some rocks in the hole, then placed themselves at the drop off side and physically pushed the truck as far as possible to the safe side when the driver inched past.

We reached Obravic after midnight and stayed there the rest of that night. There was a delay going into Obravic and the sound of gunfire could be heard. Most of the escorting partisan group had gone ahead of us and we could only assume there was some sort of skirmish prior to our getting the OK to proceed. Carl reported he saw some bodies as we pulled into the village.

At Obravic, after consultation with a partisan leader and a British officer, it was agreed Frank Oliver (who held a Captain rank) would remain in Obravic as long as necessary to manage further movements since not all of the evacuees could be immediately accommodated on the next leg of the journey. The rest of our crew, including me, left Obravic for Zara (Zadar) the following morning. Once again we were on a road with plenty of switchbacks, but this time it was mostly downhill to sea level. We arrived after dark and stayed the night on a British cruiser. We arrived at Ancona, Italy on November 22 after a jolting ride across the Adriatic via the British destroyer HMS Hammersby. We slept on the floor in an ordinance depot at Ancona that night and were transferred to 15th Air Force Headquarters at Bari on November 23 via C-47. After a good meal, a thorough delousing, a good bath, some new clothes and a debriefing by intelligence officers we were flown back to our base at Torretta.

Frank returned to Italy later with the last of the group of over 120 escapees, evadees and refugees. Our longest mission was over.

The mission of October 14, 1944 was, for me and others on the crew, the most memorable of all those we flew. Details of those

days are more entrenched in memory than any of those involving intense combat such as Lobau, Vienna, Munich, Ploesti, Blechhammer etc.

When we bailed out over Yugoslavia it was with considerable trepidation. The onerous reputation of the Ustase and the lack of information of who controlled what territory in Yugoslavia was disturbing to say the least. We apparently bailed out at the right place, God was with us that day and those that followed.

The situation in Yugoslavia today is even more disturbing. In 1944 there was a common enemy (except for the Ustase) and dedication to the liberation of their country. This was enough to put aside old enmities, at least for a time. Today the old disputes (many with religious origins) have erupted again and terrible acts of war and atrocities between groups within the former Yugoslavia are common daily events.

The people who helped us in 1944 were a mixture of Croatian, Serbian and Moslem unified by the Partisans and all fighting for a common cause. We are indebted to them and especially to a number of Moslem people we encountered. It is our prayer that the present terrible conflict can soon end.

As pilot that day I worried for years afterward about the loss of a valuable B-24 airplane and what went wrong with the first engine ?-what happened to all the gas ?-was there a terrible mistake made in gas transfer ?-how could the bailout have been avoided?

That mission was the first time I ever had to turn around before reaching the target in nearly 50 missions and it bothered me. But after all this time I can truly say I am at peace with myself. It all turned out Ok. All 11 of the crew returned safely and completed their tours of duty.

I flew my last mission on December 17, led by Col. Keese. It was back to Odertal with a newly arrived crew from the US, except for Fred Dodge who was along again as Engineer-gunner. From historical records I learned that there was heavy fighter resistance and plenty of flak.

Our group was credited with eight enemy fighters downed-five of them by 827th Squadron gunners and one each by the 824th, 825th and 826th. But unlike October 14, I don't remember anything about that mission, except that it was the last of 35.

Now after nearly 50 years I have been privileged to attend recent reunions with some of the October 14th crew. At the association's Dearborn reunion there was the emotional meeting with Frank Oliver when neither of us was aware the other would be attending. Then at Harrisburg, I spent many hours with Carl Voss and Henry Walrond. We were all disappointed Frank Oliver and others of the crew were not there. None of us was aware that Frank was so ill or his time so short. I have learned recently that Tom Reimer could not attend the Harrisburg reunion because he is now seriously ill. It is truly too bad we lose touch with each other over the years; however, the good memories from years long ago and from recent reunions shall always remain.

I would be delighted to hear from any of the crew anytime, especially those we have not yet been able to contact. At this time I do not know the status and/ or whereabouts of Fred Dodge, Art Dunmire, Vince Fornieri, Robert Parsons, "Chief" Wakolee, or Harold Sykes.

** Mission totals reflect policy of double credit for some missions which apparently was discontinued while we were in captivity.*

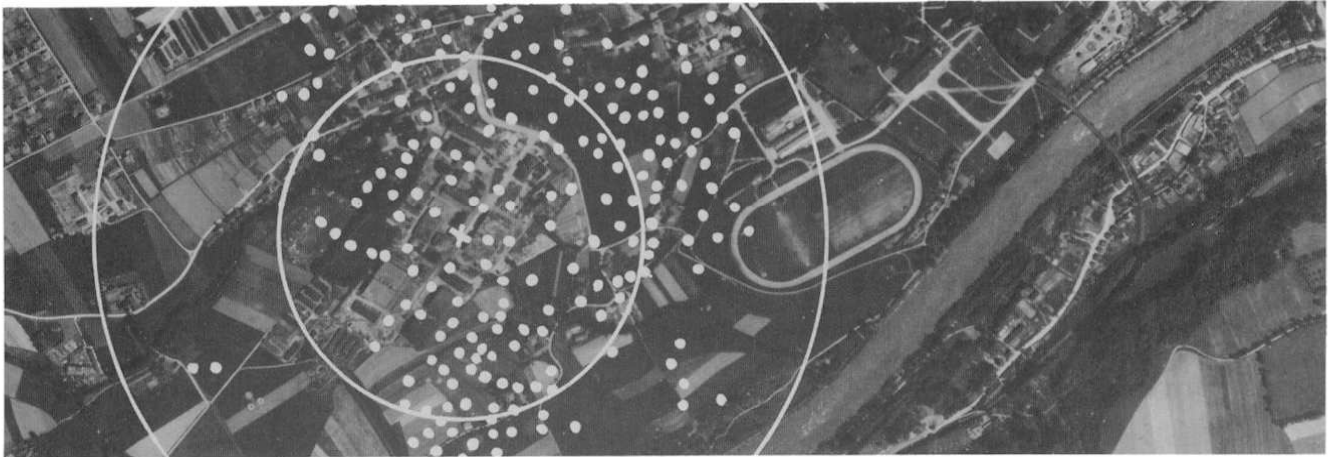


Missions Flown By David Ward 484th Bomb Group

Preface:

I always felt that the 826 squadron was very fortunate that we did not lose many planes or crew members. Our navigator Carl Voss became ill just after we got to Italy and he was in the hospital at Bari until we had almost finished our fifty missions. He never did fly a combat mission with us. We were assigned a substitute navigator until about the end of June. Then the squadron commander came in the tent one day and asked me if I had studied navigation as a cadet. I told him that I had a quick course on it while waiting for Bombardier School, but didn't consider myself that good. He said he thought I was, so we would get no navigator for the rest of the missions. That is why you will see the notation "no navigator."

Legend *Single Mission ** Double Mission GP = General purpose bombs. Example, 9-500# GP = five 500 pound general purpose bombs. Hrs.= hours, length of mission. Alt.= Alternate target.



*4-30-44 Alessandria, Italy marshaling yards. No flak or fighters. 150 direct hits 7.5 hrs. All returned 8-500# GP bombs.

**5-6-44 Pitesti, Rumania marshaling yards. No flak no fighters. 7.5 hrs. All returned, 9-500# GP.

**5-7-44 Bucharest, Rumania marshaling yard. 4 holes, flak intense, heavy inaccurate. No fighters 8 Hrs. All returned 9-500# GP, #2 & 4 engines out.

*5-12-44 Via Reggio, Italy target cloudy. Hit alternate RR. yards. No flak, no fighters. 6.5 Hrs. All returned 9-500# GP.

*5-14-44 Padua, Italy hazy - hit wrong target. Hit RR. yards. Flak light, inaccurate. No fighters. 5 Hrs. All returned 10 500# GP. Hit Piavo Desacco by mistake.

*5-17-44 Porto Farraio, Italy, Elba Island harbor facilities. Sunk Ship. Heavy Flak, accurate. 6 Holes. No fighters. 6 Hrs. 10-500# GP. All returned.

5-19-44 Recco, Italy RR. yards. Very cloudy. Bombs returned. 6 Hrs. All returned 3-2000 GP. No Mission Credit.

*5-23-44 Subiaco, Italy road block small target. No Flak or fighters. 4.5 Hrs. All returned 10-500# GP.

**5-24-44 Weiner Nuestadt, Austria. Target airfield. Cloudy hit alternate Zagreb, Yugoslavia marshaling yards. Flak intense heavy, accurate. No fighters 7 Hrs. All returned 9-500# GP.

*5-26-44 Lyons, France marshaling Yards. Very good results huge fires. No Flak or fighters 9 Hrs. All returned 9-500# G.P.

5-27-44 Salon, France airfield. 2-Super chargers out. Aborted mission. No flak or fighters. 9-500# GP returned. No Mission credit.

** 5-30-44 Wels, Austria air craft factory destroyed. Lost Engine and altitude short of the target dropped bombs on railroad anti aircraft train from 15 000 ft. Knocked out

track between Linz and Steyr Had P-38 protection back to Italy. 9-500# GP. 7 Hrs. Enemy aircraft in the vicinity but did not attack.

**6-2-44 Szolnok, Hungary marshaling yards. Slight flak ,heavy inaccurate. No fighters. All returned 7 Hrs. 9-500# GP.

*6-4-44 Bussoleno, Italy. Weather was undercast. Hit alt. Recco Viaduct. Flak heavy inaccurate. No Fighters 9.5 hrs. 6-1000# GP. All returned. No gas left.

*6-5-44 Marradi, Italy RR Bridge 8 direct Hits 5 hrs. Flak slight, heavy, inaccurate. No Fighters. 6-1000# GP. All returned.

6-7-44 Nice, France Var River Bridge, demolished target. Flak heavy accurate. T/Sgt. Thomas Key KIA. T Sgt. Alvin Petrillo wounded. 425 holes in the Plane. 16 heavy Guns 8 Hrs. No fighters. 6-1000# GP. Emergency landing on Corsica.

**6-13-44 Munich, Germany heavy clouds. Hit alt. at Innsbruck. Flak heavy accurate. 20 holes. Fighters Me-109 & 210 JU88, FW 190. Lost 6 planes. 9-500# GP. Number 3 & 4 engine out on landing. 7.5 hrs.

*6-14-44 Szony, Hungary. Heavy clouds. Hit alt. at Split Yugoslavia. No flak. No fighters. 5.5 hrs 18-250# GP. All returned.

**6-23-44 Giurgiu, Rumania oil refinery. Huge fires, flak Heavy, accurate. All returned. 7 hrs. 5-1000# GP

*6-24-44 Avignon, France railroad marshaling yard. Lead ship malfunction. Bombs returned. Flak heavy, inaccurate, many dogfights. 8.5 hrs.

**6-28-44 Bucharest, Rumania marshaling yards. Flak heavy, inaccurate. Sgt. Dowling shot down Me-109 All returned. 8 hrs. 9-500# GP.

*6-30-44 Blechhammer, Germany. Clouds prevented penetration. Flak heavy, inaccurate. No Fighters. 7 hrs. 9-500# Incendiaries dropped in Adriatic Sea.

**7-2-44 Budapest, Hungary. Good results round house destroyed. Huge fires. Flak heavy, accurate. 9-500# GP 6.5 hrs. 1 large hole. No Navigator.

**7-3-44 Bucharest, Rumania Oil Refinery. Smoke up to 20 000 ft Flak heavy, accurate. 9-500# GP 7 hrs. No Navigator.

*7-5-44 Beziers, France marshaling yards. Fair results. Flak light, accurate. Lost 3 Planes. 9-500# GP. 8.5 hrs. No Navigator.

*7-6-44 Aviano, Italy oil storage tanks. No Flak. No fighters. All returned. No Navigator. 9-500# GP. 6 hrs.

*7-11-44 Toulon, France submarine pens. Smoke screen obscured target. Flak heavy, accurate. No fighters. 9-500# GP Bombs. 8 hrs. No Navigator.

*7-12-44 Nimes, France marshaling yards #1& 2 Engines knocked out. Landed at Corsica. Flak heavy, accurate. ME-109 Fighters 20 Holes. No navigator. 9-500# GP Bombs. 6 hrs.

*7-14-44 Petfurdo, Hungary Oil Refinery. Flak slight, inaccurate. No navigator. 5-1000# GP Bombs. 6.5 hrs.

*7-15-44 Ploesti, Rumania Oil Refinery. Smoke visible 100 miles away. Flak heavy inaccurate. No Navigator. 40-100# Incendiaries. 7.5 hrs.

*7-17-44 Tarascon ,France Railroad Bridge. Several direct hits. Flak heavy, accurate. No fighters 5-1000# GP 7 hrs. No navigator.

**7-18-44 Fredrichshafen, Germany aircraft factory. Several direct hits. Flak heavy, accurate. No fighters. 10 Holes. 9-5000# GP 7.5 hrs. No navigator.

**7-19-44 Munich, Germany aircraft factory. Flak heavy, accurate. 8 Holes. No fighters. 5-1000# GP. No navigator. 9 hrs.

*7-30-44 Budapest, Hungary aircraft factory. Flak heavy, accurate. 50 to 75 ME-109's. #1 Engine hit over target. 1 Hole. No Navigator. 9-500# GP. 8 hrs.

*7-31-44 Bucharest, Rumania oil refinery smoke up to 18000 ft. Flak heavy, accurate. No fighters. 9-500# GP. 7 Hrs. No navigator

**8-3-44 Fredrichshafen, Germany chemical plant. Clouds obscured results. Flak heavy, inaccurate. No fighters. 9-500# GP. No navigator. 7 hrs.

*8-6-44 Miramas, France marshaling yards. Very good bomb pattern. Flak heavy, accurate. No fighters. 9-500# GP No navigator. 8 hrs.

**8-7-4 Blechhammer, Germany synthetic oil plant. Flak heavy, inaccurate. No fighters. 9-1500# GP. No navigator. 8 Hrs.

A Tribute To My Engineer

by

T W Tikey 566th Bomb Group 8th AF

T/Sgt. Ivan S. Roberts was my Flight Engineer on B-24 "Slick Chick," and later in 1944 on our various Pathfinder craft. My crew (those who still correspond) lost track of Ivan after we returned to the States, so we don't know if he's still living. But, I remember him well because we owe our lives to this laid back, extremely loyal, Ozark-talking fellow crewman — even before we flew one combat mission out of England.

In early February 1944, after phase training in Casper, Wyoming and Alamogordo, NM, we embarked to our combat base in Attlebridge, England via the southern route (Herrington, Kansas; West Palm Beach Florida; Trinidad; Belem, Brazil; Fortaleza, Brazil; Dakar, Senegal; Marrakech, Morocco, and Prestwick, Scotland). This narrative essentially covers our leg from Fortaleza, some 2200 plus miles over the South Atlantic, to Dakar. Aboard that evening were: J.W. Tikey, pilot; Richard Smith, copilot; Henry Tevelin, navigator; Francis Spigelmire, bombardier; Ivan Roberts, flight engineer; Frank Simek, radio operator; Marlow Jovaag, waist gunner; Boyd Condon, ball turret; Bernard Massing, tail gunner; and Frank Bois, waist gunner.

We spent two days in Fortaleza and were confined to the base awaiting better weather conditions. We finally

were told to take off around 10 PM one evening in early February, with the warning that we would hit one of those numerous, huge South Atlantic storms and that the best penetration would be at 9,000 to 11,000 feet. Not to worry, they said !

About midnight we hit it, and it was an extremely vicious one, tossing us around like a feather! We had to go straight through because we didn't have radar then and couldn't skirt around it.

My airplane had a Sperry A-5 autopilot aboard, but since the Altitude Control was "wired" off for technical reasons, I chose not to engage it and flew manually. (Probably a mistake because automatic rudder and aileron control would have helped.) (I later spent 36 years working for Sperry.)

Thunder ! Lightning ! Tremendous wind gusts! Up and down! Spigelmire, my bombardier, was praying like crazy. Weren't we all ! This huge storm lasted two to three hours. But here's the scary part. After about an hour of this buffeting, I noticed the number three engine manifold pressure slowly, dropping from 30 inches.

Here's where Roberts came into the picture, and he started to frantically try to resolve the reason for this ever slow drop on number three. We could never have made it to Dakar from our position on three engines. We would have run out of gas.

The number three manifold pressure was down to 12 inches and I was thinking of feathering, when Roberts, thank God and praise the Lord, found the trouble. He removed the #3 oil dilution fuse and the pressure started a slow rise up to normal. The shaking and super Gs on the plane caused a short in the system. With the benefit of hindsight, the malfunction probably occurred in the #3 oil dilution switch in the cockpit. It was "off" but "shorted" to "on" because of the storm.

There was no reason for Ivan to suspect this trouble, and why he pulled that fuse, God only knows. This was truly a miracle !

Gas was steadily pouring into the #3 engine oil manifold and would have caused an engine failure and/or a fire. The tremendous rains must have helped to curtail a fire.

Specifically, on the B-24 some gas was normally poured into the oil system in small amounts, for cold weather starting. Overdilution causes sludge and carbon to be loosened in the engine, causing oil lines to clog and oil screens

to collapse. A very dangerous condition.

Lt. Pastovich's plane, another crew in the 466th Group on this Dakar leg, lost one engine, then two, and never made it. Immediately upon landing and refueling, we helped search for this plane and absolutely no trace of its disappearance was found.

So, T/Sgt. Ivan S. Roberts, wherever you are, many, thanks for what you accomplished on that dastardly night. You saved our crew—pure and simple.

Truthfully, I can say that this midnight to 3 AM episode in early February 1944 was my most frightening WWII experience. No combat mission compared to it.

Editors Note: For the non technical readers oil dilution was used during cold weather on piston engines only when an extended stay on the ground was anticipated. The oil was diluted with fuel before engine shut down reducing the viscosity facilitating a cold engine start later on..



The Mission to Stuttgart

By Martin Andrews
Pilot 306th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force



Flight crew of Martin Andrews

Except for scattered low cumulus clouds, the day of 6 September 1943 promised generally clear weather for the continent of Europe. The U.S. 8th Air Force, the night before, alerted its heavy bomber groups in England to prepare for a 'maximum effort' mission. The group commanders passed the word on down the line. Flight crews could expect to be awakened at 2 A.M., a miserable time to get out of bed, even if one was going on a picnic. On the nights before bombing missions I would usually read a book, but it seemed I would never fall asleep until midnight. When the corporal came round to shake my shoulder and say, "Wake up, lieutenant! Wake up!" I felt as if I'd never slept at all. And it would be a long, long day before everything was over and we got back to England.

If we got back.

It was always important to eat a good breakfast because you'd be going for many hours without eating, and flying at the high altitudes we did, in open, unpressurized planes, increased your hunger. At the briefing room that morning we learned that our target for the day was Stuttgart. I seem to recall that our specific goal was the Bosch Magneto Works. At least, the word 'Bosch' has stuck in my mind. This meant a long flight and a deep penetration of Germany, a matter of concern in those days because the American heavy bombers did not have the extra fuel capacity that they would have later on. Sometimes, when we flew into the interior of Germany, we would run so low on gasoline that, on at least one occasion, we had to cut our outboard engines and make a power glide to get us back to England.

The American and British fighter planes didn't have the range that they later had, either. Their pilots could accompany us only limited distances past the coast of France before having to turn back for home. In the months to come they would get drop tanks - and the P-51s - that enabled some of them to fly all the way to Poland and back. But we had to do without them. We had an almost constant Luftwaffe 'escort.' From field after field as we flew in and out of Germany, their fighters would come up like hornets and work us over. In fact, the Messerschmitt 109's and the Focke-Wulf 190's were mauling us so badly in 1943 the Americans briefly considered going in at night the way the Royal Air Force did.

Adding to our flight crew's stress before we even started on the September 6th mission was a sad and violent accident that nearly killed two of our crew members. Our Crew Chief and Top Turret Gunner, Leo Liewer, and our Ball-Turret Gunner, Kenneth Rood, fell from a Jeep on their way out to the plane and were seriously injured. Since both men were extremely well-liked and since both had to be replaced at the very last moment, it cast a deep gloom upon the rest of us. Their two replacements, Sgts Ralph Biggs and Guido DePietro, were good men but they were sudden and total strangers as we took off together for Stuttgart.

The 306th Bomb Group, to which we belonged, did not have the lead position that day. We flew in a high box formation to the right and to the rear of the leaders. In those days, German fighter attacks often followed a standard pattern. On our way into Germany they seemed to attack more from the right, perhaps because this gave them the sun at their backs. Their procedure was to come up along side of us but out of range. Since they were faster than we were, they would soon pull ahead of us, then wheel over and hit us head on. The Germans had quickly figured out that the most vulnerable part of the B-17 was the front of it. We flew the B-17 E and F models. The later B-17 F and the B-17 G would be fitted out with two extra guns in the nose in what was called a chin turret. But at that time, in 1943, we didn't have them.

The German fighter pilots whom we encountered were very good and certainly courageous, though I sometimes wondered if some of them, on occasions, were as scared as we were. They often flew close enough for us to see their faces. On one of our earlier missions, the plane flying off my wing had to move out so that the on-coming German fighter, whose pilot may have been dead by that time, could go between us. As we flew to Stuttgart that day the Luftwaffe, as usual, came up to greet us. I don't recall the number of attacks but, during one of them, an ME-109 knocked out our number two engine, the inboard engine on the left side. After a bullet or shell fragment punctured an oil line, the oil pressure dropped to zero, so I had to stop the engine and feather the propeller to keep it from spinning out of control.

Losing power in an airplane is always serious business but losing power on a bombing mission brings extra worries because you start falling behind and become easier prey for enemy fighters. Being thus suddenly crippled, we could no longer keep up with the planes in our squadron. Looking back on it now, after all these years, we might have fared better if I had turned back then and there and flown back to England. But, because the target seemed within our range and because of the on-coming bomber groups behind us, I decided to fly on to Stuttgart. A measure of safety existed inside a formation. Within it, you may have been just another schooling fish but outside of it, all by yourself, especially as a cripple in broad daylight, you offered German fighter pilots, eager to add to their list of bomber kills, a tempting morsel.

On we flew. "It's not long to the target," I kept telling myself. "As soon as we drop our bombs, I will dive as fast as I can for the deck, then skim at tree-top level across Germany, across France, across the water and back to England" This, of course, was wishful thinking, for we kept losing ground.

After falling behind our own group, we joined the next one and then the next. We were just a straggler, struggling to stay up with that stream of bombers. As it turned out, it was over an hour from the time we lost our engine to when we finally salvaged our bombs. Though I had no way of knowing it, someone up front had made a fateful mis-judgment.

We learned later that a Brigadier General sat in the lead plane and that, when he couldn't see the target under a smoke screen and cover of clouds, he elected to make a second pass. This could be considered a brave and determined action but, unfortunately, it triggered a disaster for the bomb groups coming behind him. It may have upset the meticulous flight plans that had been decided upon back in England and the confusion was compounded by the inability of the following air crews to see target objectives covered up below. Big bomber groups have to move ponderously. They cannot maneuver easily and quickly. They have to make slow, flat turns so that the inside planes of the inside squadrons won't lose too much speed and stall out. So this, too, may have created problems.

It seemed to me, as just a lone cypher in that great mass of airplanes, that we had all been sucked into a kind of giant whirlpool flying aimlessly over southern Germany. All this was wasting time and time meant burning fuel. The 8th Air Force lost 45 bombers that day, more than half of which went down from a simple lack of gasoline. In our own case, our co-pilot, Keith Rich, who had been monitoring our fuel gauges, kept giving me ominous reports. We were getting into deeper trouble and we knew it.

Even before our Bombardier, Robert Huisinga, dropped our bombs on some target of opportunity, Keith and I were aware that we could no longer get home. We didn't have enough gasoline to reach the coast of France, much less the coast of England. With our three good engines going at full manifold pressure and high RPMs to stay aloft with that load of bombs, we had gone way over normal fuel consumption. With no chance of getting back, we had two options. One was to keep flying toward France until we ran completely out of fuel. There was no longer any thought of going down to tree-top level because you cannot parachute from there. Both of us thought, however, that we could get as far as France where we could all bail out with some hope of escape. The other option was to go to Switzerland which lay a half-hour's flight away. But Rich and I decided not to go to Switzerland. That seemed like quitting. We agreed we should go as far as we could before giving up.

Then, just after we made that decision, our Tail Gunner, Henry Hucker, called over the intercom in great excitement to say that Number Four engine was on fire. (That's the outboard engine on the right side.) I looked out past Keith to help him check it out. It wasn't really on fire-although from Hucker's point of view it must have looked that way. The engine had simply overheated, causing pre-ignition in the cylinders and sending black smoke pouring out of the cowl flaps. There was nothing to do but to throttle back on it. Now, with the last of the American bombers flying fast away from us, we were reduced to only two fully functioning engines. This caused Rich and me to change our minds. We told the crew we were going to try to get to Switzerland while we still had a chance to do so. Our Navigator, Gordon Bowers, gave us a heading and we turned toward the south.

Just after we did this, we faced one quick, head-on fighter attack. There were only four of them, all of them Focke-Wulfs, but the rate of closure was fast and they made only one pass. They didn't do any damage and they didn't come back to play with us. I've often wondered about the pilots of those four planes. Maybe they didn't realize that they had an easy kill. Maybe they were just student pilots. Or maybe they were headed for the American bombers behind us and were saving their ammunition for them.

Flying south, we began rapidly to lose altitude and approached the area of Friedrichshafen at about 10,000 feet. We carried no maps of Switzerland but each member of the crew had a little escape kit in his flight suit. Bowers opened his up. Besides such things as a knife, some foreign currency, a small compass, and some concentrated chocolate, it contained a handkerchief. On this handkerchief was printed a map of Europe. Since it included all of Europe, Switzerland made up only a small part of it. Still, that was all we had to go by.

Looking down past Friedrichshafen I could see what I presumed was the Lake of Constance and, remembering my grade school geography, I figured Switzerland lay on its south shore. However, as we passed over the Friedrichshafen region, the Germans pumped up some flak. While anti-aircraft fire didn't seem as much of a danger to us as the German fighters did, the number of explosions going on around us started me thinking, "What if some pocket south of that lake is part of Germany?" I called Bowers over the intercom to say, "I think we should make a right turn, south of that lake. I think that the most level part of Switzerland lies over to our right." (I happened to be right, but I was only guessing.) Gordon disagreed. He pointed out that if we made a right turn we might be over Germany again or Occupied France and therefore still in trouble. So, we continued south with the Alps right ahead of us.

We continued to lose altitude and were soon skimming above the peaks of the mountains. By now, Bob Huisinga had rendered our bombsight inoperative and our two Waist Gunners, Walter Kozlowski and Elmo Simpson, seeking to lighten the plane, dropped their 50-caliber machine guns into the wildest parts of the Alps. Because we were now so close to the high peaks, some of the crew became worried about our chances of staying up. Our Radio Operator, Venton Scott, called up to ask if the crew should prepare to bail out. "There's no need to jump," I told everyone, "You could kill yourselves trying to parachute into those steep mountains. And don't worry about this airplane. We've still got two good engines

and we're going to be landing somewhere very soon."

By now we had crossed the Alpine divide. As we continued to let down, we could see airfields on the southerly piedmont ahead of us. There were planes parked on them but they were German planes! There were swastikas everywhere! Clearly we had reached northern Italy, which was not where we wanted to be. I asked Bowers to come up to the cockpit and let me look at that little handkerchief map, too. Luckily it showed a lake we could identify over to our right. The map also showed that the northern tip of it lay in Switzerland. This was Lago Maggiore.

We flew at once over to the Swiss end of the lake, noting a river that flowed into it from the north and looking for what might serve as a landing strip. Suddenly, a single-engined Swiss fighter plane appeared at our side, readily recognized by its white cross on a red field. (Its pilot, we learned later, was Captain Gottfried von

Meiss.) He swung in close to us and, by pointing down, directed our attention to something on the ground below. He seemed to be telling us where to land. Sure enough, we could see a small grass airfield at the edge of Lago Maggiore. (We learned later that it was called Magadino.) While I had never landed a B-17 on grass before and the field didn't look very large, I figured it would work out all right. For one thing, I could come in very low over the water to use every bit of the field. Also, our plane was very light. We'd gotten rid of our bombs and had almost empty gas tanks.

It seems strange in retrospect, but we had been told that, if we ever landed in Switzerland or Sweden, we should try to destroy the airplane. We had with us for that purpose four incendiary bombs. Filled with thermite, they were about the same



Martin Andrews

shape as a soft-drink can. When you struck a cap at one end, the contents would burn fiercely after a time delay of seven or eight seconds. They'd been made for the R.A.F. and I had once seen one demonstrated. Accordingly, before we landed, I told Bowers to set one off in the nose of the plane, Scott to set one off just behind the bomb-bay, and Rich to set one off in the cockpit. I intended to set the fourth one off myself. From the pilot's side window, I planned to crawl out on the fuselage as soon as I stopped the plane. From there I would make my way out to the left wing where I would set the bomb just above one of the empty gas tanks. The bombs, as I recall, had spikes at the bottom which you could drive into soft metals. Once that thermite burned through the wing's aluminum skin and got to that empty tank, the plane would surely blow up.

As I swung the plane low across the lake on our base leg to start our final approach, I noted that the Swiss had ringed the entire

field with soldiers. They seemed to be everywhere I looked and everyone of them appeared to be carrying a gun. So, my last words to my crew members as I came in for the landing were, "We are landing in Switzerland, but go out of this plane with your hands in the air! I see soldiers everywhere I look and they all have guns! We are landing in Switzerland, but go out of this plane with your hands in the air!"

The Swiss had indeed ringed the airfield with soldiers, almost to their peril, for, if we hadn't been able to stop, we would have rolled over some of them. It is my recollection that two armored cars raced next to us as we came in for the landing, but they might have been ambulances or open cars with more soldiers~ At any rate, I used up every bit of that

grass field to get the plane down and we rolled right up to an edge where armed Swiss soldiers stood their ground.

Everyone in our crew did as he was instructed. From the cockpit, as Rich struck the cap of his incendiary on the control column, I began to work my way out of the side window with mine. One of the Swiss soldiers standing just below me began shouting something at me. Since I understood neither German or the German-Swiss dialect, I had no idea what he was trying to tell me. But I suddenly realized that I would look silly trying to set a bomb off on the wing while he was pointing a gun at me from ten feet away. So I decided I would do better to set my bomb off in the cockpit, too. After doing so, I exited the plane by way of the bottom escape hatch. As it turned out, none of those R.A.F. incendiaries worked. They all proved to be duds.

But then, as it also turned out, I was told by a U.S. military attache in Switzerland that the Army had changed policy and didn't want the planes destroyed after all. It was at this time that we personally met Captain von Meiss. He took us all to the officers club where they gave us coffee and sandwiches. A very pleasant and urbane man, von Meiss's friendly reception has remained in my mind through all of the years since we landed at Magadino. But there was one aspect of my relations with the first Swiss officers whom I met that caused me some dismay. It had nothing to do with them. It had to do with me. During my Army training, we had been told many times to say nothing

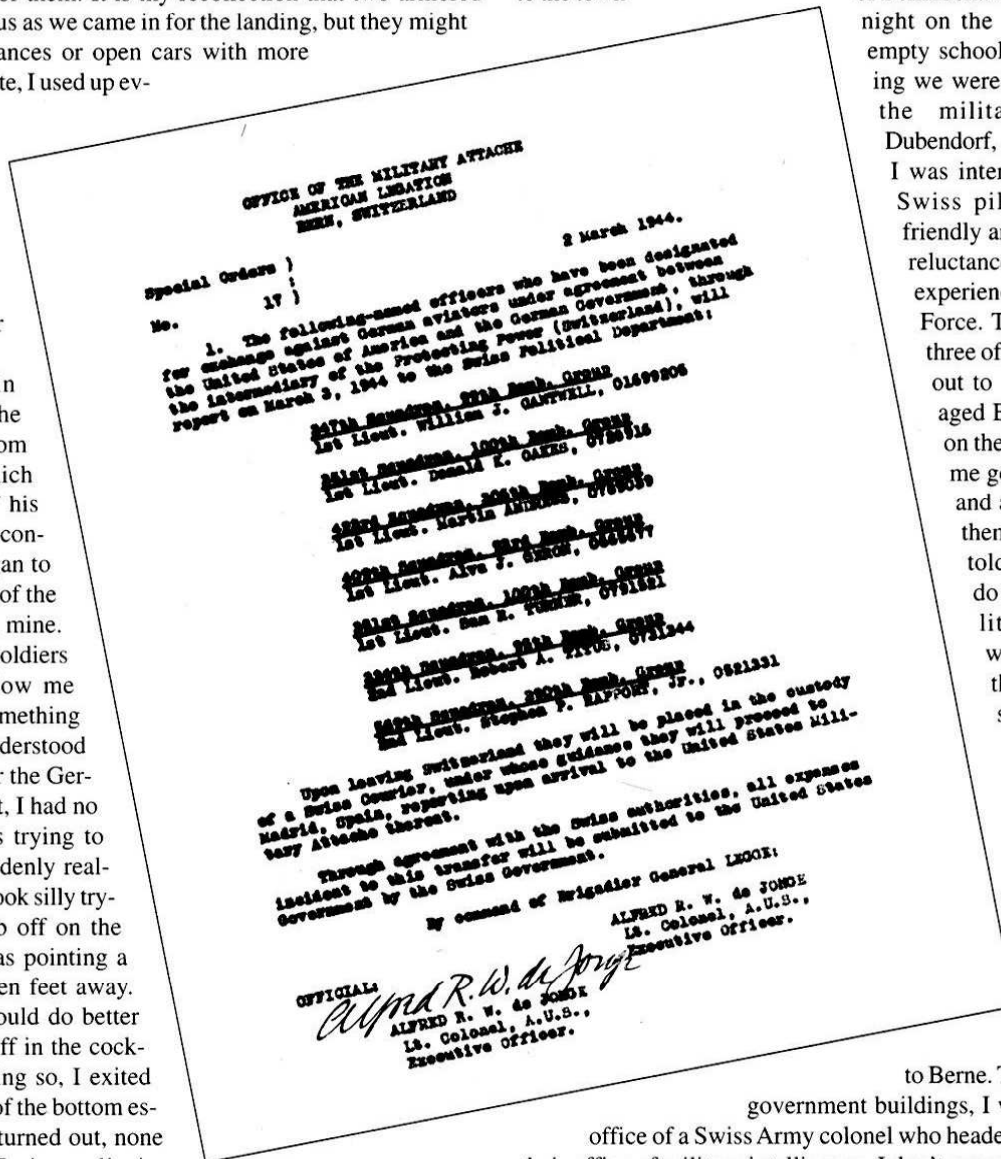
of a military nature to an enemy or a stranger. In Switzerland I followed those instructions to the letter even though I sometimes hated to do it. All of the Swiss officers whom I initially met were most cordial, but duty dictated that I could tell them nothing about our plane nor our mission until I'd spoken to a U.S. military attache in their country. At Magadino the Swiss must have thought it humorous when my crew members and I insisted on calling ourselves "tourists."

From Magadino's air- to the town

field we were taken under guard of Bellinzona where we spent the night on the third floor of an empty school. The next morning we were taken by train to the military airport of Dubendorf, near Zurich. There I was interrogated by more Swiss pilots. They were friendly and understood my reluctance to talk about my experience with the 8th Air Force. The following day three officers escorted me out to where an undamaged B-17 was standing on the tarmac. They had me go inside this plane and asked me to show them how to start it. I told them I couldn't do that. But I felt a little ridiculous when they started the engines themselves without any help from me.

The only untoward incident that I experienced in my first days in Switzerland occurred when we were taken from Zurich

to Berne. There, in one of the government buildings, I was taken into the office of a Swiss Army colonel who headed, I was informed, their office of military intelligence. I don't remember his name but I do remember he was tall and austere. He said nothing to me when I entered his office but motioned me to a chair in front of his desk. He then asked me to describe to him our mission to Stuttgart. Once more I started my usual demurral, "I'm sorry, Sir, but until I meet an American military officer here in Switzerland, I can tell you nothing about..." At this, he surprised me and flew into a rage. Picking up a sheaf of Swiss newspapers from his desk, he began shouting at me. "What do you mean you can't tell the Swiss military intelligence anything about your mission!" Then, gesturing with the newspapers, "It seems you people are perfectly willing to talk to news reporters!"



On 6 September, four other American planes, that had gone to Stuttgart, had landed in Switzerland. Two had set down in Zurich, one had landed in a farmer's field and one had ditched in the Lake of Constance where one of the crew had drowned. I looked at the newspapers the colonel was holding in front of my face. Besides numerous photos of American B-17's, they carried long written texts. Obviously, some of the American crew members had talked freely with newsmen. So I told him, "I'm very sorry, Colonel. I cannot answer for the actions of those Americans. I can only tell you that I am not yet at liberty thing connected with the U.S. Army Air Force." With that, he curtly dismissed me. Just as I was about to go out of the door, however, he stood up and said one thing. "Let me give you a bit of advice, Lieutenant Andrews. I advise you and your crew members not to try to escape from Switzerland. All of our soldiers have guns and they are very good shots. Yes, sir," I said and left. Actually, I couldn't blame him for his anger, although I learned later that he was one of the very few Swiss officers who was something of a Nazi sympathizer. Still, I began wondering about myself for being so stiff about orders. In one incident, though, the second day we were in Switzerland, this adherence to orders worked in my favor. Just after my crew and I left Bellinzona by train for Zurich, a middle-aged civilian stepped into our compartment and asked if he could speak to "the pilot of the U.S. plane that landed yesterday in Magadino." He identified himself as an American, named Allen Dulles.

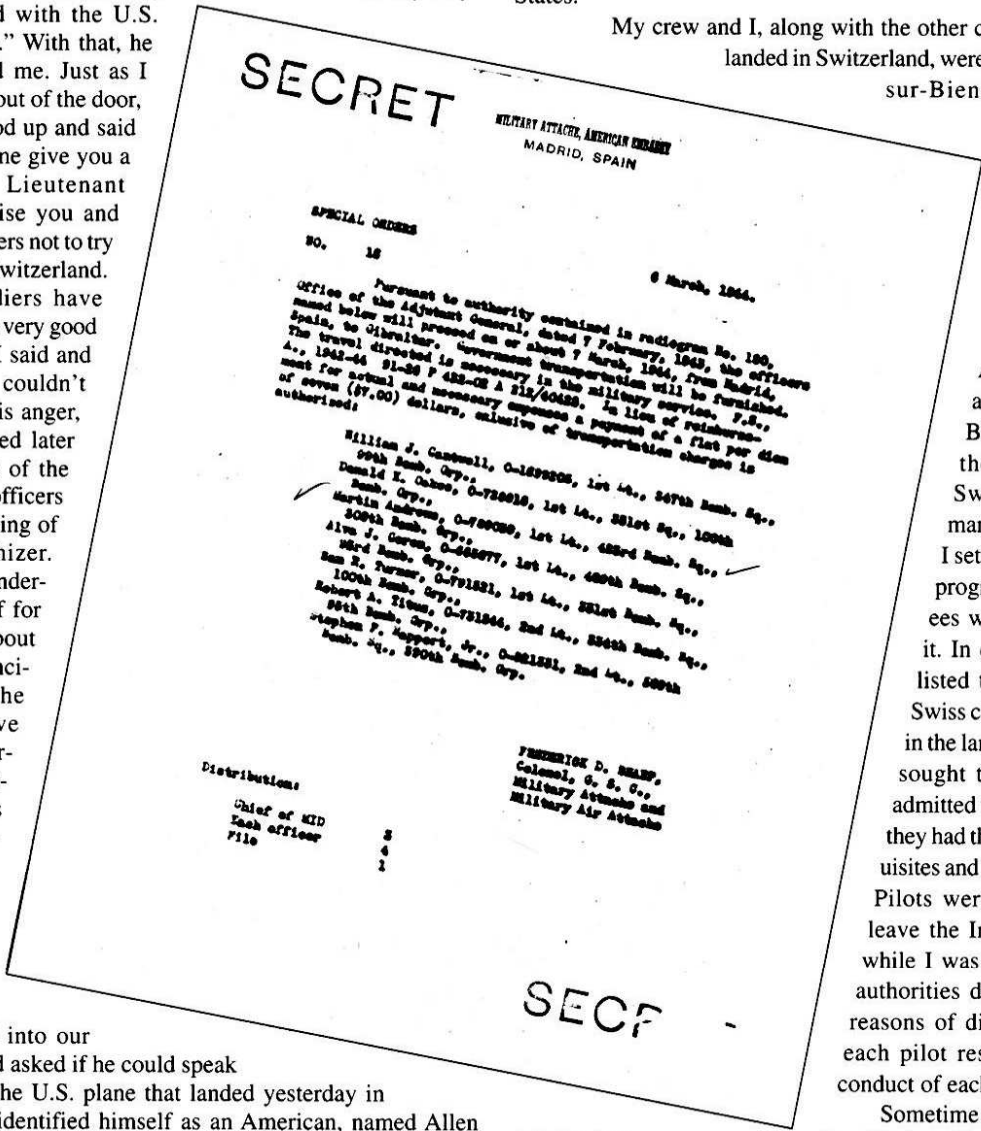
Allen Dulles was then the head of the American OSS spy network in Europe. After the war, President Eisenhower made him chief of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. I agreed to go back to his compartment to talk with him privately, but I told him before I did so, "Look, Mr. Dulles, I'm sure you're for real and I've heard about your brother." (John Foster Dulles was already well known as a U.S. foreign advisor.) "But until I meet a military attache here in Switzerland I can't tell you anything about what I was doing yesterday. I'm perfectly willing to talk about my boyhood in Wisconsin or about my days in college. But about what I did yesterday, nothing."

Allen Dulles was then the head of the American OSS spy network in Europe. After the war, President Eisenhower made him chief of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. I agreed to go back to his compartment to talk with him privately, but I told him before I did so, "Look, Mr. Dulles, I'm sure you're for real and I've heard about your brother." (John Foster Dulles was already well known as a U.S. foreign advisor.) "But until I meet a military attache here in Switzerland I can't tell you anything about what I was doing yesterday. I'm perfectly willing to talk about my boyhood in Wisconsin or about my days in college. But about what I did yesterday, nothing."

Dulles liked that. Maybe he felt spies should be silent types. At any rate, we had a long and pleasant conversation in his train compartment in which he proceeded to tell me about his boyhood in Auburn, New York and about his student days at Princeton University. He also told me a little bit about his work. He was headed back from a clandestine meeting in Locarno when he ran into me. As it happened, this chance encounter with Dulles led to my departure from Switzerland when he arranged for me to be exchanged for a German officer in order to carry information back to the United States.

My crew and I, along with the other crews that initially landed in Switzerland, were taken to Macolin-sur-Bienne in the Jura Mountains where the Swiss set up our first Internment Camp. At the beginning of November they moved us to Adelboden, into another camp in the Berner Oberland. At the request of the Swiss officer commanding these camps, I set up an educational program for all internees who wished to use it. In doing this we enlisted the aid of several Swiss civilians, especially in the language field. I also sought to get Americans admitted to Swiss schools if they had the educational requisites and the desire to do so. Pilots were not allowed to leave the Internment Camps while I was there. The Swiss authorities demanded this for reasons of discipline, making each pilot responsible for the conduct of each of his crew.

Sometime in December the Ice Hockey Club challenged the American internees to a hockey match. We accepted the challenge but they skated far better than we did and beat us by a lopsided score. In January, Adelboden began filling up with British internees. Taken as prisoners-of-war in North Africa, they streamed into Switzerland when Italy capitulated and threw open P.O.W. camps. Their ranks included, not only Englishmen, but Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and Indian Sikhs. I mention them because the Adelboden Ice Hockey Club once more challenged the internees to another match. But this time they faced far better players, Canadian Ex-POW's for whom hockey was their national game. This time Adelboden lost, and by an equally lopsided score.



In February, Dulles summoned me to Bern where he told me I would take part in a most unusual wartime happening. I was to be exchanged, along with six other American officers, for seven German Luftwaffe people, also interned in Switzerland. Dulles had selected me for a special assignment. I spent a week in his office memorizing pages of information that he wanted transmitted personally to Washington. This was roughly three months before D-Day in Europe. When I got back to the United States, I was taken to OSS headquarters near Washington where I reported what I'd memorized. Of the seven Americans figuring in the exchange, six were pilots and one was a navigator. Though neither of us knew it at the time, that navigator had also memorized secret information, and, since interrogators spoke to him and me separately, they could check our accounts for accuracy.

I'm pretty sure Dulles had a hand in initiating that exchange and asking the Swiss government to sound out the Germans about a man-for-man deal. The Swiss, eager to get rid of extra war-time mouths to feed, did so and the Germans agreed. They made just one stipulation, however. They insisted that all of the American exchangees wear civilian clothing. They may have done this to forestall possible trouble with the French Underground. All the while we were in Germany and France, German military guards accompanied us. In France, had we been wearing U.S. uniforms, this might have started a commotion.

My departure from Switzerland became as dramatic as my arrival. The railroad station in Basel lay half in Switzerland and half in Germany. On the day we left, 3 March 1944, almost no traffic occurred. The huge main waiting room was completely deserted. The Germans had festooned the walls of this vast chamber with big banners and swastikas. As two Swiss diplomats walked us across that room to hand us over, I remember having strong feelings of uneasiness. The officer, to whom we were being given, wore the black uniform of Himmler's sinister SS. I thought to myself, "We are at war with these people. What if they changed their minds about an exchange while they have us in their hands? What then could prevent them from accusing us of being spies in our Swiss civilian clothing? What if any one of them discovered I had memorized so many things about their armed forces, including the names of some treasonable people in their midst?"

The SS officer was a major. He carried a dagger at his side in place of a sword, which struck me as an odd affectation. Clearly a Nazi, he gave us all a stiff-armed salute with a loud cry of "Heil, Hitler!" We Americans, as civilians, emulated the Swiss diplomats and simply nodded our heads. Our only protection at this point was that we'd been told that the Swiss would not release the Germans for whom we were being exchanged until we reached Madrid, Spain. Happily, the black-uniformed SS people did not stay with us long. They marched us to a German train where a three-man Wehrmacht guard, a captain, a sergeant and a corporal, took over. Only the sergeant could speak English. The captain spoke French, however, so I could communicate with him. The ten of us, the three German Army guards and the seven Americans, occupied two compartments in what became one of the eeriest train rides I've ever had.

As the train moved north along the Rhine valley that afternoon, it seemed to stop at every station. We were never allowed to leave it, but we could lean out the windows to find ourselves cheek-by-jowl with all kinds of German people milling along the platforms. At each station, more and more officers, probably on home leave, came aboard. When we finally crossed the Rhine that night and headed for Paris the train must have carried hundreds of them,

each returning to some western position. The train also carried anti-aircraft guns, front and back, so we began sweating out our own U.S. fighter pilots, who'd taken up shooting at every German train that they could.

Word got around and soon many of the officers aboard learned who we were. Some of them arranged to talk with us. A German army lieutenant told me he'd gone to Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. A Luftwaffe pilot accosted me. He was a major and highly decorated, for he wore a Knight's Cross at his neck; but he was not very pleasant and our conversation was short. He told me that he considered American bomber crews to be barbarians and added, gratuitously, that the German people did not like our President Roosevelt. When I replied that that was nothing compared to how Americans hated Adolf Hitler, he simply shrugged it off and left.

What most of the Germans really wanted was to bum cigarettes. Each of us Americans had taken along several cartons of Swiss cigarettes. We considered these inferior to unobtainable American ones but they were better than what the Germans had. Our Wehrmacht sergeant chain smoked all the time he was with us. "Albert," I told him, "you're going to have a sore throat when you leave us." "Ah, yes," he said, "but it will be the first sore throat I've had from smoking cigarettes in five years."

In Paris, using Dodge station wagons with swastikas painted on them, two German Army majors oversaw our transfer from one railroad station to another. One of them spoke English with a Scottish burr. We learned he'd been a peacetime lawyer in Edinburgh. The presence of swastikas is what I remember most from the tour they gave us between stations. At that time, hundreds of huge Nazi banners lined the main thoroughfares of the French capital and draped the public buildings.

Our German guards took us at last to Hendaye, on the French border. From there we walked over the Bidasoa River on a small bridge to Irun, Spain. Here we encountered the only untoward incident of our trip out of Switzerland. Crossing the bridge the same time we did were some 40 members of the Spanish "Blue Division," which had been fighting with the Germans in Russia. They were violently anti-American and yelled and screamed at us. But this only came to shouting, for a Swiss diplomatic courier immediately joined us and took us by train to Madrid. On the train he pointed out to us a Gestapo agent in civilian clothing who also accompanied us.

In the Spanish capital our Swiss escort took us to the U.S. Embassy, from where we drove to Gibraltar by way of Seville. We then flew to Casablanca and to New York. After reporting to Washington, and getting a home leave, I was assigned as a pilot to the Air Transport Command for what remained of the war. Back in Switzerland, my navigator, radio operator and ball-turret gunner all went to Berne to work for the U.S. Legation. Our bombardier, Bob Huisinga, became an Executive Officer for our Military Attache, General Legge. He and the rest of our crew returned to America early in 1945.

All of us considered ourselves lucky - and grateful - that the "neutral island" of Switzerland existed. Had it not, we most certainly would have spent many months in German POW camps if, indeed, we had gotten down to the ground alive. It has been a long time since our mission to Stuttgart. But every year, on the sixth of September, I take a few minutes to remember, and give thanks for, that fortuitous landing in Magadino.



High Altitude Bombing of Flak Batteries

From Micro Films

I have often wondered over the years, as perhaps many of our members also have, why more flak suppression missions were not flown by the 15th Air Force, as most aircraft losses by the 484th Bomb Group can be attributed to anti aircraft fire. Felix Rameder our good friend from Ebergassing, Austria, who observed allied bombing attacks as a young boy of 13, living in a town heavily defended by anti aircraft weapons, asks the same question in his letter shown below. In response I found a reference in our micro film library on this very subject. I had heard of at least one instance when a three ship element from the 484th BG was ordered to dive down out of the formation and bomb flak installations before rejoining the main bomber stream. I have not been able to verify this one way or another.

On April 1 and 19 April, 1945, B-24s of the 15th Air Force successfully attacked flak batteries Northeast of Venice, Italy from high altitude (24,000 to 26,000 feet) with 200 pound fragmentation bombs equipped with variable time fuses. The first attack was against four 4-gun batteries and the second attack was against two 4-gun batteries. These batteries were selected for bombing as they defended an avenue of approach to important targets in Austria and Germany. It is felt the attacks were successful since the intensity and accuracy of the flak opposition was materially reduced. . None of the 36 aircraft participating in the anti flak operations were lost or damaged. In addition to minimizing the AA opposition, the attacks killed 31 enemy gunners, wounded 9, and caused 3 to be missing, and destroyed one 20 MM gun besides obtaining direct hits on other equipment.

The aim of the assaulting flak positions is to reduce the intensity and accuracy of ground positions. The 260 pound fragmentation (frag) bomb equipped with VT (proximity) fuse was effective in reducing the morale of gun crews and damaging fire control equipment (AA directors) cables, dials, and radar.

Each plane carried

18 M-81 bombs, a T-50E1 proximity nose fuse (bomb burst set to fire at 17 feet above the ground, and a non delay fuse in the tail.

On April 1 1945, near Grisolera, Italy excellent pin-point bombing secured many near misses on three of the four batteries.

The attack was made in two waves of nine aircraft composed of three ship elements. Each element was assigned a separate 4-gun battery. All batteries attacked by the first wave ceased firing when the bombs exploded, even though one battery was missed by several hundred yards. The second wave attacked 15 minutes later and reported that all firing ceased as the bombs exploded. Both waves received scant, inaccurate ground fire on their bomb runs which were made between 24,000 and 26,000 feet. No damage or losses were sustained. Bomb strike photos show many near misses on gun positions, Ground source indicate that 22 soldiers were killed, 18 wounded, and one 20 MM gun destroyed.

On April 19, 1945 near Grisolera and San Stino, Italy, eighteen aircraft attacked two 4-gun batteries which were located near the prescribed route of the main bombing formation. The plan of attack was the same as on April 1, 1945. Scant flak was encountered on the bomb run, but all opposition ceased after the bombs exploded. Bomb strike photos show burst in the air directly over one of the 4-gun batteries. Ground sources indicate that nine soldiers were

Ebergassing, Austria
Bud Markel
C/O Torretta Flyer

From a recent issue of the Torretta Flyer I have learned that more aircraft of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups, were brought down by anti aircraft fire than by fighter planes, 61 planes by flak, 36 by fighters.

The question that comes to mind is why the Americans did not have a policy of attacking flak batteries direct. It seems that only when the batteries were in the path of the bomber formations when attacks were attempted on a limited basis. In a ten mile area around my home at Ebergassing, there were 10 batteries totaling 104 guns, all lay in open fields. Of these batteries only two were attacked, one from 3 B-17s on December 6, 1944. One gun was damaged and one other to the west of Ebergassing 1 mile away on March 15, 1945 another B-17 Group attacked from 27,000 feet, but the bombs fell 600 yards short without damage to the guns on a clear day. I saw this. Obviously if more anti aircraft attacks were undertaken to increase bombing techniques, aircraft losses could have been reduced considerably.

If in the spring of 1944 each flak battery was attacked by two bomb groups to put them out of action temporarily, all of the following attacks on the main targets could have been made at 15,000 where bombing accuracy is greater. But then I am no Air Force general.

In the German army the duty of flak soldier was a good job. A father was asked about his three sons in military service, he replied "only two are in the army, the other is a flak soldier." I rest my case.

In many books about the B-17 and B-24 I have read that the B-24J and B-24H were not good for combats above 24,000 feet, and a B-17 crewman said, "our best cover was a B-24 Group below us at 24,000 feet while we were at 27,000 feet."

Wishing you all the best

Felix Rameder,
Aviation Historian

killed and three were missing.. One 88 mm and one 20 mm gun were hit with unknown results. The planes assaulting the flak positions were followed by the main column of bombers which were forced to fly a dog leg course to avoid the bombed gun positions. Aircraft negotiated the corridor for a period of two hours and a half after the attack was made without encountering or observing flak bursts. On previous mission the Germans had fired at bombers in the restricted zone even though they were beyond the limits of accurate engagement.

The report concludes that bombers at high altitude can identify and drop 260 frag bombs with proximity fuses accurately enough to cause diminution of accuracy and intensity of AA opposition.

Ground reports from special agents indicate that frag bombs with proximity fuses reduce morale and accuracy of flak personnel, kill and injure flak personnel and cause damage to AA equipment. It was also found that bomber crews were very enthusiastic about flying anti flak missions as they were the ones most effected by this action and it was a way to fight back at the AA Gunner.

It was found that some proximity fuses were subject to early firing higher than 17 feet above the ground reducing their effectiveness against enemy installations. Each bomb burst distributed fragments in a circular pattern of approximately 115 to 120 feet, but not of uniform density.

There was a certain amount of overlap of the pattern within each element; efforts to increase the dimensions of these patterns by using a longer intervalometer setting and flying a looser formation would increase the efficiency by reducing overlap and spreading the bombs more evenly along the bomb run.

Editors Note:

This report is of a type of attack plan taking place from high altitude to avoid small caliber anti aircraft fire. It is obvious that bombing of anti aircraft batteries would have to take place when ideal weather was in place and target identification could be determined visually. I am not aware of target identification using intersecting radio beams by the 49th Wing Aircraft of 15 Air Force as used by the 8th Air Force in England. Because this operation took place during the waning days of the European war, it could not be refined further. It would seem that a coordinated attack using P38s as fighter bombers as a second wave at lower altitude just after the high altitude bomb run would have a better success rate in destroying guns and equipment while the defending troops were still hunkered down and away from their small caliber guns. In addition

the use of 500 bombs or larger in conjunction with the frag bombs would be more effective in destroying heavier gun laying equipment In reading the full report I was struck with the notion that this type of flak suppression was only temporary as heavy artillery pieces such as the 88 mm and 105, would survive light weight frag bombs quite easily. We have heard of other flak suppression attacks by 49th Bomb Wing aircraft where three ship elements were diverted from the main bombing formation and made diving attacks

on flak installations that blocked the territory standing in front of the target.

It was well known during the war that the German defenders employed mobile flak either mounted on flat bed trucks or rail cars. In the case of the 88 gun, it could be transported using its own wheeled gun carriage. This mobility allowed anti aircraft fire to appear suddenly in areas where no activity was plotted previously. You can't bomb a target whose whereabouts is unknown.

The Allies had hoped to close the European war in the fall of 1944, but Adolph Hitler's insistence on a suicidal defense of the Third Reich to the bitter end and the terrible winter of 1943-44 prolonged the war into the Spring of 1945.

Aircraft production was running full blast back in the USA and the training facilities were still turning out flight crews at a record clip at this

time resulting in a surplus of aircraft and crews for the European conflict. It was planned that this surplus would be used for the final assault on Japan.

It is true the B-24 performed better at lower altitude as Felix suggests. In the Pacific Theater of Operations where lower altitudes were the general rule, the B-24 was superior to the B-17 because of its longer range. This was due to the low drag Davis Wing. Both the B-17 and B-24 were sluggish at high altitude because of war contingencies. Both aircraft in operational configuration were flown at higher gross weights than the original design specification. A good example to illustrate this point is the addition of nose turrets to both the B-24 and B-17 to counter the head on fighter attacks favored by the Luftwaffe. This alone added about 500 pounds to the aircraft without a corresponding increase in engine horsepower to carry the additional weight.

The whole prewar design philosophy was to defend the bomber from fighter attacks emanating from the rear. In the nose turreted B-24 J and H, the pilot's armor was behind him, where the danger was greater, instead of in front of him.



Safety Of Demolition Bombs

Excerpted from Straight And Level Vol. XII No. 4
February 21, 1945

Have you often wondered how safe the bombs really were? Many will recall seeing bombs dropped off the end of a bomb loader, or even a whole load being dropped from the aircraft bomb racks with a loud plunk, when a quick change in bomb load was ordered. That sound stays with ones remembrances of the war, certainly in your editor's mind. The ordnance guys would say it's perfectly safe, but sometimes with a slight doubt in their voice as if to say they were not perfectly sure either. Sure, we wanted to believe wholeheartedly that the bombs were safe, but there were always stories of aircraft suddenly blowing up while parked in a hardstand, either in our own group or in another. If the truth were known, many or all of us felt fear whenever the thudding sound of dropping bombs reached our ears. Maybe the accompanying story will ease that fear forever. Ah! But not quite, you say. . .

Considerable doubt has been expressed many times regarding the safety of demolition bombs when exposed to fire or when struck by fragments. In order to eliminate this doubt, the following material concerning demolition bombs has been compiled.

The photograph is of a 100 lb, Amatol filled demolition bomb which was removed from a flak damaged bomber at one of the bases of the Fifteenth Air Force. A fragment had ripped into the case of this bomb, tearing the steel case open to form a rectangular opening approximately 12 x 4 inches, and gouging out the explosive filler for a depth of approximately 3 inches. This example does not prove that demolition bombs can not be detonated when struck with flak, but it does give some factual evidence as to the terrific punishment that a bomb can safely take.

An examination of the dud bombs at Ploesti revealed a large number of RDX Composition B filled bombs. The reasons for these bomb failures have been discussed in a previous article, however, the fact that RDX Composition B bombs are in Ploesti today is highly important. This should prove to all personnel that in spite of the weird and fantastic stories which are circulated concerning the sensitivity of new explosives such as RDX composition B, new explosives must be safe before they are accepted for use by the ordnance department. The fact that bombs can have their cases ripped open by steel fragments without exploding or that they can be dropped from heights exceeding 20,000 feet and then may fail to detonate unless the fuse itself functions, should prove to all the safeness of the modern American detonation bomb.

In order to get factual evidence of what happens when a demo-

lition bomb is exposed to a gasoline fire, (as would occur if a bomb loaded airplane crashed and began to burn), the Navy bureau of ordnance ran a series of extensive tests. As a result of these tests the following conclusions may be drawn.

No definite time interval can be predicted for the detonation of a 100 lb bomb fused with the AN-M103 Nose Fuse which is exposed to fire. However, the minimum detonation time of the test is outside the safety time interval of two and one-quarter (2-1/4) minutes which was the minimum time as determined in a report issued by the Chief of Naval operations.

The time necessary for the detonation of the bomb is independent of the fuse used. The AN-M103 nose fuse was placed in an empty 100 lb GP bomb requiring approximately fifteen (15) minutes before detonation when exposed to fire.

It might also be presumed that a larger bomb would not detonate as quickly as a small bomb under similar conditions since the larger bomb would require more heat to raise its temperature to the point where it will detonate.

The intensity of the fire and its proximity to the bomb are two extremely important elements in determining the detonation time of the bomb. Rescue work should therefore be governed not only by the minimum time interval of two and one-quarter (2-1/4) minutes but also by common-sense analysis of the circumstances surrounding any particular crash. It is vitally important to remember that any time limit should include the time for both rescued and rescuing party to get a safe distance from the airplane before the detonation.



The Business Of Precision Bombing



June 2. Szolnok Marshalling Yard. The beginning of an accurate job of bombing by the 484th Group of the 49th wing. The score was 52% within 1000' of the briefed aiming point.

The Business Of Precision Bombing

Excerpted from Straight and Level
Vol II No. 1

Straight And Level has been published for eight weeks prior to this issue. During this time the 15th Air Force has become more than ever alive to the question: "How accurate is our bombing?" Also many problems have been raised and solved and a uniform procedure for determining accuracy has been worked out:

1. Strike photos are roughly analyzed first.
2. As they come in the bomb plots are compared with the strike photos to see whether they represent a fair cross section of the bombing (it is rarely possible to plot all the bombs dropped).
3. The percentage of all bombs plotted within 1000 feet of the briefed mean point of impact is then used as the score.
4. Where a bomb plot does not seem to represent a fair cross section it is rechecked against the strike photos, the tactics report and any other sources of information available including the Wing Photo Officer and the Wing Bombardier.
5. Targets of opportunity are not counted because verification of the aiming point is in most cases impossible.
6. Where the aiming point was changed an investigation is usually made to determine whether or not the change was justified. If it was, the new aiming point is used for the scoring.
7. Bombing by pathfinder is not counted in the record because photos are usually not available; and frag, incendiary and 100 lb. demolition are usually impossible to plot.
8. When a bomb plot is not submitted because the strike photos are clouded, smoke-obscured, etc., a zero score is given unless other evidence is submitted to show that some bombs actually hit in the target area. Photos of bombs leaving a plane can provide this information, as can recon photos.

(Note: The figures used in this publication are approximate, and opinions as to the accuracy of Groups is not necessarily conclusive nor final. They are for the most part close estimates).

During the first eight weeks of Straight And Level many suggestions and comments have been made. In general these have been on two main subjects: (a) The fairness of the scores and (b), the effect of publishing the facts, especially for poor missions.

(a) Through the development of a standard procedure the

figures given represent in a great majority of cases the accuracy achieved within a few percent. In the remaining cases that may slip through the variations work both ways, and it is believed that over a period chance inequalities will iron themselves out.

(b) It is felt that an up to date overall picture of our bombing accuracy will do more to improve our bombing than over praise for an occasional job of high accuracy, and too-ready condemnation for a SNAFU job. If our morale rests on a good understanding of the facts it can withstand the waxing and waning fortunes of day-by-day bombing.

SUMMARY OF THIS WEEK

For this week the 49th Wing regained its position in the lead. The other four wings were bunched together, with the 5th taking second place. Many missions were flown with frags and 100 lb. demos for which bomb plots cannot be made. Thirty-nine missions were flown, two less than last week, one mission being flown on a shuttle basis into Russia. There was one score over 60% and only four over 50%.

Bombing Accuracy By Wings (% within 1000' of B.A.P.)

For the four-week period ending

	June 2	May 26	(April 30)
49th Wing	30.3	27.0	(14.2)
47th Wing	25.6	21.0	(11.4)
5th Wing	23.5	22.1	(22.7)
55th Wing	21.5	21.5	(21.0)
304th Wing	18.2	16.0	(16.9)
<u>15th AIR FORCE</u>	23.9	21.5	(16.3)

For the first time since publication of the record began, a Wing has crossed the 30% line for four weeks of bombing. The Air Force average has been steadily climbing. The April figure is published for comparison.



May 30. Wiener Neustadt - Neudorf Scoring 61%, the 460th Group of the 55th Bomb Wing hit this target.



May 27. Avignon Marshalling Yard. The 301st Group of the 5th Wing hit this target with 57% within 1000 feet.

Some B-24 Publications

Legend

ISBN Number: International Booksellers ID, LOC Number: Library of Congress classification number.

Ad Lib: Flying the B-24 Liberator in WWII, by William Carigan, ISBN 0-89745-099-X, Sunflower University Press, Manhattan, KS, 1988, The B-24 from a pilot's view point .

American Combat Planes, by Ray Wagner, ISBN 0-385-13120-8, LOC 77-16952, Doubleday & Co, Garden City, NY 1982, Combat aircraft of the US Armed Forces to 1982 .

Aphrodite: Desperate Mission, by Jack Olsen, LOC 70-97083, G P Putnam's sons, New York, NY,1970, Secret Missions using radio controlled explosive laden bombers, B-17, B-24, includes the death of Joe Kennedy.



Atlebridge Diaries, by Lt. Col. John H Woolnough, LOC 78-73162, Newsphoto Yearbooks, San Angelo, TX,1979, History of the 466th BG 8th AF, B-24s.

B-24 Liberator, by Frederick A Johnson, ISBN 0-87938-758-0, Motorbooks Osceola, WI, 1993,General History, illustrated color, b &w photos, some nose art.

B-24 Liberator at War, by Roger Freeman, ISBN 0-7110-1264-4, Motorbooks Osceola, WI, 1983, General History.

B-24 Liberator in Action, ISBN 0-89747-190--3, Squadron Signal Publications, Carrollton, TX 1987,, Text photos, color drawings Publication No 80.

Camouflage & Markings B-24 Liberator, by Ducimus Books Ltd, Staples Printers, London. Markings and Insignia B-24 b&w photos color drawings.

Carpetbaggers, by Ben Parnell, ISBN 0-89015-592-5, LOC 87-6709, Eakin Press, Austin, TX 1987, Clandestine missions 801st & 492 BG 8th AF mostly.

Coffee Tower, Lyle H McCarty, Privately printed, 1987, History 459th BG 15th AF typewritten, b&w photos ,charts.

Consolidated B-24 Liberator, by John M & Donna Campbell, ISBN 0-88740-452-9, LOC 92-62298, Schiffler Publishing Ltd. Atglen, PA, 1993, Photo book, nose art Color & b&w.

Consolidated B-24 Liberator Early Models, by Philip J R Moyes, ISBN0-905469-70-4, Visual Art Press, Oxford, England 1979, text, drawings, b&w photos.

Consolidated B-24D-M Liberator, by Ernest R McDowell, ISBN 0-668-02115-2, LOC 74-93933,Arco Publishing Co, NY 1969, B-24 & derivatives serving in various airforces, combat markings, b&w photos color drawings

Cuckoo Over Vienna, by Claude L Porter, ISBN 0-9624007-0-X, LOC 89-092105, Village Press Inc. Traverse City, MI 1989, Account of a B-24 crew member's life as a POW.

Eagle of the Pacific, by Edwin & Jeanne L Spight, ISBN 0-911852-88-3, LOC 80-8164, Historical Aviation Album Temple City, CA 1980, Story of Consair Airways crew flying C-87's(B-24)during WWII

Eight Bailed Out, by Maj. James M Inks, Popular Library, Eagle Books, NY, 1954, B-24 Crew escape story.

Famous Bombers of Second World War, by William Green, Doubleday & Co Garden City, NY, 1959, WWII Bomber Aircraft of many nations , Vol. two of two part series.

Fields of Little America, by Martin Bowman, ISBN 0-85059-644-0, Patrick Stephens Ltd.. Cambridge, England 1977, History of the 2nd Air Division 8th AF (B-24's),b&w photos charts, drawings.

Flight Manual for B-24 Liberator, by USAAC, Aviation Publications, Appleton, WI 1977, Pilots Flight Manual reprint.

General Dynamics Aircraft and Predecessors, by John Wegg, ISBN0-87021-233-8, LOC89-60237, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 1990, General History of General Dynamic Aircraft, including Convair & B-24 aircraft

General Service Notes Model 32 (B-24) by Consolidated Aircraft Corp.. 1942, Maintenance Manual Model 32 (B-24)

Jaws Over Europe, by Ursel P Harvey, Ursel P Harvey, Ellington, FL. Privately printed. B-24 personal photo collection

Lady Be Good, by Dennis E McClendon, ISBN 0-8168-6624-4, LOC 82-70977, Aero Publishers, Inc.. Fallbrook, CA 1982. Lib found in Libyan Desert 1958.

Liberator, by John McSweeney, General Dynamics., Mostly about the Collings Foundation B-24.

Liberator Lore Vol. 1 Frederick A Johnson, Frederick A Johnson Publisher, Tacoma, WA 1989, B-24 excerpts from the parts Catalogue, line drawings.

Liberator Lore Vol. 2 Frederick A Johnson, Frederick A Johnson Publisher, Tacoma, WA 1989, B-24 Nose Art color b&w photos (poor).

Liberator Lore Vol. 3 Frederick A Johnson, Frederick A Johnson Publisher, Tacoma, WA 1989, B-24 Tests and Modifications b&w photos..

Liberator Lore Vol. 4 Frederick A Johnson, Frederick A Johnson Publisher, Tacoma, WA 1989, Privateers, War Stories, b &w photos.

Liberator Pilot, The Cottontails Battle for Oil, Vincent F Fagan, 0-914379-02-X, LOC 91-70528, California Aero Press, Carlsbad, CA 1991, WWII B-24 Bomber Pilot 450th BG survival story, b & w photos.

Log of the Liberators Steve Birdsall, ISBN 0-385-03870-4, 74-173267, Doubleday & Co Garden City, NY 1973, General History, b&w photos, serial nos.

Low Level Mission, by Leon Wolf, Berkley Publishing Corp. New York, NY 1957, Bombing of Ploesti by B-24 D

Marking & Camouflage 1941-45 B-24 Liberator, by E A Munday, ISBN 0-85045-128-0, Osprey Publishing Ltd. Canterbury, England, Markings B-24 aircraft.

Pilot Training Manual B-24 Liberator, HQ, AAF Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Office of Flying Safety 1944, Pilot Training Manual B-24 Liberator

Ploesti Oil Strike, by John Sweetman, Ballantine Books, New York, NY 1974, General History Ploesti Mission 1/8/43, B-24 D.

Ploesti. The Great Ground Air Battle of 1 August 1943, James Dugan & Carroll Stewart, Fletcher & Son, Norwich, England 1963, Bombing of Ploesti by B-24 D.

Secret Squadrons of the Eighth, by Pat Carty, ISBN0-933424-43-4, Speciality Press, Stillwater MN, 1990, Clandestine missions 8th AF composite squadrons, some other B-24 operations.

Target Ploesti, by Leroy W Newby, ISBN 0-89141-170-4 82-24138, Presidio Press, Novato, CA, 1983, 15th AF Bombar-dier experiences, Ploesti Missions B-24.

The 1000 Day Battle, by James Hoseason, ISBN 0-9506768-0-2, Gillingham Publications, Lowestoft, England 1979, B-24 Operations 2nd AD, 8th AF..

The B-24 Liberator, by Allen G Blue, ISBN 0-684-14508-1, 75-21664, Charles Scribner's & Sons, NY, General History, illustrated b&w photos, serial numbers.

The B-24 Liberator, by Steve Birdsall ISBN 0-668-01695-7, 67-14200, Arco Publishing Co. NY, 1979, B-24 History, B&W photos.

The B-24 Liberator 1939-1945 by Martin Bowman, ISBN 0-528-81538-5, 80-50342, Rand McNally, NY 1980, General History photos color & B& W.

The B-24J Liberator, by Roger A Freeman, Profile Publications, Leatherhead, England, 1965, Text, photos, drawing, serial nos.

The Bomber Barons, by Frederick A Johnson, Bomber Books, Tacoma, WA, 1982, History of the 5th Bomb Group, text, b &w photos.

The Desert Rats, by Michael Hill, ISBN0-929521-41, 90-62326, Pictorial Histories Publishing Co. Missoula, MT 1990, B-24s, 98th Bomb Group B-24Ds, Attack on Ploesti 8/43.

The Fortunes of War, by Allan G Blue, ISBN 67-2787, Aero Publishers, Inc.. Fallbrook, CA 1967, History of the 492nd BG, b &w photos, drawings.

The War of the Cotton Tails, by William R Cubbins, ISBN 0-912697-96-, 88-26227 Algonquin Books, Chapel Hill, NC 1989, WWII B-24 Bomber Pilot 450th BG POW story, b & w photos maps.

Toward Sanctuary by Bill Barnes, Privately Printed 1945., Collection of letters written by Bill Barnes 766 BG

United State Military Aircraft since 1909, by F G Swanborough LOC 62-14737, Putnam, London, NY 1963, Development of US military aircraft, charts drawing b&w photos.

US Bombers 1928 to 1980, by Lloyd S Jones, Aero Publishers inc. Fallbrook, CA 1980, Collection of US Built Bombers.

Wings, Sentry Magazine, Sentry Books Inc. Granada Hills, CA 1991, A magazine issue devoted to the development of the B-24

Know your B-24 Model Designations

Model	F/ER	No	G/Wt	Span	Length	Eng.	HP	Speed	Remarks
XB-24	39-40	1	46400	110'	63'9"	R-1830-33	1200	273	Model #32 S/N 39-680
YB-24	40-40	7	46400	110'	63.9	R-1830-33	1200	275	Service Test
B-24A	40-41	9	53600	110'	63.9	R-1830-33	1200	275	Some modified to C & D
XB-24B	40	(1)	53000	110'	63'9"	R-1830-41	1200	310	Turbos, Self Seal Tanks B-24C
B-24C-CO	40-41	9	54000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-41	1200	313	Turbos, 3 Pwr turrets B-24D-CO
B-24D-CO	40-41	2425	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-43	1200	303	Consolidated Vultee
B-24D-CF	40-41	2425	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-43	1200	303	Some at Ft Worth
B-24D DT	41-41	10	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-43	1200	303	Douglas Tulsa
B-24E-CF	42-42	144	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-65	1200	304	New Propellers
B-24E-DT	42-42	167	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-43	1200	304	
B-24E-FO	42-42	480	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-65	1200	304	
XB-24F-CO	CV-42	(1)	56000	110'	66'4"	R-1830-43	1200	304	Hot Air Deicers
B-24G-NT	42-43	430	56000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-43	1200	300	As B-24D
B-24H-CF	42-43	738	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	As E Emerson Turret
B-24H-FO	42-43	1780	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	
B-24H-DT	42-43	582	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	
B-24J-CO	42-43	2792	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	
B-24J-CF	42-43	1558	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	Some Motor Products Turrets
B-24J-FO	42-43	1587	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	Some Motor Products Turrets
B-24J-N/A	42-43	536	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	Some Motor Products Turrets
B-24J-DT	42-43	205	60000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	290	Some Briggs Ball Turrets
XB-24K-FO	CV-43	(1)	62000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-75	1350	294	Modified D, Single rudder
B-24L-CO	44-44	417	64500	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	300	As J, Manual tail guns
B-24L-FO	44-44	1250	64500	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	300	Manual tail guns
B-24M-CO	44-44	916	64500	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	300	Manual tail guns
B-24M-FO	44-44	1677	64500	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	300	Manual tail guns
XB-24N-FO	44-44	1	65000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-75	1350	294	K, Single tail, Cabin ht
XB-24P-CO	45	(1)	62000	110'	67'2"	R-1830-43	1200	300	Modified B-24D-CO
XB-24Q-FO	46	(1)	64500	110'	67'2"	R-1830-65	1200	300	Modified B-24L-FO

F/Yr. Fiscal year procured, No = number contracted for, (1)= aircraft modified from existing stock. G/Wt = Planned Gross weight, Eng. = Engine, CO = Consolidated Aircraft Co., San Diego, CA; CF = Consolidated Aircraft Co., Ft Worth, TX; DT = Douglas Aircraft Co., Tulsa, OK ; FO = Ford Motor Co., Willow Run, MI; NT = North American Dallas, TX. The Ford Motor Company (FO) supplied knock down kits for assembly by North American at Dallas, TX; and Douglas Aircraft at Tulsa, OK.

B-24 Serial Numbers are prefixed by a two number code indicating fiscal year of procurement, note that sequential block numbers are assigned by model and manufacturer

41-28574	to 41-29006	B-24H-DT	42-64047	to 42-64394	B-24J-CF	42-99936	to 42-100435	B-24J-CO
41-29116	to 41-28608	B-24H-CF	42-64432	to 42-64501	B-24H-CF	42-109789	to 42-110188	B-24J-CO
42-7465	to 42-7769	B-24H-FO	42-72964	to 42-73514	B-24J-CO	44-10253	to 44-10752	B-24J-CF
42-50277	to 42-50451	B-24H-CF	42-78475	to 42-78794	B-24J-NT	44-28061	to 44-28276	B-24J-NT
42-50452	to 42-50508	B-24H-CF	42-94729	to 42-95503	B-24H-FO	44-40049	to 44-41389	B-24J-CO
42-50509	to 42-51076	B-24J-FO	42-95504	to 42-95628	B-24J-FO	44-41390	to 44-41806	B-24L-CO
42-51077	to 42-51225	B-24H-DT	42-99736	to 42-99935	B-24J-CF	44-41807	to 44-42722	B-24M-FO
42-51226	to 42-51430	B-24J-DT				44-44049	to 44-44501	B-24J-CF
42-51431	to 42-52076	B-24J-FO				44-48754	to 44-49001	B-24J-FO
42-52077	to 42-52776	B-24J-FO				44-49001	to 44-50251	B-24L-FO

Source:

US Army Aircraft 1908-1946 by
James C Fahey

Hummelstown, PA

Dear Bud

Here is a photo of our crew taken in front of our brand new B-24L



Standing left to right: Ferris L Jones-C/P, John S Wise-P, and Elias W Smith-N. Kneeling: Claude M Bassler-R/O, Everett A Evans-E, Russell J Hayhurst-N/G, Robert J Havlik-W/G, Ira Whiteley-T/G, and Frank Haverdick-B/G. Cambell L Gilbert-B was not present when the photo was taken.

Sincerely

Claude M Bassler 827 sq.

Dear Sir:

This letter is directed to former Commanders of the 15th Air Force, 484th BG, 825 Sq. In a recent "Torretta Flyer", Winter-Spring '94, it was stated that some 59 years ago pilot Major J.C. Landon and Bombardier Lt. George Adams were awarded the DFC. They were most deserving, but the other eight brave crew members who completed the same 36 combat missions with this pilot and bombardier were also deserving of this medal. All crew members (10) were interdependent on one another for their survival and for the success of each mission. All crewmembers endured the same horror of flak and fighters. No one was exempt.

Our C/P "Lucky", N/G-Person, E Kinsky, B/G- Konertz, T/G- Martin, N- Roth, U/G Cromer and R/O Freeman performed outstandingly as a fighting unit. The DFC was usually automatically awarded to all crew members of Heavy Bombardment Flying Units on completion of their tour of duty. It is unconscionable that the other 8 members of this crew did not receive the DFC.

Sincerely,

Bill Freeman R/O

Southbridge, MA

Dear Bud:

After seeing the 484th Citation in an issue of the 15th Air Force "Sortie" I was reminded of what happened to our crew on June 13, 1944.

Lt. Willie Fairchild's bunch flew on that mission, we used some other crew's airplane as ours was down for maintenance work, a 50 hour inspection perhaps.

On our way to the target upon test firing of the guns, we discovered that the only guns that worked were in the top turret, my position. As we approached the target area, which was covered by a smoke screen, we were hit by fighters who came right into the flak after us.

Now, before leaving our base, we all had been issued flak helmets, a new idea for us, and we were supposed to put them

Letters To The Editor

on while over the target where the flak was thickest. To store my helmet in the top turret prior to reaching the target, I just put mine over the gunsight between the guns.

As we approached the target I endeavored to put my helmet on. I discovered to my dismay that the helmet strap had become entangled on the rotor for my vertical elevation, and try as I might I couldn't get the darned thing free.

Just about that time, with the sky alive with ME 109's, two of them flew through our formation from the rear, and pulled in front and above the group, and they hung there like two sitting ducks for what seemed a long time, two prime targets for me with the two only working guns on the ship, and my flak helmet trapped over my gun sight. There were other planes of our group slightly in front and above, and I was afraid to fire for fear of hitting some of our own planes without the gunsight. So I didn't and missed a chance of nailing at least one of them because of my dumb luck with the damned flak helmet. "C'est la vie!"

In any event with no particular thanks to me, we survived Munich to go on to Innsbruck, and apparently did a good job.

According to the Sortie article, the 484th was cited for its successful bombing run at Innsbruck, and I wonder if that meant a Unit Citation with a blue ribbon in a brass frame. Was it official*, or was it just a slap on the back for a job well done? I am not looking for any medals, but if it was official I wouldn't mind having one for my "leave behind" souvenirs, when I go to that great bomb group in the sky. When I read the article I felt a twinge of nostalgia and had to ask.

Thanks for listening

James J Cox 826 Sq.

* Editors Note: Yes this was the first Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the 484th Bomb Group, and is official.

Dear Bud:

As requested I'm enclosing a few photos. My pilot Thaddeus M Phillips is the same person to whom reference is made in Torretta Flyer #25 Winter-Spring page 5 receiving the DFC. I don't recall the event(s) which brought him the honor. He earned it regardless, as he was one hell of a pilot..

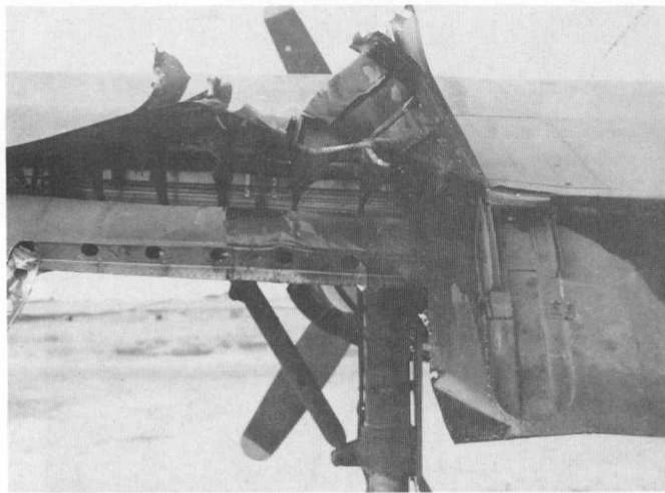
Best wishes,
Ed "Kosikowski" Cosgrove 825 Sq



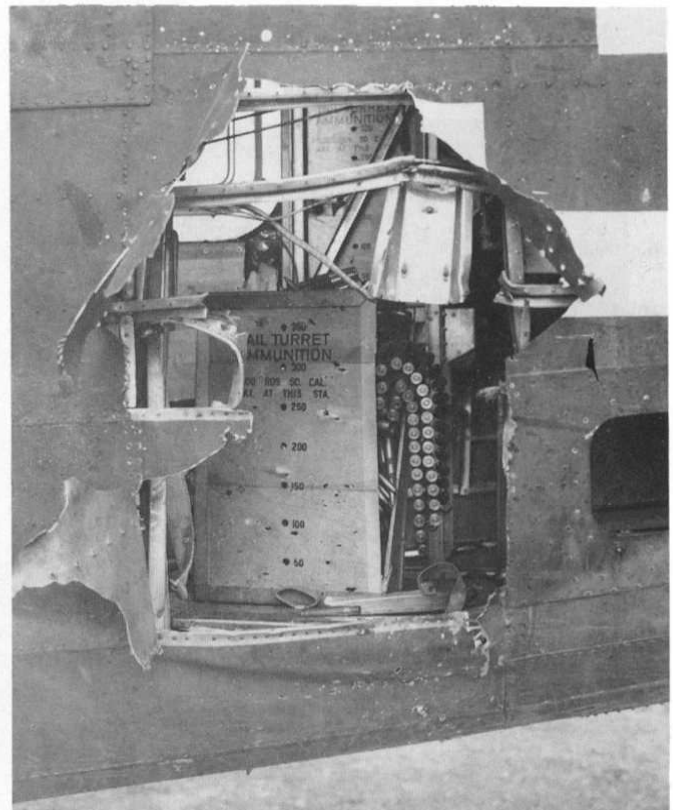
#36 Ground Crew



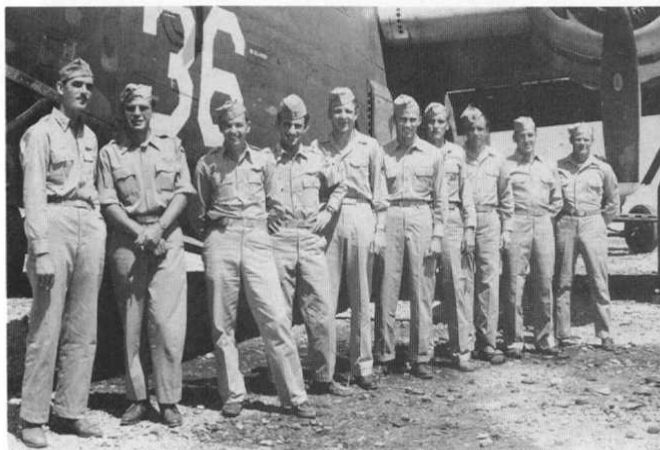
Flak damage, gunner not injured



Flap damage due to cannon fire from a ME109



Flak damage near the L/H waist. Gunners not injured as they were wearing flak jackets



From L to R, Phillips-P, Cosgrove-B, Maddox-CP, Podber-N,

Torretta Flyer Number #26 Fall-Winter

All photos are of B-24H 42-94742 #36, 825 Sq. This aircraft crashed April 21, 1944

Edited for the Torretta Flyer

Mr. Markel:

Thank you for sending me copies 24, and 25 of the Torretta Flyer, I appreciate the print quality and for the information regarding the life of the 484th Bomb Group in Italy. I especially appreciated the list of your aircraft in issue No 24 as it helps us with identifying crashed airplanes.

I have a list of five 461 Bomb Group aircraft that fell in Southern France during the war. I don't know if there are any downed 484th Bomb Group aircraft in this area at this time.

My family and myself are involved in deep sea diving. In 1984 while diving off of Agay in the Mediterranean Sea I came upon a lost B-24 at 42 Meters. I haven't been the same since, being bitten by the research bug. I am convinced there are other downed aircraft that have not been identified yet. As a result a new organization "Aero Re. L.I.C." was formed with me as president. We locate and identify crashed aircraft of WWII in the region of the French Riviera. This can be tedious work as we may have found only one part to identify the whole aircraft with. We now have twenty members. A book on crashed B-24's is now in preparation also.

When a positive identification is made efforts are made to contact the survivors or their families and arrange for them to travel to France to visit the spot where the aircraft fell. This has been accomplished many times and is a rewarding experience for everyone. For the survivors or families it establishes the exact final resting place of the crashed crewmen. This is important to me as it is part of French history that has been unknown till now by the French.

I am enclosing a photograph of 42-78289 a B-24 G "Flak Strainer" taken in October 1933 at the Dijon-Longvic airfield in France. The word Johnny appears just below the right waist window. You will notice some engine parts and cowling laying on the ground indicating that repair work was underway.

I rest as your friend, Phillippe Castellano, 500 Rue Leo Brun, # 06210, Mandelieu, France.

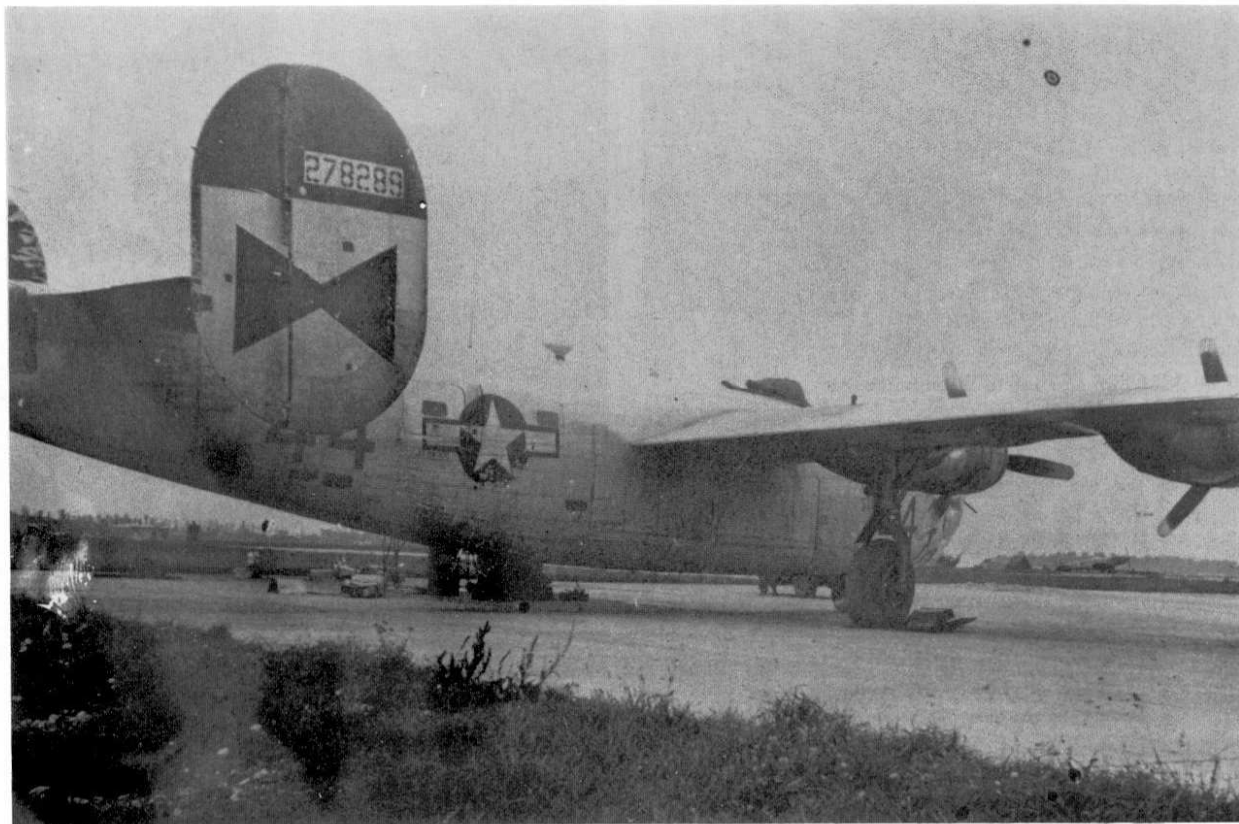


Photo credit: Pierre Granddillet, France

St. Louis, MO
Dear Bud:

I am writing this letter to fill in a few gaps in our group history.

In the Torretta Flyer No. 24 and in the article on "Aircraft Operated by the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups," in the compilation on page 15, we would like to add that plane No. 22 had no known name. However, on the right side of the nose was painted a girl sitting on a pillow. (See photo). The pilot on this mission was H. Keith Ridgway. We were returning from a mission to Blechammer, Germany. I was the bombardier on this mission. Date - August 7, 1944.

Two engines were lost on final approach due to lack of fuel, the other two died shortly after. We crashed in a small farm field near Torretta Field. Donald W. Spinney (TG) and Seymour J. Bomson (R/G) were both killed in the crash. The rest of the crew came through with various injuries, some minor and some serious. The plane shown in the picture on page 19 was definitely the plane we crashed that day.

Robert J. Dieker. 824 Sq.



P. S. Enclosed photo of old No. 22 in better days. From the left, Ross Applegate, C/P, Stanley J. Gaworecki, N, Robert J. Dieker, B, and Richard C. Wood, T/G. All members of Keith Ridgway's crew.

Alexandria, VA
Dear Bud & Bea:

I have to tell you that I feel you are doing an excellent job on the publication "Torretta Flyer." The Winter-Spring issue was one of your best. It was interesting to read about the thirty missions I flew between July 43 and April 44. It brings back many happy and also many sad memories of our experiences during WWII.

Betty and I are sorry we have to miss the boat cruise. We made the same trip a few years ago and really enjoyed the cruise and of course the seven meals a day. We do plan on the 95 reunion at Wright-Patterson. We toured the museum years ago and found they have a B-36 in which I have a few thousand hours. A little bit larger than the B-24.

Sincerely,
Fred Dierksmeier 826 Sq.

Acworth, GA
Dear Bud:

Read about the 484th BG in the fall issue of the "Der Clarion." I was a member of the 484th from its founding in Harvard, Nebraska, or should I say from its selection process in Boise, Idaho.

I was assigned as a navigator on a flight commander crew, with pilot "Ole" Sylest Olson, Romus Brandehoff co pilot, and Glenn Smith the Bombardier. The enlisted men on our crew were all tech seargents. They are: Eugene Servis-engineer, Harold Seitz-radio operator, Vincent J Costanzo-tail gunner, Charley V Glass assistant engineer-nose gunner, Christopher A Pollack-upper gunner, and Dale Cato-ball gunner.

I was commissioned a bombardier in class 43-9 San Angelo, Texas -then one of the few to be shipped to San Marcus, Texas

to attend class 43-15 Navigator School.

After phase training at Harvard, Nebraska we flew the southern ferry route to Torretta where we trained on practice missions before actual combat. Flew 26 mission with the same crew and aircraft, 2 more with the squadron and wing commander as one of the three Bombardier-Navigators on the lead plane. Shot down on 29th mission on June 13, 1944, bailed out simultaneously with the co pilot, and was captured June 19th one year to the day of our marriage in San Angelo, Texas. Was a prisoner in Stalag Luft III, then to Stalag 7A at Mooseburg. Worked for Westinghouse after the war thirty two years and retired in 1982. At present I am serving as chapter commander in AV-DOW.

Regards.
Ben Huckins, 825 Sq.

Morristown, FL
Dear Bud:

I saw this article in our local paper about old Mountbrook Florida airport (Morriston Field) where 484th aircraft departed using the southern route to Italy.

Alfred Koch, brother of George Koch

The City of Williston has owned the former Montbrook Army Air Field for almost 50 years. How much longer would Hull suggest the city "sit back and watch" it become more valuable? The unanimous decision of Williston City Council to consider negotiation of a sale for development of the airport/industrial park was a clear demonstration of vision and foresight for the good of the people.

There is no guarantee that a sale will be consummated and it may be another 50 years before another opportunity to negotiate a sale arises. The city council, as the corporate decision makers for the incorporated City of Williston, acted wisely and with due diligence on behalf of the city taxpayers. I am confident they will continue to put the good of the majority ahead of the limited self-interest of a few.

Sincerely,
George Sandora
Executive Director Levy County
Development

Apple Valley, CA
Dear Bud:

I am enclosing several photos of my airplane "Old Flutter Butt"* and its crews.



Photo 1 The ground crew who were very good as we never missed a mission or had to abort.



Photo 2 Ship #40 B-24H-15 42-52602, North American built from Ford knock down kits at Dallas, Texas.



Photo 3 Front Row left to right; John T Kinsky-E W/G, Robert J Person-N/G, William G Freeman-R/O W/G, Raymond T Cromer-2nd E U/G, Clarence P Konertz-B/G, and Ward L Martin-3rd E T/G. Front row James C Langdon-P, Ranscomb E Roth-N, and George W Adams-B. Lucky F Moorhead-C/P is not in the picture.

James C Langdon 825 Sq.

* Editors Note: "Old Flutter Butt" and "Stew Bum" are listed as the same 42-52602. It was shot down June 13, 1944 by fighters near Natters. Capt. Robert C Quinlan and crew were captured and spent the rest of the war as POWs.

Alma, WV
Dear Bud

The big storms of the winter of 1993-1994 left us without power, one time for five days. Our only source of heat was a fireplace insert. I had ample time to think and remember. This is the 50th anniversary of tent 39 heater. It wasn't restricted to us, everyone had one and no one really knows how many there were in Italy or for that matter who invented it.

It was truly one of the great inventions of WWII. Simple, cheap and easy to fabricate from unusual pieces that were available and fit together as though they were meant to be.

It also put out more than enough heat. I don't know who invented it. Ours was the work of Otto Zelenka. He was a charter member of the "jack of all trades" club, and probably made most of the ones in the 827 squadron.

Fabrication started with the familiar 5 gallon Jeep auxiliary gasoline can. With the can laying on its flat side instead of the usual upright position the filler cap was toward you, a round hole was cut in the opposite corner for the exhaust flue. On the bottom a hole was cut to accommodate the burner can, usually a thick brass 75 MM shell case. Slots were cut in the open end for combustion air and fuel entry. Containers for 75 MM shell were welded together, then attached to the left rear top of the fuel can. The stove was supported by a four legged bomb fin holder.

The heater is now ready for the fuel system. A 55 gallon drum was outside the tent high enough to allow gravity feed to the fire pot. Aluminum tubing was used to carry fuel from the drum to the fire pot.

Tent 39 had five youngsters and one old man of 38, Frank Simmons. He looked out for us like a father so the line and shut off valve went under his bunk ("sack"). Frank would open the valve in the morning and get a few drops in the fire pot and light it with a long taper usually a rolled up "Stars and Stripes." It took only a few minutes to get the tent warm and five youngsters leaping out of the "sack" dressed, and on to briefing and the flight line. On colder mornings the heater would glow cherry red.

One added feature of the heater was that it could be used as a cooking stove. Frank used to enjoy making his own recipe of Arkansas coffee. Using his canteen cup 1/2 full of coffee and 1/2 water he would boil it to perfection and pour off the liquid. He was the only one in the tent who could

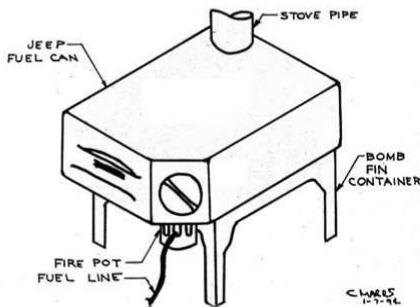
manage to drink it.

Fuel for the stove was plentiful. We used 100 Octane aviation gasoline. Think what the government would say about this today. Despite the universal use of aviation fuel very few accidents occurred, tents did tend to burn down from time to time from many causes, but the stoves were safe when operated according to standard operating procedure, that is by lighting the fire with a small amount of fuel and then adjusting the fuel flow to maintain the heat range below that which the can would burn through. This was left to responsible individuals.

The stove earned its place in the history of WWII warfare and, it is remembered with fond memories by 15th Air Force personnel, by officers and enlisted men alike.

Editors Note:

This recipe wasn't much different from mess hall coffee where it was made in a 50 gallon garbage can, with coffee similarly poured into boiling water. As the water evaporated the coffee got stronger and stronger. It did get your attention and bring you fully awake.



It was also common practice to take bread (a crumbly and loose baked bread of local origin) from the barns that served as mess halls and make toasted cheese sandwiches from the canned K ration lunch. Those who could tolerate Spam would fry thin slices to a crisp and make sandwiches slathered with generous globs of catchup (mayonnaise was unheard of in Italy). Others who would rather "eat out" could purchase the same sandwich at the NCO clubs, that is if you could get past the roulette table that blocked the entrance to the kitchen with its temptations.

Sincerely,
Charlie Marrs, 827 Sq.

Stamford, CT
Dear Bud

This was my most traumatic war experience. While flying formation nearing the initial point of target over Vienna we lost oil pressure on both engines on the left side. Both propellers were wind milling. We salvoed bombs, guns and ammo. The navigator could not determine which country we were in. The airplane eventually ran out of altitude and crash landed in the mountainous terrain in Croatia. Two bailed out while the rest of us road her down to land in a fluid area, but the Partisans got to us first and took us out of there in a hurry.

That evening we rejoined the two who had bailed out, one was seriously injured in the fall. With partisan escort we walked three days to an OSS team at a Partisan Command Post in the vicinity of Bihac. We spent about two weeks at this post before being flown out in a C-47 to Bari after being MIA for three weeks. Returned to duty with 34 missions to go.

Walter A Menn 826 Sq.

Uniontown, OH
Dear Bud:

I was born in Creston, Ohio February 4, 1921, and graduated from Creston High School in 1938 and Wooster Business College in 1939. (After the war, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Management was achieved at the University of Akron, Ohio.) From 1935 to 1942 I was employed by a local Ford Dealer as Business Manager and in Sales.

I was sworn into the Army Air Corps 26 May 1942 and received my commission and Bombardier Wings at Roswell, New Mexico, September, 11 1943. First assigned to Mountain Home, then Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho the crew was transferred to Harvard, Nebraska Army Air Base. With a new B-24-H. we were deployed to Torretta Field on March 1, 1944. We were identified as LT Sylfest L Olson's crew and we were together the entire time until we were shot down. On our 29th mission over Munich, Germany 13 June 1944 we sustained a heavy fighter attack. Descending to five thousand, the attack increased and we were forced to abandon 42-52715. After about a year in POW camps the entire crew did arrive safely home after the war's end.

Married 20 December 1944 to the "gal back home", Daisy Marie Tidrick, while at Harvard, Nebraska. Daisy was lost to leukemia in February 1990, after 46 years of a great marriage. We have three sons, one daughter and seven grandchildren.

Glenn T Smith 825 Sq.



Kneeling Left to Right 2d LT Benjamin Huckins-N, 1/Lt Sylfest L Olson (D)-P, 2/Lt Romus S Brandehoff (D)-C/P and 2/Lt Glenn T Smith-B. Standing Left to right: Sgt Dale W Cato (D)-E, Sgt Charley V Glass (D)-As/E, Sgt Christopher A Pollock-G, S/Sgt Harold A Seitz-R/O, Sgt Vincent J Costanzo-G, and T/Sgt Eugene Servis (D)-E.

Thousand Oaks, CA

Dear Bud:

Enjoyed your winter-spring edition immensely. Particularly on page 7 and the picture in Lyon. I was one of those who went. On one mission, we ran into bad weather and couldn't get to Lyon so we ended up on a short strip NE of Marseilles. The strip was so short, they had to unload all our bombs and gas and fly them out on C-47's. Even empty, it was a dicey take off.

The next item to catch my eye is on page 22; that being my being awarded my first DFC. 1st Lt Campbell was my bombardier and the last name on the list, was Sowers, my top turret gunner and engineer.

The trip aboard the Fun Ship looks inviting but at this time don't know whether I can make it or not. I will be in Spain that summer and should be back by 1 October.

Will sign off by saying that your review of the missions flown struck a tender note because starting in August and going until the following May, my crew and I completed our 35 missions.

Rod Stewart 826 Sq.

North Wales, PA

Dear Bud:

I have enclosed two pictures of 826 squadron aircraft.

Carl Voss 826 Sq.

Canyon Lake, Texas

Dear Bud:

Please find enclosed a picture of me and my buddies, all navigators. The photo was taken in Bari July 29, 1944. They are from left to right, Arthur Shak, John C Brown, and me, Robert W Tissing.

Robert W Tissing, 824 sq.



Photo 2 "Puss 'N Boots" #64 41-28835 Salvaged October 26, 1944



Photo 1 "Dry Run" #61

We Have Not Forgotten

Last September my brother John and I visited Washington, D.C. John spent five years in the U. S. Army flying helicopters. I spent four years in the U.S. Navy on board ships. We served in the early 1980s and feel lucky to have survived some dangerous situations. It was therefore with reverence that we stood in front of the Vietnam Memorial on a warm Sunday afternoon. As we milled about, we remembered a young man from our hometown who had been killed in action. We used to see his mother every Sunday at Mass. Eventually, our small town named a street after him: he was James J. O'Shaughnessy. We searched the directory, and found his name. When he was killed he was in his early 20s.

Our town, Closter, N.J., outside New York City, was where Mrs. O'Shaughnessy continued to attend Mass every Sunday after her son's death; it was where a new generation of kids grew up on O'Shaughnessy Lane; it was where a family, a town, and a

parish were forever changed by the Vietnam War. A town where the war was no longer a million miles away.

A park ranger made each of us an etching of James O'Shaughnessy's name. As he did the etching, strangers began to assemble and quietly observe. John and I stood united with strangers paying homage to a young man who died in battle 24 years ago.

There is a school of thought today that by honoring those killed in war, we glorify war itself. Those who believe that this is why Americans observe Memorial Day ought to spend an afternoon at the Vietnam Memorial and learn how the spirit of a human life lives on, and how by honoring our dead we glorify life, not war.

On this and every Memorial Day we all should remember that those who died in both the defense of America and in the defense of other nations are small-town heroes. In their youth, they went to war in fear, but with courage, in a faraway land. In do-

ing so, they joined the ultimate protest of war and paid the ultimate price. They were our flesh and blood, our loved ones, our neighbors, our friends, our young men and women who left us never to return. By bringing their spirits back home in quiet communion, we place value on each of their lives.

The moment my brother and I stood with strangers before our local hero's name, he was with us in our collective spirit. For that moment, James J. O'Shaughnessy was home. As Americans, we embraced him on that beautiful September day and silently said to him,

"We have not forgotten."

JAMES H. RODGERS JR. New York

Reprinted with permission of the Wall Street Journal ©1993 Dow Jones & Co. Inc. All rights reserved.. "Letters to the Editor"



Ambler M Blick

Ambler M Blick, 69, 827 Sq. and association member passed away August 4, 1993. He was a T/G on Harold Ralph Riggs crew. He flew 50 missions in just 84 days earning many theater ribbons, the Air Medal, and Distinguished Unit Badge.

May 29, 1944, the target was Weiner Neustadt. Squadron CO Major Haldeman in "Hustlin Hussy 42-52677" was lost near Graz, shot down by fighters. Flak too was very heavy and intense. The 824 Squadron also lost a ship that day, CO Lt Col. William M Hendrix in ship 41-28780, was hit by flak and went down near Seenbenstein. Ambler flew most of his missions in a B-24 called "Big Ass Bird."

He is survived by his Wife Myra, a son, Monte, two daughters, Wincey Casserly, and Linda Hess, and six grandchildren.

His Crew: Harold Ralph Rigg-P, Leonard Romey-C/P, Ted A Turk (KIA)-N, John D Henry-B, Bob L McKee-E, Claire O Palmiter-R/O, Rudolph P Laine-N/G, Gerald L Huber U/G, Billie R Miller-B/G, and Ambler M Blick-T/G.

John C Chaffe

John C Chaffe, 825 Sq. association member died June 11, 1993. John was a radio operator on the crew of James C Porter, he managed to get in 40 missions before being shot down on June 26, 1944, which is quite a feat considering his first mission began after May 7, 1944. The crew was flying "Big Dick #31 42-94740" when they were shot down by fighters near Ghorherrn June 26, 1944. He held the rank of S/Sgt. He lived in Paoli, PA.

His Crew: James C Porter-P, Billie P Sanders-C/P, Lawrence Glasser-N, Isaac W Smoke-B, Clarence T Gambill-E, John C Chaffe-R/O, George A Van Vliet-N/G, Francis Bangs-T/G, Russell J Schneider U/G, Wilbur R Dyott Jr-B/G

Lowell K Davis

Lowell K Davis, 76 Pilot 824 Sq. and association member passed away Tuesday, July 13, 1993. He was born to Addle and Drude Davis on March 24, 1917, in Purdon, Texas. Lowell graduated from Texas A&M in 1940. He was a pilot with the 484th Bomb

The Last Mission

Group. He flew 50 missions and received the Air Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation, and the Distinguished Flying cross. He flew many missions on ship 42-52687 "Guardian Angel." He was recalled by the Air Force during the Korean War.

He joined General Electric in Dallas and later in Houston as the Credit Manager of Large Apparatus. Lowell retired in 1979 from General Electric and the Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel. After his retirement the Davis' moved to Austin. Lowell was a life time member of Tannehill Lodge #52. He was an avid golfer and a member of the Bergstrom Golf Association.

Lowell is survived by his wife of 48 years, Francys Joyce Davis, three daughters, Judy Simmons, Joyce Gunnels, Jill Goodwin, and five grandchildren.

His Crew: Lowell K Davis-P, Thomas R Woolcott-C/P, Arthur TS Shak-N, David M Bartow-B, George W Rands-E, Aurolio E Gallegos-R/O, Garland T Wyrick-N/G, Alfred L Krueger-B/G, Victor Morettini-U/G, and John Cale-T/G.

Cemetery in Arneytown, New Jersey.

Jay received a degree in education from Temple University and taught 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades and also was a demonstration teacher at Trenton State College.

He was an early supporter of the scholarship fund and had hoped to travel to Italy to witness the giving of the awards, but illness prevented the trip. He had been a member of the Association since 1983.

James E. Ellis II,

James E. Ellis II, 827 Sq. and association member died Wednesday at age 67.

Ellis was owner of Jim's Camera & Video in Brentwood Center, Wilson, NC

Born in Wilson, Ellis graduated from Coon High School in 1943 and served as an Army Air Corps B-24 tail gunner in Europe, flying 33 combat missions. After the war he earned a degree in business administration at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he joined Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

Jay K Dudley



Jay K Dudley

Jay K Dudley, 764 Sq. and association member, died September 11, 1993. He had been ill with emphysema for four years prior to his passing. He served as a darkroom technician and cameraman with the squadron with the rank of S/Sgt. He was one of the original cadre stationed at Hammer Field, California and shipped overseas on a Liberty ship, subsequently working under the direction of Captain James Clark. He is buried in the New Jersey Veterans Memorial



James E. Ellis II

He was active in American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and other veterans groups and the UNC Alumni Association. He suffered a debilitating stroke in November 1986.

Ellis is survived by two sons, James E. Ellis III and Duke R. Ellis, and a brother, Charles A. Ellis. (see also Milton Ring from same crew page 42.)



Charles A. "AL" Harford

Charles A. "AL" Harford, 825 Sq. association member passed away Nov. 16, 1993, in Fort Morgan, Colorado. He was the engineer on Charles Marshall's crew



Born February 1, 1925, in Pueblo to Carl and Elva (Rinker) Harford. He graduated from Pueblo Central High School in 1943. He joined the Army Air Force following high school and served in Italy during World War II. Following the war he married Kay Roberts on March 8, 1946, in Raton, N.M. He began a 47-year career with Colorado Interstate Gas Company working in Pueblo, Colorado. He is survived by his wife, Kaye, daughter, Sydnie Harford, Denver; sons, Chris Harford of Fort Morgan and Douglas of Denver; sister, Elva Leonard of Pueblo; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Escape Statement (from Micro Film records)

His crew was shot down on a mission to Vienna on February 21, 1945 Thirty seconds before bombs away three bursts of flak hit the aircraft, knocking out No 2 and 4 engines, all of the hydraulic system, and the inter phone. The aircraft lost several thousand feet immediately, and as soon as the pilot regained control, S/Sgt. upper gunner bailed out and his chute was seen to open. The tail gunner S/Sgt. Rollo Richmond was seriously injured. Radio operator Joseph Cataldo and 2nd navigator Clyde V Thompson received superficial wounds.

The pilot headed south and then southwest and crossed lake Balaton at about 15,000 feet The maps on which the battle lines and safe areas were drawn had blown out of the window when the crew threw out guns and other equipment to lighten the load. As soon as they were sure they were behind Russian lines, they headed for Yugoslavia. The co/pilot instructed the crew to rig a

static line to Sgt, Richmond's chute, and after assisting him out, the remainder of the crew bailed out.

Sgt. Charles A Harford landed in a cornfield. The whole village came out and shouted "Americanski" He convinced them he was an American because he was speaking English. He returned to duty March 1, 1945. At the time of crash he had flown 21 missions.

His crew: Charles A Marshall-P, John R Gross Jr-C/P, John D Cummins-N, Robert F Anderson-B, Charles A Harford-E, Joseph Cataldo-R/O, Peter Regalman-N/G, Rollo Richmond—T/G, Robert Powers-U/G, and Robert Sorenson-B/G. (Information taken from a membership application)

In addition the escape statement lists second navigator, Clyde V Thompson and F/O Lee, and S/Sgt Sandberg as being on board and parachuting out of the aircraft. The master Data Base shows a Ray A Lee Jr-B 825 Sq. and member Glen L Sandberg 825 sq. being assigned to the Charles A Marshall crew. All but one of the crew returned to Italy, and went on "R & R" to Egypt..

Harry J Jenkins 824 Sq.

Harry J Jenkins 824 Sq. died December 21, 1993. He was an intelligence staff officer holding the rank of Major serving with the squadron from its inception until the 484th bomb Group was disbanded in July 1945. He was the Group CO from late May 1945 to July 1945 with the Rank of Lt. Col..

He sailed to Italy in January 1945 with the ground echelon element of the 484th Bomb Group on the SS Oswald Jacoby without incident. But a connecting flight from Naples to Cerignola became very precarious when in dense clouds the flight instruments malfunctioned, luckily the co/pilot was able to find the airfield and make a safe landing.

James R "Jim" Johnson

Maj. James R Johnson, 764 Sq, 77 died June 6, 1993 after a long illness.

He was one of the first persons to join the Association His early support was most welcome in the days when the Association was formed. He and his wife Gladys attended reunions in 1983, 84, 86, 87, 88,

89, and 91. He was a contributor to the scholarship and computer funds.

He and his crew were identified mostly with a B24-E called "Lazy Lady" # 12 42-51762. It lived on for a while even after the crew finished their missions in July 1944. It was finally salvaged for parts November 11, 1944

James Johnson had organized a crew reunion in 1980 when he learned Bud Markel was organizing a reunion for wartime members of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups. There was one guy he couldn't find, the navigator. He found out he'd stayed in the Air Force and retired as a Lt/Col. in Dunedin FL. One of his gunners had lived only six miles from him and didn't even know it. The men had a group picture taken in front of the B-24 Liberator on display at Lackland Air Force Base. The crew was split up. Johnson's navigator Jerome R. Roth, nose gunner John L. DeGraaff, engineer Charles Louis and radio operator and waist gunner William E. Jennings had completed their last required sorties on July 22 1944, bombing the large oil fields at Ploesti, Rumania. Co/pilot Pilot Graven F. Mitchell, bombardier Walter J. Roeben, waist gunner Lynwood C. Harrell, ball gunner Donald G. Charland, and tail gunner J.D. Trout flew their last mission two days later with five replacements in the "Lazy Lady." The plane was shot down over Linz, Austria. It was hit by fighters just short of its target, the Herman Goering tank plant. Of the 10 men aboard, only Roeben, Charland and Trout survived. They were held in separate German prison camps until the war ended. The 1980 reunion was a huge success.



Maj. James R Johnson

Cyril L. Kline

Cyril L. Kline 71, 764 Sq. and association member of Charleroi, PA died Feb. 8, 1992, following a lingering illness.

He was born in Charleroi on August 12, 1920, a son of the late George and Anna Mackanos Kline. He served as a 1st/Lt. in the Army Air Corps Crew #7 during World War II, where he served with the 764th Bomb Squadron.

He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with five Battle and Presidential citations. He flew missions to Ploesti, Munich, Linz, Vienna, Athens, and Sarajevo.

Mr. Kline retired with 50 years of service as a foreman with the Corning Glass Works, Charleroi.

He is survived by his wife, with whom he celebrated 48 years of marriage, Veronica Talpas Kline; one son, Dennis Kline, two daughters, Donna McCloskey and Doris Koecheler six grandchildren; two sisters, Mrs. Steve (Frances) Marchezak. and Mrs. Fred (Marge) Owsiany.



Cyril L. Kline

Thomas J McGuire

Thomas J McGuire Bombardier, 825 Sq. died in 1988.

As bombardier on Charles O Crane's crew, they ferried B-24 42-52678 on March 22, 1944 across the Atlantic using the southern route. He became a POW and was held in Shumen, Bulgaria. He served in the USAF after the war and retired as a Lt/Col.

His Crew: Charles O Crane-P, Rua L Petty-C/P, Kenneth F Kover-N, Thomas J McGuire-B, Jesse F Compton-E, James E Conochen-R/O, John M Canfield-G, Richard S Wood-G, and Orville Gore-G.

Carmelita "Carm" McKew,

Carmelita "Carm" McKew, Assn member & wife of Charles McKew 824 Squadron.



"Carm" McKew

Carmelita McKew, Andover, Massachusetts, an Internal Revenue Service retiree, died July 16, 1993.

Born in Lawrence, MA she attended St. Patrick Grammar School and graduated from Lawrence High.

Members of her family include her husband of 51 years, Charles A. McKew of Andover; sons, Charles A. Jr., Howard J., a daughter, Mrs. R. Bruce, a sister, Mary Riley, and seven grandchildren.

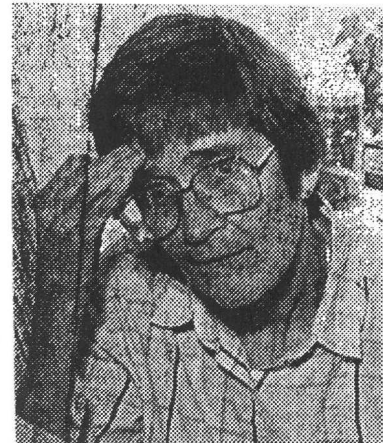
Charles and Carmelita were married on November 15, 1941. they enjoyed over 51 years together and were "Best Friends".

They began raising a family in 1944. She enjoyed travelling and most of all being with her family. A highlight of each year for children and grandchildren was the annual New Year's Eve Party hosted by Charles and Carm at their home. A tradition began with pool parties held at the McKew house. They became important events, and have been continued by the children at their homes. Their extended family included relatives, friends, and friends of friends. It was a good life.

Carmelita McKew, was an active member of the 484th Bomb Group Association along with husband Charles. They made up the membership search committee and between the two of them brought many new people into the Association.

Even after she was diagnosed with cancer and was recovering from an exploratory operation, she insisted on continuing the work. This was not easy for her as it entailed travelling to libraries to extract information from the stacks of heavy phone books. The work was made easier later when phone listings became available on CD-ROM disks.

Donna Nagelhout



Donna Nagelhout 55, wife of Arnold P Nagelhout, 825 squadron, died of lung cancer (April 2, 1992)

For most of her 35-year nursing career, either preventing death or facing it was a part of her work day. She was a registered nurse. Mrs. Nagelhout, 55, talked calmly, almost matter-of-factly, prior to her death. "I'm lucky," she said, referring to her family's coping with her illness. One of her daughters is a nurse practitioner, her "baby sister," Susan Bubbs of Allegany, is director of patient services for the Cattaraugus County Health Department. "Donna was always very direct, straight forward, no facades, no pretenses," she said. Anyone meeting her for the first time knew that. Mrs. Nagelhout didn't mince words when it came to discussing her bout with cancer.

"I was expecting two grandchildren in February of 1991. I decided to quit while my daughters were pregnant because I had read about secondary smoke and I didn't want to have the kids affected by my smoking," Donna had said. She was a heavy smoker—two packs of cigarettes a day for 35 years.

When she knew her death was impending Donna set out to get her house in order. She had time to prepare her family, emotionally and financially. Together, with husband, Arnold, she set up a family trust, arranged powers of attorney and tied up all financial and legal ends to make things easier for their heirs. Her own funeral was already arranged and paid for before she died.

She is survived by husband Arnold, four grandchildren, ages 2 months to 4 years, and four children: Twins Joann and James, 31; Christine, 32, and David, 29.

Vernon Oldfield

Vernon "Duke" Oldfield 825 Sq. died June 6, 1993. He was a radio operator on Henry E Dionne's crew.

The crew: Henry E Dionne-P, Robert Fritts-C/P, Garland A Hall-N, Robert C Mills-B, Roy A Nichols-E, Vernon A Oldfield-R/O, Emilio "Mel" Marchese-B/G, Evan J Hestad-T/G, Gerald J Roach-T/G, and David L Leap-N/G. Vernon had been a member since 1988.

William J O'Malley



William J O'Malley 825th Sq. and association member passed away January 28, 1994 from Alzheimer's disease. He was the Radio Operator on James J Ahern's crew. He had been awarded numerous battle ribbons including the Southern France Campaign, and Air Combat-Balkans. He became a POW on January 15, 1945, when his ship 424-41145 was shot down after being damaged by enemy fire. The ship fell near Kirchberg. He was captured by ground troops and was held in Dulag Luft Wetliar.

His Crew: James J Ahern-P, George E Morges-C/P, Jobe Taylor-N, Mike Hartunian-B, Relis Oldfield-E, William J O'Malley-R/O, Jimmie Slaton-NG, Richard Callen-AE, William Haraby-U/G, and Eugene Musser-T/G

Vincent O'Shea

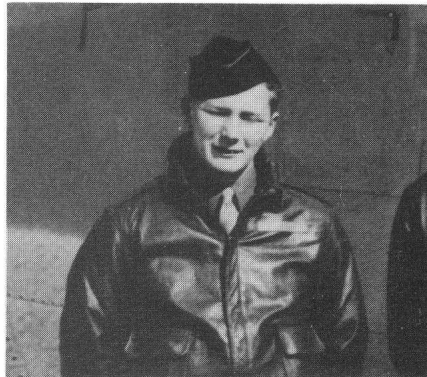
Vincent O'Shea, Pilot, 826 Sq. and association member of Durham, North Carolina, died May 2, 1994. He served with the 484th bomb Group from April 1944 till September 1944 when his tour of duty ended. In July he and his crew were sent to rest camp on the Isle of Capri. The crew was assigned to ship #52 42-52705 "Toggle Anne" so named because on some missions the bombs were toggled out when the lead ship dropped. The plane survived the war

and was returned to the States at conclusion of hostilities in Europe in May of 1945.

Vincent and his wife "Chickie" attended many reunions of the Association and have made many friends within the Association over the years. He enjoyed stamp collecting, rug making, was a volunteer math tutor, and volunteered at the VA hospital. He enjoyed a good game of Pinochle. He was a member of the Association since 1983.

His crew: Vincent W O'Shea-P, Norman J Dion-C/P, Gerald S Fluxgold-N, Guido Mattei-B, John F Barber-E, Ellsworth E Goodell-R/O, James H M Malone U/G, John W Maloney-B/G, Newman McMurtre-N/G, and Raymond E Adler-T/G.

Willard I. Pearson



Willard I. Pearson

Willard I. Pearson, 70, 826 Sq. and association member of 1425 18th Ave., Moline, IL, died Monday April 25, 1994.

He was buried in the National Cemetery Arsenal Island with military rites conducted by the Moline American Legion Post 246, where he was a member.

Mr. Pearson was born Nov. 25, 1923, in Rock Island, the son of S. Adolph and Lillie Pearson. He married Evelyn A. Anderson May 18, 1947, in Moline, Illinois

He owned and operated Willard Pearson Service, Moline, and also worked at John Deere Plow Planter. He was a World War II Army Air Corps veteran. He was a member of Willard Velie Post 2153 VFW, 484 Bomb Group Association, the Liberator Club.

Survivors include his wife Evelyn, a daughter Karin Martin, and grandsons David and Todd Martin, all of Moline, Illinois.

His Crew: Floyd R Creasman-P, John T Harper-C/P, Jay Jordan Glew-N, Marvin C Rudolph-B, Willard I Pearson-E,

Raymond B Hinz-R/O, Edward McDonnell-B/G, Timothy J Holland-U/G, Joseph M Hebert Jr-T/G, Richard E Strombeck-N/G Paul E Miller-R/O, and Francis S Boyd-B/G, are also shown as being members of the crew earlier.

The Crew often flew #63 "Salvo Sally." On the crew's tenth mission to Weiner-Neustadt the ship was badly holed by flak.

John S Vnuk

John S Vnuk 824 Sq. a member of the Association since 1987 passed away May 22, 1993. He was a line chief and inspector holding the rank of M /Sgt

Ralph E Denlinger

Ralph E Denlinger 824 Sq. died August 7, 1991, He joined the association in 1983 but had not been an active member since. He is buried in the Dayton National Cemetery.

Henry E Dionne

Henry E Dionne Pilot 825 Sq. See obit Vernon Oldfield.

Richard F Dolin

Richard F Dolin (G) 827 Squadron died April 14, 1966, He was a gunner on Brice H Keller's crew.

Charles R Donnelly Jr

Charles R Donnelly Jr, Engineer 827 Sq. He was the engineer on Edgar T Keffer's crew.

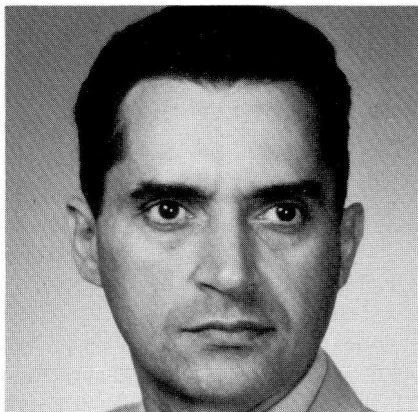
William B Douty

William B Douty 827 Sq. died November 3, 1992

Thomas W Fairhurst

Thomas W Fairhurst 827 Sq. died August 29, 1992. He was the R/O on Marion Hammett's crew

Frank E. Oliver



Frank E. Oliver Bombardier 826 Sq. died December 19, 1993, in his Carmichael, CA home after a long battle with cancer. He was 77. He was born July 10, 1916 .

Frank's plane was shot down on October 14, 1944, on a mission to Blechhammer. The crew was forced to bail out after encountering engine trouble over Yugoslavia.

He landed by himself near the river Ona. Dazed from hitting a tree on descent, he ran further into the hills but couldn't go far because of a torn ligament in his knee. Several people were searching the hill side, when he saw one wearing a red star, he hailed him. He was then taken to partisan troops nearby. He eventually was rejoined by the rest of his crew and other escapees and civilian refugees who had been rounded up by the partisans and brought to a British Mission about one month later. A British Major from the Mission put Oliver in charge of the party that now totaled about 126 persons and was then responsible for transporting the group in stages to Zara where they were taken aboard a British ship for transfer to Italy.

His actions while behind enemy lines, which included evading capture and bringing Allied ex-prisoners of war to safety, earned him the Legion of Merit Award. Mr. Oliver also received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Purple Heart. In his last four years of active military duty, he served as director of procurement at McClellan AFB. He retired from McClellan Air Force Base as a colonel in 1963 after 24 years of service.

Survivors include his wife of 38 years, Elizabeth L. Oliver , children, Kirk Oliver and Heather Siercks , and three grandchildren.

Edmund S. Piantek

Edmund S. Piantek, 80, 825 Sq. died in Hopewell New Jersey on March 21, 1993. Born in Bayonne, NJ Mr. Piantek , retired as a resident engineer and draftsman for Western Electric after 35 years.

He was a member of the 484th Bomb Group Association since 1982 and was a POW. He was awarded the air medal and the African-Middle Eastern service medal. He was a charter member of the Air Force Association, a member of American Legion Post 159, and a member of the Caterpillar Club, having made a life-saving jump from a disabled aircraft.

Son of the late Leon and Maryanna Piantek, he is survived by his wife, Jean Scott Piantek, a sister, Josephine Mierzejewski , a grandson, Jeffrey Scott, and a cousin, Ida Nerowski

Louis W Ranger

Louis W Ranger 825 Sq. an ordnance specialist, passed away December 29, 1992, after an illness of five years that kept him from active participation in the Association. He lived in Syracuse, NY

Milton J Ring

Milton J Ring 69, 827 Sq. has passed on (May 26, 1993) He was born Nov. 14, 1923 in Norwich, CT the son of the late George F. and Harriet Lafferty. Mr. Ring had been employed for 21 years as a letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service prior to his retirement. He was a retired lieutenant colonel with the U.S. Air Force, and had served in World War II as a bomber pilot He was a recipient of the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal, a distinguished unit badge, and the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters. He served in the USAF for 20 years.

2nd/Lt Milton Ring Co/Pilot in the 827 Sq. and flew 30 missions when the war in Europe ended. Member Joe Shugrue reports that " Milt was a good and brave man and was always a kind friend to me."

In addition to his wife Monica, survivors include three sons, Joseph A Ring of Oviedo, Fla., James A. Ring of Norwich, and Thomas A Ring of Plainfield; two daughters, Patricia A. Ford of Washington, D.C., and Elizabeth A Slezak of Plainfield; two brothers, George F. Ring Jr. and Ken-

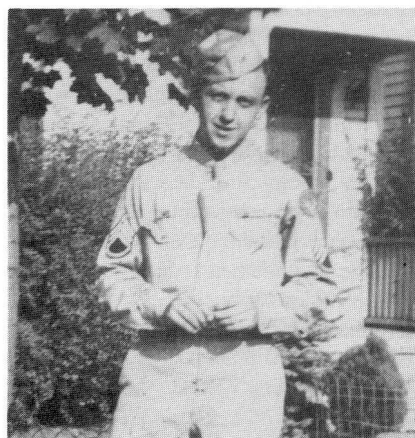


Milton Ring
neth J. Ring, both of Norwich; five grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

His Crew: Kenneth G Rounds-P, Milton J Ring-C/P, James R Mercer Jr-N, Howard U Heller-B, William E Novak-E, Paul F Megonigal-G, John E Parker-R/O, Kenneth E Crockett- G, Solomon S Ostrovsky-G, and James E Ellis-G

(See also James E Ellis obituary page 38.)

Stephen Smith Jr



Stephen Smith Jr., 70, Fulton, NY, 825th Sq. Electrical Specialist, passed away 3 February 1993. After enlisting in the Army Air Corps in 1942, Steve was stationed at Fort Niagara, NY and Atlantic City, NJ. He was then assigned to Seymour Johnson Field, NC as a mechanic instructor on the B-15. In 1943, while at Seymour Johnson Air Base, Steve met and married Edith Barrow of LaGrange, NC.

Steve's association with the B-24 began when he was assigned to Chanute Field in Rantoul, IL. He was then sent to Harvard, NE. From there, he shipped out March 1944

for Italy as part of the 484th Bomb Group.

After his overseas duty, in August 1944, he returned to the U.S. and was stationed at Smokey Hill AF Base in Salina, Kansas. There he began working with the B-29 until his separation from the service in October 1945.

After Steve was discharged, he returned to his hometown of Fulton, NY. He worked 24 years for the Sealright Co. in Fulton. He retired in 1992, after 21 years, from the New York State Dept. of Labor as a Senior Safety Consultant for Federal OSHA Law.

Photography was one of Steve's many hobbies. He was especially proud of the pictures he had taken and developed while he was in the service. In more recent years, his collection of photographs included pictures of the old warplanes that he photographed at various air shows.

Steve was a member of the 484th Bomb Group Association and attended the 1983 reunion in Williamsburg. He was also a member of the Confederate Air Force.

Steve is survived by his wife, Edith, a son Stephen L., three daughters - Sharon, Eva, & Linda, and 9 grandchildren.

A Poem by Al Solomon 826

Where have the years gone?

*Deeper within our hearts,
growing nurturing waiting.*

*Waiting for the light of our caring
the water of our silent tears,
and the love of knowing our fellow mates.*

*The meeting with comrades supplied
the nutrients for those years to bloom,
bigger, brighter, and most fulfilling.*

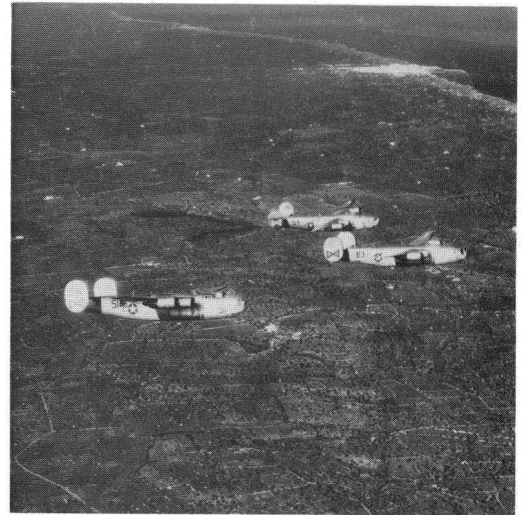
*Renewing friendships that never really
disappeared.*



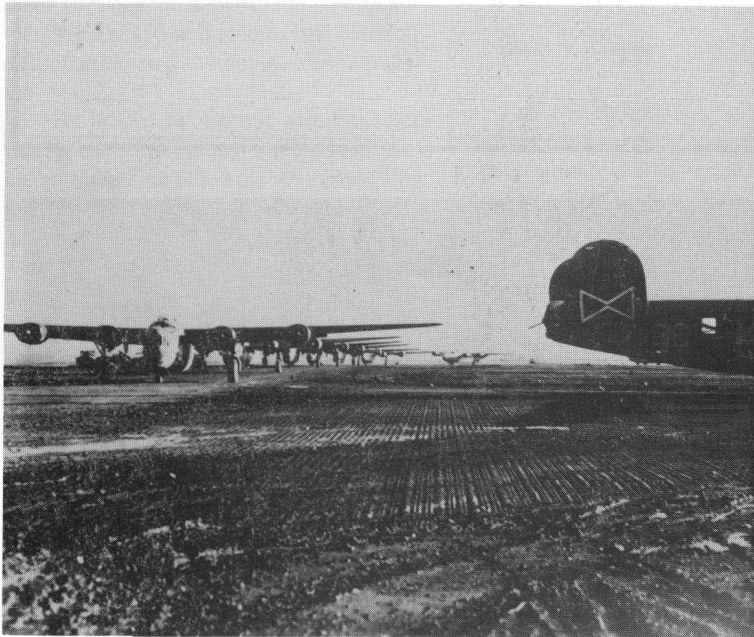
James C Ellis, 827 Sq. Photo



Cerignola, Italy Special Services Music Hall



Ships of the 825 Squadron, from left 51, 53, and 63



484th Bomb Group lines up for Early Morning take off.



Charles J. Hiller and Vernell Packard, ord. 827 Sq.

484th Bomb Group Association
1122 Ysabel St
Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453-13

Address Correction Requested
Forwarding & Return Postage Guaranteed

NON PROFIT
ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
TORRANCE, CA
PERMIT 259