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## *Tales From The Internet And News Of The Association*

### *New Friends*

One of the nicer things that the internet provides is the making of new friends. Wally Forman is one of them. He and I have exchanged information on B-24 serial numbers and names used by the 484th Bomb Group. Subsequently he published a book containing an alphabetical listing of over 7000 names. Aircraft are also listed by unit. The 484th names appear on pages 164-165. The book is called "B-24 Nose Art Name Directory," by Wallace R Forman, published by Specialty Press, North Branch, MN. Members who served later on in the war will recall that the nose numbers were enclosed within a large black or red circle to enhance recognition from a distance. The 461st was summarily directed to use a rectangle. Members have told me that some of the nose art was lost during these conversions. Apparently the conversion was not carried out on the whole fleet because my airplane 44-49939 "Roll Me Over" still showed a huge red "74" when photographed in March 1945.

### *New Books and The Internet*

Another new internet friend is Fernando D'Amico from Italy, who in collaboration with another Italian, Gabriele Valentini, the book's illustrator, and Nick Beale, from England, wrote the book "Air War Italy 1944-45". The book is written from the defender's viewpoint giving the reader a fresh look at the air war from the other side. It has many photographs, most not seen before and full color side views of Italian and German aircraft, and maps of the airfield used by the German and Italian pilots.

Italian fighter pilots who aligned themselves with the German cause flew ME-109s and Fiat G55 from German held airfields in Northern Italy. They would attack American bomber formations and stragglers returning from missions. Instead of the Luftwaffe cross they carried an Italian flag consisting of green, white and red bars on the fuselage sides and on the vertical fins. An Italian 1944 attack on or about 4 November, 1944, using ME-109s on the 484th Bomb Group, is described on page 121.

"Cap Bellagambi led a flight of six Me's taking off from Aviano to attack seven B-24s of the 484th Bomb Group. The Italians shot down two, but claimed a third. Cap. Bellagambi got a B-24J that became separated from the main formation shooting it down into the sea 10K south of the River Piav's mouth. The second was downed in the same area by Ten. Rosas. The third was claimed by Ten. Valenzano of the 1st squadriglia but was corrected to a probable in the official communique.

One ME was hit and badly damaged by the American defensive fire, leading the pilot Cavagnino to make an emergency landing on a small strip of ground. The aircraft came down safely, but its canopy refused to open. Through a side panel Cavagnino called for help from a few farm workers keeping well back from the smoking aircraft. At least two came to the rescue and forced the hood open, dragging them to safety. Seconds later the ME-109 exploded. The other five Messerschmitts landed at Aviano at 1310. The Association's records show ship 42-551852 Nose 27, 824 sq. shot down by flak near Raum Erding. The Crew:

William F Gaskill-P  
Eugene C Stamm Jr-C/P  
Telsa I Johnson-N  
Stanley G Zawaskas-B  
William H Hiller-E  
Harold A Sax-RO  
Marcus D Armfield-G  
Raymond G Bush-NG  
Donald L Olson-UG  
Marshall D Preston-TG

### *The Flak Towers*



A new book available through Borders is "The Flak Towers in Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna 1940-1950," by Michael Foedrowitz. Any crew member who ever flew a mission over Vienna can tell you about the Flak Towers built in three locations within the city. The huge 128 mm flak guns that played such havoc with our bomber formations, were mounted atop the hard concrete construction.

"On every tower, 300 to 500 foreign workers were employed, particularly Yugoslavs and Greeks, but also Italian military internees and a few Austrian skilled workers. There were also construction units of the RAD and the Wehrmacht, as well as Jewish forced laborers. The building materials were brought to the building sites on newly-laid rail lines, sometimes even on streetcars, from the Danube and the Aspang depot.

The Viennese Flak towers were built on concrete slabs at least two meters thick. A very hard type of concrete, reinforced with spirals, was used. The outer walls were two meters thick, the roofs up to 3.5 meters. On the towers themselves, cranes were mounted, sometimes on rails which had been mounted on the roof to give them flexibility to serve all four 128 mm gun mounts. The building time was half a year, and the last tower to be ready for action, in the early summer of 1944, was the Stiftskaserne gun tower.

No tower was completely finished, though all were ready for action by the summer of 1944.

The gun mounts were similar to those of the Wilhelmsburg Flak tower. The crews of the 128 mm Flak guns were somewhat safe from splinters and light bombs hitting the roof because of the fact that the guns in the towers were protected by steel cupolas.

In the upper third of the gun towers, lower platforms for light Flak weapons were built, though they never actually seem to have been installed. Every bunker had a water supply and its own power plant. They were used as storehouses for valuable cultural