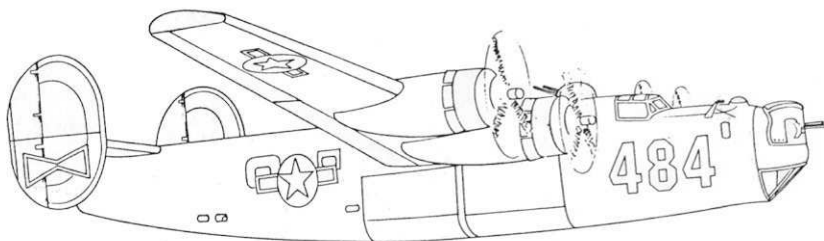


The Torretta Flyer



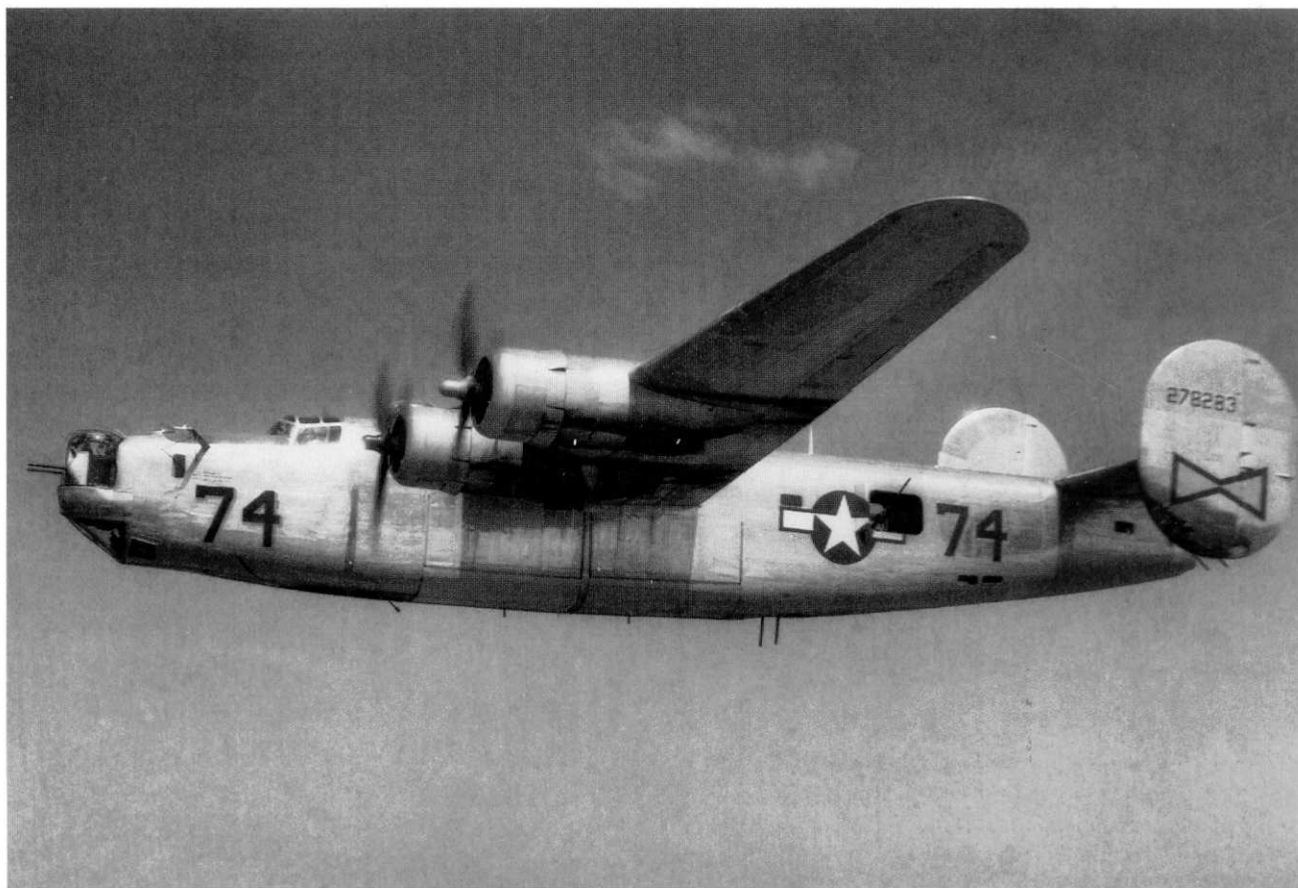
Torretta Flyer No 35

484th Bomb Group Association

Fall-Winter 1999

St. Louis Reunion, October 6-10, 1999

See page 6



42-78283 of the 827 Sq. Attention model builders. This particular aircraft is a B-24G-10. North American Aircraft assembled this aircraft in Dallas, Texas from Ford knock down kits. Note the number 74 denoting the 827 squadron, is painted black with a red shadow on the one painted on the nose, but without the shadow on the number near the waste window. The bow tie outlined in black denotes the 484th BG. The top of the L/H rudder is painted in red, but the R/H rudder inboard was not painted, which was contrary to orders. The red paint denotes the 49th Bombardment Wing, Italian based 15th Air Force. Aircraft radio call letters were not painted on 484th BG aircraft as was the practice in other groups.

Along the bottom of the aircraft you will note from the front, the angled trailing wire antenna shown in retracted position used for low frequency transmission and receiving. The ADF sense antenna with only the antenna posts shown, was used in conjunction with direction finding. Further aft are the guns pointed down of the ball turret shown in retracted position. The turret would be lowered with the guns still pointed down so the gunner could gain access to the turret.

Aft of number one and two engines cowl, the cowl flaps are opened slightly, indicating the engines were set to climb power a few minutes after take off. However, full open cowl flaps on take off roll was a "no no" as your Editor found out. Ask me.

News of The Association

Let's Go: St. Louis



The 484th bomb Group will meet for its 18th annual reunion October 6-10, 1999 at the St. Louis Airport Marriott. Please contact the Association office for reunion package that contains information on tours, accommodations, and reunion events.

By E-Mail: bud484bg@aol.com
By Phone: 310/316/3330
By Mail: 1122 Ysabel St.
Redondo Beach, CA, 90277-4453.

The Marriott is a well equipped facility with many guest amenities. The Marriott shuttle bus provides transport to the hotel and return to the airport. A "Metrolink" light rail system will whisk you downtown from the airport station in minutes. A nearby park will accommodate all RVs. An automobile is not required to enjoy this reunion.

Once again we have employed Armed Forces Reunions Inc. to arrange all of the events.

The Internet

You will notice that more information is coming from the Internet as shown in this issue of the Torretta Flyer. The good news about the Internet is that it is used more and more by young people. The Pearl Harbor generation (Those past 73) are not too interested in the Internet for reasons of their own. I have spoken to my contemporaries and the reports I get back is that most of them do not want to tackle a new technology. But for our organization the Internet has been a blessing. As an example, a message or a download comes in via the telephone wire, and through the modem in digitized form. Literally digitized text can be poured into a word document, or directly into the flyer with hardly any intervention required. Handwritten text requires a typed copy for publication. As yet the facility to transform written text into print

is not practical, because if the text is of poor quality and cannot be read by eyes only, a machine can not read it either.

List of Members on Last Mission

Readers will also note that the list of those who have departed this life is growing longer. It is a fact that about 32,000 WWII veterans are passing on each month now. Some WWII Veterans organizations are scheduling their last reunions and will soon disappear altogether.

New Members

It is for this reason that the Internet has become so important to the Association. As stated before, it is the young who are using the Internet: offspring, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. We are very grateful for their E-mails because of their interest and desire to become new members of the Association.

Overseas Cemetery lists

We want to thank Alan Davidson, and Dick Olson for their work in compiling the list of our personnel buried in overseas military cemeteries. However because many servicemen's remains were brought back to the states for reburial here, we do not have an accurate list of all of our war dead. Al Marcus has been working with the Veterans Administration in tracking the deceased who were admitted to a veterans hospital in the intervening years. The obituaries as shown in the last pages of the Flyer are provided by family and friends. Neither the Government nor private institutions send us death notices, so what we publish is what we know.

World War Two Victory Medal



Authorized on July 6, 1945 and awarded to all members of the United States armed forces who served on active duty at any time between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946. This medal was also awarded to members of the Philippine Armed Forces.

Designed by the Army Heraldic Section, the obverse shows a female figure representing Liberation, her foot resting on a helmet, she holds a broken sword. Rays behind the figure and the inscription, "World War II" complete the design.

The medals were not distributed in great numbers nor were they noted in some discharge papers (not in your Editor's discharge). You are reminded to apply for yours at the Military Records Center in St. Louis.

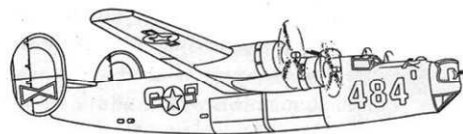
Index

- 4 Scholarship Report
6 News From The Internet
6 Let's Go: St. Louis
- Stories*
- 8 The End of WWII
by Jud Suddarth, 827 Sq.
12 Sequel To The Mission
by Herb Weinstein, 825 Sq.
14 Contents of the New Web Site
- Messages*
- 19 International Messages
21 Letters To The Editor
21 Book review "Face of A Hero"
by Louis Falstein
- Passings*
- 28 The Last Mission
29 484th BG Personnel Buried
in Overseas Cemeteries
From Alan Davidson, 826 Sq.
31 Recent Passings, Last Mission List
32 Obituaries
36 Last Mission Lawrence Z Rose Crew
- Poems*
- 7 Combat Advice
20 Air Man
28 A Soldier Died Today
- Humor*
- 27 British Fitness Reports
- Photo Pages*
- 39 Attention Aircraft Modelers

The 484th PX Items

- 484th BG Logo patch, stitched, 2 3/4" in diameter ----- \$5.00.
- B-24 three- dimensional tie tac, silver, 1 3/4" ----- \$5.00.
- Association Pin with 484th Logo 7/8" ----- \$5.00.
- Baseball Cap, red & white. side view of 484th silver B-24 on front, postage inc. --- \$12.00.
- Miniature Plaque 1 3/4" with display stand, postage inc.----- \$25.00.
- Back issues of the Torretta Flyer, (24) Nos 10 thru 33, postage inc.----- \$130.00.
- Individual issues----- \$7.00 ea.

The Torretta Flyer



Issue #35 Fall-Winter 1999

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The Torretta Flyer is the official publication of the 484th Bomb Group Association. Normal distribution is limited to members only. Requests from nonmembers for copies should be directed to the Editor.

Contributions of stories, articles, memorabilia, and graphic materials to the Torretta Flyer are always welcome. Only clean typewritten manuscripts and Microsoft Word disks are acceptable. Handwritten letters will no longer be published. 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.

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Associate Editor, Bea Markel

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Scholarship Report

The 1999 Scholarship award ceremony for six Italian students took place on May 13, 1999, in Cerignola, with over 200 in attendance, including official representatives and dignitaries, as arranged by Professor Umberto Albanese. A very warm tribute was given to members of the 484th Bomb Group. The Italian tour that had been planned to coincide with the Awards Ceremony was cancelled and there were no 484th members present. However, one of our members, Dorothy McGuire, (daughter of Thomas McGuire) travelled to Cerignola on her own, and was there a few days prior to the Awards ceremony. She contacted Professor Albanese and he and his wife, Antonietta, opened their home to her and extended their hospitality to her in every way possible. In our correspondence with him, we acknowledged this act of kindness to Ms McGuire and once again thanked him for all the work and effort he does on behalf of the Association. His response was heartwarming: He considers it a privilege and honor to have been given an honorary membership in the Association. He will never forget the sacrifices and the help that was given by the US during (and after) WWII to his people, and especially by members of the 484th Bomb Group. He further expressed the wish that we print these words: "To ALL members of the Association: MY HOME IS YOUR HOME".

The Association awarded six scholarships to Italian students: Francesco Agostino, Angela Dell'Olio, Anna Borrelli, Daniela Masciave, Angela Massaro and Anna Masticci and one to Brandy Leichleiter, a student from the Harvard Public School System, Harvard, Nebraska. These are the letters from the students receiving the 1999 484th BG scholarships.

Cerignola, Italy

Hello:

My name is Francesco. I am an Italian student and attend the third year of the "Istituto Tecnico Agrario Statale G Pavoncelli." I am 17 and live in Cerignola. In my free time I play football and volleyball, and love sports. My hobbies are: 1) reading scientific books and ones of adventure, and 2) listening to pop music. There are four of us in my family, my father who works as a farmer, my mother, and my brother. We live in the country outside of Cerignola. After graduation I would like to attend Pisa University. I hope to meet the president of your organization. I am very happy to receive your scholarship, and hope I am worthy of it

Yours faithfully,
Francesco Agostino



Cerignola, Italy

Dear Members of the 484th Bomb Group Association: It's wonderful for me to receive a notification of my scholarship award. I want to thank everyone who made this possible. Without looking back, I hope this will be the start of a brilliant school career. I think that these initiatives are very important for every student because they have something new to look for, the chance to improve themselves. This applies not only to studies but also to life. I finally have to say that behind this scholarship there are all of you who believe in me and who have helped me.

Sincere thanks,
Angela Dell'Olio



Contributors To The Scholarship Fund For 1999

Charles H	Bell	825
<i>In Memory of Robert Quinlan</i>		
John M	Billings	825
Lee E	Boydston	825
Marshall L	Byford	827
George	Christie	765
<i>In Memory of Seymour Jenner</i>		
Frederick A	Dierksmeier	826
Colin E	Dye	826
<i>In Memory of brother, Keith H Dye</i>		
Edith F	Hansen	824
Grant V	Hansen	824
Joe	Hebert	826
Evan H	Housworth Jr	827
Dan	Joba	826
Paul E	Johnson	826
Robert M	Kelliher	765
Albert	Krapf	826
James C	Langdon	825
LeRoy	Leach	825
Anthony G	Lucca	826
Adolph	Marcus	824
Charles A	McKew	824
<i>In Memory of Carmelita Mckew</i>		
Ruby S	Moore	824
Louie W	Odom	826
Richard D	Olson	826
<i>In Memory of father, Richard Olson</i>		
Robert J	Person	825
Harold D	Pressel Jr	825
<i>In Memory of Jack Messersmith & Bob Quinlan</i>		
Mrs. Walter	Rix	824
<i>In Memory of husband, Walter Rix</i>		
Walter H	Scheurs	825
Alfred J	Solomon	826
John	Stonecipher	825
David R	Ward	826
Ross J	Wilson	824



Cerignola

Dear 484th Bomb Group Association

This is an important letter for me to write to you all, to thank you for your scholarship award. I am very much obliged to you for choosing me. I already knew of your initiative (the Scholarship program) before which I admire much. But I never thought I would be recognized, but it did happen to me. I am very

happy to acknowledge that you felt it was very important to extend a hand to me for study and future work. I hope that I can do this for all of my school fellows, and all of the boys and girls of my country.

I want to use this scholarship to continue my studies and help all children of countries at war who have been unluckier than me.

Again thank you very much for this opportunity.

Yours Faithfully,
Anna Borrelli

Cerignola, (FG) Italy

Dear Mr. Markel:

My name is Daniela Masciave. I am 18 years old and attend the fourth class of Liceo Scientifico in Cerignolia, Italy. I am very happy to have won one of the scholarships assigned by your association.

I consider myself very lucky. With this letter I would like to thank you all for the prize I have received.

Next year I will take the leaving certificate of high school and it will be a very important year for me indeed. I know I will have to study very hard, but certainly the effort will be rewarded in the end.

When I finish school here in the south, I will go to the university probably in the north of Italy. My ambition is to become a doctor and to work in a big hospital, and specialize in medical research to contribute to scientific progress of mankind. My dream is to be able to attend important American scientific meetings.

Thanking you for your prize once again, I remain,
Yours faithfully
Daniela Masciave.



Cerignola (FG) Italy

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of receiving an award. During these years it has been difficult for me getting good results at school, because I had to face other problems, but now I am very happy to get the award, as I think this is an exciting experience mainly because I didn't expect it. I'd like to meet your President and to know some more news about 484th Bomb Group Association organization.

I hope it will continue its activity to help students like me. Please send me a copy of your "Torretta Flyer"

Best Greetings
Angela Massaro



Cerignola, Italy

Dear members of the 484 Bomb Group Association

I am Anna Lucci Masticci and I am a high school student. I am 16 and in my fourth year. I was very pleased to hear from you that I have won an award for my scholastic achievements. I would like to thank you for this opportunity and hope to deserve the prize, and to improve myself and to undertake advanced learning. I am well advanced in my studies even for a 16 year old, and have great ambitions for the future in scientific work, therefore I hope to be a scientist or doctor of medicine.

I hope to use part of the scholarship grant to go abroad to study English and learn different customs and in fact to continue my studies in America and to work there in the years to come.

I wish to thank you with all my heart.

With best regards,
Anna Lucci Masticci



My Career Goals

By Brandy Leichleiter

(Graduating Senior of Harvard High School)

"Why would anyone want to go into education? I never want to be a teacher. I don't see why a person would want to be in school when they don't have to." Even though I have frequently overheard remarks like these when sharing my future career goals, I haven't let them change my mind. Just like to become prosperous and lead a happy life, but the only one who decides the happiness and believe that the process are hard to have specific career goals in mind for myself the future. I plan to attend a four year college, major in education, and pursue a career in the United States. While attending college,



I plan to major in secondary education. I feel teaching is a very admirable profession. Teachers must have compassionate and understanding attitudes in order to do their work. To make school enjoyable for students, teachers must love their work, be creative, and willing to enforce the rules. Teaching can be a difficult line of work considering the different types of students that must be taught and the different stages of learning comprehension in a single room. Teaching has rewards also. Knowing that a student's life has been changed because a teacher took the time to explain something new is inspiring.

News From The Internet

Jimmy Stewart: Flying High Without A Scandal!

(From the 2nd Air Division Memorial Home Page)

In February of 1941, Metro Goldwyn Mayer gave one of its greatest farewell parties to Academy Award winning superstar Jimmy Stewart. Louis B. Mayer, legendary chief of the studio, wanted to fly the flag at half mast." Mayer had used his considerable persuasive talents to convince Stewart that his best interest would be served by remaining in Hollywood. Stewart demurred and nine months before Pearl Harbor he enlisted as a private at age 32, well beyond the draft age. In October 1943 he would lead the 703rd Squadron of the 445th Bomb Group to Tibenham, England and combat with the United States 8th Air Force.

After qualifying and initially assigned as a B-24 Instructor Pilot assigned to an overseas combat unit, Col. Robert Terrell, Commander of the 445th Bomb Group, selected Stewart to command the 703rd Squadron. As its commander, he led sixteen of the squadron's aircraft to England on the Queen Elizabeth. Legend has it that Stewart personally shook the hand of every man in his organization as they embarked in New York.

You will find many prominent members of the Second Air Division Association in the course of Stewart's career, including Andy Low, roommate at the 453rd BG; Gen. Robert Terrell of the 445th who brought him to England. Ramsay Potts, commander of the 453rd when Jimmy was transferred there to become Group Operations Officer after 20 combat missions with the 445th; and Gen. Ted Timberlake, under whom he served as Executive Officer of the 2nd Wing.

Stewart earned a reputation as an officer who had a special regard for his men. Walter Strawinski thinks this was noticeable when he was flying. Stewart was known as being one of the few officers who never left the airfield tower until every single plane returned. Jimmy would never move until every single plane was back on the ground and accounted for.

It was the kind of small detail that was very important among the men, and they all tucked it away. Walter Matthau, another Hollywood legend who recently turned into a "grumpy old man," was then a staff sergeant in the 453rd Bomb Group. Matthau tells of his rapport with the airmen who flocked to briefings to "hear Jimmy Stewart be Jimmy Stewart."

Jimmy continued to serve in the Air Force Reserve until his retirement at age 60 as a Brigadier General. His old roommate, Andy Low, recalls that Jimmy was frequently called upon by senior Air Force officials for advice and counsel regarding Air Force concerns.

B-24s in Russian Service By Szymon Serwatka

The following is my first posting on Russian B-24s, this is an abstract from a Russian article from "Mir Aviatsii" (World of Aviation) 2195. I did my best to translate all fragments concerning Liberators.

The history of Liberators in the Soviet Air Forces began with B-24 41-23891 which landed in emergency in the Far East. She

was assigned to 890th Air Regiment of 45th Air Division on October 23rd, 1943. Since production of B-24s in Soviet Union was not planned, 41-23891 was not used intensively. 30 airmen were trained on this B-24s by 1945.

As Soviet forces proceeded westwards, more and more American crews chose to land their damaged aircraft in Soviet-held territory. Saving these machines for Soviet AF was not an easy task. Some aircraft were damaged or destroyed by anti-Soviet partisans. Some were robbed by Soviet soldiers of everything which could be sold and even guarding the aircraft did not always help. So many aircraft was useful only for spare parts. The first task in adopting B-24s and B-17s to Soviet service was replacing the white stars with red ones. It was decided Soviet airmen could not fly on machines with naked girls and other things painted on them, so orders were issued to get rid of all nose arts. This was a lot of work in the case of aircraft without camouflage - pictures were scraped, using acetone and sand. The camouflaged machines were easy, the nose art was simply painted over.

In June 1945 it was decided the 203rd Guard Air Regiment would get all Russian Liberators. The regiment had an order to create manuals and regulations concerning operating the B-24s. In 1945 the Soviet heavy bomber Pe-8 became obsolete, thus creating a need for long range aircraft. This role was assigned to B-17s and B-24s. They were used by 45th Air Division during long range training missions.

The Liberator was not liked by Soviet crews due to her low aerodynamics. With reduced engines the speed dropped quickly, take off and landings were difficult. These reasons may explain why the only American aircraft that crashed while in Russian service was a B-24 #42-94800. This machine lost an engine on take off and broke in two parts during emergency landing. All the crew in the tail section perished.

In the beginning of October 1945, the 203rd Air Regiment had 21 B-24s in flying condition. B17s were used in the Soviet AF till the Summer 1947.

The B-24s served longer due to their more durable engines. The main reason for a B-24 to be put out of service was lack of pneumatic parts for nose wheels. In 1948 3 Liberators were moved to Kazan, where Tu-4s (Soviet copy of B-29) were built. B-24s were used there for crew training since it was the only type available equipped with a nose wheel. These 3 aircraft were returned to 203rd Regiment in 1949. The last Liberators in Soviet service were withdrawn in 1950.

The 484th BG planes that were flown by the Russians were all shot down near Kecskemet:

42-52016 Scharf's plane
44-49580 Fritt's plane,
44-50437 Helm's Plane
Via b24@mach3ww.com

The Betty Reese Story

Editor, Ledger-Dispatch Antioch, CA 94509
T. W. McCarthy Chino Hills, CA 91709

Dear Ken: Mostly because of the increased communications afforded by the Internet, a group of World War Two veterans who flew the B-24 Liberator, and others associated with that magnificent airplane have recently enjoyed swapping tales and

reminiscing via e-Mail. A few days ago, someone commented on the fact that there were only a few of the old Liberators left, in spite of the fact that 18,000 were built during the war. That led someone to ask: "I wonder if there is still anyone around who knows how to build a B-24? Maybe we could build another one!" Then, he added: "I know at least one girl who worked on B-24s, her name is Betty Reese."

The "Story of Betty Reese" began in 1945, when a nineteen year old Flight Engineer named Roger Ellis was pre-flying his B-24 prior to takeoff from Morotai, a tiny island in the Southwest Pacific. The mission of the 424th Sq., 307th BG, 13th AAF was to bomb a Japanese oil field in Borneo a thousand miles to the West. Because the entire flight would be over water and fuel transfer would be required, it was important to inspect the fuel valves at the rear of the flight deck. While performing that check, Ellis found a small white card tucked in between bulkhead panels. He pulled it out and read:

Good Luck! Betty Reese
429 Rosemount Ave.
Pittsburg, California

Now our young airman got his share of precious letters from home, but somehow this message from an undoubtedly beautiful "Rosie the Riveter" was special. She had helped get this airplane to them, thousands of miles from home and he could laugh at Tokyo Rose because he knew that girls like Betty Reese were behind him and the rest of his crew; making airplanes that safely accomplished their mission and brought them home again.

The mission that day was four hours flight time to the target and as the bombers approached the oil field, Ellis moved through the bomb bay pulling the arming pins from the bombs. These pins, along with the note from Betty Reese went into his pocket. The bombs were on target and all but one of the B-24s made it back to Morotai safely.

In his tent that night, Ellis emptied the pockets of his flight suit and, as was his practice, wrote the details of the mission on one of the tags tied to the arming pins, and hooked it into the binding of his address book. Then he turned the pages to "R" and entered: Betty Reese, 429 Rosemount Ave., Pittsburg, California. In parentheses, he noted "card from ship."

Fifty-three years later, there is a yellowed picture of that B-24 with its crew of ten on the wall. They made it to the target and back 23 times, and when the war was over, they flew their B-24 back to California. Thanks in large part to Betty Reese and others like her, who did their share in anonymity here in the United States they made it safely home. Now, that veteran, and a large number of other veterans who flew B-24s would like to locate Betty Reese and say: Thank you, Betty. We owe you, and your/ co-workers, our lives and we would just like you to know that we haven't forgotten. You were a very important part of every mission that we flew. Obviously we can only hope that Betty Reese is alive and be made aware of our search. We expect that she may have been employed at Hamilton Field which was apparently a major staging point for B-24s heading out to the war in the Pacific.

To date, our efforts have disclosed only that there no longer is a Rosemount Avenue in Pittsburg, California, but we have just begun. We are asking your help in whatever way you can, to publish our story in the Pittsburg area in the hope that someone will be able to provide information that will eventually lead to

finding Betty Reese. Please, anyone who might be able to offer any information at all, (may we ask that they contact you?), or write or call: Tom McCarthy, 15111 Pipeline Ave., #197, Chino Hills, CA 91709, (909)597-5548. Your help will be deeply appreciated by a lot of old WW II vets!

God bless America, and thank you,
Tom McCarthy

Combat Advice

Those that beat guns into plows will plow for those that don't.
If the enemy is in range, so are you.
Incoming fire has the right of way.
Don't look conspicuous: it draws fire.
The easy way is always mined.
Try to look unimportant, they may be low on ammo.
The enemy invariably attacks on one of two occasions:
When you're ready for them. - When you're not ready for them.
Teamwork is essential; it gives the enemy someone else to shoot at.

If your attack is going well, you have walked into an ambush.
Don't draw fire, it irritates the people around you.
When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend.
If it's stupid but works, it isn't stupid.
When in doubt empty the magazine.
Never share a fox hole with anyone braver than you.
Make it too tough for the enemy to get in and you can't get out.
Mines are equal opportunity weapons.
A Purple Heart just proves that were you smart enough to think of a plan, stupid enough to try it, and lucky enough to survive.
Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last and don't ever volunteer to do anything.
Five second fuses only last three seconds.
It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed.

If God had meant for us to be in the Army, we would have been born with green, baggy skin.
Always remember your weapon was made by the lowest contract.

Friendly fire - isn't.
There is no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole.
No combat ready unit has ever passed inspection.
Tracers work both ways.
If you take more than your fair share of objectives, you will get more than your fair share of objectives to take.
If you can't remember, the Claymore is pointed towards you.
The side with the simplest uniforms wins.
Combat will occur on the ground between two adjoining maps.
The combat worth of a unit is inversely proportional to the smartness of its outfit and appearance.
Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate - the bombs always hit the ground.
Odd objects attract fire - never lurk behind one.
Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.
Your bivouac for the night is the spot where you got tired of marching that day.

From: Winddancr4@aolcom

The End Of World War Two

By Jud Suddarth, 827 Sq

The Miracle Of Forgiveness

"Come on, Jud. It's been over fifty years since World War II. Don't hold such a grudge anymore. It's time to let go. Let it go," said my good friend, Hank Schilling. I had just taught the Miracle of forgiveness' lesson the previous week at a church meeting. I explained about the necessity of forgiving and how difficult it is sometimes to forget a deep and long time hurt, like my hatred for Nazi Germany, its people, its army, and especially the Luftwaffe. I related a story that went something like this:

In the early 1960's, I worked at Lockheed Aircraft Company as a Senior Research Engineer. One day the manager came to my office and informed me that one of the negotiators for the F-104 Fighter program was not available, and I would have to take his place the next day. Lockheed had been negotiating the fine points of supplying new state-of-the-art fighter planes to the new German Republic. Many of the top brass from the Luftwaffe would be in attendance, and I would get to meet the Chief Air Marshall, and the top aces of all fighter pilots, past and present. It was to be a great honor for me to take part in the meeting, and certainly a boost in my career.

Many of my friends died at the hands of the Luftwaffe, and I personally, stared into the flashing orange muzzle blasts from these very men. My hatred grew at each encounter with the ME-109's and the dreaded FW-190's, and the ME 262 fighters as they decimated our B-24 heavy bomber formations over Germany, Rumania, Austria, and France. At the mention of the word Luftwaffe, I was instantly transported back in time, and in the blink of an eye, I relived the awful moments of days past when I was a navigator on a B-24 bomber crew in the summer of 1944, based in Italy. The eight and nine hour flights into enemy territory were just as vivid as the two or three minute bomb runs over places like Bucharest, Ploesti, Pitesti, and Giurgiu in Romania. Like Wiener Nuestadt, and Vienna, in Austria. Like Toulon and Nimes, in France. Again I saw my friends go down in flames, or disintegrate as we flew through their wreckage.

I was incensed at the suggestion that I would sit at the same table and negotiate with this hated enemy. My reply to my boss was a loud "Absolutely Not!", as I clenched my fists and bounded up in great anger. He, nor anyone else had the least inkling of my feelings, because I had never discussed this with anyone, but business came first, and he asked me again to attend the negotiations the next day. I was adamant that my decision stood. He threatened to fire me and I threatened to have our conversation aired on the evening news if he took such action. I knew that Lockheed did not want that kind of publicity, and that he would not fire me, but with those few words, my career with Lockheed was over, and I soon had to find another job.

After Hank said "Let it go.", he gave me a book to read. "This book, The Blond Knight of Germany, by Toliver and Constable, is about the greatest fighter pilot who ever lived, a German fighter pilot. He shot down two hundred-sixty-three allied planes during World War Two. He has a message for you. Read it. You might like it."

I read it. I didn't like it. It infuriated me as I read of the many victories of Eric Hartman, the German ace of aces of all air warfare. At least he didn't brag about it; I'll give him that much credit. I read on and learned that he was defending some of the places that I bombed. Some of his missions coincided with mine. He shot down seven American P-51 fighters and several B-24 bombers in a three day period over the oil fields at Ploesti, Rumania. I was on those raids. Maybe he actually shot at me. Maybe he saw our orange flashes too. Maybe he was as terrorized as I was.

His success was attributed to a mode of warfare which was to attack from the rear, fire at the enemy, and run. He avoided one on one combat. If he was forced into a dogfight and found himself outnumbered, he simply rolled over on his back and bailed out. Smart guy. Not a coward by any means; just smart. Why didn't our guys think of that.

As of a few months ago, Eric Hartman was still alive. After the war ended, he was taken prisoner by the Americans, then turned over to the Russians who demanded he be tried as a war criminal. The real story of Eric Hartman begins with the totally unreasonable accusations and torturous confinement he received at the hands of the Russians, and his outstanding behavior for over six years. He maintained that he was not a war criminal, never having planned nor enforced any acts of atrocities. He was just a twenty year old kid, doing his duty as a soldier. He was one year older than I. He was a soldier, just like me, doing the best job he could at his various assignments. Just like me. He had a sweet-heart who was in his thoughts constantly. Just like me. When he finally got home, he married her. Just as I did. He raised a family after the war. Just as I did. In fact he and I led strikingly similar lives, except he was infinitely more successful than I was.

One day in November after finishing the book, I was walking in the local mall and the realization of all these things struck me with a blinding inspiration. I had no reason to hate Eric Hartman. I had no reason to hate the Luftwaffe either. As for Nazi Germany, I had already let it go. I suddenly realized that there is so much to be thankful for, there is no room for hatred. My life was spared in the air war over Europe, and I escaped unharmed from many hazardous encounters since. No more will I have to listen to the guns. The orange flashes will come to me now, only if I will them to come. The fragmented visions of battle, and the smell of cordite will never be by my bedside again. The monkey on my back has released his grip forever, and the grudge of fifty-four years is gone.

Now I am Free. I have even forgiven myself for such incredible stupidity. Those ghosts have put themselves to rest. The miracle of forgiveness has made me free from the past. I am free to sleep in peace at last. World War Two was over for me on November, 1997. Thank you Hank for pointing the way.

The Last B-24

What a glorious day for an air show! A brilliant billowing cumulus on the horizon set a magnificent first day of summer, complete with an indigo sky, for a perfect Seattle day. The sun

beamed down on the blonde hair of my still beautiful wife, and created little haloes on the back lighted heads of my small grandchildren; a dozen of them flitting around as aimless as summer gnats.

We stood on the apron of the Boeing Field flight line inspecting the last flyable B-24. It was owned by the Confederate Air Force that was showing a display of World War II aircraft. My sons and their wives clucked politely as they wondered aloud how Dad could possibly have survived World War II "in that little thing." A couple of other relics of that era, like me, were waving their arms, pointing here and there, gesticulating with wild stories about how it was back then. Their progeny, like mine, listened in amused confusion as we each spun our tales of bygone days in the wild blue yonder.

I exchanged a few courteous exaggerations with my contemporaries, gaining a depth of comradeship in a few moments that these kids of mine would probably never know. As we chatted, I heard the sounds, and smelled the powder, and saw the ghosts of my friends who slept while we lived the nearly five decades between 1944, and this moment. My memory conjured up familiar voices that screamed "There's a fire in the bomb bay!" And "Here they come at two o'clock low! They got two out of Baker flight!" And worst of all "Watts is blown to bits!" I heard the bursts of flack as the fragments pierced the skin of our fragile bird and sang past my head and body. I felt the shudder as our plane was hit again and again from the cannon fire of the Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf fighters. I sweat again the agony of watching my comrades burn as their B-24s came apart and plunged to the earth in pieces. I feel these moments again as I write this.

"Grandpa, where did you sit?" My fifteen year old grandson asked as he peered in through the Plexiglass nose, now all weathered, cracked, and yellow.

"Right there----in the navigator's compartment." I showed him. Looking through that old plastic nose panel brought more memories as I remembered both the ecstatic, and the frenzied times I spent looking through the other side. I recalled the breathtaking starry nights as I shot the stars at high altitude on celestial training missions. I spent many hours laboring away in the small navigator's dome, just in front of the pilots' seats. My memories took me back to the air base at Pocatello, Idaho, where we took most of our combat crew training. We called the place PQ after the call letters of the control tower. Our training schedule called for us to fly six hours, sleep and eat eight hours, ground school four hours, and fly six hours. We flew twelve hours out of every twenty-four, and never once were we grounded for weather; rain, shine, or blinding blizzard. Every sixth day we had no schedule for twenty-four hours. Once we took off at night when we couldn't see our own wing tip lights. The tower couldn't see us either, but we flew nevertheless. We landed under the same conditions of course, and that was with very primitive vacuum operated flight instruments. We did three engine take offs, and were denied permission to land because we only lost one engine. That policy cost Uncle Sam some airplanes and crews, in the wild mountains of Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming. It was war time we were told, and war time is always accompanied by arbitrary, and foolhardy policies. Pocatello was where I met that gorgeous blond beauty on her twentieth birthday at a little supper club called Fred and Kelly's. I was totally smitten by her at first sight, and have remained so captivated even now as she stands beside me this day, the still beautiful, and stately matriarch of all these kids. The

few times we had together, and the happiness we shared sustained me through the hundreds of hours over enemy territory. Even as I frantically pondered over my maps and charts, trying to keep track of our position or find a target, her face crowded all my thoughts. I still see her in my mind's eye during the working day, forty-six years, and all these kids later. I mention her because she is inseparably connected with my memories of the B-24 days.

I know these scenes have played in at least a dozen movies and plays, but they are as real to me now as the days in which they happened. I was there, and maybe I'm just a little bit proud of the fact, as our numbers have dwindled to a small percentage of that elite corps who survived until the end.

The B-24 Liberator bomber was the unheralded giant of the striking force that destroyed the production of machines and oil that sustained the enemy. It remains unknown for the most part, except for the men who flew her, and the survivors of her terrible wrath. This magnificent bird flew calmly on as her sister, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress got most of the credit.

I don't suppose anyone cares anymore, and certainly the Boeing employees of Seattle wouldn't believe it, but there were nearly nineteen thousand B-24s built as to a little over thirteen thousand B-17's. We used to pass up the B-17 groups on our way to the targets over Europe, drop our bombs, engage enemy fighters, run through miles of flack and on the way home, meet the B17s still trudging along looking for the same target. We flew higher, faster, carried more bombs, but still the press and general public never caught on. More B-24s were built than any other World War II airplane, however, they had a reputation of being easily shot down. We got shot at, shot up, shot full of holes, (147 on one flight) crash landed, but we never got shot down.

"How did you get through that little door, Grandpa?" I remembered very clearly the first time I wormed my way into the navigator's compartment as I explained it all to them. My first flight was at night, and I'd never even been close to a B-24. The bombardier and navigator were required to stand on the flight deck behind the pilots to maintain proper balance during take off. As soon as we were airborne, we scurried into the bomb bay, then forward to the nose compartment, through a narrow passageway along side of the spinning nose wheel. A small cut in the nose wheel bulkhead allowed us to worm our way inside to the more spacious nose compartment. It housed the nose gunner in his turret, the navigator with his map table facing aft, and the bombardier in a prone position facing forward. I used to slither through that passageway like a greased eel, but then I was twenty years old, and one hundred pounds lighter. It was still a very cumbersome tight fit, dressed in heavy flying boots, sheepskin jacket and pants, electric suit, and a parachute harness. We didn't think much about it except for that first time. It was terrifying, to climb around the spinning nose wheel in the dark trying not to fall out through the open nose wheel well, and to avoid the nose wheel retraction mechanism that always seemed to close in on me just as I was trying to crawl around it. The darkness was terrifying as the wheel rubbed against my body, nearly pulling me into the open void, without my chest parachute attached. The open nose wheel doors created a deafening roar with a wind of cyclone proportions. The noise, darkness, and a possibility of falling out without my chute attached was a frightening experience that first time. The familiar green glow of my navigation instruments soon calmed my fears, and it never bothered me again.

"Oh it was easy to crawl in there." I lied. "Piece of cake."

"Grandpa, you're too fat to fit in there!" They all laughed.
"Where all did you go, Grandpa?"

The fields of Nebraska were all white with snow except for the North Platte River meandering through the plains. Our bomber group, the 484th Bomb Group, 827th Squadron, was sent to Harvard, Nebraska, on November 21, 1943, for overseas combat training. We made simulated bomb runs on many of the major cities within a radius of a thousand miles. Some of our training missions lasted over twelve hours, and this time was spent mostly above twenty thousand feet. There were no pressurized cabins in those days, nor was there any heat. Our faces were raw and callused from wearing our oxygen equipment for such long periods.

After hundreds of hours in the air, we were becoming familiar with the airplane and our jobs. It was a great adventure, and we all felt absolutely invincible and cocky in mastering our new skills. I believe we all forgot we had a war to fight. I don't think it sank in that we were becoming a lethal machine to do misery to our enemies. For the time being it was all fun; big boys with expensive, dangerous, toys, designed only for the purpose of administering death and catastrophe. I loved every second of it. Learning the electrical, hydraulic, and mechanical systems of the airplane was an intense, and cherished experience.

Our B-24 Flight Commander saw to it that each crew member could land the plane in an emergency, and that I could take charge if necessary. I learned to fly formation from both seats, and to take off and land, which I did on many occasions. It was grueling work but we thrived on it. Even now as I think about this old bird, I can hardly believe that the most destructive machine of World War II was only twenty years removed (nineteen seventeen to the first B-24 produced in nineteen thirty-seven) from the Spads, and Nieuports of Captain Eddie, and the Fokker Triplane, and Albatross of The Red Baron; from the wood and fabric biplanes of World War I, to the B-24. Who would believe that I learned to fly in a biplane, wore a leather helmet, goggles, and a long white silk scarf? Although I was a navigator, I went to the first phase of primary training, flying in the bright blue and yellow Stearman biplane, the last of the real airplanes. That is it had two wings, a round black engine in front, and a tail wheel in back.

My first flight as a co-pilot came on an air to ground gunnery range near Idaho falls, Idaho. We were flying at an altitude of fifty feet so the gunners could practice strafing tactics. The co-pilot went to shoot the waist guns, and I was sitting in his seat. We came upon a herd of wild horses, and the crew opened fire on them. Our pilot left his seat, and rushed back to the waist to stop the mayhem, totally forgetting that I was sitting next to him. That was one of our first flights together, and I hadn't yet sat at the controls. I didn't know what to do other than stay on the course, maintain the fifty foot altitude, and continue the tight turns with very steep banks. I soon became familiar with terror as I racked the bird around the tight course in trail with other planes of our group. The B-24 had no power boost on the controls, and it required considerable effort to muscle the sluggish bomber through the tight maneuvers. My hands cramped, and I was soaked with sweat. When I couldn't hack it any longer, I peeled up in a violent turn to gain altitude, and allow a little margin for safety. The crew nearly had a stroke when the two pilots saw each other at the waist guns. Who was flying the airplane?

All this, just twenty-six years (nineteen seventeen to nineteen forty three) from the World War I aces, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, and Manfred von Richthofen, the German Red

Baron. These great old fighter pilots were my boyhood heroes, whose planes still hung as balsa wood models from my bedroom ceiling at home.

As my combat training came to an end, I found myself hopelessly in love with the gorgeous blonde I met in Pocatello. I couldn't think of anything but her with only days left before time for overseas departure. I persuaded her to come to Harvard, Nebraska, where we had a couple of days together--just enough time to get engaged.

"Yes, my little grandkids, it was real fun." Real fun indeed. Until the good-byes were said; until I saw the Florida coastline disappear from view under my navigator's window. From then on, it wasn't any fun at all.

My heart sank in lonesome despair, and I finally realized that this wasn't for fun; that some of us were going to get killed, and maybe I wouldn't live to marry my beautiful Delaine, or have children. Maybe I was standing in my own coffin

"Daddy said you had a monkey, Grandpa." Said one little cherub.

"Yes Honey, we did. His name was BB eyes--a big spider monkey we bought from natives right out of the jungle of Natal, Brazil, in South America. His eyes were so close together they almost touched. He didn't like us too much, and made a lot of trouble. He yelled at us constantly, and never did tame down. When we took off for Africa, he escaped and crawled out into the wing, and stayed there the entire flight. He tore up some wiring, and broke the sending unit of my flux gate compass about half way across the Atlantic ocean. Between my magnetic compass, and the Astro-compass, which used the shadow of the sun, I was able to stay on course. He wasn't used to the cold weather we ran into, and died a few days later. "

My first real test as a navigator came on the initial leg of the journey to North Africa. The flight was from Florida to Trinidad, a small island off the coast of Venezuela near the equator. It was a world of my dreams as a small boy, of pirates, tall ships, mutinies, and plunder. The weather was good, and there were no problems. It was an easy flight by any standards, but nevertheless, I was proud, and elated when the tiny white cloud over Trinidad lay dead ahead on the horizon. I made my first real voyage, along the ancient course of the pirates, and I didn't get lost at sea. Radio silence was mandated, so I did celestial navigation using lines of position from the sun and the moon.

Trinidad was my first visit to a foreign land. It was hot, ten degrees North Latitude, and still steaming from a tropical rain that deluged the island almost every day for about five minutes. We landed on March 13, 1944; then on to Belem, and Natal, Brazil. We left Natal for Dakar, in French West Africa, on March 25, 1944. Our next leg was to Marrakech, Morocco, again a fantasy of my boyhood--The French Foreign Legion. We stayed in the same barracks that I saw in several movies of the early thirties. Those guys must have been midgets, because the beds were too short, the shower hit the middle of my back and my knees rubbed against the table in the mess hall. The barracks were from the French Colonial times, very old, and very hot. The next day, we left for Djedia, which was near Tunis, in Tunisia, North Africa. We stayed there until March 28, during which time I visited the Casbah in Tunis, and saw a civilization that had not progressed in three thousand years. We had to go in groups of six, with the lanyard of our pistol tied to our wrist, a round in the chamber, and the hammer at full cock. It was a scary place, but

unforgettable. I also got to see the ancient city of Carthage that was still beautiful in its Mediterranean setting. At Tunis, there was a salvage dump of destroyed military equipment that covered an area of several square miles. I saw hundreds of wrecked German trucks, tanks, aircraft, and field artillery in huge piles, bulldozed into one giant scrap heap. There was dried blood everywhere, and the unmistakable stench of rotting flesh. By this time, I knew there was a war on, and that I would soon see more than this pile of excrement from the god of war.

I mention the dates and places of our travels because thousands of others preceded us, and many more thousands came after, following the shortest, safest route to rain death from an angry sky upon our enemies.

There was one small problem in our otherwise uneventful flight over the Atlantic. About half way across, the main fuel transfer pump quit just as we started to transfer fuel from the auxiliary bomb bay tanks to the wing tanks. We only had about an hour of fuel remaining in the wing tanks when the transfer process began. When the pump quit, we all went into a full panic. The flight engineer exhausted his bag of magic tricks, but nothing made it work. He kicked it with all his might in complete frustration, and it started right up, and never again misbehaved. His frustration, and short temper saved us all from joining the fishes in the briny deep.

Movies, TV, books, and novels by the dozens attest to many of the same stories, and every conceivable happening in "The Great War," so no need to dwell on parallel events.

But the feelings I had---I must share for the blissful little ones now darting around the old B-24 nose wheel in some kind of carefree game. For them I write.

Mission number three and four was my first experience under fire of any significance. Our target was the railroad yards of Bucharest, Romania, to slow down the transportation system of German supplies. A lone P-39 American fighter plane with engine trouble flew into our formation for the protection of our fire power. He was about twenty feet from my window, and we waved to each other. We were nearing our target, and the flack was starting to be worrisome. I was looking directly at him when he disappeared in a ball of orange flame. Terror overcame me as I realized he probably was just a twenty year old kid like me. Almost immediately we were hit with several bursts of flack this time aimed at us, and my fear mounted to uncontrollable dimensions at the sound of shrapnel penetrating the thin skin of our plane. I was consumed with horror at the thought of dying, and then at the thought of dying as a coward. For the first time of my life I prayed a totally sincere prayer that the fear would leave me, and that at least no one else would die because of my cowardice. I made the same fervent plea several times as we were hit repeatedly with bursts of flack. An emergency arose that occupied my full attention to the extent that my fears were lost in the duties at hand. As our damaged aircraft made its way to friendly territory, a great wave of peace came over me. I performed my duties as I was trained to do, and never again to the present time have I experienced the lack of courage that plagued me that day. As we landed at our Italian airfield, I was overwhelmed with gratitude, realizing that I was part of a miracle; a direct, and timely answer to my first real prayer. I made some promises to God that I probably didn't expect to keep, but the gratitude for that moment has remained with me, and I have tried to be at least a little worthy for the years of borrowed time I have enjoyed.

I crawled out of the plane when we rolled to a stop, and after

surveying the battle damage, I remember the warmth of the day, the smell of the grass, and my inexpressible joy at being able to live one more day. I was beginning to realize that the chances of survival would run out sometime before the magic fiftieth mission, and that at least some of my crew wouldn't make it home. (The average life of a bomber crew was seventeen missions at that time)

And so it became a private ritual to lie down in the grass after each return from enemy territory, and express my profound thanks to God. Each day since my last flight into enemy combat has been a bonus for which I may not deserve, but even so, has been granted to me. Even at this very moment as the grandchildren are playing under the old ungainly looking relic of another era.

There is of course much more to write, but perhaps these few words may suffice to write away some of the haunts of the past. Perhaps the sounds, the smells, the visions of friends in mortal peril, and the bad dreams of war days with the uneasy qualms of guilt may be buried at last; my final memorial to the last B-24.

Everett, WA

Dear Bud,

My wife, Delaine, and I were looking forward to meeting you at the 484th reunion in Tucson last month. We are sorry you were not able to be there and everyone missed you very much. Maybe next time.

What a delightful time we had rehashing old times and meeting two of my old crew members, Fred Roessler and Marv Fischer. This was our first reunion, and we felt bad that we missed their friendship all the years past, but we were both overjoyed to be able to come to the reunion and see them once again. I felt almost like I was twenty years old for a few hours.

I recorded a couple of hours of shooting the bull with them, and I have a lot of memories stored on a couple of tapes. I've enclosed a couple of articles I wrote for my kids that might interest you. We hope that you had a happy holiday and hope to hear from again.

Happy landings, Jud Suddarth 827th Sq. N on J.P.Roedel's crew
Airplane #O76

Editor's Note:

Jud writes about forgiveness. I have an experience to relate. I was invited to speak about my WWII experiences to my granddaughter's English class with students of diverse backgrounds. I told a war story (How our crew almost bought the farm). The students asked only a few questions and I thought the words had gone over their heads. Several weeks later the students wrote me how much they appreciated my talk, but one student asked if I had forgiven my enemies. I had never thought about it since the end of the war. I had to be honest to the student and to myself. It was a tough question, and I had to think long before responding. No, I have no hatred of enemy airmen whom we fought against, or of persons living today in former enemy countries. As for the WWII enemy leaders who brought death and destruction to millions, I can't forgive their hideous acts.

Sequel to the Mission

By Herbert Weinstein

I was the radio interceptor of the 484th Bomb Group attached to the 825th Squadron, because I had been born in Germany and spoke fluent German. Special radio equipment had been installed on three B-24 Liberator bombers, from the 40 or so, planes being flown by the Group.

My job consisted of listening to and intercepting the German (R/T) Radio/Transmissions traffic. The German radar stations in Vienna, Munich, Udine, and Budapest controlled all the fighters in the air and ordered them, where and who to attack. Listening to them I could tell 20 to 30 minutes in advance, if and where, we would be attacked. When I knew, I passed the information on to the flight commander who would contact our fighters to intercept and engage the German fighters.

I was not a member of any one crew and flew with the crew assigned to one of these planes. I became the 11th man and flew almost all my missions with different pilots. In the last Torretta Flyer, Art Ouellette tells of the mission to Trento in Italy, where due to intensive flak, Bomber #24 on which he was flying, was hit, and #2 engine and #3 engine were badly damaged. #24 was one of the ships with my special radio equipment and I, the German guy, as Art called me, when I phoned him after reading his story, was the 11th man aboard.

The crew that day were: Don Zimmerman, pilot Charles Walter, copilot Walter Klus, navigator Dominick Blanda, bombardier Marshall Kahn, engineer Donald Kenny, radio operator James Carney, nose gunner Mike Rainey, top gunner Rix De Lambert, tail gunner and Art Ouellette, ball gunner.

During our flight toward the target, I listened to the radar station in Udine, which would have been the control dispatching fighters to intercept us, but the only R/T traffic was to the shadowing German fighter who was radioing our speed and altitude to the control station. No fighters were being vectored toward our formation.

So I was somewhat relaxed when we turned at the IP toward Trento, at an altitude of 22,000 feet, ready for our bomb run, when we were bracketed by intensive flak. It jolted me, made me scared, all I could think of was the words "Bombs bursting in air" from "The Star Spangled Banner", it was such a noisy affair. Crack and bang, the plane fishtailing and being thrown up and down from the force of the exploding shells. And then there was this extra loud explosion and I saw pieces coming off #3 engine through my little window by the radio station. The pilot did a hell of a job keeping us level and flying. He informed us that #2 and #3 engines had been hit, but we were still flying on and after dropping our bomb load on the target we turned left toward the Ligurian sea.

It was the expertise of the pilot Don Zimmerman and the copilot Charles Walter that kept this plane flying, although we were loosing altitude fast, towards our lines for almost two hours. It was about 3:30 in the afternoon and we were flying at 16,000 feet. Blanda, Rainy, and I were working in the bomb bay throwing everything out, including the kitchen sink, to lighten the plane.

Then there was a loud crack and the propeller sliced into the bomb bay, the plane shuddered as if it were coming apart. We heard the jump bell, someone yelled jump and jump I did. I was the first man to bail out because I was standing in the cat walk, the others were behind me. What happened next, my first and only parachute jump, was 54 years ago, but I remember it, as if it had been yesterday. I knew that the guys in the waist were trying to drop the ball turret to get rid of 1,100 pounds and I was afraid that I might be swept back and hit the turret as I bailed out. I bent my legs, clasped my knees and tucked my head in, to make myself like a ball and so let myself fall.

As soon as I cleared the plane there was a rush of air, the slipstream, like a gigantic hand, grabbed me and tossed me turning head over heels in the air. As I tumbled like a diver, I remember saying to myself straighten your legs as if you were diving. That stopped the tumbling and straightened my fall even though my feet were pointing toward the sky and my head toward the ground. By that time, I thought that I must have fallen thousands of feet, even though only seconds had passed, to me it seemed like forever. I pulled the ripcord of my chest pack. There was a sensation of silk rustling, and cords flashing and then the chute opened with a terrific jerk.

My goggles slipped off my face, my fur lined leather boots were ripped off my feet and the pair of GI boots fastened to one of the rings of my harness, by the laces, also were torn away. I was hanging like a sack of flour in the harness of my parachute, with only my felt shoes from the heated electric suit, on my feet.

Maybe it was cold, it probably was at 15,000 feet, but being scared makes the adrenaline flow and you feel warm. Although I always kept my harness very tight, the shoulder straps were at least 6 inches above my shoulders and I wasn't too comfortable

I remembered some of the advice of the parachute instructor, who had given a lecture on what to do if we ever had to bail out. After the chute opens put your thumbs between the straps and your buttocks and you can then lift yourself up and sit further back in the seat. You can steer the chute and keep it from swinging back and forth by pulling on the cords in the opposite direction to let some air out of the canopy. Definitely cross your legs when landing near trees, the reason is obvious.



So I tried to insert my thumbs as he had directed and due to my dead body weight it was quite difficult. I finally managed it, but trying to lift my body up, just did not work. I had a hard time reclaiming my thumbs. It seems as if you are just suspended in space, you don't seem to be falling at all. At 15,000 feet or 12,000 feet or even 8,000 feet things on the ground look the same size, it is deathly quiet, there is no reference point. As I looked up I saw another chute that had opened; it was a distance above me. I could not see the plane, it was gone. I did not know whether it had crashed or had traveled on.

I looked at the ground; there were patches of snow, the terrain was hilly with scattered small trees. I saw no signs of habitations, no villages or towns. I started to think what I would do once I hit the ground. I knew that I was in enemy territory and the thought of becoming a prisoner of war was very scary. The war was winding down, the Germans were on the run, but there was little I could do about it.

I was still hanging there, how long would it be before I landed, would I ever hit the ground. I bailed out at 16,000 feet and I figured that at a rate of fall of 14 feet per second, after the parachute opened, it would take between 15 to 20 minutes and that did not take into consideration the fact that the wind carries you sideways. I hoped and prayed that the wind would carry me towards our lines and not further into enemy territory.

Anyway, I am still suspended as in a void, thinking hard what to do and considering one hairbrained idea after another, discarding them all. All at once I began to feel that I was falling. The ground was coming closer and the closer it came the faster I was falling. I remember crossing my legs, I was not going to straddle a branch, and at the last minute I pulled on the cords of the chute to avoid hitting a tree and I landed hard, I rolled until the chute stopped me, the canopy had become entangled in the tree. The first thing I did was to check for a broken arm or leg, but except for a sore spot on my behind, I sustained no injuries. I unhooked the harness and untangled the canopy from the small tree, I did not want it to be visible. I started to cut some of the silk of the chute with my

knife to wind the silk around my feet since I was shoeless, when I saw some people approaching.

They were civilians, they wore no uniforms and as luck would have it, one has to be lucky, they said that they were Italian partisans, here to help us to escape the Germans. Mike Rainey had landed about a 100 yards away from me. Mike had not lost his shoes, as I had, he gave me his flying boots after he changed into his GI shoes. The Italians bundled up our parachutes and took us to the bottom of the hill, where an old truck was parked. They drove us over a very rutty country road to a farmhouse. They told us that the Tedeski (Germans) were fast retreating in the area and in a couple of days it would be safe to take us to the Allied lines. It was now about 6 o'clock, it was dark and we were hungry. They gave us some bread and cheese to eat and we shared some of the chocolate bars we carried with us.

The night and the next day passed uneventfully and after dark they loaded us back onto the truck and by ways only known to them, drove us toward the Allied lines and turned us over to soldiers of the 5th British Army. We thanked them profusely for helping us and gave them our parachutes as tokens of our appreciation. The silk of the canopy sold for a 1,000 dollars on the black market.

The Brits arranged transportation to a forward Allied airfield, which was the same field where old #24 had crash-landed, We were happy to find out that all the men had survived the landing without mishap. They had boarded a plane to Rome a few hours earlier. We, on the other hand were believed, by the crew to be prisoners of the Germans. They thought that, since we bailed out some miles back of the German lines, our chances to reach the Allied lines were slim. We figured later on that the wind had been very favorable to us and carried us many miles to the south. That and the timely arrival of the Italian partisans, who hid us, contributed to our lucky return. The next day we flew on to Rome where we were debriefed. Afterwards, we flew to Foggia, and rode to Cerignola and were reunited with the rest of the crew.

The end



Battle Damage, Members of the 484th Bomb Group gather around an olive drab B-24 that has suffered damage to the tail turret, killing the tail gunner. Notice the right elevator was completely shot away, and the left elevator was hit also.



Contents Of The New Web Site

For Those Of You Without Internet Access, The Web Pages Of The 484th Bomb Group Association Have Been Changed. Today it looks like the following:

Introduction

The 484th Bomb Group Association was formed in 1981 to bring together personnel that served with this B-24 group, and to record the achievements of the group's 208 missions during WWII through its magazine. The 484th holds yearly reunions in different cities throughout the continental United States. The association publishes the magazine "The Torretta Flyer," and awards selected scholarships to high school graduates. The association has planted trees and installed plaques in the Memorial Park adjacent to the United States Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, and at Arlington National Cemetery.

The 1999 Reunion In St. Louis

The St. Louis Airport Marriott Hotel will host the 1999 reunion of the 484th Bomb Group October 6 to 10, 1999. Room rates for members and guests are \$77.00 per night for single to quad occupancy. For phone reservations call the hotel direct at (314)423-9700. Mail reservations should be sent to Central Reservation Office, St. Louis Marriott, 10600 Pear Tree Ln. St. Louis, MO, 63134-4198. E-mail[bud484bg@aol.com] or phone Bud Markel at 310-316-3330 and request the reunion package.

Reunions Held By the 484th BG

Previous Reunions have been held in Torrance, CA 1981, United States Air Force Museum, Dayton, OH 1982 and 1995, Williamsburg, VA, 1983, Orlando FL 1984, Torrance, CA Annual Meeting 1985, San Antonio, TX 1986, Colorado Springs 1987 in conjunction with the 15th AF, San Francisco, CA 1988, New Orleans 1989, Nashville, TN, 1990, Kansas City, MO 1991, Dearborn, MI 1992, Harrisburg, PA 1993, Carnival Cruise 1994, San Diego, CA 1996 Washington, DC 1997, Tucson, AZ 1998, St. Louis, MO 1999.

Life During The War years

The twentieth century was torn apart by three major wars

that effected the lives of millions of people. Some historians will say that WWII was the most traumatic event of the century. This was certainly true of the period from 1933 to 1948. The WWII Generation was thrust into war at the time when the country was least prepared to fight with a standing army of only 110,000 men. The country was isolationist and wanted nothing to do with the war that was brewing in Europe. The huge Atlantic ocean that separated the new world from the old was soon to shrink, as thousands of bomber crews would deliver their own aircraft to the battle front over the ocean.

The enemies of peace were already planning to unleash the most brutal war of all time, and millions of lives would be wasted on the whim of the German military and its political leaders. A total war was necessary to bring this unchained evil to heel. It called on the youth of America, the high school and college students, to defend the country and defeat the enemy. These fuzzy cheeked kids were asked to save the world for humanity, which they were ill prepared to do. But no matter, the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 emptied the classrooms of young men anyway. They were soon to learn how to fight, and with a big stick.

This came at a time when the main interest of young men was the opposite sex, love had to be postponed while a war was fought. Bomber and fighter crews of the United States Army Air Forces however did the next best thing, they decorated the bombers and fighters of the Eighth and 15th Airforces with paintings of scantily clad ladies. In essence, it was the fair sex we were fighting for.

The men of WWII were a proud generation who experienced a quick transition from the serene life of young manhood, model planes and chopped model A Fords. Thrown into the jaws of war the men-boys were not prepared for the quick life and death decisions that war demands. Our values of good and bad were threatened from what we saw and what we had to do. You learned not to make permanent friendships. These new friends would just disappear in a bright flash in the sky followed immediately with black smoke. They were here today and gone tomorrow, happenings that were never quite accepted by the schoolboys inside them. The memories of buddies missing in action (MIAs) and killed in

action (KIAs) were irritating, because it was time to forget and get back to finishing the war. At unwanted times their dreams would be contaminated with flashbacks of those would be friends.

The effect of absorbing all of the excitement of a lifetime in one sudden rush changed plans for daring stunts after the war. A 75 MM cannon equipped B-25 Pilot swore that when the former field piece went off he could hear the rivets pop. Handling the controls tenderly afterwards, he did not know if he could bring the wounded mass of metal back to base. A quiet 9 to 5 office job seemed ideal at the time.

But they were not fatalists, they knew that power would soon pass into their own hands and they had to survive to keep traditional values safe. The people back home were depending on them. What depressed all airmen was the appearance of the Me-262 jet powered fighter. With determined vigor the jets were tearing huge holes in USAF bomber formations. Luckily the Luftwaffe squadrons were small and the losses could be tolerated. But! But! Why hadn't the guys back home come up with something better? The airmen were determined then and there to do something about this outrage if and when they returned home. Today's precision Airforce is proof of this. This retired generation of Pearl Harbor, its job now almost complete wants to sit back and write its memoirs. Can you readers help?

The 15th Air Force

Because the Association has received many inquiries about other 15th Airforce Groups, the main units are listed below. The United States Army Air Forces (USAF) classified its bomber aircraft as follows: 1) Medium Bombers: A-20s, B-25s & B-26s ,2) Heavy Bombers B-17s & B-24s, 3) Very Heavy Bombers B-29s.

15th AF Bomb Groups

The various Organizations of the 15th AF are broken down by Wing, and Group. For squadrons assigned to the groups E-Mail me at bud484bg@aol.com. The 49th Wing was comprised of the (A) 451st BG at Castelluccia, (B) the 461st BG at Torretta, and (C) the 484th BG at Torretta. All three groups flew the B-24 Liberator Bomber and shared the same combat color, insignia red. The groups sometimes flew to the same target, and at other times separate targets.

All of the other heavy bomb groups of the 15th Air Force operated the B-24 Liberator. (A) 47th Combat Wing (CW): 98th BG, 376 BG, 449th BG, 450th BG. (B) 455th BW: 460th BG, 464th BG, 465th BG, 485th BG. (C) 304th BW: 454th BG, 455th BG, 456th BG, 459th BG. The exception was with the 5th Combat Wing which operated the B-17 airplane: 2nd BG, 97th BG, 99th BG, 301st BG, 463rd, and 483rd. The 15th Airforce's bombardment and fighter wings were based in southern Italy.

15th AF Fighter Groups & Auxiliaries

Fighter Escort was flown by the 15th Airforce's 306th Fighter Wing. The Fighter Groups were: 1) 1st Fighter Group (FG) P-38s at Lesina. 2) 14th FG P-38s at Triolo, 3) 31st FG P-51s active from 4/44 at Mondolfo, 4) 52nd FG P-51s at Piagolino, active from 5/44, 5) 82nd FG P-38s at Vincenzo, 6) 325nd (FG) P-47s trans to P-51s at Mondolfo, 6) 332nd FG Tuskegee Airmen P-47s trans to P-51s at Ramitelli. The P-47s were replaced by

P-51s in May of 1944. Notes: On occasion groups were moved from one wing to another. Other Units: (A) 5th Photo Recon GP F-5s, (B) 68th Tactical Recon GP 1) B-17s, 2) B-24s, 3) 154th Weather Recon GP P-38s. You can reach the 15th Airforce Association (AF) at cebn@aol.com. Also try: http://www.heavybombers.com/484th_bg.html

The 484th BG Is Born

The 484th Bomb Group was trained in Harvard, Nebraska in 1943 with B-24s and deployed to Italy in March 1944. The group arrived in Cerignola, Italy where the gently rolling mounds of the Foggia plain awaited them. In prewar days the Italian Airforce trained near Foggia too. The 484th BG took over farmland where wheat was once grown. Dual North and South runways were laid out and paved with crushed gravel, and later improved with pierced steel planking, a dubious improvement especially when it rained.

The group brought 60 new olive drab B-24s to the airfield at the Torretta crossroads about 12 K southeast of Cerignola, itself 35K south of Foggia. The group started out with about 3 trained crews of 10 men for every B-24. This would vary depending on losses and availability of replacements. In the one year of combat operations over 5000 soldiers and airmen passed through the group. Replacements were brought in to fill in the Table of Organization (TO) due to casualties, illness and to replace flight crews who had finished their combat tours. For a battle area that was expected to offer light resistance tours were set at 50 missions. However, resistance was stiff from both fighter aircraft and flak cannons. Credit was shortly reduced to 35 missions, and modified again by giving double credit to long and arduous missions. Flight crews were given leave to rest camps at the halfway point of 18 sorties. Ground echelon personnel were given leave also when conditions permitted it. One such camp was on the Isle of Capri.

The B-24 Liberator Bomber

The Consolidated B-24 Liberator was designed and built in such great haste such was the need for a heavy bomber in 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. By taking the long Davis Wing and empennage from a twin engine seaplane and installing them on an oval fuselage the B-24 was born. To improve ground handling visibility, the whole assembly was set on tricycle landing gear. The design was both good and bad. Good: The Davis Wing in combination with the supercharged Pratt & Whitney R-1830 engines and the Hamilton Standard hydromatic propellers worked well together. Bad: The nose wheel, built up of welded steel struts was too weak and failed when over stressed due to hard landings, strong cross winds, or rough runways. The fuel quantity indicators were of a simple boiler gauge style that required level flight for accurate reading, except that the aircraft actually flew slightly nose high to get additional lift from the fuselage. (The Lockheed Constellation was purposely designed to obtain fuselage lift). The fuel selector valves could be set for all engines to feed from the crossfeed manifold which held about 60 gallons. When this was used up all four engines would quit, not handy during the take off roll. The outboard auxiliary or Tokyo tanks of early model B-24s up to the "H" model did not have any fuel quantity gauges at all. When the fuel pressure dropped when feeding from these tanks it was time to transfer back to the mains before the engines quit.

Other airmen who had adverse experiences with the B-24 fuel system can advise us of their own fuel system horrors.

Primitive Repair Facilities

The numbers of serviceable aircraft for each mission varied too, due to the repairs needed to make the planes air worthy after receiving battle damage. Because of its longer range, the B-24 was needed in many theaters of war, impinging on the number of replacements available to any one group. Squadron maintenance was undertaken by crew chiefs and helpers who worked without shelter, rain or shine. It was the rule rather than the exception in the 484th that most of the aircraft would sustain some damage from the dreaded flak both slight and heavy on each mission. Most engine change tools were hand made or adapted from what was on hand.

Flying in a straight line to maintain formation order, mandated flight routing directly into flak bursts just ahead or above just prior to and on the bomb run. The steel fragments (shrapnel) would nick the props, punch holes into the pushrod covers causing oil leakage and lacerate the fuselage bottom with holes and rips. Spent shrapnel would bounce off the thin aluminum skin sounding like pebbles falling on a tin roof. All of this required inspection and repair.

Luftwaffe Ju-88s Bomb Bari Harbor

The shortage of supplies and parts for use by the 15th AF came about because of a very effective attack on Allied supply ships lying at anchor in the harbor at Bari, Italy on the Adriatic coast by Luftwaffe Ju-88s in December of 1943, just two months and a half after the establishment of the 15th Airforce itself. Many of the supplies intended for the new Airforce ended up at the bottom of the harbor. They were not easily removed because of the contamination caused by exploding gas shells. Thus the midnight auto supply came into being. Mechanics and armorers had to beg, borrow, or steal from outlying sources. Damaged B-24s uneconomical in time and material to repair were soon cannibalized. It was known that lesser quality stovebolts were sometimes substituted for high strength A&N hardware, and so it goes.

Hung Bombs

Documentation of repair procedures of aircraft and components were distributed through "Tech Orders" in the Army Air Corps, but were not usually transmitted from one command to another. As an example, bombs would not always drop when selected to do so. The shackles that secured the bombs to the aircraft would often freeze depending on the severity of the weather encountered at bombing altitudes. It was not unusual to encounter 30 below temperatures. The coldest temperatures were encountered nearest the bomb bay doors so the lowest bombs would freeze and the others above would leave their protective arming wire and fall sharply in a heap on top of frozen bombs. Thus leaving the upper bombs live when only a slight jar would set them off.

Hung bombs were probably first encountered by the English based 8th Air Force because the 8th AF had been established earlier and had flown many tough missions before the Fifteenth AF became operational. It is not known if a fix was ever found,

and if there was, a quick way to pass on this information to other commands, it was not easy, and at best there was no time to wait for conventional mail. With the satellite not yet invented this is understandable. Without the quick transfer of information to both the 8th AF and the 15th AF, they were to suffer the same problems.

Freezing of bombs as can be seen from the foregoing was a very dangerous condition with loss of life and/or loss of the aircraft heavily threatened. To face this problem in the heat of combat with flak bursting all around and without tools or prior instruction required quick thinking. The idea, of course, was to get rid of the damn things in any way one could which meant there was no control as to when the bomb would drop and, because of the delay the assigned target was far away by then. The possibility of other aircraft below was always there. Casualties caused by falling bombs on other aircraft were not unusual. Which all brings the story back to what was said earlier, better know your equipment thoroughly. Comments on hung bombs from other flight crews and armorers are welcomed here too.

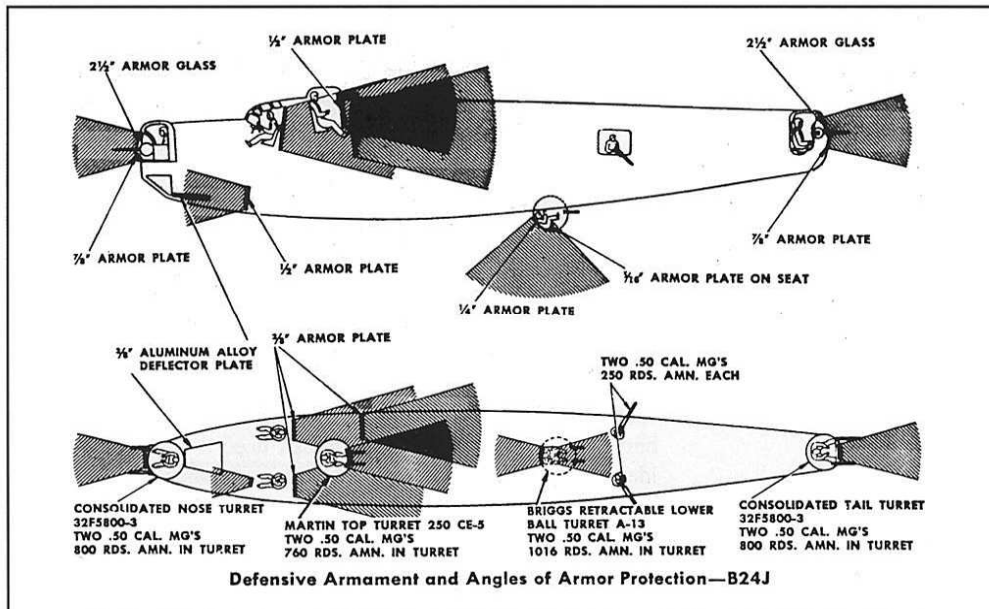
The Dreaded Flak Guns

In the Italian based 15th Airforce, anti-aircraft (flak) accounted for more casualties than fighter planes. Bomber crews feared the dreaded 88mms and higher caliber flak cannons with a passion. When flak jackets became available, extra sets were brought on board not only to wear but to sit or stand on. The need for protection from below needs no explanation.

Because the enemy needed to protect the oil refineries and installations, flak cannons were mounted on railway flat cars and were moved about as needed but also to fool our intelligence (S-2). The flak trains were often hid in railway tunnels at night for just this purpose). The next day they would be somewhere else.

Late in the war when the fuel situation was becoming acute for the Axis Powers the more mobile guns such as the versatile 88s were moved from the eastern front and placed aside the oil refineries, such as Brux, Moosbeirbaum, Odertal, and Vienna. The 88 had a high mount that permitted elevation of the gun barrel for use as a flak gun and as well as fire against tanks, making it a dual purpose weapon. In the larger cities flak towers were erected so the gunners could have free fields of fire. On the top of the towers, 88s as well as larger caliber guns were installed behind well protected concrete barriers. Some of these steel and concrete structures still stand.

The Luftwaffe was also charged with the responsibility of defending German occupied territory from the ground as well as from the air. In reality the Germans were defending three fronts after June 6, 1944, The Western Front, The Eastern Front and the Air Front overhead. Over 1,000,000 men were assigned to the defense of the Reich. They were aided also by civilians, including high school students. The Allied oil campaign began to have effect on fighter activity in mid 1944 and the capture of Ploesti by the Russians, at about the same time fuel production dropped drastically. The fighter attacks on the bomber streams began to weaken sharply. Anti-aircraft fire was more intense than ever. In these desperate times the Luftwaffe also sent its jet fighters into action against the bomber streams with deadly effect. Fortunately for the USAF, and unfortunately for the Luftwaffe, the jets were few in number and not quite battle proved.



When the B-24 was first designed. Fighter attacks were assumed to come from the rear, and armor plate was installed as shown in this drawing. The Luftwaffe's bold head on attacks rendered this placement useless.

Aviation Archeology

In England crash sites were evacuated and hard items were found: such as guns, engines, and propellers that would survive a crash, even after decades in the hard ground. The aircraft parts were lifted out, cleaned up and put in small museums at former USAF airfields in the East Anglian farmland. When asked why the English wanted to preserve the material of the American Air Forces, their reply was, "It happened here on our land."

Curiosity about The Air War 1939-1945

There was similar curiosity when one of the 484th aircraft was shot down over Europe and the Balkans where citizens, enemy or friendly, took great interest in the crash site. They wanted to know all about the mission, how the plane was brought down, and so on. Citizens and soldiers alike would often care for the wounded and dead by seeking medical aid, and arranging for humane burials.

Now with the cold war over, and many citizens of the former communist countries of Eastern Europe are enjoying their new freedoms, they are more curious than ever about the air war. They seek information from the National Archives in Washington DC, and at Maxwell Field in Alabama. They seek aircraft numbers, crew lists, bombing missions, and related data. Regular mail inquiries began about 12 years ago, from men who witnessed the war as children in Germany and Austria, and related to us their experience of dodging bombs while being awe struck from the drama of thousands of bombers awakening the neighborhoods with their thunderous engine roar. Of sunlight bouncing off the silver airplanes, and too of fluttering aluminum parts that would catch the light like a falling metal leaf.

The Success Of E-Mail

Since the advent of E-Mail, the number of inquiries from Europe and the USA that are being mailed to this web-site is growing. There are interested parties who are trying to fill out their own knowledge of the air war. Their interest in WWII is the same as with the English, it happened over and on their land. This new interest is heartening to members because of the need for more information. This hopefully will bring all peoples of the world closer together. Also it can awaken need for the preservation of privately held WWII documents and personal histories and result in increasing the pressure for more libraries and archives.

Europe's Hospitality

We have had inquiries from overseas from interested parties who want to know everything about the bombing missions of the American Air Forces. Because of the effect the bombing had on their lives, the memories are forever etched in their minds. They have expressed special interest in the disposition of the flight crews, and the aircraft, serial number, and the aircraft name. Some association members have returned to the spot where they fell. The citizens of friendly and former enemy countries who witnessed a particular crash have invited the Americans back with their families. Members who have returned to Europe have reported that these visits were very enjoyable.

No Tests Given In Training

In training during the war, due to the expediency of getting troops into battle quickly, grades were not often given at the end of classes. If one hoped to survive and return home after the war, the soldier had to pay close attention to what was being taught. A flyer had to learn his aircraft and weapons like the back of his own hand. There was no cheating or use of crib sheets in combat. It was best to get the information stuffed between your ears for instant recall, or your butt and those of your aircrew buddies would be put in peril.

The Torretta Flyer and Membership

The above is an example of what appears on the pages of the 484th's magazine, "The Torretta Flyer." The Flyer is mailed to all regular and associate members of the association. "The Torretta Flyer," a 40 page slick paper magazine is issued twice a year. Regular membership is open to any veteran of the American forces who was assigned to Torretta Field, Italy during 1944-1945. Associate membership to bona fide veterans of the USA of any war or service is available too within the limits specified by the IRS. At the time of this writing associate memberships are open.

The 484th BG solicits contributions to the magazine as a way to preserve the stories and experiences of WWII veterans. Just drop a note to the editor at bud484bg@aol.com. Because of the irregular publication dates of the *Flyer* and not to disappoint non member applicants, subscriptions to the *Flyer* are on hold.

Scholarship Program

A memorial scholarship program was established by the 484th Bomb Group Association to remember and honor the deeds of members of the group who did not return from the war. The program was made a living memorial by giving scholarship awards to students completing high school.

Save Those WWII Documents

The World II War generation that Tom Brokaw talks about in his new book, are passing on at a faster rate now. These men of the heavy bomb groups now in their mid seventies need to tell their stories while still alive.. They need to make copies of: Their personal history, documents, books, pamphlets, manuals, tech orders, maps photographs, artwork, memorabilia, uniforms, artifacts of WWII. Also important is the recording of the veterans personal history and war experiences, via oral tapes while they still can. I say this because the internet has the renewed interest of younger generations, some offspring of veterans, some grandchildren, and from the general public not only in the USA, but also from Europe. All of this material can be held in a WWII Library for use by all interested parties. See my proposal below.

Help Sponsor a WWII Library

Instead of another war memorial or monument the 484th would like to see the creation of a WWII Library to house and store the history of WWII that is in private hands, meaning collectors, veterans, industry, and interested parties. Then veterans would have a place to store and display their, histories, documents, photographs, maps, memorabilia etc. If the nation can create and preserve the battlefield at Gettysburg, then it could also do comparable justice to the history of WWII, and its veterans. The proposed library could be ideally located within a newly closed military installation to eliminate land cost.

The objection of this editor to monuments is that they are static constructions, cold and indifferent, hiding under a green patina, ignoring any human presence. Cold stones just don't cut it. A library is alive with humanity, of all ages. The patrons of a library come and go, stop to read a book, or pick up paper. They attend lectures and listen to music, and readings. It's a place of social interchange, and where knowledge transfer and learning occurs. This creates a pleasant experience. If you support the idea of a WWII Library, E-mail me.

Bud Markel bud484bg@aol.com Phone (310) 316-3330
484th Bomb Group Association,
1122 Ysabel St.
Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453.

Combat Colors.

The combat color of the 49th Bombardment Wing was insignia red. The rudder/fins tops were painted red as well as the inside of the rudders and also the horizontal stabilizers. The practice of painting the insides of the rudder/fins and horizontal stabilizers was not universally applied, because of combat needs. It happened that a ship that returned from a combat mission and could not be made airworthy in time for the next mission, would be towed to the bone yard. Here it would be stripped of any useful parts never to fly again. In the meantime a new aircraft would be ferried from the pool at Gioia Del Colle. It was not unusual for this new ship to be flown without any insignia at all until time could be found to do the painting. The 461st and 484th often borrowed parts from each other. Whole aircraft would also be traded back and forth between the two groups. All groups used a two digit code to identify squadron. Each Group had four squadrons.

49th Wing Bomb Groups (The Red Tails)

- 1) 451st Bomb Group based at Castelluccia, Italy: A large red ball on the bottom half of the rudder/fin.
- 2) The 461st Bomb Group based at Torretta: A long red dash on the lower rudder/fin.
- 3) The 484th BG also based at Torretta sported a red bow tie on the bottom half. It was surrounded on unpainted aircraft with black paint, on olive drab aircraft the bow tie was surrounded in white. Squadron numbers were again painted in red on silver airplanes and white on olive drab aircraft.

Only two digits from 1 to 99 were divided into quarters for the four squadrons, 824 Sq. 1 to 24, 825 Sq. 25 to 49, 826 Sq. 50 to 69, and 827 Sq. 71 to 99. Mickey ships equipped with bomb laying radar were painted gray overall, using a three digit code.

Cowl rings were often painted, and supposedly each squadron had a color. But this practice was not maintained through the war as replacement aircraft were flown into the airfield at Torretta, Italy very frequently and the overwhelmed mechanics did not have much free time to keep up the paint work.

Please refer to the book: *Aircom Aviation Series No S13, USAF Heavy Bomb Group Markings and Camouflage 1941-1945 Consolidated B-24 Liberator*. Look up the color page showing aircraft with red tail, (pages are not numbered in my copy) No templates were ever issued by the group. The mechanics copied the insignia from one plane to another. Notice on the cover of #77 a B-24 of the sister group 461st sporting a red bar followed by half of a bow tie. This was true also as groups exchanged parts to keep aircraft in the air.

Editors Note:

On page 39 and the last page of this publication are some examples of the variations of insignias that were employed by the 484th Bomb Group. The round background was used late in the war as a way of improving recognition from a distance. As the threat of fighter attacks against the bomber formations diminished due to lack of fuel, the bomber formations tended to spread out, thus the need of recognition from a greater distance.



International Messages

Our Website has been drawing interest from Europe as well as from the USA. For this issue International mail and E-Mail are grouped together in this special section.

Czech Republic
Bud Markel, Esq.

Dear Mr. Markel:

Thank you for your letter dated March 20, 1999. The attached sheet has been very interesting - the picture with tails of B-17s is very good for me. I didn't know that 97th BG had the Red and Silver rudder checks on the tail. I knew a variant with the diagonal red stripes on the lead ship only. Therefore I am glad to know it. One piece of sheet metal of the downed B-17 on 21st July 1944 had the red color and now I know why.

German jet fighters Messerschmitt Me-262 were in Czechoslovakia from the fall 1944. There were KG/J units with Me-262 "Sturmvogel" in the middle Bohemia. The letters EG meant Kampfgeschwader, it is a unit with light bombers and letter J meant Jagger, a fighter plane. KG/J units were in Prague-Kbely/Stab and I./KG/J 6/, in Prague-Klecany /II./KG/J 6/ and in Prague-Ruzyně /III./KG/J 6. The other units were in west Bohemia town Pilsen/Plzen/. They were training units I.Erg./KG/J.

Another unit came to Prague-Ruzyně in April 1945. I./KG/J 54 and the unit JG 7 Hindenburg came soon after this. The I./KG/J 51 came to Prague on April 26. Units KG/J had Me-262A-2a Sturmvogel, it was the fighter-bomber and the units JG had Me-262A-1a Schwalbe, it was a true fighter. The unit JG 7 was there from 15th April 1945 in the airdrome's Prague-Ruzyně Cheb /Eger/Zatec /Saatz/.

German Me-262 fought American Mustangs, Thunderbolts and attacked B-24 and B-17 American bombers from 10th April 1945. But jet fuel type J2 for jet engines wasn't in the airdromes at Kbely, Cheb, Zatec, and Ruzyně. 34M3 fuel was available only on 22nd April 1945. Until on 26th April 1945 much fuel was transported to the airdromes.

The Czech revolution started in Prague on 5th May 1945 and units ROA for German Russian units from former Russian POWs joined in the revolution and they attacked Ruzyně airdrome. Therefore the last twenty Me-262 flew to the airdrome at Zatec, 70 km far away from Prague, to the northwest.

On 8th May 1945 a small group of Me-262 took off just from Zatec/Saatz/ so as to attack against Russian tanks which came to Czech borderland. Five of the jet fighters landed then on Fassberg

where they became British POWs. The Soviet-tanks came to Most-Brux about 12 o' clock and to other towns near of Czech border around 4 o' clock.

German pilot Oblt. Fritz Stehle, the Staffelkapitan I./JG 7 took off with Me-262A-1a Schwalbe and in two of minutes he was from Zatec over Czech border mountains Krusne-Hory-Erzgebirge. He wanted to attack the Red tanks maybe but he saw the Russian fighter with red stars on fuselage. After his attack the Soviet plane was shot down and crashed in mountains near the village of Klíny. The pilot Stehle then notified authorities of the shot down Soviet fighter from Jak-9.

At 4 O' clock on 8th, May 1945, and again on 9, May 1945 Russian tanks came to Prague and Russian German tank battle took place on 11, May 1945. It ended at the village of Milín near the middle Bohemia town of Píbram. The Czech Communist historical group looked for the wreckage of the Russian Jak-9 but they found only parts from American P-39.

It was in 1987, the pilot's personal weapon was found and it was found out that pilot's name was Stepanov and he served in the Russian Guardian unit. In 1988 one Russian woman came to visit the Czech Republic, she was a member of the P-39 ground crew during the WW 11.

The best Russian fighter aces flew on Bell P-39 Airacobra. A.I. Pokryskin had 55 victories, N.D. Gulajev had 57 victories, G.A. Reckalov had 56 victories, A.F. Klubov had 50 victories and so on. Bell P-39 and P-63 Kingcobras were made mainly for Red army in the end of WW 11.

I do not have the book "Operation Pinball, I m afraid, but I do know that the P-63 serviced as flying target, and your letter confirmed this.

It is difficult to purchase foreign literature in my country. I must buy books in Germany or England but it is not possible to travel all of the time, I can buy the books in Gzech Republic but there are no books about 15th AF or 8th AF, on wartime operations of the USAAF during WW11. There are many books about Czech airmen in Great Britain in WW II and now books about German fliers from WW11 in Czech Republic.

I am sending a copy from Czech aviation magazine showing a couple pictures of the P-63. It was one of the aircraft used in gunnery practice in the USA during WW 11 and now it is in the collection of the British Museum at Duxford. I saw a P-63 fly on

a visit to the Duxford last year.

You will be interested to know, (1) the large airdrome/inter-national/ is in Prague-Ruzyně today. (2) The army airdrome with a big airplane museum is in Prague-Kbely today- there are many planes from Czech aviation history and a couple planes from WW 11 a Spitfire, IL-2 Stormovik, La-5FN etc. including the Jet fighter Messerschmitt Me-262. Me-262 production totaled 1470 and, half of them fought during WW 11.

Me-262 was used as a night fighter too, it had a two member crew and radar as well. My father heard the jet Me-262 for the first time in fall 1944 when he visited some relatives in the middle Bohemia. The Germans and his relatives named these planes "Turbine" and according to a German official the jet fighter was also called "Turbin jager." My father saw an Me-262 in Cheb/ Eger/ airdrome in the summer 1945 .He liked it very much

I am looking forward to next your letter with your personal story.

Yours sincerely,
Radovan/Radek/ Helt

Czech Republic
Dear Mr. Markel,

I would like to thank you for all the documents about the 484th Bomb Group, which I have received from you. I also wonder if you have in your archives documents and photos which have something to do with the activities of the 461st Bomb Group during the 17 December 1944? I am greatly interested in these documents too, because majority of these planes crashed in Moravia.

Our group has already finished the research of places where American aircraft crashed in Moravia. In enclosures I am sending you a sketch, in this sketch there are all discovered places of plane crashes marked. In these days we are interested in explorations of places where on the 17 December crashed the planes of Luftwaffe. The attack against US planes realized Jagdgeschwader JG 300 (Stab,I,II Sturm.,III. and IV.Gruppe) and lost 51 fighters (15 Fw-190 and 36 ME 109). So far we have lifted up remains of 5 German planes and we have identified them. If you are interested in news about lost planes of Luftwaffe next time I will send them to you.

In conclusion I would like to ask you whether you can provide me with any copies of photos, which are connected with pilots and planes of the 17 December 1944. I would be very grateful for it. I would like to know whether you have all volumes of, "The Torretta Flyer?"

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely
Jan Mahr

fofi@vsps-su.cz
Re: Odertal Oil Refinery

Dear Bud,

I just received your materials about Martin's plane, thank you very much. There is a lot new information for me, I would

like to use it in an article, where I will write about this action.

I also found information about German pilot who shot down the Martin's plane. It should be pilot of ME 109G-10 from III./JG 300. His name was Lt. Kraft. A witness of this fight allege that German pilot was shot down a few minutes after the Liberator crashed. Can you confirm this information? The Liberator crashed near Liebau (today Libina). There is forest today in this place where the Liberator crashed and today there are only three small craters standing. The crew has a small monument with their names in Libina. I found a few fragments from this Liberator as a plastic oval tablet where is written numerous numbers and inscription "Cal. Air Speed" and "True Alt." Unfortunately, the tablet is not complete, only a piece. I also found a few pieces from some covers and a piece of fuselage partition. There were also other small pieces, but I don't know what they are.

I also obtained information about a nearby village today called Vaclavov (Wanzeldorf) not far from Umperk. Do you know today name of Odertal? It is probably town in Poland today.

Sincerely,
Ladislav Fojtl

Air Man

Over the target
The bombs go away,
"An easy mission,"
I start to say.

Then comes the flak
It's all around
I suddenly wish
T'were on the ground.

A burst on the right
Four just ahead;
Now some on the left
I should have stood in bed.

I look at my pilot He says,
"Howdy, If they are not careful
They'll kill somebody."

Were soon out of range;
I take the toll. All's
okay, only one flak hole.

On the way home
I start to relax, dreamin'
I'm a civilian payin'
income tax.

Lt. Howard N. Hartman
Submitted By Al Kline
via the internet

Letters To The Editor

Bud Markel
Redondo Beach, CA

Dear Mr. Markel

In reference to my uncle 1/Lt John Ehnnot, we are interested in the mission and aircraft of his final mission. We are interested in any information regarding him so that we may pass on the memory of him for another generation or two. Enclosed are a couple of pages from some research about 10 years ago through the Air Force historian at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

Thank you for responding. Hopefully we may be able to attend a reunion

Sincerely,
George E Brugos

Target Narrative Reports

Mission November 118, 17 December, 1944. The Odertal Oil Refinery was hit as it still was pumping out over 4000 tons of gasoline a month. On this day 30 B-24s attacked the factory dropping 52.5 tons of bombs. Results were unobserved. On this mission our group was attacked by 30 to 40 enemy fighters at the precise time the escorting fighters departed. Our losses were none while the enemy suffered a loss of seven planes.

Thirty to forty enemy fighters made aggressive attacks from 6 o'clock to 9 o'clock in trail in a coordinated attack. The enemy began their attacks at the time penetration escort left the bomber formation. Flak was medium intense and heavy at the target. Trains were seen at 47720N-1728E in a marshaling yard holding 800 railroad cars, at 1114 hours from 21,500 feet. Also at 4716N-1709E 500 railway cars at 1332 hours, as observed from 19,000 feet.

A smoke screen was observed at Oppelin at 1217 hours from 24,700 feet. Two aircraft were lost. Seven probable enemy fighters were claimed and two aircraft damaged.

A B-24J of the 484th Bomb Group S/N 42-50934 was shot down in Hungary, MACR 10679. A B-24J S/N 42-51835 was shot down over Germany as reported in MACR 10492.

MACR is the official Air Force Document meaning, "Missing Air Crew Report" and can be Obtained from the Albert E Simpson Memorial Library at Maxwell Field, Alabama.

Canyon Country, CA
E-Mail



For a couple years I've been blaming it on iron deficient blood, lack of vitamins, dieting and a dozen other maladies. But now I know the reason I'm tired is that I'm overworked. The population of this country is 237 million. 104 million are retired. That leaves 133 million to do the work. There 85 million in school, which leaves 48 million to do the work. Of this, there are 29 million employed by the federal government. This leaves 15 million to do the work. Four million are in the Armed Forces, which leaves 15 million to do the work. Take from that total the 14, 800,000 million who work for the State and City, Government, and that leaves 200,000 to do the work. There are 188,000 ill and in hospitals, so that leaves 12, 000 to do the work. Now there are 11, 998 in prisons. That leaves just two

peoples to do the work you and me. And you are sitting there screwing around on your E-Mail.

Denny Posten
b24driver@thevine.net

Book Review: *Face of a Hero* by Louis Jalstein

Paperback - 253 pages (January 1999) A rediscovered novel of World War II air combat that predates *Catch-22* by a decade.

A reader from New York City, says: "The finest war book I have read on effects of being soldiers. This book primarily describes the effects of being bomber gunners flying from a base in Italy in World War II. With great insight into the characters, the author shows how the war powerfully affects all. It follows the gunners on their missions into the local towns and in their barracks and base. It also shows the effects of the war on the townspeople. It left me powerfully moved, sad, and with an understanding of the emotional horrors of war. It is the best war book I have ever read."

Dear Bud

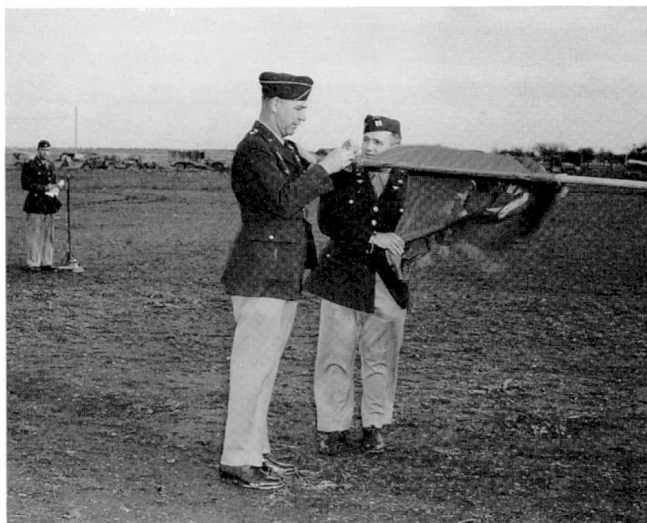
While reorganizing my dad's scrap book and records I found orders for (4) four unit citations. Does that number match yours? Were any of these unit citations ever issued?

Daniel Denney
Denney3aol.com

Hello Daniel

On two occasions, the 484th bomb Group was awarded Presidential Unit Citations for meritorious performance in combat. To the best of my knowledge the brass framed blue badge was given at one of the parades at Torretta in the fall of 1944.

Bud
bud484bg@aol.com



The (DUC) Distinguished Unit Citation then called the Presidential Unit Citation ribbon is attached to the flag of the 484th Bomb Group in the fall of 1944 at Torretta Airdrome.

Dear Bud:

Bud, I am the son of J.R. Dunn who was on the ship "Rumhound." My wife and I searched and found most of the crew and I have been talking to them on the phone and keeping in touch often. I have bad news though, the navigator of the Rumhound crew, 1/Lt Bernard J. Bossick of 513 Westlawn Rd, Columbia, South Carolina passed away .

He was a true soldier and on one flight saved the crew, during a storm en route that delayed their arrival to their destination and resulted in a high rate of fuel consumption. Due to his excellence of navigation, he guided the crew safely to the landing area with just enough fuel left to glide in. They surely would have crashed due to the lack of fuel and I would not be here today I'm sure.

Just wanted to let you know about our loss Bud. I am still going to send you the information on "Rumhound" and all the pictures the guys have sent to me, so you might run a little story about them. It would really make them very happy.

Thank you very much
Brad and Karen Dunn
htf@neto.com

Cheboygan, MI
Dear Bud:

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Richard Hugo's story in issue #34 of the Flyer. His rendition of the "nuisance raid" on Innsbruck was cleverly handled but I don't think he meant to call attention to the futility of the mission. It appears the details were offered, only as a backdrop, to provide a comparison to the intelligence officer (Lt. Barudi's) version of the mission and his own, ergo, the connection to *Catch-22* - the parody on military mentality. Each one saw the war from a different perspective.

In his story, Hugo mentioned that nobody was forced to fly and from my vantage point in the 824th Squadron, this was correct. Working out of the Operations Section, my perception was the same as Hugo's. The men who flew did so for their own reasons. It was assumed that if a man arrived at a point in his training where he became part of a crew and he stayed with it till he went overseas, he was pretty much committed to fly. The culling process generally took place long before he arrived in a combat zone.

I knew of cases where men requested removal from flying status and their requests were granted. These cases took place while they were in training

I was privy to one incident, however, where an enlisted air crewman refused to fly after arriving in our squadron. The man was a transfer from another outfit, believed to be the 8th Air Force, and it wasn't a pretty scene when he refused to board the truck one morning for the trip to the line. He was brought before the Operations Officer and dressed down properly and threatened with a court martial. With this prospect in mind, he went, reluctantly, down to the line. As it turned out, there was a stand-down that day and everybody returned to the squadron area. The man who refused to fly was transferred out of the squadron the very next day, as soon as orders could be cut.

I was particularly amused at Hugo's telling about the interrogation by their intelligence officer and his putting Hugo and his crew in for the DFC in spite of how much they down-played the importance of their mission. In my opinion, the crews who put their lives on the line the minute they got aboard the plane, deserved any and all the awards they got. But, as Hugo implied, his intelligence officer "kind of stretched the truth a little in this instance."

Those of us in the ground echelon shared in some of the awards earned, for the most part, by people like Hugo and the rest of those who flew. Unit Citations, Battle Stars, etc. were generally given to the group or squadron as a whole, therefore we, the ground folks, benefited as well. This didn't seem important till later in the war, when the army instituted the "point system." Points were

given on an individual basis for such things as overseas duty, awards and medals, etc. Flight crews were rotated based on missions flown, but for the ground personnel, the "point system" was their ticket home!

This all gets back to the advantage of having a man on your side who had a hand in "creating points!" A man who was a master of hyperbole; a man with the propensity for stretching the truth; a man with a proclivity for exaggeration! Hugo ran into one such man in his squadron, in the form of Lt. Barudi, the intelligence officer. But, he shouldn't have felt guilty in receiving his DFC. I know of a case where a clerk was awarded the Bronze Star for making typewriter repairs. Go figure!

In the final analysis, we all benefited from the efforts of those masters of hyperbole; those men with the propensity for stretching the truth; those men with the proclivity for exaggeration! Some were just better at it than others!

Regards
Gordon Graham, 824th Sq.

Salt Lake City, UT
Dear Bud:

Having gone overseas with the 484th, I believe I can shed some light on Alan Davidson's quandary regarding double missions, (Page 22 of Winter-Spring 98-99 Flyer).

Yes, when we arrived at Torretta Base in April 1944, the standard tour was 50 missions- but certain targets had a two mission value. This was determined by whether or not it was north of a certain latitude or east of a certain longitude. I vaguely remember these coordinates being on the G-2 briefing map, along with the routes to and from the day's target.

What were those coordinates? I don't remember what they were, but I do recall that all the tough targets lay in the two areas. In an attempt to reason where those coordinates were, I got a map of Europe and my educated guess is 47% east longitude and 25% north latitude. If you plot these, you will find all the tough targets lie to the east or north of them.

After D-Day, there was a marked decrease in German fighter activity, although flak was just as intense. My diary shows that on July 13, 15th USAAF moved the two mission credit coordinate further north and east, resulting in only one target remaining, a double that I flew-Blechammer. Enough said!

I believe that sometime after I rotated home in late August that the standard tour became 35 sorties.

Joe. Hebert 826 sq.

Torrance, CA
Dear Bud & Bea

This happened on one of the missions I was on. We were on our way to the target and had finally reached the Adriatic and were told to test fire our guns. I being in the tail let go a couple of short bursts and everything seemed to be working O.K. I looked out and down to the ground to our left and here was 100 octane gas flowing

over the port (left) wing and back toward the tail, right past the waist window. All of a sudden the waist gunner began to test fire his gun. Well when you fire a 50 cal. machine gun there is a flame that comes out the end of the barrel about two feet long. I called my pilot on the inner phone and told him what was going on, but he could not radio the plane as we were on radio silence. All I can say is that gasoline is one tricky substance and no one can predict how it is going to act. God must have stepped in for nothing happened. What had taken place was that they were transferring fuel into a full tank and it had no place to go except out the overflow and down the wing.

Best Wishes
Albert F. Kline, T/ G 824 Sq.

New Derry, PA
Dear Bud:

Reading through Torretta Flyer #32 again brought back a lot of memories to mind. I was the tail gunner on Charlie 31. McSween is the prisoner in the photo. Also read about my good friend Walter Chapman from Kentucky.

Some day I plan to write up my stint behind the lines.

Until Then, Ferdinand D Kuhn 826 Sq.

Editor's Note:

See pages 27-28 Torretta Flyer #32 Fall-Winter 1997.

Apple Valley, CA
Dear Bud:

Please find enclosed a picture of our crew #40, "Old Flutter Butt" 825 Squadron. The crew was formed in Boise, Idaho, November, 1943 and sent to Harvard in December of 1943, then overseas in March, 1944. We finished our mission in August of 1944.

Take Care
Jim Langdon



PH 1 Seated: L to R: George Adams-B, Bill Freeman-R/O, Bob Person-N/G, Raymond Cromer-U/G. Standing Jim Langdon-P. The deceased are: Clarence P Konertz-BG, Ranson E Roth-N, and Ward L Martin-T/G



This wartime crew photo was received previously. 2/Lt Lucky F Moorehead-C/P, 1/Lt George W Adams-B, Ranson E Roth-N, T/Sgt John T Kinsky-E, Raymond T Cromer-U/G, S/Sgt Ward L Martin-T/G, Clarence P Konertz-B/G, T/Sgt William G Freeman-R/O, S/Sgt Robert J Pearson-U/G. Maj. James C Langdon is not shown.

bud484BG@aolcom

Dear Bud,

My father, James Perkins Lyle, was commander of the 827th Bombardment Squadron in Italy during the war. After the war, he stayed in the military and eventually rose to the rank of Col. He was killed in a military plane crash in 1967. The reason I am writing is to ask if you or anyone in your organization has any information that you would like to share with me.

Best wishes,
James Louis Lyle Re: 827th Sq. CO
jlyle@DHVX2O.CSUDH.EDU

Dear James:

This is in reply to your E-Mail regarding information on your father, James Perkins Lyle. He won the DFC 9/44. Flew his last mission with the 484th on 12/18/44. Flew 28 missions as Plane Commander. He was one of several squadron commanders of the 827th Squadron, 484th Bomb Group. On some of these missions, I have lists of the whole crew. He held the rank of Major.

Bud Markel,
President and Founder 484th BG Assn.

Redlands, CA

Dear Bud:

I haven't kept up with the old army gang, Harold had several strokes, and passed away in July 97, he hadn't known me for nearly two years.

I'm living with my oldest daughter and working in the medical center as a file clerk. I have two kittens to keep me company. I've been out here about two years. It was too much to keep up the place in Florida. I have a sister and nieces around

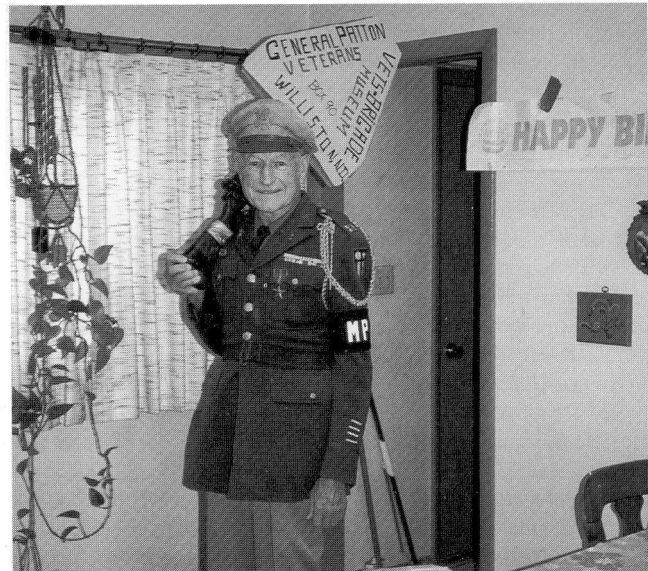
here in Redlands where I spent Thanksgiving with them. Time goes on.

I often think back to the good times and forget the bad. I was looking at the pictures of our last reunion in San Antonio. Those were the good times.

Margaret Miller

Editor's Note:

Harold and Margaret Miller were long time members of the Association from the 461st BG.



Ed Nesheim shows he can still get into his uniform

Williston, ND

Dear Bud:

We've been trying to organize a Veterans Museum in Williston. We are trying to raise \$100,000 for the project. We do have General Patton's 6'2" uniform complete with pearl handled pistols for display.

Williston is where oil was first found in ND in 1951. It's mostly dried up now, but 75 miles south they are pumping 2000 barrels a day

Thanks
Ed Neshieim. 824 Sq.

"B-24 crew honors 'Fearless' leader"

Reprinted From the Midland Reporter-Telegram article:

In the stormy skies over Europe during 1944, the 10-member Fearless Fowler air crew waged war for freedom in the spartan confines of a droning B-24 Liberator, a heavy four-engine bomber assigned to the United States Army Air Forces.

But when he wasn't flying, the crew's leader, the wiry Kansas farmer-turned-pilot, Lt. Floyd Fearless Fowler, sought out barroom brawls, particularly when he was tanked up on his favorite booze, I.W. Harper whiskey, which he called "One W. Harper"

"Fearless" was quite a character," recalled Arthur "Artie" Shaw, a Midlander, who was the bombardier aboard Fowler's B-24, nicknamed "Duck."

When he got a few too many drinks, he would usually get up in the bar, kind of cock his head over to one side, and he'd say, 'Folks, I am the roughest S.O.B. in this place.' And everybody would stop and listen," Shaw recalled recently, as four of Fearless Fowler's crewmen got together for their first reunion in Midland. They eagerly told tales of their beloved command pilot. "It was amazing how often somebody disputed his word. It didn't matter where we were.

Fearless ... was pretty good with his dukes," Shaw noted in a reunion with three former crew members: Howard "Red" Higgins, the B-24's co-pilot, now a retired helicopter pilot out of St. Louis, Mo.; Leroy "Ham" Hamilton, the B-24's radio operator and top-turret gunner who is a retired driver's-license examiner living in Dodge City, KS.; and Bob 'Buck' Bufford, the B-24s nose-turret gunner and flight engineer who became a Tennessee automobile-parts dealer.

Fowler, who was a crop-duster during the postwar years, had died, as have at least two other crew members. Shaw was unable to locate three other crew members.

Of a stateside brawl, Bufford recalled a time when Fearless Fowler whipped 19 out of 20 sailors in a Nebraska bar." They'd make some smart remark, and it didn't take much to tick him off" Bufford recalled.

"There were 20 sailors and one Marine in this bar. And one of these sailors jumped on him, and he whipped 19 of them," Bufford said. "The 20th (sailor) picked up a big quart whiskey bottle and was fixing to crown him with it, and this little Marine jumped down off the stool and decked him (the 20th sailor) ... to keep him from hitting Fowler in the head with that quart whiskey I bottle. "Fearless Fowler was "blood from his head down," Bufford said "but he didn't have a scratch on him. He never saw anyone or anybody he was scared of in any situation. He was tough."

During the war, Hamilton figured that many servicemen drank to relieve pressure of the war "You'd have to go somewhere to get it off your mind," Hamilton said. "It was that I.W. Harper that got it off your mind."

Of his B-24 crew members, Hamilton said that it was "a privilege being with these boys. "And of the Consolidated B- 24 Liberator, of which 18,000 were built during the war, "the '24 was great" and contributed toward winning the 1939-1945 war against the Axis powers. "We haven't won a war since."

While Fearless Fowler was daring and eager to fight on liberty, he was a by-the-book pilot and stalwart commander on duty. "We were pretty close." Shaw said, "because we had to rely on the rest of crew, Higgins, who was Fearless Fowler's co-pilot, was fond of the old B-24, which was produced in greater numbers than any other American aircraft, including the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. "It had three ways of doing everything, yes, sirree," said Higgins: "Manual, hydraulic, and electrical. It needed it (the redundancy), but it would get you back (home). It was harder to fly than the B-17—more work.

We could fly it today," Higgins surmised. Of Fearless Fowler, Higgins said that "He was recognized by others as a good one (aircraft commander). He'd look out for you." While Higgins figured that pure old "luck" got many fliers through the war alive, "You've got to remember, you're flying along there, and you're protected by 032 aluminum; that's pretty thin."

The Fearless Fowler air crew was assigned to the 15th Air Force's 484th Bomb Group out of Cerignola, Italy. Shaw flew 49 missions in Fearless' Fowler's B-24 "Duck" and flew two

additional missions in other B-24 heavy bombers.

"All of it was scary," Shaw said of bombing missions into Germany, Poland, Romania, and France. Fearless Fowler's air-crew did not lose any crew members but the aircraft did pick up battle damage, including flak.

Airborne formations of B-24s which were escorted by P-51 Mustang, P-38 Lightning; and P-47 Thunderbolt fighters, were assaulted by German fighters, including the Focke-Wulf 190 and Messerschmitt ME-109.

In his war service, Shaw said that his steel helmet took on flak. "I've got a piece of flak out at the house that stuck in my steel helmet. I got hit a couple of times, but it never broke the skin. We were pretty close."

Shaw's tribute to the reliability of the B-24 was simply put: "well, it got me home every time" Members of the Fearless Fowler B-24 air crew and their wives gathered recently.

Submitted by Art Shaw, 827 Sq.

Bud484BG@aol.com

Hi Bud,

I had requested information about cowling colors in the 461st Bomb Group and here is what their webmaster responded with: The 461st engine cowlings were color coded by Squadron. Someone correct me if I'm wrong (as if you wouldn't) 764th - White, 765th - Red, 766th - Yellow, 767th - Green

One of the other interesting idiosyncrasies of the markings was the way the width of the red bar on the tails of 461st A/C was sometimes varied to allow coverage of a previous 484th or 451st BG marking. The 484th transfers seem to be slightly thicker, but the 451st transfers are very thick, to cover the circular marking below the red upper half. See the picture of "Stinky" in the aircraft section. I don't have documentation, but I'd bet dollars to doughnuts it's a 451st transfer. Sorry I don't have any information on the 484th cowling colors, but I bet someone will chime in now that you've brought it up. I'd love to know more about the other 49th Wing A/C markings. Did the 484th Bomb Group paint their cowlings a different color by squadron?

Do you know what the colors were? I hope you're doing well and I look forward to hearing from you. When will the next Torretta Flyer be published? I always look forward to seeing what you come up with next.

Sincerely, Dick Olson

dolson@geographix.com

Redondo Beach, CA

Hi Dick:

In response to your e-mail of 5/12/99, I did not know about the cowling colors of the 461st, or if indeed the cowlings were actually painted. Some aircraft did have painted cowlings. But color determination of back & white photos is difficult to determine.

The maintenance personnel charged with the application of the group combat color (red) would apply the insignias freehand as there were no patterns available. Some bow ties were large almost touching the edges of the rudder/fin, others were smaller.

Because the mechanical maintenance of the aircraft was labor intensive, there was very little manpower left to keep up the various identifications, such as the nose number, the radio call letter, squadron colors and so on. In the beginning of operations, planes flew without any identification at all, again determined from photos.

The 49th Bombardment Wing Groups, consisting of the 451BG, 461stBG, and 484th BG painted the tops of the rudder/fin red so that the aircraft serial number was not covered over, but not universally applied either throughout the Wing. On the bottom half of the rudder/fin the 451st Bomb Group displayed a large red ball, the 461st a bar, and of course in the 484th the bow tie. On some olive colored aircraft the bow tie was outlined in white, on silver airplanes outlined in black, again not universally applied. Crew chiefs were often discouraged from painting new aircraft that were assigned to them as quite often they would be shot down before the work was completed. It was known that aircraft were transferred between units, some as far away as the 8th AF in England.

The mechanics worked out in the open with primitive tools, as much of the supplies intended for the 15th Air Force were at the bottom of the harbor at Bari, Italy, because of a disastrous bombing attack by Ju-88s on the harbor in December of 1943.

Thanks for the information on the Website Link to POW Artists of WWII, and specifically William N Capece. We did have his name and current address on our database and had invited him to join the association back in 1994. Haven't had a reply. If you do talk to him, perhaps you could prod him. It would be nice to have some of his artwork to display in the Torretta Flyer.

Bud Markel 484th BG

Ebergassing, Austria
Dear Bud and Bea,

In America the people suffer on hurricanes moving very fast. In Austria time goes by as quickly as the hurricanes move.

This should be an apology for not writing to you sooner. In summer and fall usually there is so much to do in the garden and in the house that I postpone my correspondence from one week to the other. Then, suddenly there are only a few weeks until Christmas and the year is over.

Thank you for the Torretta-Flyer and the mission list you sent me months ago. Something interesting about the "fell" places: I found out that many of the crash sites listed in the MACR are not the places where the plane actually crashed. I will tell you more about that in my next letter.

My air war research work has kept me busy, too. In spring I searched and found for a member of the 463 Bomb Group the crash site of his plane (10 May 1944). I even found small parts of the plane and was able to send them to him back to the USA.

This search led me to the crash site of a B-17 of the 97th Bomb Group (23 April 1944) and of a B-24 of the 464th Bomb Group (29 May 1944). In both cases I even found photos of the wreckage. I was also able to find a former German fighter pilot

(he received the "Ritterkreuz" decoration) of the German fighter group JG302 "wilde Sau" (wild boar). He has shot down 22 US bombers. From June to August 1944 his home base was airfield Gotzendorf which is 4 miles away from Ebergassing. He is working on a book about his experiences now.

Taking all that into consideration it is no wonder that I am always behind my schedule regarding house, garden and especially regarding my correspondence.

So I hope that this winter will be a long one so that I might be able to answer all the letters I have received from my friends.

My family and myself are all well and I hope that the same is true for you and your family. If you have more time to spare for writing letters to your friends please do not hesitate to write to me. I am always happy and thankful when I receive a few lines from you.

Best regards
Felix Remader

Editor's Note:

Felix Remader has been a long time friend of the Association, he has contributed articles to the Flyer and was the guest speaker at the Washington, DC reunion.

Dear Bud,
Editor, 484th BG Web page

Many years ago I acquired a bomber jacket from the 826th Bomb Squadron. The jacket is named to a Lt. D. Rothberg. The painting on the back of the jacket is "Sleepy Time Gal." Can you help me with any information about this person or about the missions this plane flew.

Thanks
Tom Rasmussen
[SRasmus 1](#)

Redondo Beach, CA
Tom Rasmussen
Re your E-mail May 11th,

The jacket you have acquired belonging to a 1/Lt. David Rothberg, was a navigator assigned to the 826 Squadron, 484th Bomb Group, 15th Airforce during WWII. He flew missions on crews piloted by Robert J Lovett and Robert E Myers, respectively. For more information you might contact Lawrence Huntoon, who was a member of the crew, at 716/374-2610. Sleepy Time Gal was shot down in the Spring of 1944 with a different crew.

Bud Markel 484th BG Assn.



Phoenix, AZ

Dear Bud:

I was curious about the abbreviations shown after the names on the membership roster. Also in the columns heading Squadrons are numbers that I don't recognize. Most of the members of the association seem to be of flight personnel. Is this correct?

Cordially,
George M Venslove, 824 Sq.



Atlanta, GA

Hello, Bud Markel:

484th BG Assn.

Thank you for your help in clearing up the matter regarding Crew Member Leo Hartman, Tail Gunner on the John Konop Crew of the 824th Squadron of the 484th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force, based in Italy during WWII. That put to rest a lot of uncertainty about what happened to Hartman when he bailed out over the Adriatic Sea as our crew was returning from a mission with a very troubled B-24 aircraft which ultimately made somewhat of a crash landing at the base of our fine fighter escorts, The Tuskegee Airmen. John Konop did a masterful job in bringing that plane in as he did, and I always believed he was overlooked and most deserving of some medal which he should have gotten, but never received. Congratulations on the newsletter which I just received. The pictures are especially meaningful to me and bring back so many memories of that time, a very small time span for us all, but a tremendously large and impressive part of the history of the lives of all of us. Thanks to you for all you are doing to keep those memories alive and to help us various persons who experienced that time to, stay in touch.

Sincerely your friend,
Frank B. "Burt" Vardeman, 824 Sq.
fburtv@aol.com

Editor's Note:

The abbreviations after the roster names are duty assignments shown in lower case in capital letters. Squadron numbers beginning with a 7 are from the 461st Bomb Group and service squadrons. At one time the 461st BG was part of the association. Flight crew members do predominate in the membership roster because there were more of them than any other group.

Dear Bud:
Holmdel, NJ

The New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal.

The New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal was created in 1856 and was instituted into the New Jersey revised statutes in 1924. It was created so the Governor may present in the name of the State of New Jersey, the Distinguished Service Medal, to any member of the state's organized militia, which is now the New Jersey National Guard.

In 1988, then governor Thomas Kean signed public Law 1987, chapter 388, which modified the criteria to enable the governor, with the assistance of the adjutant general to award the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal to any resident of the state, who while serving in the active federal military service in time of war or national emergency was cited for "Especially Meritorious" Service by appropriate federal authority.

In order to be eligible for the award of this medal, a current resident of New Jersey must have been a resident of New Jersey at the time of entry into active federal military service, and received an honorable discharge from the respective branch of service.

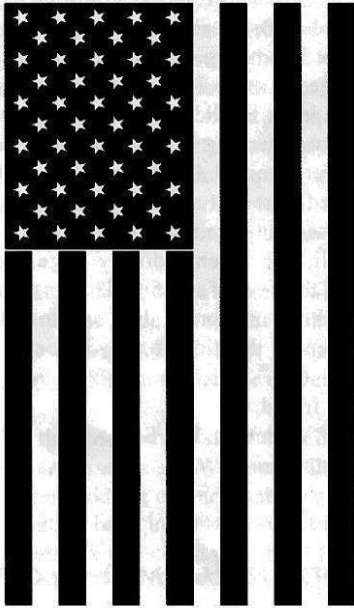
The quality of this service must have been recognized through the award of the Bronze Star Medal, Silver Star Medal, and other Medals. In recognition for individual heroic actions, or the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received as a result of direct combat actions against an armed enemy of the United States.

Joe and Betty Dondero, 826 sq.

Humor: The British Military Officer Fitness Reports.

1. His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity
2. I would not breed from this officer.
3. This officer is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't be.
4. When she opens her mouth, it seems that this is only to change whichever foot was previously in there.
5. He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.
6. He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.
7. Technically sound, but socially impossible.
8. This officer reminds me very much of a gyroscope, always spinning around at a frantic pace but not really going anywhere.
9. This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
10. When he joined my ship, this officer was something of a granny; since then he has aged considerably.
11. Since my last report, he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.
12. She sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them
13. He has the wisdom of youth and the energy of old age.
14. This officer should go far, and the sooner he starts, the better.
15. In my opinion, this pilot should not be authorized to fly below 250 feet.
16. The only ship I would recommend this man for is citizenship.

The Last Mission



A Soldier Died Today

He was getting old and paunchy,
and his hair was falling fast.
And he sat around his Legion post
telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he had fought in
and the deeds that he had done.
In his exploits with his buddies.
They were heroes, everyone.

But sometimes to his neighbors,
his tales became a joke.
Yet all his Legion buddies listened,
for they knew whereof he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,
for old Bill has passed away.
And the world's a little poorer,
for a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth,
their bodies lie in state.
And thousands note their passing
and proclaim that they were great.

Newspapers tell their life stories,
from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a simple soldier
goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution
to the welfare of our land.
A person who breaks promises
and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow,
who in times of war and strife.
Goes off to serve his country,
and offers up his life?

It's so easy to forget them,
for it was so long ago.
That the "Old Bills" of our country
went to battle, but we know,

It was not the politicians,
with their compromises and ploys,
who won for us the freedom
that our country now enjoys.

He was just a common soldier
and his ranks are growing thin.
But his presence should remind us
that we may need his likes again.

For when countries are in conflict,
then we find the Soldier's part,
is to clean up all the troubles
that others often start.

If we cannot give him honor
while he's here to hear the praise
Then at least let's give him homage
at the ending of his days.

Perhaps a simple notice
in a paper that would say:
our country is in mourning
because a Soldier passed away.

Anonymous
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Newsletter" published by Disabled
American Veterans Chapter #119

KJA and MJA Personnel 484th Bomb Group Interred in European Military Cemeteries

Compiled by Alan Davidson

This list reflects all servicemen of the 484th Bomb Group of WWII who are interred in military cemeteries in Europe. A plot location shows where a grave marker stands. Names that are identified as missing are inscribed on the wall of the missing near the center of the grounds. The names of bodies brought home after the war for burial at home are not listed. It is Davidson's opinion that about a half of the war dead were brought home for burial in the USA. Contact the Battle Monument Commission for further information. Burial in the year 1946 was about one year after the actual mission.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Plot</i>	<i>Cemetery</i>
1/30/45	824	Ashton, John D.	Sgt	E 7 31	Sicily-Rome
1/15/45	824	Bolmgren, Donald A	2/Lt	G 15 60	Sicily-Rome
12/17/44	825	Boomer, George O. Jr	2/Lt	D 22 39	Lorraine
3/4/45	826	Bottoms, Henry B.	2/Lt	Missing	Florence
6/11/44	826	Bowersmith, Donald E	S/Sgt	Missing	Florence
1/21/46	827	Brooks, Herbert J	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
11/27/44	827	Brumer, Frederick J.	Sgt	Missing	Florence
6/11/44	825	Burton, Robert E.	2/Lt	F 13 15	Sicily-Rome
12/9/44	825	Compton, Vern E.	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
6/13/44	824	Conn, Nathan Y.	S/Sgt	Missing	Florence
1/21/46	827	Coonn, William L.	T/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
3/1/45	825	Cooper, Alfred W.	T/Sgt	H 1 20	Sicily-Rome
11/17/44	827	Cosgrove, Gerald L.	Cpl	Missing	Florence
5/31/44	825	Daniels, Clair L.	2/Lt	G 1 31	Sicily-Rome
2/17/45	826	Danowski, Edwin T.	1/Lt	H 15 20	Sicily-Rome
6/13/44	825	Davison, Phillip S. Jr	Sgt	E 11 16	Lorraine
1/30/45	824	Denslow, Guy A. Jr	Pvt	F 11 36	Florence
12/17/44	824	Egizi, Vezio	S/Sgt	D 20 26	Florence
11/17/44	827	Farstad, Stanley A.	Cpi	Missing	Florence
12/9/44	825	Fincher, Emil E	Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
10/23/44	827	Fugate, Howard E	Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
6/13/44	825	Giroux, Ronald B.	S/Sgt	A 14 32	Lorraine
6/9/44	826	Grant, Donald L.	Capt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
8/22/44	824	Green, William A.	2/Lt	D 11 35	Lorraine
5/29/44	824	Grunsborg, Manfred	S/Sgt	Missing	Florence
5/29/44	827	Haldeman, Donald C.	Maj	K49 18	Lorraine
8/24/44	825	Hall, Garland A.	2/Lt	Missing	Florence
6/13/44	826	Hansen, Irwin	Sgt	B 13 5	Florence
2/24/45	824	Hartmann, Leo C.	Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
12/9/44	825	Haverty, Robert L	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
12/9/44	825	Helbert, Richard J.	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
10/23/44	827	Helms, Robert B.	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
5/10/44	827	Helton, Guy S.	T/Sgt	D 8 18	Lorraine
5/29/44	827	Hickey, Raymond W	1/Lt	D 17 22	Lorraine

<i>Date</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Plot</i>	<i>Cemetery</i>
6/13/44	825	Jackson, Julius E.	Sgt	E 20 42	Lorraine
5/29/44	824	Jorgensen, Stanley P.	2/Lt	E 28 31	Lorraine
11/17/44	827	Kaler, Roy W.	Cpl	Missing	Florence
1/21/46	827	Karban, Charles W Jr	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
1/21/46	827	Kemp, Robert W.	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
12/17/44	824	Lee, George R.	S/Sgt	B 33 23	Lorraine
8/22/44	824	Lee, Parke D.	Pfc	D 7 33	Lorraine
10/23/44	827	Lindstrom, Mitchell M.	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
6/13/44	824	Long, Leonard E.	S/Sgt	Missing	Florence
12/9/44	825	Lough, Warren D.	T/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
11/17/44	827	Lynch, Phillip I	F/O	Missing	Florence
11/17/44	827	Malatsky, Sidney J	2/Lt	Missing	Florence
11/17/44	827	Martin, Harold G	2/Lt	Missing	Florence
8/20/44	825	McClellan, Charles E.	S/Sgt	D 8 33	Lorraine
10/23/44	827	McClellan, Walter E	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
2/18/45	826	McDaniel, Abner O.	Maj	H 13 26	Sicily-Rome
12/9/44	825	Meyers, Robert J	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
1/20/45	825	Michaelian, Haig A	Cpl	E 1 18	Sicily-Rome
1/21/46	827	Mick, Joseph C	Cpl	Missing	Sicily-Rome
12/9/44	825	Moore, Harvey L Jr	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
3/4/45	826	Morrow, Levi L	Sgt	K 28 33	Lorraine
3/14/45	825	Moyer, Gordon M	2/Lt	E 10 29	Lorraine
1/16/46	825	Musser, Eugene D	S/Sgt	Missing	Epinal
3/4/45	826	Ness, Oscar R.	2/Lt	A 124 29	Lorraine
3/4/45	826	Ober, Carl F	Sgt	Missing	Florence
1/21/46	827	Parliman, Joseph W. Jr	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
5/29/44	824	Pearse, Richard M	1/Lt	D 33 35	Lorraine
1/21/46	827	Petruska, Michael C.	Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
8/22/44	824	Pope, Harry R	Pvt	E 42 16	Lorraine
1/21/46	827	Ramsey, Edwin O.	Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
8/22/44	824	Reeves, John W Jr	2/Lt	E 35 28	Lorraine
10/23/44	827	Rhein, Charles R	1/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
2/21/45	825	Richmond, Robert R	S/Sgt	Missing	Florence
1/21/46	827	Rochford, LeRoy J Jr	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
2/20/45	826	Ronder, Julian V.	2/Lt	H 9 2	Florence
2/21/45	825	Roor, Dirk	Sgt	M 19 1	Netherlands
6/13/44	825	Roth, Arthur C.	2/Lt	K22 32	Lorraine
6/13/44	825	Rule, Otis C.	S/Sgt	B 17 38	Lorraine
8/22/44	824	Ruthenberg, John J.	2/Lt	K 30 25	Lorraine
1/20/45	825	Sanderson, Robert C.	1/Lt	H 10 26	Sicily-Rome
11/17/44	827	Schultz, Frank I.	Cpl	Missing	Sicily-Rome
8/7/44	824	Spinney, Donald W.	S/Sgt	E 9 2	Sicily-Rome
1/21/46	827	Stansberry, Milton A.	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
1/21/46	827	Stuart, Norton L.	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
4/25/44	825	Sullens, Arthur J.	T/Sgt	A 19 3	Lorraine
10/23/44	827	Thomas, Albert R.	Sgt	H 9 61	Sicily-Rome
12/9/44	825	Tomchik, Alfred J.	2/Lt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
4/8/44	825	West, Walter C.	T/Sgt	F 13 6	North Africa
12/17/44	825	White, Albert R.	S/Sgt	E 42 25	Lorraine
2/20/45	826	Wiggins, Lyle D.	Sgt	G 8 27	Florence
6/13/44	824	Willour, Vincent E.	S/Sgt	Missing	Florence
10/7/44	827	Wilson, Woodrow	2/Lt	C 84	Rhone
12/9/44	825	Woods, John L	S/Sgt	Missing	Sicily-Rome
12/11/44	825	Yurochro, Edward	Cpl	Missing	Florence

The Last Mission List

This list is made up of names given to the Association by friends and family. Al Marcus adds names to this list via the Veterans Administration. Alan Davidson provided information on war time passings. Your Editor lost his nose gunner, James L Hill earlier in the year.

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Duty</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Uniy</i>	<i>ASN</i>	<i>Dec Date</i>	<i>Pilot Or C O</i>
1/Lt	N	Bernard J	Bossick (D)	824	0814232	2/18/99	Churn, Harold L
S/Sg	N/G	William A	Coke (D)	826	37104388	2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R
F/O	B	David	Coleck (D)	826	T122088	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
Cpl	G	Gordon M	Cooper (D)	827	35232631	7/4/98	Kanar, James R
Cpl	N/G	James	Cotter (D)	827	42032446	5/11/99	Bolton, Russell K
2/Lt	N	Robert W	Cress (D)	825	0703711	4/11/98	Crumbliss, Jack A
2/Lt	C/P	Francis J.	Cummins (D)	826	0713294	2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R
Sgt	N/G	Phillip S	Davison Jr (D)	825	31284665	6/13/44	Willen, Robert W
S/Sg	E	Edward C	Domenico (D)	826	35068340	Unk	Forster, Stanley L
	N/G	Michael	Dubois (D)	824		7/23/96	
S/Sg	E	Roland B.	Giroux (D)	825	31242281	6/13/44	Willen, Robert W
S/Sgt	E	Robert J	Gunthorpe (D)	824	34602994	8/22/44	Ruthenberg, John J
2/Lt	B	LLOYD C	Hanson (D)	826	T127838	5/11/99	Forster, Stanley L
S/Sg	R/O	James W	Hartgrove (D)	826	34432711	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
	N/G	James L	Hill (D)	827	37631343	3/24/99	Guisbond, Monroe B
Sgt	E	William L	Humphrey (D)	826	38255625	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
S/Sg	U/G	William	Kelly (D)	825	37565711	Unk	Boone, Robert L
Sgt	T/G	Raymond E	Kennedy (D)	826	36353036	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
2/Lt	N	Seymour S.	Lambert (D)	824	0722857	8/22/44	Johnson, Gary B
Capt	P	Kenneth R	Larsen (D)	826	0699615	2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R
SgtB/G		Victor B	Laucella (D)	826	31143530	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
S/Sg	B/G	Robert J.	Mathison (D)	826	39461205	2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R
S/Sg	E	John	McClellan (D)	825	35609070	8/20/44	Walker, Thaddeus H
S/Sg	E	Newman	McMurtre (D)	826	18201430	7/7/98	O'Shea, Vincent W
2/Lt	N	Francis J	Miranti (D)	824	0697615	12/26/97	Hallenbeck, Ralph J
T/Sg	E	Louis H	Morris (D)	826	32889366	2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R
2/Lt	NV	Richard F	Mulcahy (D)	826		2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R
Sgt	E	Roy A	Nichols (D)	825	39294379	9/1/1997	Fritts, Robert
Pvt	BG	Richard A	Notarantonio (D)	824	31293371	8/22/44	Ruthenberg, John J
S/Sg	E	Ben G	Olds (D)	826	38288918	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
Cpl	BG	Gerald L	Olson (D)	824	38563432	8/22/44	Johnson, Gary B
Cpl	B/G	Arthur G	Ouellette (D)	824	31388972	3/3/99	Zimmerman, Donald G
S/Sg	NG	Martin A	Pizzolato (D)	827	36729677	2/20/99	Hammett, Marion H
T/Sgt	E	Kenneth J	Querry (D)	825	38320137	5/10/98	Sprinkel, Reed
1/Lt	N	Frank V	Rabinovitz (D)	826	0707107	2/17/45	Larsen, Kenneth R

2/Lt	B	Elvin D	Rodgers (D)	825	0716949	8/20/44	Walker, Thaddeus H
1/Lt	P	Lawrence Z	Rose (D)	826	0804406	6/11/1944	Rose, Lawrence Z
2/Lt	C/P	Arthur C.	Roth (D)	825	0820068	6/13/44	Willen, Robert W
S/Sg	R/O	Otis E.	Rule (D)	825	39408445	6/13/44	Willen, Robert W
Sgt	B/G	John F	Scarborough (D)	825	34688662	8/20/44	Walker, Thaddeus H
S/Sg	T/G	George J.	Scheina (D)	826	32368767	2/17/45	Bird, Edward P
Sgt	T/G	Frank J	Schoen (D)	825	37722294	8/20/44	Walker, Thaddeus H
1/Lt		Frank E.	Torres (D)	827	0867026	11/1/1997	
Cpl		Thomas J.	Tracy(D)	826	31333305	5/10/85	
Cpl		Raymond M.	Trangmar (D)	825	18058900	unk	
Cpl		Elmer J.	Trathen (D)	825	33617782	3/20/48	
M/Sg	AR	Lucius W.	Treat (D)	825/827	14046537	6/24/83	Arm
1/Lt	P	John E	Trechter (D)	824	0547131	10/29/78	Trechter, John E
S/Sg	G	Pete P	Trombetta (D)		33259205	Unk	
Pvt		Frank C	Trowbridge (D)	824	37459310	6/3/93	
Pfc		John H.	Truax (D)	826	19183181	10/25/91	
Sgt		Floyd A.	Trull (D)	827	34436992	8/8/90	
Cpl		Walter E.	Tubach (D)	827	33464452	12/5/85	
Sgt	U/G	Charles L	Tubelis (D)	825	13102700	11/29/94	Muszynski, Alexander J
S/Sg	G	Robert D	Tullis (D)	826	35224985	3/5/80	Vance, Richard G
Pfc		Herbert V.	Turdo (D)	826	32927070	3/7/75	
2/Lt		Theodore A.	Turk (D)	827	0698619	6/10/44	
Pvt		Albert B.	Turner (D)	484	18121241	2/3/66	
S/Sg	G	Thomas W.	Tuttle (D)	827	39029115	7/3/74	Ellis, Cecil R
T/Sg	R/O	Frank J	Tybursky (D)		31190371	4/26/63	Sahdle, Eugene M
S/Sg	B/G	Harry R	Watkins (D)	827	39255831	2/13/99	Brush, Elvin W
S/Sgt	f	Charles	Wayshak (D)	824			Jehli, Walter A
Cpl	RO	Larry K	Williams (D)	824	39857391	8/22/44	Johnson, Gary B
Pfc	TG	William C	Winegardner (D)	824	35558438	8/22/44	Johnson, Gary B
Sgt	TG	Irving C	Woods (D)	824	17136468	8/22/44	Ruthenberg, John J
S/Sg	RO	Phillip W	Wright (D)	824	37653078	8/22/44	Ruthenberg, John J

Obituaries

Bernard Bossick, 824 Sq.

1/Lt Bernard Bossick, Navigator on Harold L Churn's crew passed away February 18, 1999, after a short illness. He has been a member of the Association since 1988.

He is survived by his wife, Lois. Any correspondence regarding Bernard's passing should be directed to Mrs. Louis Bossick c/o William Harnett 912 Kinksbridge Rd, Columbia, SC 29210

Harold W Earp, 827 Sq.

Harold W Earp 827 Sq, Martha Earp, the wife of Harold W Earp reported his passing on May 22, 1994. Harold was the engineer on Alex Bourdo's crew. This crew ferried a new B-24 "Pontiac Squaw" to the squadron in April of 1944. The Bourdo crew consisted of Alex D Bourdo-P, Robert Paliafito-C/P, James Wilson -N, William Thompson-B, Harold Earp-E, James Weakland-R/O, Roy J Harrison-N/G, Roger Beers-T/G, John Hyde-U/G, and Joe Heisler-B/G.

Jerome D Dufour, 824 Sq.

Jerome "Jerry" D Dufour, 824 Sq. died December 6, 1998 at his home in Westminster, CA. He was 81. He is survived by his four children, their spouses and six grandchildren. When Col. Keese was forming the 484th Bomb Group he asked Jerry to join the 484th because of his experiences during his first tour of duty and for that first raid on Ploesti on August 1, 1943.

It was not easy to ask a man who went through hell on that famous low level mission to come back for a second tour of duty. It was not usual in air force history for airmen to volunteer for extra tours, but Jerry was one of them, and proudly so. He is known to have said, "If you think you can, or think you can't. . . You are right." Jerry was well known in the 484th and was respected by all.



Lloyd Hanson, 826 Sq



Lt/Col. Lloyd Hanson-Bombardier, was born May 2, 1924 in Arthur, N.D. to Carland Amanda Lambrecht Hanson. He was in the U.S. Air Force for a total of 27 years, serving in World War II and in the Korean and Vietnam wars. He retired in 1969 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He moved to Lompoc, CA that year and was employed in real estate sales for 16 years. He died Tues. May 11, 1999 at age 74. Survivors include his wife, Jean Hanson of Lompoc; son, James Hanson of Wilmington, N.C.; daughters, Mary Ledford of Aromas, Calif. and Barbara Hanson of Lancaster; sister, Audrey Grieve of Buffalo, N.D.; four granddaughters and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was called into active duty in April, 1943, and received basic training at Sheppard Field, TX, College training Galesburg, IL, Preflight at Ellington AFB, gunnery at Laredo, and then to bombardier training at Midland, TX, graduating in June 1944. He joined a bomber crew and was assigned to the 826 Squadron and flew 26 combat missions. He returned to civilian life after the war but was recalled in 1951 where he served as a B-29 bombardier instructor. Lloyd became a Radar Navigator at Holmstead AFB on B-47s and B-52s. His last duty station was Clinton Sherman AFB. He retired from service July 1969.

James L. Hill, 827 Sq.

James L. Hill, 73, of Palm Desert, died March 25, 1999, in Brea. Jimmy Hill was the baby of the Ben Guisbond crew, of which your Editor was the engineer. Jim and I would talk cars well into the night, he for Chevrolet, me for Ford. He was very athletic and tried to drag me to the softball games that always seemed to be in progress. But I preferred to sleep between missions. He was good hearted and didn't say much when I filled a condom with water to about the size of a rat and placed in his cot. When he rose up in



The Lloyd Hanson Crew: From left back row: Stan Forester-P, Ed Lechtanski-C/P, and Lloyd Hanson-B. Kneeling from left: Ed Domenico-E, Harry Marshall-W/G, Harry Humrighouse-B/G, Ed Wiggins-T/G, Roy Humrighouse-W/G, and George Pringle-R/O.

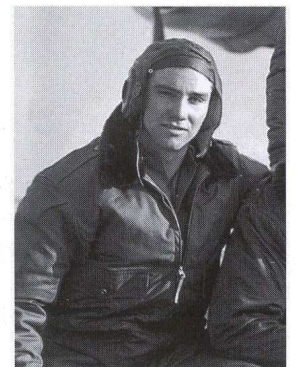
surprise as his bare feet touched the cold rubber, there was a look of apprehension, then wonder that came over his face. He looked sternly at each of us in turn asking with his eyes who did the trick. I confessed at the Torrance, CA reunion in 1981. He forgave me but said "don't ever do it again." The six enlisted men of our tent were like brothers from a big family, Jimmy was like the kid brother to me.

He was born Oct. 7, 1925, to Claud C. and Delia J. Brickell Hill in Monette, Ark. He married Josephine Aquilla Pillow on May 18, 1945, in Holcomb, MO.

He was the director of Building and Safety for Palm Desert for eight years, a self-employed building code consultant for 10 years and a licensed building contractor.

He served in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II as a Nose Gunner on crew 74, 827. He was a member of the Gardena Veterans of Foreign Wars and a past president of the Exchange Club of Palm Desert.

Survivors include his wife, Josephine; two daughters, Donna Chandler of San Juan Capistrano and Dianne of Gardena; three grandchildren; his mother, Delia of Gardena; two brothers, Fred Charles of Lake Forest and Maurice of Mariposa; and a sister, Joella Cole of Reseda.

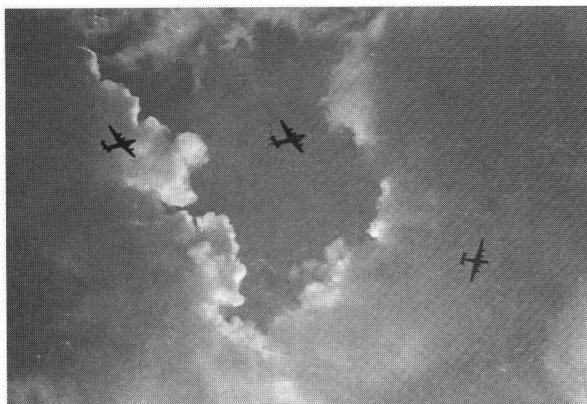


Frederick S. Howland, 826 Sq.

T/Sgt Frederick S. Howland, 76, South Attleboro, MA died September 21, 1998 at Sturdy Memorial Hospital.

Born in Lakewood, RI, he was the son of the late William R. and Honora M. (Williams) Howland. He had resided in South Attleboro for over 60 years and received his education in the Attleboro school system. He was an Air Force veteran of WWII. Mr. Howland served in the 15th Air Force in Europe, was shot down over Italy, and received the distinguished flying cross. He was a retired supervisor at the Swett Mfg. Co.

Survivors included two sisters, Mrs. Carl (Iva) Beety of North Attleboro and Miss Myra Howland of South Attleboro. Several nieces and nephews also survive. Sgt. Howland served as an engineer on the Robert Remington crew and also with Clare T Ireland's crew. The Remington crew was shot down on June 13, 1944. Howland survived the crash and returned to duty on July 22, 1944. The crew: Walter E Chapman-B, Irwin Hansen-G KIA, John Hassan-N, Alvin T Houpt-U/G, Frederick S Howland-E, Richard Olson-C/P, Robert R Remington-P, Edwin G Rogers-B/G, William B Snyder-R/O, and Ralph R Stokes-G. Reported by Dick Olson, dolson@geographix.com



Doomed B-24 falls out of the sky

Lois M Locke



Lois M Locke, widow of Major Don Halderman (KIA), 827 Squadron, was entered into rest on July 3, 1998. She is survived by her husband Robert E Locke, daughter Carolyn A Gorsuch, grandson Royce P Gorsuch both of Salem, Oregon, and a sister Loraine Lang of Murietta, CA. She was a member and past president of Phi Epsilon Sorority and a long time member of the 484th Bomb Group Association.

Arthur Ouellette, 824 Sq.



Arthur Ouellette, a retired commercial art teacher died March 3, 1999, after a brief illness at Saints Memorial Medical Center in Lowell, MA. He was 74 years old. After returning to Lowell upon completion of his military service Arthur married Theresa Gauthier on January 1, 1949. This past December, Theresa and Arthur celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at a surprise party given by their family. Arthur began studying commercial art at Butera School of Art in Boston in 1950 After graduat-

ing Art began to work as a commercial artist and plate maker for a printing company. Art also had his own commercial art company, Art Associates, and was hired as a commercial illustrator at the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Training School. After completing his work as an illustrator he was hired as a teacher of printing, then as a teacher of the Commercial Arts.

After Theresa and Arthur retired from working, they moved to Williamstown, Vermont where they spent 10 years in rural bliss. Art painted many watercolor and oil paintings while living in Vermont. As a member of the Palleters Art Association, Art began exhibiting and winning prizes for his paintings of pastoral Vermont scenes. Returning to Lowell, MA, two years ago Art had missed the sounds of traffic and the city of his youth. Art began writing, one of his favorite topics was Wyatt Earp, the other his time in the Army Air Corps, he told of his experiences as a Gunner on a B-24, the day to day goings on during the down time waiting to fly the next mission.

Arthur is survived by his wife Theresa, three sons Don, Brian, and Gary, three grandsons Eric, Rob and Rick. As a Vietnam Era Air Force veteran and the eldest son, Don, writes, that, "the possession of my father's flight jacket has taken on a new meaning at the time of his passing, given to me while stationed at Nellis AFB in Nevada, the "My Devotion" logo painted on the back of his jacket just about says it all. He had great devotion for his country and family. May God keep him in his glory on this his last mission."

Martin A Pizzolato, 827 Sq.

Martin "Marty" A Pizzolato, 78, died 2/5/99 after a losing battle to cancer. Marty was a jeweler in the Chicago area and was owner of Chasco Mfg Co that made jewelry products. He is survived by his wife, Rose, many children and 25 grandchildren.

The Pizzolato crew flew their first mission on August 15, 1944, in support of the landings in southern France. The ship, old 76, a scarred old warhorse in Easy 22, carried the crew safely to the target and back on that day, With the surprise mission, the flak was light that day, allowing all but one of the formation to return home. The one holdout finally landed at Grossetta and returned to Torretta the next morning.

Clark W Ecton, 825 Sq



Clark Warren Ecton was born June 23, 1917 in Bucyrus, KS to father Herman Ecton and mother Ruby Winkler Ecton. Clark attended a two room schoolhouse in Bucyrus taught by farmers' wives. He finished grade school, and Paseo High School in Kansas City, MO. Clark was an enterprising young lad delivering by bicycle for Crown drugstore. He then took a Saturday job at Walter's grocery, and hired his bother Allen to throw papers for the Kansas City Post. September 16, 1942, Clark enlisted in the US Army. He wanted to be a pilot but was too short to qualify. Instead he put in for OCS at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD and received his 2/Lt's bars. After a stint at Davis Monthan AFB, he was transferred to Harvard, NE where he joined the 484th Bomb Group as an ordnance, budget, and fiscal officer. He went by troopship with the group to Brindisi, Italy and then on to Torretta. He died May 10, 1998 at age 81. He is survived by his wife, Doris and son, Dale.

Kenneth J. Querry, 825 Sq.

Kenneth J. Querry, 825 Sq. 76, Flight Engineer on Reed Sprinkel's crew, Pot Luck #40, 825 Squadron, passed away May 10, 1998, in Bella Vista, Arkansas.

Born April 2 1922, in Tonkawa, Oklahoma He attended Tonkawa High School, Northern Oklahoma College and Central State University where he received his degree in Business Administration. He was employed as an Administrative Supervisor in the Production Department for Continental Oil Company in Kansas and Oklahoma. Ken later was promoted to Administrator of the Aviation Department in Houston, Texas. He was elected to the National Passenger Travelers Association Board for several years. He then transferred to Dubai Petroleum Company, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from where he retired.

Kenneth is survived by his wife, Gwen, of 51 years, and three daughters, Marilyn, Karen, Kim, and their families. One of the things etched on his headstone is a B-24 plane and "Pot Luck" etched below.



Glen L. Sandberg, 825 Sq.

Glen L. Sandberg, age 75, passed away on May 19, 1999, in Tarzana, California. Mr. Sandberg was an elementary school principal with the Los Angeles Unified School District for 30 years. He is survived by his children, Claudia Sandberg-Larsen of Sacramento, Sandra Hill of Boulder, Colorado, Laura Sandberg of San Diego, and Robert Sandberg of Grand Fork, North Dakota. He is also survived by 6 grandchildren.

Mr. Sandberg was a member of the 15th Air Force Association at March AFB-Riverside. He also was a member of the Masonic Lodge of Canoga Park. He received his Masters Degree in Education Administration from the University of Southern California. He was the B/G on John M Billing's crew.

David Sheddon, 825 Sq.

Friends of Miriam and David Sheddon will be saddened to learn that Dave, 73, died of cancer Nov. 24, 1996. Dave was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but spent most of his adolescent years in Atlanta, Georgia, where he attended Georgia Tech and became, according to a friend, "the epitome of the southern gentleman."

While in college he was drafted into service for World War II. Receiving flight training, he went overseas as a 1/Lt in the 484th (B-24 Liberator) Bomb Group where as several who knew him said, he was an "excellent pilot" and survived an emergency crash landing in the Yugoslavia area.

Returning home, Dave enrolled at the University of Michigan, majoring in Chemical Engineering and earned a Masters in Business Administration. It was in the University's hospital that he met and married Miriam, a nurse on the hospital staff.

David subsequently worked for the Union Carbide Company for 35 years, first as a tech sales representative, later as West Coast Sales Manager for graphite yarn and cloth. The Sheddons have made their home in Fullerton since 1957.

Dave had an easy way with children and friends, liking to give them nicknames that seemed to fit, and he always had a humorous story to tell the children. His volunteer activities. Included 10 years on the board of the Las Lomas Verdes Swim Club, driving for the FISH program, and participating in the California State Fullerton Continuous Learning program.

He is survived by Miriam in Fullerton, a daughter, Alice, in Sacramento and son, Mark who resides in Encinitas, CA.

On his last mission of the war on December 20, 1944, his plane nose no 33 S/N 44-41135 was so badly shot up he made a crash landing on the Isle of Vis. There were injuries to some of the crew members, and one was killed. The crew flying that day were: 2/Lt Dave W Sheddon-P, 1/Lt C W Kerr-C/P, 2/Lt K P Kincade-N, 2/Lt D H Doblle-B, T/Sg R.C Graves-E, T/Sg D G Fore-R/O, S/Sg E W Wright-NG, S/Sg R E Hansen-T/G, Sgt S Gross-B/G, S/Sg C A Parr-U/G, Pvt W C Goodlett-f.

Charles Wayshak, 824 Sq.

Charles Wayshak 82 of Watertown, formerly of Boston, an Army Air Forces veteran and retired engineer and technical assistant for Boston radio and television stations, died Thursday at Newton Rehabilitation Center. He was 82.

Born in Boston, Mr. Wayshak attended local schools. He had worked as a motion picture projectionist for E.M. Loew's theaters in Boston. Mr. Wayshak joined the Army Air Forces at the beginning of World War II. He became an aerial photographer in the 15th Air Force B-24 Liberator Squadron.

He was cited twice by the War Department, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf clusters and the Distinguished Unit Badge with oak leaf clusters while serving as a member of a Heavy Bombardment Group in Europe.

After being discharged from the service, he returned to Boston and became an engineer and technical assistant for RKO Broadcasting Corp., WNAC-TV and WRKO Radio.

He retired in 1979. He then became involved with real estate management and maintenance for a few years. Mr. Wayshak was

an active member of the Mt. Tabor Lodge of Masons, the Disabled American Veterans and the 15th Air Force, 484th Bomb Group 824th Squadron. Mr. Wayshak is survived by his wife of 52 years, Veronica (Balamut), and many nieces and nephews. The Charles Wayshak crew flew its first mission on September 5, 1944

2/Lt Walter A Jehli-p, f/O Melvin Rubin-C/P. 2/lt Norman Bennett-N, F/O Arthur J Hill-B, T/Sg Harry G Walsh, Cpl Bernard Kelly-R/O, Cpl James L Timmerman-B/G, Cpl Charles Wayshak -N/G, Cpl Fred K Helman-U/G. Herman J White-T/G.

Report On The Lawrence Z Rose Crew Its Last Mission

This report was prepared in response to inquiries by David Rose, a nephew of Lawrence Z Rose, 826 Sq. Lt. Rose was the pilot of the crew that was shot down on June 11, 1944, in ship 42-52684 on the Mission of June 11, 1944. I interviewed Lt William Hardin-C/P, and Lt Louis Falvo by phone for this report. In addition Louis Falvo sent me the photos shown with this report. David Rose sent the MACR report that provides more details on what happened that day.

Statement 2/Lt Orville Wildman-N: I was the navigator on the same mission as Lt Rose. Lt Rose's ship was hit by a ME-109 in a head on attack after leaving the target a Giurgiu, Rumania. His ship dropped down nearly straight and level. About 500 feet below the formation 2, 3, and 4 stopped completely. The plane went into a spiral to the right. Half way around two men parachuted and both chutes opened almost instantly. The plane then disappeared beyond my vision.

Statement F/O Emil E Maniak-B: I was a bombardier on a plane flying in the same formation as Lt. Rose. Lt Rose flew Baker 22 and filled in Baker 12 only to be shot down by fighters. His plane went into a spin and no 2 and 3 engines were on fire. I saw an explosion in the nose or cockpit and then it fell about 10,000 feet tearing the left wing off. About 2 or 3 thousand feet more the right wing tore off and then the wings and hulk fell to the ground and exploded. I saw 5 chutes open and one partially open and it looked as though it was tied in the middle.

Another eye witness, a flight engineer flying the same mission said he saw Rose's ship pull up to take Baker 12 position when he was attacked by enemy fighter causing a fire in the nose and flight deck. He followed the ship as it descended to the earth and saw it explode at about 6000 feet above the ground. Before the explosion he saw two parachutes open.

Further reports state that Lt Rose's foot was shot off, but he bailed out successfully and was taken to a hospital by Rumanian civilians about 40 miles away from the point of landing. A British POW from the same hospital said that the stump had healed but that Lt Rose had died of dysentery and loss of blood.

The attack took place at 21,000 feet at 10:10 AM. The plane fell over Petroshani and it was William L Humphrey, the upper gunner who fell into the Danube River and drowned later according to the MACR. Lt Hardin reports identifying Humphrey's wallet ring and other possessions. These articles were retained by Rumanian Army Personnel. Hardin also reported that David Coleck, the bombardier bailed out. His body was found and buried by a Greek priest at Petroshani. Included in the MACR was the information that the ball turret gunner Raymond E Kennedy was hit and probably trapped and could not escape. The tail gunner Victor D Lancellea was still at his station still firing at attacking airplanes when the plane blew up.



Standing Left to right: T/Sgt Ben G Olds-E, S/Sgt Charles F Kesity -NG, S/Sgt James A Hartgrove-R/O, Sgt William L Humphrey-U/G, S/Sgt Raymond F Kennedy-B/G, and S/Sgt Victor B Laucella-T/G. Kneeling left to right: 1/Lt Lawrence Z Rose -P, Lt Gorp-C/P (later replaced by Lt Hardin), 2/Lt Louis Falvo-N, and F/O David Goleck-B.

42-52684, nose number 54, with Pilot Lawrence Z Rose at the controls was shot down on June 11, 1944. Louis Falvo, the Navigator, reports the aircraft did not have a name. The crew was going to name it "The Rose" for the pilot's wife, Betty. Lawrence Z "Larry" and Betty Rose were married about a year before the crew were shot down, and had a son. Falvo didn't know his given name. Betty remarried sometime after Larry was shot down and moved to Eyria, OH, her new married name is unknown.

William Hardin, the copilot reports that they had to change airplanes because the ship originally assigned to them had an oxygen leak which would have been their own plane. By the time they became airborne in another ship, they were late catching up with the formation and instead of flying lead which would be Able 11, they were assigned to deputy lead which would be Able 12 in the formation. The lead ship was shot down and Rose's crew moved up to take the lead, and they in turn were shot down by fighter aircraft.

If indeed the lead ship was shot down by flak gunners, it was SOP (Standard Operation Procedure). Flak gunners would aim for the lead aircraft in hopes of dispersing the formation. It is not known what happened to the lead ship.

The normal crew complement of a combat mission totaled ten, four officers, and six enlisted men. The officers consisted of Pilot, Copilot, Navigator, and Bombardier. The enlisted men were Engineer-Gunner, Radio Operator-Gunner, Nose turret Gunner, Upper turret gunner, Lower Ball Turret Gunner, and tail gunner. This is assuming that the Engineer and Radio Operator were assigned to the two waist guns. In the case of some lead crews an extra navigator or radar operator would be on board. Usually several aircraft in the formation would have a photographer on board to take bomb strike photos. In addition special radio operators might be on board also to jam flak gun transmissions, and to monitor German fighter control instructions so that the formation could alter course to avoid interception by Luftwaffe fighters.

The crew in aircraft S/N 42-52684 flying Able 12 and 11, June 11, 1944 consisted of:

Pilot	Lawrence Z Rose	KIA, S/N 0804406*
Copilot	William Hardin	POW
Navigator	Louis Falvo	POW, S/N 0687824
Bombardier	David Coleck	KIA, S/N T22088
Engineer U/G	Ben G Olds	KIA, S/N 38288918
Radio Operator	James W Hartgrove	KIA, S/N 34432711*
Nose Gunner	William L Humphrey	KIA, S/N 38255625
Ball Gunner	Victor B Laucella	KIA, S/N 31143530
Tail Gunner	Raymond Kennedy	KIA, S/N 36353036

* Rose was alive during bail out, but died of his wounds in a Romanian hospital. * Hartgrove fell into the deep water of the Danube and was carried away from shore by a strong undertow and drowned. The Target that day was Giugiu located about 30

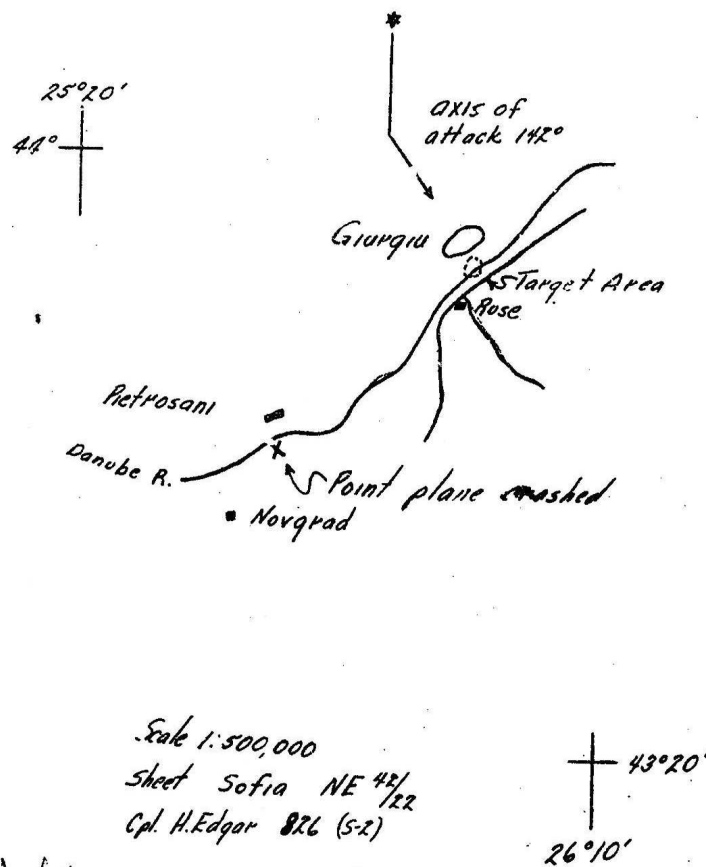
kilometers south of Ploesti. A pipeline ran from Ploesti to Giugiu where barges were loaded to transport fuel into Germany. These barges were attacked at night by RAF Wellingtons operating out of Torretta. Later this job was taken over by RAF 205 squadrons flying out of southern Italy. The Wellingtons moved to another base prior to the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups taking over Torretta Field. Hardin did say that they dropped on Ploesti instead of Giugiu.

Hardin goes on to say that he did not have his leg straps fastened, when he jumped, he had unfastened the straps so as to aid either the radio operator or the engineer, when the cockpit caught on fire, and his only option was to jump as is. He floated down hanging on the risers with his bare hands almost falling out of the chute several times and did fall out of his chute when he hit the Danube River.

Free of his harness and parachute he managed to swim to the shore. Picked up by the Rumanians and the Germans,

he was asked to identify any crewmen from a stack of dead bodies nearby. Prodded by the Germans to quickly identify anyone from the pile, he could not. He was still suffering the after effects of the jump and was not feeling well at that time. Hardin confirms Falvo's story that Larry Rose, (Falvo says that is what the crew called him), was wounded in the leg before jumping out of the aircraft, and survived long enough to be taken to a hospital where he either died of his wounds or of dysentery.

Four men parachuted out of the burning aircraft, Pilot Larry Rose, copilot William Hardin, Navigator Louis Falvo, and the Radio Operator James W Hartgrove. Hartgrove fell into the Danube



into deeper water and was dragged under by a strong undertow and drowned. Falvo says he fell into chin high water and was dragged by the undertow towards land and finally grabbed onto a small bush and was able to crawl out of the river. Falvo was told later that Larry Rose died in hospital.

As for the rest of the crew, It was impossible to use the interphone as it became inoperable and the bailout bell used as an adjunct perhaps was not heard or was inoperable too. It was protected in two ways to prevent misuse by playful crew members. 1) Break away safety wire had to be broken before the red switch cover could be opened, 2) a coded sequence had to be entered before the bell would ring. The normal sounding of the bell was one long ring for bail out, the short rings was to indicate recall of the jump order, but often just the sounding of the bell was enough and many jumped.

Editor's Comments on B-24 Flight Characteristics:

In this circumstance with the cockpit on fire, the bell may have failed to ring which would account for the men in the tail not being alerted in time to jump safely. Those in the back of the ship did not bail out.

The four that did jump were all on the flight deck and jumped out of the open bomb bay doors. When a damaged bomber is falling out of formation or is in a spin, centrifugal forces pins down crew members so they can't escape. It is essential that bailout proceed immediately before the aircraft dives or, falls into a spin. Crew members probably had less than a second or two to jump safely, hence no time to fasten leg straps.

Hardin reported too that he could see clearly the white flashes of the fighters' guns as he closed in.

It's likely that the nose gunner and bombardier may have been already dead from the fighters head on attack. This is pure speculation because a nose gunner if attacked from the front while in his turret is protected by bullet proof glass and armor plate if facing straight ahead. The irony is that both pilots had no protection except from the rear, and protecting the gunner only made little sense. The instruction manuals showed armor plate installations in B-24s was for protection from attacks from the rear of the aircraft. (See diagram, Page 17.) However, this is true only for aircraft arriving from the states. Airplanes sent down from England when one of the 8th Air Force's Air Divisions converted from B-24s to B-17s, resulting in a temporary surplus of B-24s in England. These aircraft had gone through a modification center where bullet proof glass was installed over all of the cockpit windows, armor plate added to the fuselage sides just below each pilot's sliding window. More armor plate was added inside also just in front of the instrument panel.

Another irony is that most crews disliked the armored B-24s as they were heavier than the conventional ships making them more difficult to manoeuver while in formation and burned more fuel which was already marginal on a mission longer than 6 hours. As an example, to maintain position in a formation when the throttles were pulled back to avoid a collision, the aircraft would sail forward at a faster clip. So here was an aircraft with more armor protection that could help save casualties, because a fully loaded conventional B-24 at 22,000 feet was flying just above the stall envelope under ideal conditions.

With the prototype XB-24 aircraft weighing about 32,000 pounds and operational design weights for B-24Ds of about 52,000

pounds, and real combat weights up to 72,000 pounds, the overloaded combat B-24s needed skilled pilots to keep them flying. The average pilot coming into heavy bomber groups averaged between 250 and 350 hours of flying time. Another caveat was that no two planes were alike in many aspects, such as fuel burn out, control differences, and so on. Ships following in the formation always burned more fuel than lead ships because of constant maneuvering to stay in formation.

The repair of battle damage added weight to older aircraft in the fleet, some were bent because of violent flight to avoid fighter aircraft or imminent collision. Thus it was desirable to assign a flight crew to one aircraft so that they could be made familiar with the individual aircraft's peculiarities. But this was only possible if the crew's aircraft was serviceable. Battle damage from flak bursts occurred quite often. Maintenance crews were hard pressed to make repairs overnight with the primitive tools at their disposal. The pilots had to become familiar with all of the aircraft within their squadrons and they talked to one another. Certain aircraft acquired bad reputations, and no one wanted to fly in these aircraft, crews often thought they were being discriminated against when assigned to them. There was yet another bit of irony, some old clunkers survived the war and returned to the states after the conclusion of hostilities. Crews would volunteer for old clunker aircraft if indeed they could, because they were considered lucky. New aircraft were seemingly shot down on their first few missions resulting in the fact that new airplanes had to prove themselves to the crews, before trust between crew and airplane could be established.

For the uninitiated, a combat crew needed a relationship with their aircraft, because the aircraft came alive when it was touched. You wore it like a shirt or coat and the human and the machine became intimate. If the aircraft was treated right such as making gentle turns when possible and not exceeding recommended power settings so that the rate of engine failure would be reduced, reliability went up. The same relationship exists between a driver and his own automobile, take good care of it, and it responds by being there for you when you need it. But in war when your aircraft is wounded by enemy action, combat crews will do anything in their power to ease the pain of the aircraft by throwing, guns, ammo, turrets, radios overboard. To lighten the load to keep the ship alive, because if it dies, so does the crew. If it's true that man makes mechanical things in his own image, sick cars begin to run hot, taking on a temperature just like a sick person. In fact, the aircraft was as fragile as the crew. In truth, the randomness of war was difficult to understand, why would one airplane be shot down and another fly through a carpet of flak and survive? A good crew that was cross trained to perform the duties of one another could survive some situations, but a direct hit in the bomb bay left little chance of survival of man or plane, this was the great worry of all combat airmen. The other greatest worry was why didn't the flak gunner ever run out of shells?

Some aircraft were equipped with pilots' seats made from armor plate to accommodate the pilot's parachute pack. These were called coffin seats because you sank down into it. The protection was from the sides, below and behind the pilot. For frontal protection flak vests would have to be draped on the pilots lap impairing precise movement of the control wheel.

The B-24 was not equipped with power boost depending solely on booster tabs to help move the flight surfaces. The ideal B-24 pilot was a beefy football player, preferably a lineman.

Attention Model Aircraft Builders

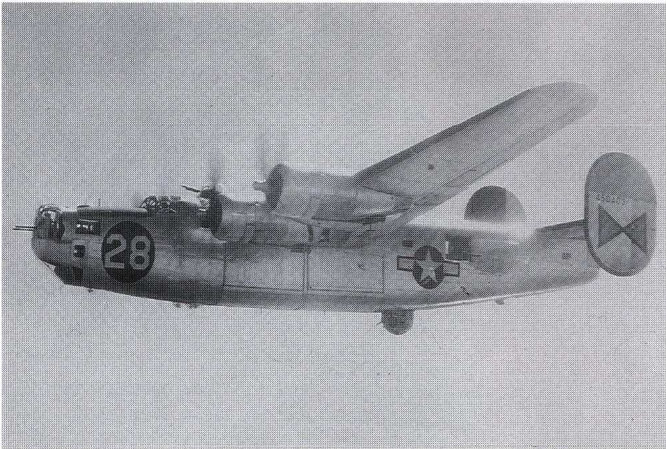
These photos show some of the variations of the 484th BG Aircraft paint schemes



42-52700 a Ford built B-24H "Generator Joe," war weary and unfit for combat was modified to serve as the squadron hack. A hack was used to transport personnel to rest camp areas, to make beer runs, and to pick up supplies.



42-52683 A Ford built B24H "The Uninvited" shows a typical white on olive color scheme.. The waist window displays a local modification. Note the de-icer boots have been removed.



44-50403 a Ford built B-24M late in the war showing the round background for the squadron number, but is not repeated aft.



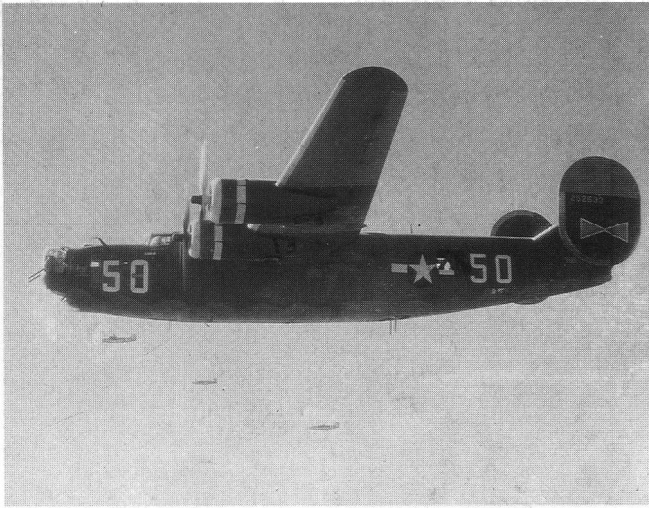
42-52072, A Ford built B-24J, "Miss Kay" with squadron numbers, and cowl rings painted in red. Black paint was generally used on natural silver aircraft.



42-51851 Ford Built B-24J Shows the Consolidated tail turret, Note: the inside of the left rudder is painted red.



44-49890, A Ford Built B-24L, 826 squadron. De-icer boots still in place and equipped with three flak suppression radio transmitters



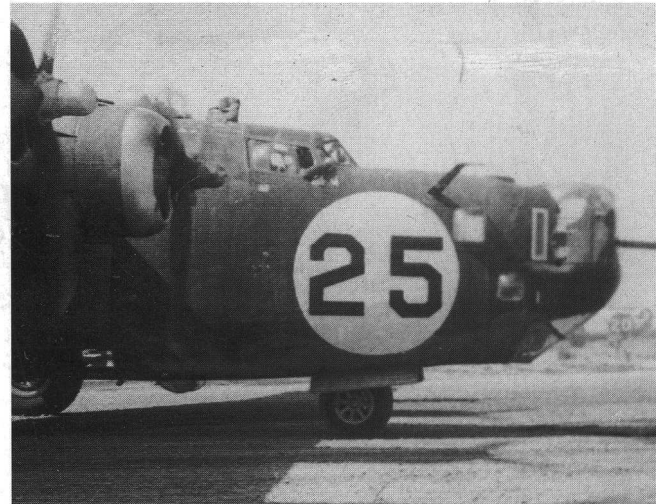
42-52633 A Ford built B-24H, 826 Sq. An example of the paint scheme on olive drab aircraft early in the war .
 Note: the engine cowls are painted white as is the surround of the bow tie insignia of the 484th BG.



42-94740, A Ford built B24H of the 825th Sq. dropping 500 lb bombs probably in spring 1944 . The fuselage does not show mud spattering



42-51884 a Ford built B-24J, 824 sq. shows a white number on a round black background on the nose only. The round background was used exclusively by the 484th Bomb Group later in the war for improved recognition from a longer distance. The left rudder has been replaced as the color is slightly lighter. Note the waist windows are covered with plexiglass. This aircraft was also equipped with anti aircraft radar jamming electronics.



Nose number #25, 824 Squadron, pulls into its hardstand after completing 100 missions. Note Black numbers on a white circle in yet another paint scheme to increase visibility at farther distances. Note the white nose cowls. The flight engineer has opened the escape hatch directly behind the pilot to aid in guiding the ship to its proper location. This aircraft is also equipped with radar jamming electronics. Note the bulge behind the nose wheel.

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