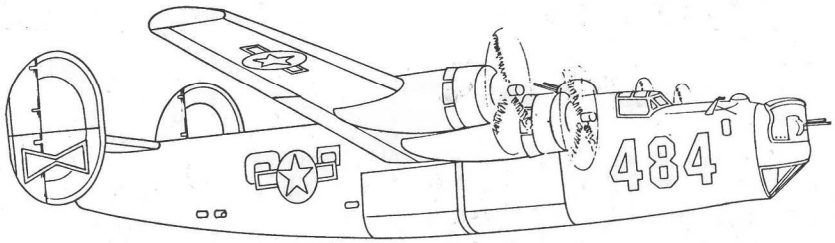


The Torretta Flyer



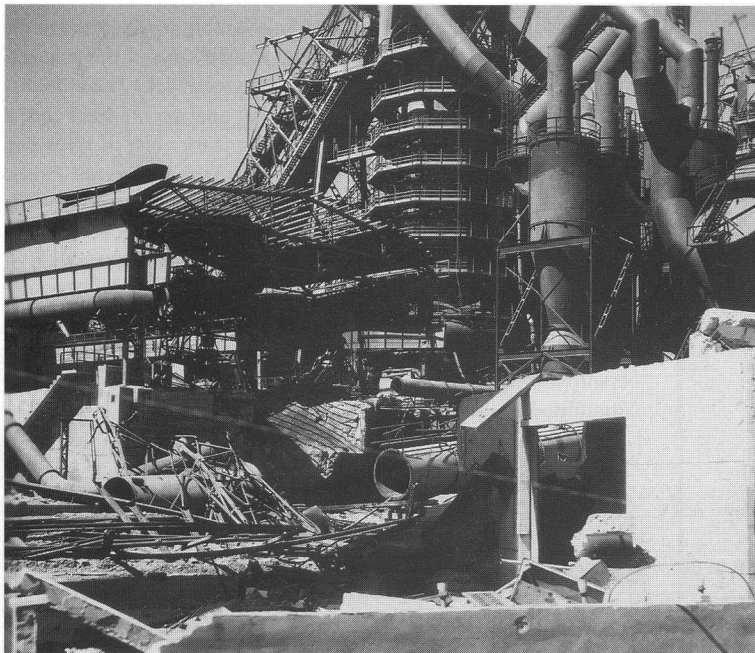
Torretta Flyer No 36

484th Bomb Group Association

Winter-Spring 2000

Dallas Reunion, October 25-30, 2000

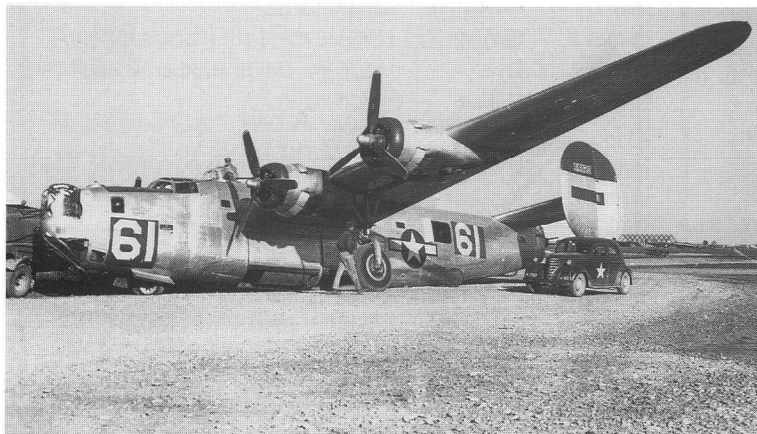
See page 4



The effect of the 15th Air Force's attacks on German war industries



Map showing the area of responsibility of the newly formed 15th Air Force.



Ship 61, 766 Sq. 461st BG 44-41120 comes to grief in the fall of 1944.



P-51, 31st FG, 15th AF, visits Torretta Field

News Of The Association

Plans For The Future

Attendance at reunions is falling as our older members age, passings are more frequent, and many are becoming infirm preventing them from traveling to a reunion site.

The problem is that Bea and I are getting older too, facing the frailties of the aging process. We had hoped that new directors would be elected to take over the association. However, the majority of our members are of the same age or older and facing the same future. We recommended that the corporation be dissolved in 2001 because of our members' aging and declining health. This should be done while we are still able to accomplish the task of preparing and transferring the Association's archives to a suitable foundation or museum of similar aims.

The recommendation that the Association will continue operations until December 31, 2001 was approved by the membership at the St. Louis reunion. At that time the 484th Bomb Group will pass into history.

After that date the materials collected from 1981 to the end of 2001 will be converted for transfer to a library or museum. The collection consists of memorabilia, mission reports, maps, photographs, micro films, morning reports, intelligence documents, data base lists, and books.

From now till December 31, 2001 we will continue to operate as usual, two Flyers per year, and a yearly reunion. The Scholarship Memorial Fund will be adjusted to be fully distributed by 2001.

99 Reunion Thanks

Thank you to:

1) Fang and Edith Hansen 824 Sq for the wine supplied not only to the 824th Squadron members but to all attendees.

2) Orville and Kate Hommert, 827 Sq for their help at the St Louis Records Center and more.....

3) Bud Pressel 825 Sq for the chips supplied by Martin's Potato Chips

4) Betty Schroeder, Claude Schroeder's wife, for the clever diet refrigerator magnets she made and brought to the reunion for distribution to the ladies.

5) Rev. John Nicolai for his fine invocation at the banquet.

6) Alan Davidson for his portable copy machine in the Display Room used by so many of our members.

Annual Meeting Report

The annual business meeting took place on Saturday October 9, 1999 at 9 AM. Minutes of Board of Directors Meetings of November 5, 1998 and November 6, 1998, respectively were read and approved. This was in regard to the election by written ballot of the Board of Directors for the year 1998-1999. The financial report was given and approved. The current financial status of the Memorial Scholarship Fund was reported as approximately \$21,772.03 as of September 30, 1999. Current paid 1999 membership total: 390.

Election of Directors

In accordance with the Notice of Annual Meeting for the purpose of electing Directors for the year 1999-2000, the election of directors took place. The Directors are: Bud Markel, Beatrice Markel, John Billings, Ken Hubertz and Ed Schwartz.

Under new business, upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors that the membership consider dissolving the Corporation as of December 31 of the year 2001, due to the aging and declining health of the majority of the members, after some discussion, the membership approved the recommendation that the Corporation be dissolved as of December 31, 2001.

Scholarship Report

Vernon Janke, member of the Scholarship Committee, made the Committee recommendation that distribution of the scholarship fund also be made by the end of the year 2001. The amounts of the awards to the Harvard, Nebraska, and the students in the Torretta, Italy area, as follows: One award for each of the years 2000 and 2001 to a Harvard, Nebraska student of Harvard Public School, in the amount of at least \$2000 for each year. Six awards for each of the years 2000 and 2001 to each of the six students in the Torretta, Italy area, in the amount of \$1500 each, for a total of \$9000 for each year, or if more than six students in the Torretta, Italy area are to share in the \$9000 per year distribution, the amount of the award per student will be adjusted accordingly. The membership approved all of the recommendations of the Scholarship Committee.

Contributions to the Scholarship Fund

IMOF=In Memory Of

<u>Name</u>	<u>L.Name</u>	<u>unit</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Charles H	Bell	825	IMOF Bob Quinlan
Lee E	Boydston	825	
James F	Carney	824	
Colin E	Dye	826	IMOF Brother Keith H Dye
Joe	Hebert	826	
H M	Hendrickson	824	
John	Hicks	826	IMOF Beloved Wife, Marie
Robert	Kelliher	765	
Adolph	Marcus	824	IMOF Deceased Crew members
E Forrest	Nance	824	IMOF Wife Suzanne
E Forrest	Nance	824	IMOF John Hensel
Barrow F	Neale	826	
Mrs Walter	Rix	824	IMOF husband Walter Rix
John H	Robson	826	
John	Stonecipher	825	

Index

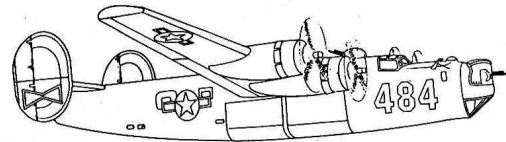
- The 2000 Reunion, *Pages 4*
Odds & Ends *Pages 5-6*
Creation of the 15th Air Force, *Pages 7-12*
Seven Killed in Bomber Crash
 by Leland Bradley- 824 Sq, Page 13
The Only Enlisted Man To Become An Ace
 from the 99th B G Association, Pages 14-18
What I Remember
 By Bill Hogan- 827 Sq, Page 19
178 Seconds To Live
 By Stan Hutchins-824 Sq, Page 20
Four Engine Fighter Plane
 Submitted by Stan Hutchins-824 Sq, Page 21
The 17 December Mission
 by John Bybee and Peter Kassak, Pages 22-24
The Old Soldier
 from Bob Glasier via the Internet, Page 25
A Very Interesting Story
 Submitted by Al Kline- 824 Sq, Page 26
Another "Lady Be Good"
 by Everett Frank via the Internet, Page 27
Letters To The Editor, *Pages 28-33*
The Last Mission,
A Pilot's Poem Page, *Page 34*
 By Stoney R Donald, @worldnet.att.net

Front Cover, Illustrations for the 15th Air Force Story
Back Cover: Photos from the 484th's Collection

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 35, postage inc. ----- \$150.00.
Individual issues- ----- \$7.00 ea.

The Torretta Flyer



Issue #36 Winter-Spring 2000

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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.

Editor, Bud Markel
Associate Editor, Bea Markel

Board of Directors 1999-2000
Bud Markel, Bea Markel, John Billings, Ken Hubertz, and Ed Schwartz

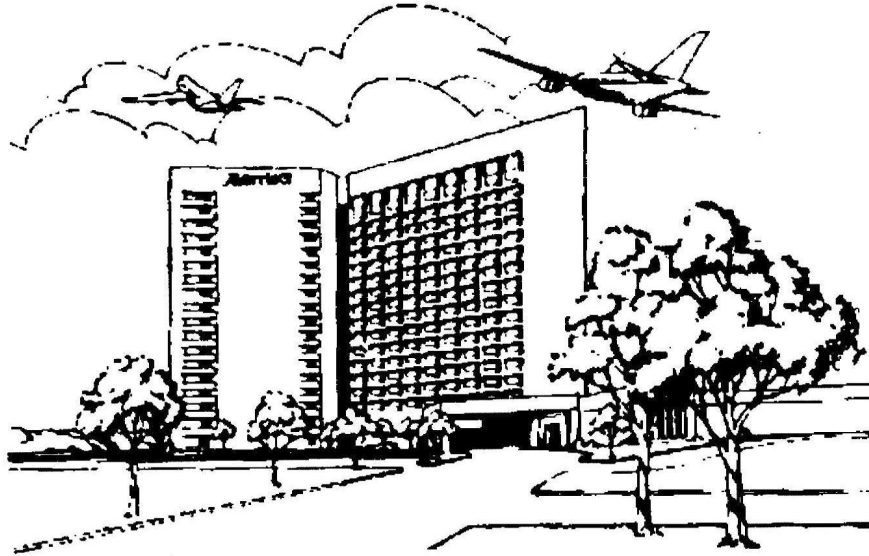
Scholarship Committee,
Dick Muscatello, Chairman, Joe Hebert, Vernon Janke, and Ross J Wilson

Membership Committee
Al Kline, Adolph Marcus, Jack Robson, Herb Weinstein,

Publicity Committee, Adolph Marcus, Bud Pressel

Direct all inquiries to the Editor, Torretta Flyer, 1122 Ysabel St. Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453-13, USA Phone (310) 316-3330 . We can be reached via the internet at **BUD484BG@AOL.com**. Also, visit our web site at <http://members.aol.com/bud484bg>. Faxes can be received at prearranged times.

Dallas: Here We Come



Dallas / Ft. Worth Airport Marriott

8440 Freeport Parkway, Irving, Texas 75063
(972) 929-8800, Fax (972) 929-6501

Room rate for the reunion are: Single/double are \$82.00 per night, each additional person \$10.00. Out of state residents may make room reservation by calling 1-800-228- 9290. Texas residents may use the number shown above. Please identify yourself as a member or guest of the 484th Bomb Group Association to receive the special group rate. Use the address above for mail reservations. All room reservations require a first night deposit.

The 484th Bomb Group will meet for its 19th annual reunion October 25-30, 2000, at the Dallas/Ft. Worth Airport Marriott. The reunion package containing information on tours, accommodations, and reunion events will be mailed out in late spring or early summer. Please contact the Association office if you don't receive your package by July 1, 2000 contact me Bud Markel c/o The 484th Bomb Group Association at:

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

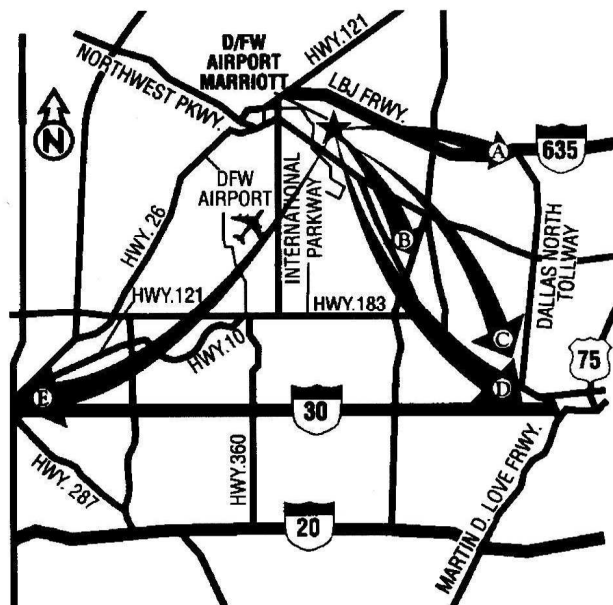
Once again we have employed Armed Forces Reunions Inc. to arrange all of the events.

Directions From Dallas/Fort Worth Airport: Exit North to Highway 114 East. Take Freeport Parkway Exit and turn left. The hotel is on the right.

- A. 12 minutes to LBJ Freeway & Dallas Tollway
- B. 7 minutes to Las Colinas
- C. 18 minutes to Love Field
- D. 21 minutes to downtown Dallas
- E. 26 minutes to downtown Fort Worth

General Information *Credit Cards accepted:* American Express, VISA, MasterCard, Diners Club, Carte Blanche and Discover.

Transportation: Complimentary airport shuttle on call 24 hours a day.



Odds and Ends

A Double Story

Have you ever wondered how Chicago O'Hare International Airport got its name? Read on.

Edward H. "Butch" O'Hare was born on March 13, 1914 in St. Louis, the son of "E.J." O'Hare, a wealthy businessman and attorney. His parents sent him to Western Military Academy (WMA) at age 13, where he pursued an interest in marksmanship, becoming president of the rifle club. In 1932, he graduated from WMA, and in 1933 went on to the US Naval Academy. When he finished his naval aviation training, he was assigned to VF-3, the USS Saratoga's Fighting Squadron. VF-3 was flying the Grumman F3F-I biplane. In July, 1940, Butch O'Hare made his first carrier landing, "just about the most exciting thing a pilot can do in peacetime."

L/Cmr John S. Thach the Executive Officer of VF-3 hailed from Fordyce, Arkansas and the Academy Class of 1927. By early 1942 Thach was a highly experienced aviator with some 3,500 hours flight time and with definite ideas on fighter tactics. He had grown up hunting pheasant, and believed that any pilot with a similar background was potentially good VF material. Therefore, he stressed gunnery and teamwork. It was a philosophy shared by one of his pilots; dark, husky Lt. "Butch" O'Hare from St. Louis and Chicago. Not quite twenty-eight, O'Hare, Class of 1937 US Naval Academy had been with the Thach crew since joining Fighting Three in 1940. Thach and O'Hare part of the squadron gunnery team which captured the fleet trophy flying F3Fs biplanes. While training the pilots of VF-3 Thach would knock the new pilots down a notch by outflying them. He would let a rookie gain an altitude advantage and then, while reading a newspaper, he would out maneuver him and get on his tail. But when he tried this with O'Hare, he couldn't gain an advantage. Thach closely mentored the promising young pilot. In early 1941, VF-3 transferred to Enterprise. By the end of 1940, Jimmy Thach and his intense training had produced a passel of sharpshooters, including O'Hare.

From Pearl Harbor through May 4, 1942, U.S. Navy pilots and aerial gunners accounted for only 24 Japanese aircraft destroyed and another 3 probably destroyed. The U.S. Navy had only one ace on its rolls, the aggressive fighter pilot Butch O'Hare.

On February 20, 1942 Japanese Navy pilots were set to attack the Lexington flying in two waves of eight and nine planes each. The G4Ms (Bettys) dark-green oblong shapes making 170 knots, were dangerously close to the Lexington before the first



shots were fired. The Bettys were each armed with two 550 pound bombs.

Jimmy Thach led three of his pilots in a hasty scramble, and personally caught two of the fleeing Bettys. He splashed one himself and shared the second. But as a reserve, "Butch" O'Hare and Lt. Jg (junior grade) Marion Dufilho were kept flying near the ship, should the bombers get too close to the Lexington. Fourteen of VF-3s 16 operational fighters were now committed, and two of those had been shot down. Some of the Japanese

gunners were marksmen; Thach saw a direct hit on one F4F's canopy and watched the Grumman dive into the water.

At 1700, just a half-hour after the first radar plot, another threat appeared on the Lexington's radar screen. But this time it was much closer and on the disengaged side of the task force. Nine miles to the east, eight more Bettys bored in-the second wave from Rabaul, completely unopposed. It fell to O'Hare and Dufilho, who flew out on a 080 degrees track, and rolled in from starboard on a high side run as the Bettys descended in a fast, shallow dive towards the carrier." Butch" O'Hare now flying the Grumman F4F Wildcat, was cool and professional. He made only beam or quartering runs, denying the deadly tail gunners a clear shot at him. He held his fire until about 100 yards out, then triggered his four .50-calibers in short, precise bursts against the nearest bomber in the formation. The starboard engine gushed smoke which turned to flame, and O'Hare shifted targets. He continued his run, slanting down into the formation, and in the same pass engaged the next in line. Only then did O'Hare realize he was alone. Dufilho's guns had jammed from the same damnable feed problem which had vexed F4F squadrons for months. O'Hare was on his own against six bombers. On his next pass O'Hare concentrated on the two bombers trailing on the left side of the formation. Again closing the range to make sure, he flamed one Betty which dropped out, and pressed his run on the next in line. This bomber exploded as O'Hare's bullets found the engine and fuel tank.

By now the surviving five Bettys were within gun range of the task force's anti aircraft fire. Despite flak bursts snapping around the formation and tracers from every bomber which could line up a gun, O'Hare dived in for a third pass, again from portside. He blew up the leader, and then there was nothing more he could do. Four Bettys pressed their attack, dropping bombs with-

Continued on next page



Lt/Cmr Edward H "Butch" O'Hare

in 100 yards of the Lexington's stern. O'Hare, still hungry, fired nearly all his remaining ammo at one of the retreating survivors. Then he reined in and headed for the barn. His first request upon landing was for a glass of water, and small wonder. In a sizzling four minutes he made three gunnery passes, shooting five Bettys out of formation.

Seven Wildcats were damaged, including O'Hare's, which sustained one 7.7-mm bullet in the fuselage and two shrapnel hits in the wings. Butch and his damaged plane limped back to the carrier. When the film in his wing camera was processed, his bravery was evident. He was credited with saving the carrier Lexington. Afterward Thach figured out that Butch O'Hare had used only sixty rounds of ammunition for each plane he destroyed.

For his extraordinary feat he was promoted to Lieutenant Commander. Originally recommended for a Navy cross, O'Hare received the Congressional Medal Of Honor from President Roosevelt the only carrier based aviator among the eight F4F pilots eventually awarded that distinction. When the folks at Bethpage, LI, where the Grumman Wildcats were built, heard about his feat, they sent him the most precious gift they could imagine. Somehow, in ration shortage wartime, they collected 5,000 cigarettes.

The night of November 27, 1943, the "Black Panthers" new Hellcat fighters were assigned to a radar carrying Avenger whose job was to vector the fighter pilots into the attacking Japanese bombers, but the Hellcats had trouble finding the Avengers. One of the Avengers shot down an enemy bomber, but in the confusion of the brief action, nothing could be seen but the flaming gasoline from the downed Betty burning on the water. Suddenly, the Avenger identified another Betty behind the Hellcats. The Avenger rear gunner fired at it. Moments later, O'Hare failed to respond to the radio. O'Hare's Hellcat fell out of control into the sea. It is believed that friendly fire from the Avenger's gunner Alvin Kernan mistakenly shot him down. He was never found.

Before all of this happened one "Easy Eddie" worked for the notorious Al Capone. Eddie, was Al Capone's lawyer, and he

was a very good lawyer. So good, that despite the murders committed by Capone, "Easy Eddie" was able to keep him out of jail. Naturally, Al Capone took care of Eddie financially. Eddie had a huge beautifully furnished house with live-in help and all of the modern conveniences available. "Easy Eddie" had a son who he doted on. He gave the boy everything of the best. He bought him cars, fancy clothes and cars, and saw that his son got the best education possible. "Easy Eddie," however, was not happy. He realized that the one thing he was unable to give his son was a good name and a good example of how to live an upright life. "Easy Eddie" decided that this was more important to him than all the riches he received from Capone. "Easy Eddie" went to the authorities and agreed to testify against Capone. He did testify, despite knowing that he surely would be killed. Capone went to jail. Within a few months, Easy Eddie O'Hare was gunned down by Al Capone's gunmen, most likely because he had given the government information useful in its prosecution of Capone. Lt /Cmr Edward H "Butch" O'Hare, USN 1914-1943 was "Easy Eddie's" son.

The Chicago airport was named for The Medal Of Honor winner, Lt /Cmr Edward H "Butch" O'Hare as remembrance of his bravery in saving the Lexington.

Send Us Your WWII Memorabilia and Documentation

Important WWII Documents can be lost when a WWII veteran passes on. These documents need to be preserved for future generations to see. Most of the internet mail to the Associations' bud484bg@aol.com is from the descendants of our deceased members. They want to know what their father, grandfather, and/or uncle did in the war. These documents can help recall the events and stories of our deceased soldiers and airmen. The documents can include, 1) orders, 2) Maps, 3) Photographs, 4) Publications, Yank Magazine, wartime 15th Air Force "Sortie," Air Force Magazine, Impact books, and so on. If in doubt contact me at 310/316/3330. Send them on to us, we will include your materials with the Association's collection that will be sent to an existing museum or library after December, 2001. The material you send in that is appropriate for publication will also be considered for inclusion in the Flyer.

The Post War Generation

There is a great gap of knowledge and understanding between actual experience and getting the information second hand from the media that was subjected to the writer's own bias. Thus the great controversy over the bombing of Hiroshima. The complaints came mostly from the post war generation who learned about the war second hand.

If you want your children to know about the war first hand without bias, then tell them your own story. The whole purpose of the Association is to preserve the history of WWII so that our sacrifices and deeds will not be forgotten.

One of our members, Walter Bondarchuk visits schools on a regular schedule and tells of his own war experiences. The students love it because it brings to life the dull texts that can only reflect what might have happened as compared to what really happened.

Creation of the Fifteenth Air Force



Abbreviations used in this report

AC/AS=Assistant Chief Of Air staff
AFHQ= Allied Force Headquarters
ASC= Air Support Command
AVALANCHE= Amphibious assault on Salerno,
September 1943
CBO=Combined Bomber Offensive
CCS= Combined Chiefs of Staff
DAF= Desert Air Force
GAF=German Air Force,IE Luftwaffe
JCS= Joint Chiefs of Staff
NAAF= Northwest Africa Air Force, 12th Air Force based
in Tunisia
NATAF= Northwest Africa Tactical Air Force, Support of
ground troops
NASAF= Northwest Africa Strategic Air Force, Bombers
attacking ground targets.
OVERLORD= Invasion of Western Europe in June 1944
POINTBLANK= Combined Bomber Offensive
QUADRANT= Quebec Conference of August 1943
Rhubarbs= A small scale harassing mission by fighter-
bombers against targets of opportunity
SOS=Service of Supply
* AA=Flak

The surrender of Italy and the conquest of the southern part of the Italian peninsula brought to the Allies a number of actual and potential-benefits. The first wedge had been driven into Hitler's Festung Europa, a heavy blow had been struck at German prestige. The elimination of thirty Italian divisions in the Balkans cut heavily into German reserves by forcing the Wehrmacht to police that area.

With the Italian fleet out of the war and the Mediterranean virtually an Anglo-American lake, the Allies could release heavy naval units for service elsewhere. The prospects for a successful cross Channel invasion were enhanced: men, materiel, ships, and planes could be spared for use out of the United Kingdom, and a pincer movement against the German armies in France could be planned. In the face of these threats the Germans would have to disperse further their air and ground forces.

For the air forces there were various advantages. From airfields near the Adriatic coast, heavy bombers could hit important targets in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and southern and eastern Germany. Ploesti's oil, the Danube supply route, and Wiener Neustadt's industries were within range. Allied air power from Italy could cooperate with the armies of the U.S.S.R. as they moved into Rumania and Bulgaria. Air bases on Sardinia and Corsica would allow NAAF to attack every part of northern Italy and to threaten, with fighter escorted mediums, the German-held littoral from Rome to Perpignan in France, and would assure air cover for any future amphibious operations between Rome and Marseille. NAAF's planes, flying from mainland and island airfields, could strongly aid the Allied ground armies as they continued their drive up the peninsula from the Volturno-Trigno line. It was the task of the air forces now to exploit those advantages

During the month which followed the occupation of Naples on 1 October, NAAF's operations were on a smaller scale than they had been in September. For one thing, the weather was bad. The inclement days in October actually proved to be hardly more than a mild introduction to the miserable winter which lay ahead, but there were enough bad days to interfere seriously with planned operations, both ground and air.

There were other interferences. During September, NAAF's aircrews and planes had operated under a scale of effort so intense that now the demands of weary men and aircraft for a reduction in effort could not be ignored; too, there were fewer crews

available, for many combat personnel had completed the required number of missions and had been withdrawn.

Actually, the tactical situation was such that it was not necessary for the Allied air arm to continue to put forth its maximum effort. The battle lines were beginning to stabilize so that the need for tactical cooperation with the ground troops was less constant than it had been earlier, while the steady decline in the enemy's air effort reduced the demands on NAAF's offensive and defensive fighters. By the end of September 1943 the Luftwaffe was in no position to interfere seriously with Allied operations, whatever their character. Its bomber units had been forced back to bases in the Po Valley. Most of its fighters had been withdrawn only as far as the area between Rome and Pistoia, but units in need of refitting—and there were many—had been sent to northern Italy, entirely out of range of the battle zone. Noticeable deficits on the peninsula of airplane tires, engines, and fuel and airfield ground equipment bore testimony to the effectiveness of Allied bombing. The GAF was suffering from a shortage of crews, and many of the crews which it did have were of low quality.

Under these conditions it was not surprising that the activities of the Luftwaffe during October were limited and spotty. Defensively, it offered only occasional opposition to NAAF's bombers until after the middle of the month; then, being better established at its new bases, it was able to attack about one-half of all Allied missions, although on a small scale and without aggressiveness. However, the enemy partly offset his weak aerial defenses by an increased use of flak, so that NAAF's units reported heavier damage from flak than at any time in the past, one bombardment group, the 340th, having ten of twelve planes holed by AA fire on a mission against Venafro.

In offensive operations, the GAF's record was similarly poor. In the largest effort since the first week of AVALANCHE, its fighters and fighter-bombers on 15 and again on 16 October put in approximately seventy-five sorties against bridges and other Allied communications targets along the Volturno. But the effort quickly declined after NATAF shot down eleven of the enemy without loss to itself. Although in long-range attacks the GAF made a better showing, it accomplished little. For the first time since August its bombers staged a major raid on an Allied convoy—near Oran. This was followed by an attack on shipping near Cap Tenes, the bombers coming from the Istres-Montpellier complex in southern France. The two raids cost the Allies one ship sunk, although three others were damaged by aerial torpedoes. On the night of 21 October the enemy staged his greatest offensive effort in more than two months by laying on three separate attacks. Some twenty Ju-88's bombed the harbors at Naples and near-by Bagnoli; destroying a gun position, military personnel were killed and 100 were wounded. Twenty-five Do-217's and He-111's attacked a convoy off Algiers, the raiders coming in at an unusually low altitude with torpedoes and radio controlled bombs to damage two ships. Night fighters and AA knocked down six of the enemy. The third raid of the night was against bridges along the Volturno. The enemy's burst of activity ended on the 23rd with a night raid on Naples; the twenty Ju-88's, which attacked, used strips of tinfoil (commonly known as Window or Chaff) in order to upset the Allies' radar control and succeeded in setting one vessel on fire.

With the GAF reduced to such an innocuous state, NAAF was able to devote most of its attention during October to the needs

of the Fifth and Eighth Armies as they continued to move up the peninsula. Following the capture of Naples the Fifth had quickly reached the Volturno River, and by the 15th had crossed to the north bank; a week later the Eighth was at the lower reaches of the Trigno above Termoli. By the end of the month the battle line ran roughly from Mondragone, on the Gulf of Gaeta, to above Teano, Piedimonte, and Boiano, and thence northeast along the Trigno. In the latter half of October the advance had been slow in the face of stubborn German resistance and against the obstacles imposed by mountainous terrain, rivers, poor roads, blown bridges, and unfavorable weather.

Both NATAF and NASAF had aided the Fifth Army in its drive to the Volturno, Tactical by close support and Strategic by continuing its program of creating road blocks along and above the Volturno.

Mediums and fighter-bombers attacked enemy supply lines along the Volturno and at a secondary defense line which ran from Formia to Isernia. Three main highways ran through this second line and into the battle area: the coast road through Terracina and Formia, the center road through Arce and Mignano, and the inland road through Isernia. Strategic hit each of these towns and a bridge at Grazzanise and one near Capua. The attacks stopped all traffic on the coast road, slowed up traffic on the other two, and so jammed military transport that units of Tactical were able to claim the destruction of more than 400 vehicles. Going farther afield, B-17's and Wellingtons dropped 9912 tons on the yards at Pisa, Bologna, Civitavecchia, and Mestre, rendering all of them inoperative. The attacks brought out such an unusually strong GAF fighter reaction that, on the night of 5 October, Wellingtons dropped eighty-two tons on Grosseto airdrome, destroying eleven aircraft.

Photo reconnaissance having revealed that the GAF had increased its fighter and bomber strength in Greece and on Crete and the Dodecanese Islands to around 350 planes, Grecian airfields during the first week of October became targets of high priority. The enemy's buildup posed a triple threat to the Allies: to the port of Bari and the airfields around Foggia; to Allied holdings in the Aegean and to Allied shipping in the narrow waters between Crete and the Cyrenaican bulge. Between 4 and 8 October the Twelfth Air Force went for the larger fields, as B-24's, B-25's, and P-38's dropped thousands of frags and several hundred tons of GP bombs on Grecian airfields. A number of enemy planes were destroyed, and hangars, runways, and installations were well covered. Concurrently, two groups of B-24's, one of P-38's, and a squadron of B-25's were sent on detached service to the Bengasi and Gambut areas to strike at the enemy's Aegean shipping. The P-38's operated for only four days but claimed seventeen planes shot down.

The outstanding mission of the month was flown on 1 October against Wiener Neustadt. It was the third operation from the Mediterranean (the first two were the Ploesti attack of 1 August and the Wiener Neustadt mission of 13 August) undertaken in behalf of the Combined Bomber Offensive. The mission plan called for four groups of 12th Bomber Command's B-17's to attack fighter aircraft plants at Augsburg and five groups of B-24's, which included the three on loan from the Eighth, to attack plants at Wiener Neustadt. Unfortunately, the B-17's failed to locate Augsburg because of a solid overcast, but many of them bombed alternate targets at Gundelfingen, Germany and Bologna and Prato, Italy. A few others attacked transports and barges between Corsica and

Elba. The B-24's, having found Wiener Neustadt, dropped 187 tons of bombs in the target area to damage assembly shops, storage areas, a hangar, and near-by rail lines. Both the B-24's and the B-17's ran into strong fighter opposition. The Fortresses were attacked over the Leghorn-Pontedera area by fifty to sixty planes, but with the help of P-38's eight enemy planes were destroyed and five probably destroyed for the loss of three B-17's. The Liberators met heavy flak and around sixty fighters, some with 37-mm. cannon in their wings and others which lobbed rocket-type shells into the bomber formation with considerable accuracy. Fourteen of the bombers were shot down and fifty-two damaged. Enemy losses were undetermined, but apparently did not equal the Liberator losses.

After this mission the B-24's which had been borrowed from the Eighth Air Force were returned to England. During the first week of October, Tactical flew around 2,600 sorties for the Fifth and Eighth Armies. On the 1st and 2nd, 160 U.S. P-40's paved the way for an Eighth Army landing at Termoli on the Adriatic by bombing and strafing troops and vehicles on roads north and west of the town. On the day of the landing on 3 October and the day after, despite bad weather, fighter-bombers with some help from B-25's inflicted severe punishment on enemy traffic. Fighters and fighter-bombers then went all-out to help the Eighth hold the bridgehead against a series of hard German counterattacks. On the two most critical days, the 5th and 6th, Spitfires and P-40's of the RAF and the U.S. 57th and 78th Fighter Groups flew approximately 950 sorties over the battle area. They broke up the main enemy concentration, struck hard against road movement, especially around Isernia, flew direct-support missions over the battle line, and protected the ground troops against a few Luftwaffe raids. Without their efforts it is doubtful that the bridgehead could have been saved. After the crisis had passed, P-40's bombed the German escape route through Palata.

NATAF's operations over the Fifth Army were more routine. Fighters and fighter-bombers bombed and strafed bridges, towns, junctions, enemy positions, and transport, while fighters flew defensive patrols over the ground troops and the Naples and Salerno areas.

Ordinary activities were curtailed for four days after the 8th as heavy rains held up the advances of both Allied armies and sharply limited air operations. Tactical's fighters and fighter-bombers got in a few licks in the eastern battle area, while small groups of B-25s, Baltimores, and A-20's attacked roads, troop concentrations, and gun positions from Capua in the west to Vasto in the east. Strategic managed to make two attacks on Italian roads, Wellingtons hitting Formia and Terracina on the west coast, and to continue its operations against airfields in Greece and the Aegean. The GAF made so few appearances over Italy that not more than one Allied mission out of six saw enemy fighters.

On the night of 12 /13 October the Fifth Army attacked along its entire front in an effort to cross the Volturno. The crossing would be accomplished by the 15th with but little aid from NAAF's planes, which were almost entirely grounded by the weather. The 13th was NAAF's best day, and then only 250 sorties were flown, half of them by P-40's. For each of the other two days, Tactical's fighters and fighter-bombers flew scarcely more than 100 sorties. Strategic's bombers made a few attacks against communications behind the German lines and against targets in

the battle zone. The heaviest attack was against Terni, where thirty-four B-17's dropped 102 tons and met the first opposition in almost a week; thirty to forty enemy fighters attacked, losing two planes while shooting down one Fortress. Conditions were no more favorable in the Eighth Army sector. Strategic flew two small missions against the Ancona-Pescara-Foggia line of communication, the enemy's only primary line of supplies on the east coast, and Tactical operated on a limited scale against transportation. B-25's were able to fly two very successful missions against Tirana and Argos airdromes in the Aegean.

For the rest of October the weather continued to limit NAAF's operations. On the 15th and 16th while the Fifth Army was consolidating its Volturno bridgeheads and beginning its effort to push Kesselring back, fighters and fighter-bombers of Tactical's 27th and 86th Fighter-Bomber Groups and 33rd Fighter Group put in around 150 sorties against targets along the highways leading from Rome to the Volturno, and mediums flew 36 sorties, light bombers 96, and nightflying Bostons 16 in attacks on rail and road junctions between Rome and the bomb line. For the next four days, TAF continued to batter roads, rail lines, and towns immediately north of the Fifth Army, the targets being on or close to three highways which converged a few miles above Capua. On the 21st and 22nd, with better weather, Tactical directed a heavy effort against the Cassino area. Between the 7th and 23rd it also struck farther up the peninsula, hitting airdromes at Tarquinia, Viterbo, and Lake Bracciano and destroying some thirty enemy planes on the ground. The GAF was offering so little opposition that Tactical's bombers operating over the battle front now flew without fighter escort.

On the Eighth Army front, from the 15th through the 22nd, air force operations were largely against the coast road in an effort to choke off Kesselring's flow of supplies into the easternmost part of the battle zone. P-40's also operated over the Adriatic, trying to interrupt enemy shipping to Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia. On the 16th, P-38's of the 82nd Fighter Group dive-bombed merchant vessels in the Levkas Channel.

For the first time the Americans were escorted by Italian pilots, flying Macchi 205's. During the last week of October the weather relented enough to permit Tactical to fly almost its normal routine of defensive patrols and reconnaissance missions; of attacks on strongpoints, bridges, transport, stores, dumps, gun positions, troops, roads, rail lines and locomotives, radio and weather stations, and airdromes; of escort and Rhubarbs.

On some days the weather sharply reduced the number of sorties, but there was never a day when TAF's planes failed to record at least a few blows against the enemy. And at all times they were so completely masters of the air over the battle areas that one German general, noting that "they pick out each individual vehicle" in strafing attacks, described their superiority as "terrible." NASAF during the latter half of October operated chiefly beyond a line running approximately from Rome northeast to the Adriatic. The command's operations were divided between lines of communication—mostly rail lines—in central Italy, communications and airdromes in Greece and the Balkans, and airfields used by the German fighter force, chiefly in the Rome area, but the emphasis was on communications in Italy, principally a group of bridges in the area between Grosseto and Ancona.

The emphasis on bridges marked a change from previous tactics in which NAAF had concentrated on key marshaling yards. Marshaling yards no longer appeared to be the best type of target

for the interdiction of rail traffic.

With Italy's surrender, Italian pilots had flown about 225 of their planes to Sicily; they had immediately started training to fly with NAAF but had been held out of combat pending an Italian declaration of war on Germany which came on 13 October and a favorable decision by AFHQ on their employment. Early in October, AFHQ decided to use five squadrons of fighters, one each of bombers and torpedo bombers, two of seaplanes, and half a squadron of reconnaissance aircraft, mainly in support of the Italian armed forces and the Balkan patriots, as couriers and for air-sea rescue. The IAF planes would be serviced by IAF specialists, many of whom were from the old Regia Aeronautica. The technicians proved especially valuable to the Allied air forces, with which the IAF continued to operate until the end of the war.

Accordingly, to reduce drastically the flow of reinforcements and supplies it would be necessary for NAAF to cut a large number of rail lines and cut them quickly and as nearly simultaneously as possible hence the decision to concentrate on knocking out bridges and sections of track so located that repairs would be difficult and time consuming. Heretofore, it should be noted, the critical communications targets had been located in southern Italy, where to keep out of operation a relatively few marshaling yards had presented no such problem as did the numerous yards of central and northern Italy. Conversely, the railroads above a line from Rome to Pescara as they filed through mountain passes or along a narrow strip of coast offered many vulnerable targets—bridges, tunnels, and trackage along the precipitous incline of a hill or mountain.

Fortunately, the targets were within reach. NAAF's heavies still were in Tunisia but within comfortable range. The three groups of B-26's (17th, 319th, 320th) operated from bases near Tunis but were preparing to move to Sardinia. The B-25's were scattered: the 310th Group and part of the 321st were in North Africa, the remainder of the 321st en route to Grottaglie on the Heel; from Sicily the 340th already was en route to Grottaglie and the 12th would move to Foggia Main during the first week of November. The 47th Group's A-20's had been at Grottaglie since the end of September and currently were moving to the Foggia complex. The American units could also count on the assistance of the four wings of RAF Wellingtons, now based at Kairouan in Tunisia.

Ample escort fighters were available. 12th Bomber Command's three groups of P-38's (1st, 14th, and 82nd) and one of P-40's (325th) were on the mainland. Four of XII Air Support Command's five groups of fighters, the 31st (Spits) and 33rd (P-40's) in western Italy and the 57th and 78th (P-40's) in the east, had been on the mainland since early in September, while the other—324th (P-40's)—was to move in before the end of October. Also available were the RAF Spitfires and P-40's of Desert Air Force in eastern Italy. The fighters of 12th ASC and DAF on the east coast could fly escort beyond their sector when necessary, all of them being within range of the bombers' objectives. The construction of new airfields was proceeding slowly, but the fields in the Naples and Foggia complexes and around Lecce and Grottaglie, although crowded, provided accommodations for all planes which currently could not operate except from bases on the mainland. NAAF's decision to concentrate on bridges was in line with current thinking in Washington. General Marshall cabled Eisenhower on 29 October suggesting that an increase of operations by medium, light, and fighter-bombers would take care

of the needs of the Fifth and Eighth Armies, leaving the heavies free to attack the nine rail lines entering the Po Valley; specifically, he suggested that the simultaneous destruction of several adjacent bridges on each line would stop traffic for a long time. Brig. Gen. L. S. Kuter, AC/AS, Plans, had suggested in a memorandum for Marshall prepared on 27 October that the destruction of eleven bridges on nine major rail lines in northern Italy and five bridges on a line approximately between Pisa-Ancona might "starve" the Germans into withdrawing into the Po Valley.

When Marshall's message arrived in the theater, NAAF's program of bridge-smashing already had been in operation for ten days. Strategic started the assault on the 19th, and for five days bridges on the central Italian rail system took a hard beating. The heavies and mediums which staged the blitz flew around 650 sorties and dropped 1,350 tons of bombs. Damage was widespread, almost all rail traffic north of the Rome area being interdicted pending extensive repairs. The enemy was forced to resort to an increased use of motor transport; and coastal shipping—which in turn were attacked by light and fighter-bombers.

Effective maintenance of the road blocks which had been imposed depended, however, upon continuing steadily and relentlessly the assault on the lines. After the 23rd this became increasingly difficult. The weather was variable but generally so bad that it became the practice to give the heavy bombers as many as four alternative targets. It grounded all of Strategic's bombers on the 27th and 28th, limited them to one mission on the 26th and again on the 28th, and on other days forced a number of planes to return without having bombed the primary target. On the four days of favorable weather which fell before the end of the month, Strategic continued to attack its targets of the preceding week. Six missions scored hits on three out of five bridges attacked between Grosseto and Ancona. Against a new set of targets farther north—between Pistoia and the French border—234 effective sorties unloaded 575 tons against Pistoia and towns along the Ligurian coast: Genoa, Imperia, Porto Maurizio, and Varage. The attack on Genoa was unusually heavy, 133 B-17's and 20 B-24's dropping 405 tons which severely damaged tracks, rolling stock, the Ansaldo steel works, the San Giorgio instrument factory, and electric and ordnance plants. Thus the interdiction program was extended to include the most direct line from Rome to northwest Italy and southern France. A third set of targets consisted of Civitavecchia and Anzio. The former took seven direct hits on rail lines and warehouses; the latter had all of the buildings on its north dock destroyed. An incidental advantage resulting from the bombings around Genoa and Imperia was the creation in the minds of the Germans of a fear that the Allies would launch an amphibious operation against the area between La Spezia and Imperia, a fear which would be present until the last days of the Italian campaign.

It also proved possible for Strategic to undertake damaging attacks on German fighter bases in the neighborhood of Rome. Marcigliana and Casale each were attacked twice and Cerveteri, Furbara, Perugia, and Guidonia once each. B-17's, B-25's, and Wellingtons flew more than 250 sorties, dropping 400 tons of bombs. Some forty aircraft were destroyed on the ground, the fields were well postholed, and a number of installations were smashed or burned. Supplementary raids were conducted by U.S. A-20's and A-36's of NATAF, which attacked Tarquinia airdrome, airfields at Cassino and Aquila, and other fields or grounds near Civita Castellana, Cerveteri, Viterbo, Acquapendente, Tarquinia, and

Sutri. On 24 October one more mission was flown against Wiener Neustadt. A total of 111 B-17's and B-24's took off, but the target was hidden by 10/10 clouds so that only twenty-three Liberators of the 98th Bombardment Group bombed the objective and they did so by dead reckoning. Sixteen planes of the 301st went seven miles beyond Wiener Neustadt and hit Ebenfurth with excellent results. The weather kept the Luftwaffe grounded and there were no encounters. Strategic also flew a long-distance mission against the Antheor viaduct near Cannes in southern France on 3 October, thirty-eight B-17's placing a heavy concentration on the target and its approaches and scoring direct hits on tracks and near-by roads.

And so by the end of October, NAAF's Strategic and Tactical Air Forces had established a pattern of operations that would endure with but little change almost to the following spring. Coastal, too, had its regular and routine duties, except that it had taken over from 12th ASC the additional job of protecting harbors and other installations along the west coast of Italy. Photographic Reconnaissance flew its daily missions, seeking out new targets and recording the damage done to old ones.

Troop Carrier continued to bring in supplies and personnel and to take out wounded. During the month, NAAF's planes flew approximately 27,000 sorties and dropped more than 10,000 tons of bombs. The USAAF's share was between 14,000 and 15,000 sorties and 8,000 tons.

On the ground, some 100 were claimed destroyed, 40 probably destroyed, and 80 damaged. The brunt of operations was borne by Strategic and Tactical, but Coastal also put in a busy month, its planes flying 5,222 sorties, shooting down 22 enemy planes, and escorting ships an over-all distance of 1,400,000 miles with the loss of only 3 vessels.

Operations settled down to the prosaic but vital jobs which kept the air elements in shape to fly. The beginning of experimental supply drops to the patriot forces in France by modified B-24's of the 5th Bombardment Wing's special flight section was something new, but these operations would be on a small scale for many months.

Since the summer of 1942 a major consideration in the development of the Mediterranean strategy had been the capture of airfields from which Allied air forces could reach profitable targets in northern Italy, Germany, Austria, and the Balkans. And now that southern Italy had been conquered, one of NAAF's most important and urgent jobs was to repair and lengthen old fields and construct new ones for use by the units of Strategic, which continued to operate from bases in Tunisia. The responsibility devolved largely upon American aviation engineers, who, with assistance from British airdrome construction groups, had prepared before the end of October enough fields on the mainland to take care of the immediate needs of Tactical's planes.

Various U.S. aviation engineer units in the theater were promptly assigned to a new command. On 4 November, Brig. Gen. Donald A. Davison became commanding general. The new command held responsibility for all airfield construction except the fields for Desert Air Force in eastern Italy, which were to be handled by the British. Near the end of October the engineers began the construction of heavy bomber fields around

Foggia, in the Heel, and in the Cerignola area and medium bomber fields in Sardinia and Corsica. In spite of great difficulties imposed by rain and mud, insufficient equipment and personnel, and poor transportation, the engineers during November and December completed or were in process of completing construction on more than forty-five airfields. The work ranged from repairs and drainage to building paved or steel-plank runways as much as 6,000 feet in length.

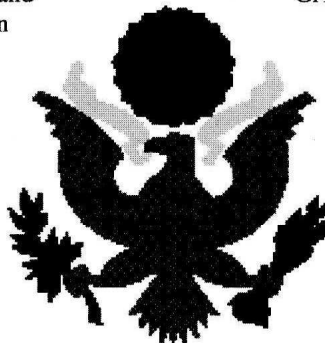
A second major activity of the 12th AF engineers AFEC was the construction of pipe lines for aviation gasoline. In October, an Engineer Petroleum Distribution Company began laying lines and setting up pumping stations in the Foggia area, and in December a second company started to lay pipe in the Heel. By 25, November the first line had been completed and was in operation; it ran from Manfredonia to Foggia and could move 160,000 gallons of 100 octane gasoline each week. By the time NAAF's heavy bombers were ready in December to move to their new fields in eastern Italy the problem of keeping them supplied with gasoline had been solved. Use of the pipe lines reduced the tonnage to be off-loaded at ports and relieved road and rail transportation of a heavy burden. A small system was established at Naples also.

Maintenance of the lines, and more particularly the handling of the gasoline at the fields, was the responsibility of 12th Air Force Service Command. Both the engineers and service command were able to supplement their limited personnel by employing along the lines and at the airfields small numbers of French aviation engineers on Corsica and by using large numbers of Italian prisoners of war in Italy.

The development of air bases in Italy not only created problems of airfield construction and of moving gasoline but also of handling supplies for the air forces. An Adriatic Depot was established at Bari, a depot that operated under the control of 12th Air Force service command but was staffed largely by ground forces service personnel. It got under way late in October and by the end of the year was supplying American air units with common items from numerous offices, warehouses, and dumps in and around Bari. Few operations in the Mediterranean were more unique or more successful than the depot, in which the American air forces ran a ground force activity in a British-controlled area.

Ploesti would be much easier to attack; half of the GAF's fighters currently facing the United Kingdom would have to be moved to the southern German front; and bombers flying from Italy would enjoy the shield of the Alps against the German radio warning system. The Americans expressed agreement with these thoughts, though they believed that the air offensive could be as effectively prosecuted from fields immediately above Rome as from bases north of the Po River, which the British had considered desirable.

Within a month after QUADRANT both Eisenhower and Spaatz had endorsed Arnold's plan to use Italian fields as bases from which to bomb German-held Europe. In a message to Marshall, Eisenhower noted a number of the advantages which had been mentioned by Portal and argued that a more intensive air effort against Germany could be maintained with proportionately smaller losses if a substantial part of the heavy bomber effort were applied during the winter from Italian bases. He pointed out, however, that new



fields must be built, runways extended, and additional steel mat shipped in.

By October plans were reaching their final form. On 9 October, Arnold submitted to the JCS, and subsequently to the CCS, a plan for splitting the Twelfth Air Force into two air forces, one tactical and, one strategic. In support of the plan, he argued that by utilizing Italian air bases important targets beyond the range of bombers from the United Kingdom could be destroyed, enemy air and ground defenses dispersed, shuttle bombing made possible, and the offensive need not be held up by adverse weather in one theater. He recommended that the Twelfth become the tactical force and that a new strategic air force be established as the Fifteenth Air Force. Both forces would operate under the direction of the theater commander, but the Fifteenth from time to time would be given directives by the CCS governing its employment.

The six groups of heavy bombers presently assigned to the Twelfth would serve as a nucleus for the Fifteenth, and fifteen additional groups would be diverted from current allocations to the Eighth. Strenuous objections to the proposal came from General Eaker in England. Alarmed at the prospect of losing bombers previously earmarked for the Eighth Air Force, he argued that the proposal, in violating the principle of concentration of force, would jeopardize POINTBLANK and so OVERLORD itself. He doubted that the necessary fields could be provided in Italy and that the problem of providing facilities for heavy maintenance could be overcome. He questioned too that the weather of Italy would prove generally more favorable for bombing operations. General Doolittle, on the other hand, endorsed the proposal. Doolittle maintained that for purposes of high-level bombardment of targets in southern and eastern Germany and the Balkans during the winter months the prospect favored Foggia as a base "from two to one to three to one" over bases in the British Isles. He felt that there would be little advantage in one area over the other during the summer, but he estimated that from 1 November to 1 May the number of days on which bombers might be expected to operate was fifty-five for those in Italy against thirty-one for those based in the United Kingdom. The general supported his argument by noting that winter storm tracks were more frequent and more severe in England than in eastern Italy; that Foggia was better protected from the weather than were the East Anglian bases; that icing below 10,000 feet was worse over western Europe because planes had to pass through cold fronts, whereas from Foggia they generally could fly between fronts; and that in the Balkans some of the best weather was experienced during the winter months.

The Fifteenth Air Force, was to be created from the 12th

Bomber Command, and when necessary could be used in support of ground operations, but its primary mission would be strategic bombing. On 22 October the question came before the Combined Chiefs of Staff, who exercised an ultimate control over the CBO.

Agreement there was reached on the establishment of the

force with its proposed build-up, but with a proviso that if "logistical potentialities in Italy developed more slowly than was anticipated, the bomber groups for which there were no accommodations would be sent to the United Kingdom.

On that same day, 22 October, a cable to Eisenhower informed him that effective 1 November the Fifteenth Air Force (Strategic) would be established under his command. The provisions contained in the SOS proposed directive of 16 October were made more specific: the new air force would consist initially of six heavy bomber groups and two long range fighter



groups presently assigned to 12th Bomber Command; by 31 March 1944 it would be built up to twenty-one bomber groups, seven fighter groups, and one reconnaissance group. These forces would be employed primarily against CBO targets as directed by the CCS, but the original units might be used, even chiefly, against objectives other than those called for by POINTBLANK until such time as air bases above Rome had been secured. In the event of a strategic or tactical emergency the theater commander in chief was authorized to use any part of the Fifteenth Air Force for purposes other than the primary objective. Coordination of operations with the Eighth, for the time being at least, would depend upon liaison.

The decision did not pass without further objections from the ETO. Portal, who earlier had favored the plan, expressed strong opposition, as did Eaker and Harris. They were afraid that the build-up of the Fifteenth would cripple the CBO and jeopardize OVERLORD, and they did not believe that Italy either offered a better base for operations than did the United Kingdom or would be able to handle fifteen additional groups of heavies. But, again, there was renewed approval from the Mediterranean, Spaatz and Doolittle—like Arnold—believing that the Combined Bomber Offensive should be conducted from both theaters, and at this point the British chiefs, apparently convinced that the Fifteenth would be established "whether or no," announced that they "welcomed" the idea. The Prime Minister also approved, provided the build-up of the new air force did not interfere with the battle for Rome and the airfields of central Italy. Arnold in a reply indicated that he had refused to reopen the question of basing the additional groups of heavies in the Mediterranean.

On 1 November, Eisenhower announced the activation of the 15th Air Force force with Doolittle in command.

Seven Killed In Bomber Crash



The B-24 memorial at the time of dedication near Walnut, NE

**Submitted by
Leland Bradley-824 Sq.**

On March 8, 1944, a B-24 Liberator bomber on a training mission from the Army Airfield at Harvard, Nebraska crashed with all seven of its crew members killed.

As part of a joint Memorial Day and World War II anniversary observance, the crew and their last flight was commemorated with a sculpture that was erected five miles south of Walnut, Nebraska.

The ceremony at the crash memorial was held the morning of May 30, 1994 in Walnut. The crash memorial site is at the intersection of Pottawattamie County M47 and G30.

The ill-fated bomber was among three flying in formation. The wing of one plane clipped the tail structure of the lead aircraft. Without its tail, the plane was robbed of maneuverability and it plummeted into the rolling snow covered farmland south of Walnut. The planes were based at the airfield in Harvard, Nebraska, and may have come from the 484th Bomb Group then in the process of moving to a new station in Italy.

There was an attempt to locate relatives of the crew members to make them aware of the memorial ceremony here. Letters were sent to newspapers in the crewmen's hometowns and nearby communities. However, after some initial leads, no response from relatives had been received.

The B-24 memorial is a 1-to-9 scale replica of a B-24 sitting atop a former windmill tower. Affixed to the tower is a board with a list of the crewmen aboard the plane when it went down.

The fuselage of the replica bomber was hewn from a fallen maple tree. Harley Ploen, the artist who sculptured the

Harvard Nebraska based B-24 fell in Mid Air Collision, March 8, 1944

replica said, "the plane was difficult to carve because the B-24 fuselage is oblong, rather than cylindrical."

It is not the first aeronautical rendering created by Ploen, whose name is fittingly pronounced "plane. In 1989, Ploen sculpted a B-29 Superfortress to honor the aircraft he serviced as a ground crew member with a bomber group in the Pacific theater during World War II.

Since then, he has constructed a P-38 Lightning, a fighter used extensively in the Pacific, and a Sopwith Camel, a World War I fighter. Ploen was asked to construct the B-24 "just because of the other planes I have around here," he said.

Those who did the asking were local Boy Scouts and Scout Leaders. "I just saw what he did," said Emil Kinser, an assistant Scout Leader in Walnut, "and after I heard the story about the bomber, I thought, 'boy that would be neat if Harley could build a bomber.'"

Emil Kinser has harbored the idea for a monument at the crash site for a long time, according to Jim Hansen, Walnut Scout Leader. Kinser lives near the area. Kinser brought the idea to a scout meeting, and I jumped on it," Hansen said. "I really feel good about this project."

Kinser said he first heard about the crash when he moved to the area 14 years ago. His interest was piqued when he found a machine gun shell while he was raking his yard. He looked up old newspaper clippings about the crash, and felt the dead crewman deserved a memorial.

Kinser said there seems to be a tendency for servicemen and service women who died during training exercises to be thought of with less honor than those who die in combat, even though they all paid the ultimate price for their country.

Ploen added, "the project has been good for the scouts. in addition to the local history lesson, it gave some of the youths a chance to interact with their government."

A group of scouts met with the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors seeking support for the project and asking the county to build a road turn-off near the site. County officials enthusiastically granted both, according to Hansen..

Ploen said he felt a connection with the dead crewman because of their mutual service in World War II. He felt pride that he was able to build a proper tribute to them. It is a tribute designed to be long lasting

"It's built to withstand the weather," Ploen said of his sculpture, "It's not a frivolous thing. Unlike the aircraft it honors, this B-24 with its propellers driven by the breeze, will remain aloft carrying the memories of the seven servicemen." If it causes anyone to stop and think for a second, then it did what it was supposed to do," said Kinser.

The victims were: Capt Robert H Mueller-26, Pittsburgh, PA, top ranking instructor at the Nebraska air base; 2/Lt Lee R Steward-24, of Sunray, TX; 2/Lt John P. Maguire-28, New York City; 2/Lt Leonard F Mulligan-23, Teaneck, NJ; Sgt William L Hicks-26, High Point, NC; Sgt. James H. Bulha-20, Newport, RI; and Cpl William L Johnson-26, El Dorado, AR.

The Only Enlisted Man To Become An Ace

This story comes from the 99th Bomb Group. The 99th was one of the B-17's groups assigned to the 15th Air Force. The actions described in this narrative did take place, but the verifying of claims of aircraft shot down in 1943 were not as strict as put in place later to reduce the number of false claims. At the time of this incident the 99th was assigned to the 12th Air force, based in North Africa, and the mission was to Sicily to bomb a large enemy airfield. Needless to say the raid stirred up a hornet's nest of Me-109s and FW 190s.

All of the B-17 groups were assigned to the 5th Bombardment Wing, and were identified by a "Y" painted high on the verticle fin. The 99th can be identified by a diamond surround of the "Y".



Ben Warmer was nervous. Two generals were there to honor him. His squadron and considerable headquarters brass were standing in formation in his honor. They were present to decorate him for shooting down seven Nazi fighter planes on one mission. Moreover, General Spaatz had earlier conferred on Big Ben Warmer the title of "Ace"—making him the only enlisted man ace to come out of World War II!

For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy .

" The captain read the citation to the assembled formation. To Ben Warmer it seemed like yesterday.

On July 5, 1943, he had rolled out of his sack in the tent area about a mile from the airstrip. It was 0300 hours and the roar of cold engines being turned over by the ground crews shattered the silence. Ben's crew was scheduled to fly a mission later that day. At the time he awoke, he had no idea where his squadron would drop its bombs, other than that it would be somewhere in Sicily.

For days, this Mediterranean island just south of Italy had been undergoing a pounding from the air and from the sea in a prelude to invasion by the U.S. Army. Sometimes the missions to Sicily were hazardous; sometimes they were milk runs.

At the pre-flight briefing, the officers and enlisted men mingled and sat together, each crew sitting in its own tight little knot. The group's commanding officer, Colonel Fay. R. Upthegrove, strode onto the jerry-built stage, but nobody shouted at the men to rise to attention. The 99th was not a chicken outfit. The briefing was routine, but the announcement of the target caused a stir: Gerbini!

Gerbini was a Sicilian hornet's nest—headquarters of Luftwaffe Air Division III, one of the top Nazi fighter commands in all of Europe. The Gerbini complex of fighter airstrips was filled with sleek Me- 109s and -110s that guarded the approaches to Italy. Its planes had always been effective against Allied marauders. Gerbini had to be knocked out; the 99th was given the mission.

It was still cold and dark when the 99th officers completed their briefing and were driven to their aircraft. Within hours the hardstands on the air base would be cruelly hot, but now the men

shivered in the sub-freezing temperatures.

Their electrically heated flying suits would remain unplugged until the engines were turning over and could provide the necessary power to heat the suits.

Ben Warmer checked his side of the B-17 from the outside. His field of fire was clear. He hunched down beneath the low-slung belly of the Flying Fortress, reached for the handles on each side of the hatch and pulled himself up into the plane. Usually there were jokes when Warmer pulled himself aboard. Today there were none. The men knew that Gerbini was going to be a tough run.

Each gunner methodically checked his position and his gun or his gun turret. At his right waist position, Warmer switched on the small overhead light and went through his check list, mentally checking off the items that could spell the difference between life and death for him, the crew and the bomber: oxygen mask; radio headphones; the electric leads of his flying suit. He looked like a giant grizzly and moved slowly in the confining flight clothing. But without the heavy and uncomfortable flying suits men could not live in the rarified atmosphere on high altitude bombing runs, where the temperature was 72° below zero and lack of oxygen could cause a blackout in seconds. On more than one occasion a careless gunner had removed one of his gloves and had touched the aluminum rim of the open gunport with a bare hand, only to pull it back as the searing cold turned his flesh to a white, dead chunk of ice.

Warmer checked his gun. He slammed the bolt back and forth a few times and its well oiled track and easy movement sounded satisfying as his gun swiveled easily on its mount. Then he carefully checked the ammo boxes and the neatly folded belts of cartridges that snuggled inside the wooden boxes. By the time the ground crew and gunners had checked out their end of the already gassed and bombed-up Fort, the officers were piling out of jeeps and weapons carriers. Within minutes they were aboard and the B-17 was buttoned up for the mission. The engines began to cough and then turned over.

The pilot and co-pilot each went through their long checklist while the heavily loaded bomber rumbled along the taxi line to the strip itself. It was still an hour and a half before daylight, when the green flare was fired from the control tower. The B-17s revved their engines and moved down the field. Ponderously, they lifted off the pierced steel planking that paved the landing strip set in the desert sand and were airborne. Wheels were retracted, and the planes started the long, slow climb toward the assembly point over the Mediterranean.

Sergeant Ed Worthy sat hunched on the jump seat next to his gun on the left directly across from Warmer. "I hear that the Krauts will be waiting for us on this one," he said to nobody in particular.

Ben hardly heard Worthy. His thoughts had turned to home and to the past. He was a giant of a man who had never worried about his great size until he was warned by an officer that it might keep him out of combat. At UCLA, Ben had played varsity football. After he was graduated from college in 1937, Ben was at loose ends. The world was in a turmoil, and Ben, rejecting his father's advice to become a lawyer, instead became a Secret Service agent. His father, a Superior Court judge in Los Angeles, helped Ben get his assignment: bodyguard to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau.

Five years later, America went to war. Ben enlisted in April,

1942. He had always been interested in flying, but there were no cockpits that could hold his 275 pounds. Assignment officers in what was then the U.S. Army Air Corps marveled at his physique and planned to make him a physical education instructor. But Ben Warmer wanted to fight. "Too tall," one personnel captain told him. "Too heavy," said another officer. Ben was downcast. Most of his friends were in combat units, but all he had to show for his time in the service was a Good Conduct Medal and letters of commendation telling him what a great Physical Ed instructor he was.

One day Ben wandered onto the weapons range. Fledgling gunners were receiving an introduction to the .50-caliber machine gun when one of the instructors called Ben over to heft the 65 pound weapon. "How about letting me fire it?" Ben asked. The gunnery sergeant said all right. Ben swung the gun on its mount and sighted at the target. He held the handles tightly and squeezed the trigger. The men on the firing line stood awed as Warmer scored hit after hit.

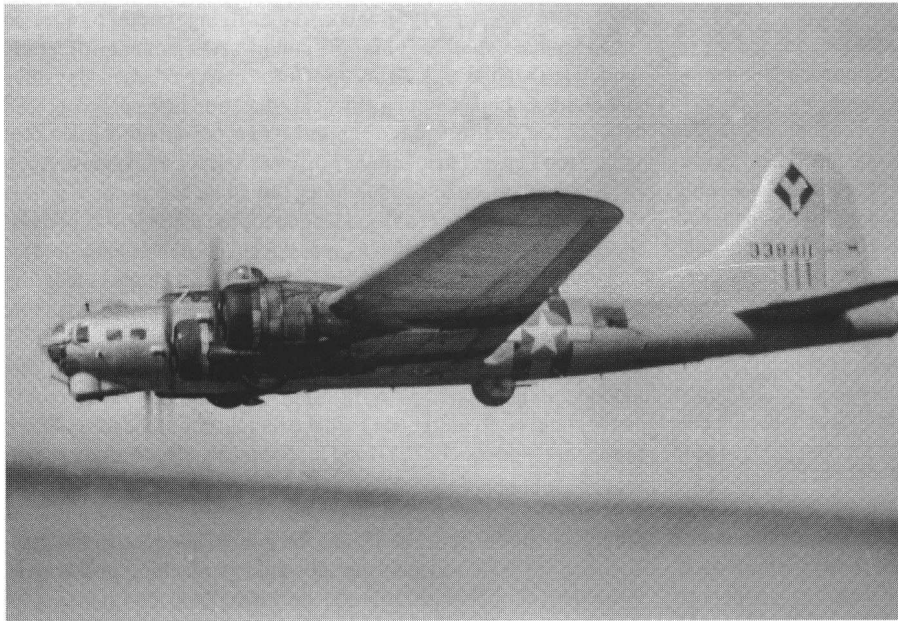
Veteran gunnery instructors knew that too often "the gun fires the man rather than the man fires the gun." However, in the massive fists of Ben Warmer, the .50- caliber machine gun was as docile as a .22 rifle. Seeing the crowd of enlisted men standing on the rifle range an officer came over to see what was up. When he saw Warmer's mastery of the machine gun, he was overwhelmed. "You're a natural as an instructor," he said.

But I want to fight," Warmer replied. Another job as an instructor, even as a gunnery instructor, would be too much to take, but he took it. He, went through gunnery school, hoping against hope that he'd be shipped out to a bomber unit rather than to a training command. It was early March, 1943, when Ben won a reprieve from a Stateside assignment. The battle for North Africa was in full swing at the time, and the Germans were rolling up victory after victory, while their Luftwaffe used its air superiority to stop U.S. bombers. More planes and crews were rushed to the war zone. Among the reinforcements was Ben Warmer.

By the time the North African campaign had ended, with the destruction of Rommel's Afrika Korps, Ben Warmer was a veteran of 12 combat missions. The 12th Air Force then turned its attention across the Mediterranean to Sicily and Italy.

Warmer remembered this first mission well— Pantelleria, a 32-square-mile island off the Italian boot. It housed an important Luftwaffe fighter base and nearly 15,000 heavily armed Axis troops. In early May, 1943, the 12th and 9th Air Forces began the task of reducing the island to rubble. For ten days and nights, B-17s, A-26s, U.S. Navy dive bombers and Royal Air Force bombers pounded the island with high explosives. But during the first four days, the island's air defense force mauled the lumbering Flying Forts. Five Me-109s cut Ben's plane out of the formation and proceeded to chop it up.

After two passes, two of the B-17's propellers were idly spinning and oily black smoke gushed from one of the shot-up engines. A third pass by the Nazi fighters severed the control cables to the rudder and it began flapping in the windstream. Enemy machine guns raked the wounded bomber fore and aft. Luckily nobody was killed. They managed to fight off the Nazi fighters and limped back to North Africa. But the plane was too badly damaged to land. "Let's bail out," the pilot snapped into the intercom mike. "Jump clear as soon as you can." Like a good captain, the pilot stayed until last. The bail-out sequence called for Warmer to jump just before the pilot. The pilot counted each member of



The 99th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force was indentified by the letter "Y" with a diamond shaped surround. The three dashes under the serial number indicated which squadron the ship was assigned to. This aircraft had painted cowl rings as well as a painted fuselage band underneath the star.

the crew whose chute he saw crack open. But he actually felt Warmer leave the ship. The huge gunner reacted on the bomber like a load of high explosives leaving the bomb bay. Only then did the pilot abandon the burning B-17 and parachute to safety.

The voice reading the citation brought Ben Warmer back to the present. "... while on a bombing mission over Sicily," the captain intoned, "his bomber was attacked by a large number of enemy aircraft."

"When wasn't there a large number of enemy aircraft?" Ben thought. The missions were all the same: the same sights, the same sounds, the same smells and the same tight feeling. Like that memorable mission over Naples. He remembered leaning against the machine gun jutting from the bomber's right waist window. The Flying Fortress had been airborne for five hours and Ben had left his bucket seat to stretch his legs.

The Naples mission had taken place on May 27, 1943—and it had been damned cold at 25,000 feet. The warning came unexpectedly: "Bandits at twelve o'clock high!" Another voice warned that others were sighted at 3 o'clock low.

"Here they come," the aircraft commander shouted. Like a swarm of bees attacking an intruder, the tiny specks in the distance grew bigger. They quickly materialized into Me-109 fighters. The Luftwaffe was up.

Tighten up the formation," ordered the 99th Bomb Group's CO, Colonel Upthegrove, using the command channel that linked the pilots of the 348th and 349th Bomb Squadrons. From the target below, flak rose into the formation of B-17s. Occasionally, the hot, jagged metal would rip through the leather flight suits of American airmen aboard the bombers, killing, wounding and maiming.

"Bandits coming in at nine o'clock high," the top turret gun-

ner of the lead bomber shouted. The B-17 shook from the rapid fire of the twin .50s in the top turret and the single machine gun in the right waist window.

"Ben, passing under at three o'clock low," the topside gunner shouted. Warmer, bundled up in leather and fleece, grabbed the handles of his machine gun and pushed the muzzle down. A plane flashed out from beneath the B-17 and rolled into his sights. He squeezed the trigger and the gun shook in its mount. The enemy fighter seemed to stall in the sky, then it faltered and nosed down, streaming smoke and flame.

Warmer scanned the skies for more enemy fighters. They were swarming all over the formation, but those which flashed across his sights were too far out of range. From his vantage point in the waist gun port, he could see the battle unfold. Thirty of the four-engine bombers had taken off from the 99th's base outside Algiers. Twenty-four were destined to return from that raid on Naples. Warmer was to see two of the bombers go down in flames. No parachutes blossomed. He cursed bitterly. He had

friends in those planes.

"Bandit coming in at six o'clock low," the tail gunner called out. "Breaking left in your direction, Ben." Warmer waited. The Messerschmitt flew right before Warmer's machine-gun muzzle. He squeezed the trigger. Tracers streaked after the climbing German plane, etching a trail of bullet holes that crept to the plexiglass cockpit shield shattering it into pieces and hitting the pilot. The Messerschmitt, out of control slid into its death dive. Warmer gleefully shouted again. Two kills in one day!

As the B-17s moved into their bomb run, the bombardiers took control from the pilots. Each plane unloaded its cargo on the harbor complex below, then it seemed to bounce 30 feet higher, relieved of its bomb burden. The formation of B-17s then turned south and headed out scurrying for North Africa and home. The German fighters chased the bombers for 100 miles, then broke off contact rather than risk running out of fuel.

Warmer felt the sweat start to drip into his eyes as he stood listening to his citation. "Although most of the attack was directed against his part of the bomber Sergeant Warmer remained by his guns and with great accuracy brought down five of the enemy aircraft."

Ben thought that nobody could write about what it really had been like up there on July 5, 1943 . . .

As they approached the target the routine checkout started for the gunners. "Pilot to crew," the aircraft commander called. "Check your suits, oxygen and guns." Warmer made another quick check, making sure that the electric heating leads of his suit were plugged in, with enough wire loose to give him freedom of movement. His oxygen tank pressure read normal and he proceeded to

load his machine gun. "starboard gun clear," Warmer reported.

"Left gun clear," Worthy followed "Ball turret gun clear," the gunner below sounded off.

Tail gun clear," drawled the Texan in the rear.

"Topside guns clear," the turret gunner above checked in.

"Nose guns clear," the forward gunner chimed in.

The pilot nodded to the co-pilot. The B-17 was ready for action.

There was no fighter escort on this one. It was too long a hop for the single-engine P-40s and P-38s. The 99th was on its own. At Luftwaffe headquarters in Gerbini, radar and sensitive microphones had spotted the B-17s. On the landing strips in the nearby valleys, gray-uniformed flight officers acknowledged the orders to scramble. In pairs and in groups of three and four, the black-crossed Me-109s and Me-110s revved up and then took off, turning south toward the approaching B-17s. Luftwaffe Division III was out to smash the 99th.

The clouds lay far below the bombers, and the pilot on Warmer's plane soon spotted the glob of brown that slowly enlarged into Sicily.

"Test fire guns!" the pilot ordered. Warmer tilted the nose of his machine gun at the pale blue water below and fired. "Starboard gun okay," he sang out. The other gunners also opened up and the sound of machine-gun fire thundered above the steady rumble of the engines.

"Now keep alert," the pilot warned. "We can expect bandits at any time." The coast of Sicily came beneath them. Someone in the flight of bombers had spotted the enemy fighters and relayed the news to his pilot who in turn broke radio silence over the command channel to warn the flight of the oncoming Germans. Warmer's pilot relayed the information to his crew. "We've got 'em at two o'clock high and nine o'clock low," he warned. A moment later he broke in with a warning that "we've now got 'em at six o'clock high.

"Any of you guys spot 'em yet?" he asked his crew. Warmer strained and squinted in the bright sunlight. "I can see 'em now at three o'clock high from starboard," he sounded off.

There was no flak yet. The enemy interceptors would first have their crack at the formation and then pull away over the target. There was no sense in being shot down by one's own flak.

"One coming in at three o'clock!" Warmer shouted and began tracking the fast-moving fighter. The top turret and belly turret gunners swung their guns starboard, toward the Me-109 coming in. If it broke above or below the B-17 in a dive or climb, they'd be ready. Ben squeezed the trigger. The Messerschmitt blew apart in the air. It was Warmer's first kill of the day.

Then the top turret guns opened up. "One coming your way, Ben!," shouted the gunner above. Warmer dropped to his knees and deflected his gun upward, waiting for the German to flash overhead. But it had gone into a steep climb instead, and when he heard the guns above continue firing he knew that the enemy fighter wasn't about to pass in his direction. "I've got it," the top turret gunner shouted. "Confirmed," the co-pilot shouted back as he looked up through the plexiglass roof and watched the Me-109 stall and flash downward straight into the ground.

A gaggle of ten Me-110s suddenly appeared off to the right. "A bunch of 'em at two o'clock high!" Ben shouted. "I see 'em," the top turret gunner answered. He swung his turret guns in the direction of the attacking flight.

One Me-109 flashed in front of Warmer's gun, too fast for him to snap off a burst. Another bore in behind it, machine guns blinking. Ben sighted down his barrel and tracked it for a moment before opening up. His tracers slammed into the engine housing and the propeller suddenly began to spin slowly. He had knocked out the engine. The enemy fighter slowed to a glide and Warmer was all set to rake it again when the cockpit hatch was pulled back and the pilot clambered out. "I got number four!" Ben hollered. He watched the German bail out.

"Ben, one coming your way," Worthy shouted from behind. Two fighters flashed overhead, one trailing smoke from Worthy's gun. Warmer stitched a bullet pattern through the German's tail section, chopping the elevator and rudder into pieces. The plane quickly nosed down.

The inside of the B-17 was littered with empty shells that rolled across the floor. Warmer took a deep breath. Another German fighter came in, and he felt the pounding of bullets. Instinctively, he pulled back and from the corner of his eye saw sunlight pouring in through the jagged holes that appeared beside him. "Close," he muttered.

Two more planes attacked and he swung the machine gun to meet the threat from 2 o'clock. The lead plane seemed to be plunging right at him, spitting fire from the leading edge of its thin wings. The tracers reached out for him and he tensed awaiting the slugs that would hit the B-17's thin aluminum skin and braces. But the tracers fell short. The German loomed in his sight. He squeezed the trigger and the fighter broke left and down, trailing oily black smoke and fire. "I've got another," Warmer called out.

Another fighter came at his gun port and he led it for a brief second before opening fire. But the pilot was gun shy. He broke off and slid out of sight.

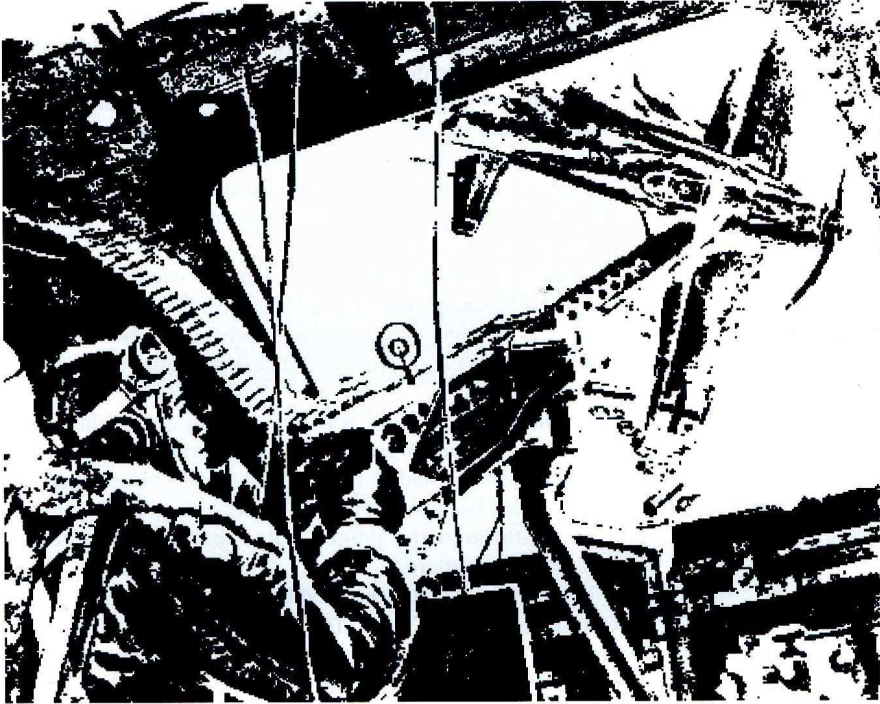
Ben's B-17 was under attack from all sides now. The voices on the intercom were blurred and confusing. "Watch that baby at nine high!" the pilot shouted. "Two bandits at two o'clock," the copilot shouted. "Watch 'em Ben." "Got 'em," Warmer replied.

Two coming in at six o'clock low," the belly gunner said. "Two coming in at six o'clock straight," the pilot shouted after spotting the attacking pair in his rear view window. "C'mon, what the hell's the matter with that tail gun!" The accordion sleeve that joined Warmer's gun to the plexiglass covering his gun port suddenly whipped away and sub zero wind from the slip stream slashed through the gap and hit Ben's face. His goggles clouded up and he ripped them off. Behind him he heard Worthy call for help. "Something wrong with my oxygen," Warmer's partner gasped. "C'mon, Ben," he coughed.

Warmer quickly played out his own oxygen line and unplugged his electric suit and intercom. He tripped and fell on the loose shell casings that rolled along the floor like marbles, but made it across to Worthy. It took him just a moment to see that enemy bullets had hit Worthy's oxygen bottle. There was a spare nearby. He ripped it off the wall and plugged in Worthy's hose. It took just a moment for the oxygen to take effect. Worthy nodded that he was okay. Wrapping a belt of bullets around his neck and shoulders in order to feed his guns, he continued his deadly fire and accounted for two more enemy aircraft.

The B-17 banked sharply and headed south in the direction of home. The formation of bombers tightened up again. The fight wasn't over. Enemy fighters were certain to be waiting for them.

"Here they come," Warmer's pilot called out. "Watch it, Ben,"



the top turret gunner warned. "Three o'clock high." The Messerschmitt dove in hard. The steep angle of his dive caused the Nazi pilot to undershoot his target, however. His tracers arched beneath the belly of the Fort. The enemy pilot jerked his nose up and the tracers lifted toward the B-17 and Warmer's amidships position. Ben returned fire from what seemed like point-blank range, but before he had finished firing at the enemy plane, his machine gun clicked empty for the third time that morning.

The nearest box of ammunition belts was stacked ten feet away. The bombers were now at 10,000 feet and Ben had no need of his oxygen mask or his electric suit. He ripped off his mask and yanked the oxygen hose coupling and the heating lead wire from their plugs on the fuselage wall. Stumbling across the shell-littered floor, he made it to the ammo boxes, grabbed some, and returned to his position.

There was no time to clamp the ammo box in place. Instead, he jerked the ammo belt out of the box and loaded his gun with it. Then he draped the belt across his shoulders—just in time to receive a warning that more planes were boring in toward his right waist gun.

"What's the matter with the right waist gun?" the pilot called. Worthy explained what had happened and reported that Ben was hooking up again back at his right waist position.

The Luftwaffe had sent 100 fighters against the 99th. In a matter of minutes, 22 had been knocked down or damaged. But there was still the bomb run and ten minutes to go before the target appeared. Meanwhile, two of the B-17s had been shot down.

Enemy fighters were circling around the tight formation of B-17s like Indians attacking a wagon train. The object was to break up the formation of bombers, each of whose guns protected the next B-17 in the flight. A gaggle of 110s came out of the sun, and as soon as they came within sighting distance, Worthy opened up. "I've got one," he shouted, "and they're coming your way, Ben!"

One by one the enemy flight passed overhead, within range

of Warmer's gun. He squeezed the trigger and his tracer chased from the tail along the fuselage, hammering into the cockpit of a German fighter. It peeled over, the pilot dead or severely wounded, and dived straight down, out of control. "Another one," Warmer shouted again.

"Confirmed," the top turret gunner snapped before warning that more bandits were coming in from six o'clock high. Ben Warmer had shot down five German planes in one day—and the bombers were just reaching the target!

Bomb bay doors open," the navigator said. "Bombs away," the bombardier announced as the plane lifted markedly. "Now let's go home"

The citation began to sound like a parody of a wartime movie, the hero grabbing a machine gun and firing it cradled in his arms. Ben

blushed as the captain read on:

Two Me-109s shied off and passed overhead so that the top turret gunner was able to finish off one. A third German passed over the bomber and into Warmer's sights. He opened up and his bullets struck the Messerschmitt before it passed out of range. The enemy fighter suddenly erupted into a fireball. Number six that day for Ben Warmer.

"Coming at you, Ben," the belly gunner shouted from below. The giant figure with the ammo belt draped across his right shoulder swung the .50-caliber gun easily, waiting for the enemy fighter. There it was. The Messerschmitt veered off and sailed across his line of vision. He swung the machine gun along the line of flight of the Nazi plane, like a duck hunter leading his quarry. He had a bull's eye on the cockpit. A bit of pressure on the trigger and the tracers led into the cockpit of the 109. It winged over and fell, with a dead pilot at the controls.

By this time the Germans had lost half of their fighters. Five of the B-17s were down, and three others were losing altitude.

The last enemy plane shot down was number 9 of the day for Warmer and victory number 13 for his crew. Of the 100 enemy fighters that tried to stop the 99th, 42 had been shot down. Ben's record, which led to his DSC and later a lieutenant's commission, still stands. It was the greatest single feat by any U.S. aerial gunner in World War II.

Nine confirmed kills raised him to a place among America's eagles. His name now appears alongside those of the great aces—Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, Captain Joe Foss, Captain Bob Johnson and Major "Pappy" Boyington. He had proved that you don't have to have "brass" to be an ace.

Warmer, a former Secret Service bodyguard won the DSC for downing seven planes on one mission.

What I Remember

By Bill Hogan 827 Sq.

I had joined the 827th Squadron in Colorado Springs after a short stint of temporary duty with a Martin B-26 tow target unit in Wendover, Utah, following training in Pocatello, Idaho in B-24's; (with Jimmy Stewart as Operations Officer and instructor pilot). This same Group had commenced training on the B-17, but were switched to the B-24 bomber.

All of the crew that had been on temporary duty in Wendover were reassigned to combat training and I ended up in Colorado Springs, to join Major Don Haldeman's crew as tail gunner.

Colorado Springs. A great non-commissioned officers' club. A fatal crash of a B-24D when the pilot banked into dead engines at low altitude. I was called upon to confirm that an enlisted member of the Squadron had been injured when a B-26 crashed on takeoff in Wendover, so he would remain on non-flying status.

Harvard, Nebraska. Snow! Landing on cleared, but icy, runways with snow banked on each side as high as the waist windows. A landing B-24 sliding sideways and ending up against a snowbank at the end of the strip. Those crew members exiting via that upper hatch behind the pilot couldn't recall doing it. In normal circumstances, climbing out that hatch was a chore.

Really low level flights down a railroad cut excused as "checking out the altimeter" (yeah!) The bank on one side of the track was higher than the plane! I recall a cow calmly chewing her cud as she stood on the upper bank while we whizzed by. Cross country flights. The nose wheel collapses on one of our B-24D bombers as it lands at night at an airport we were visiting. Lots of sparks and tortured metal noise. No one injured, but the Major upset because all the internal lights were still on after the crew hurriedly departed the ship.

A B-25 piloted by one of the women ferry pilots, crashes at the end of the runway as we await our turn on the taxiway. We couldn't "back up", so took off right over the crash site. A sad moment. Receiving our brand new B-24H bombers. Went over everything on the ship like teenagers receiving their first car. Heard that girls who helped build the bombers sometimes left a personal message under that cap in the middle of the control wheel. Pulled off the cap on the copilot's side to find, "Now you let all the Gremlins out!"

The ground support personnel left Harvard some time before we did to some combat area unknown to us rank and file, so we had to perform their duties involving the aircrafts. How about a diminutive ball gunner driving a fuel truck, with trailer, guided by a crew member who didn't have a driver's license in civilian life? Unauthorized "borrowing" of Jeeps. I got one stuck in a muddy ditch and was assisted in getting it out by the officer in charge of the Motor Pool! One of the final words of advice from the departing ground crew was that we should never pull any aircraft with one of those jerky operating "cleat track" vehicles.

Low level "buzzing" of the Harvard facilities as we departed with the base, civilian and permanent service personnel waving us a goodbye and good luck. On to Lincoln, Nebraska where we gained some light weapons, jungle survival kits and lost wooden sections of the plane's interior as well as the entire de-icing system; (wing leading edges painted red.)

Miami, Florida. Saw the Navy version of the B-24; the PB4Y. They were painted dark blue with a nose turret that looked like our ball turret. We were turned over to the A.T.C. (Air Transport Command) at this point. On to Trinidad where we slept in an open building and listened to the chorus of many nocturnal insects.

Flew low down off the northeast coast of South America to Natal, Brazil. It took a considerable length of time to cross the mouth of the Amazon river and we were low enough to feel the warm humidity off the land. Turning inland, we gained altitude and passed over thick rain forest for a while. It looked like a thick green mass with open spaces here and there. Definitely not an area to bail out into!

Natal, Brazil. Rain for an hour; then hot, sunny, humidity for an hour; hour after hour. Left with our bomb bay tanks to cross the "pond" for Africa. The consumption shown by our gasoline gages was a source of keen interest as we approached fourteen hours of air time.

Dakar, East Africa. Never landed on those steel mats before. Thought the wheels fell off! The French Quonset type huts with the porthole windows. Natives selling knives fashioned from cut up 55 gallon drums. Later, some guys had to discard the rusted up knives, along with those cheap, seized up, wrist watches that they bought in Brazil.

Difficulty in gaining altitude to cross the hills on the way to upper Africa. The reddish dust of the Dakar area had accumulated on the wing surfaces and we weren't warned about it.

Marrakech, Morocco. Toilet facilities in a building having a tile floor with ditches against the wall on three sides, where one would stand or squat to relieve himself. The French Senegalese troops wearing medium blue tunics, light tan trousers tucked in WW1 type leggings and heavy, ankle high, shoes. They wore maroon, fez style, hats that made them look even taller. Their rifles usually carried those long French bayonets whose hilt curved forward.

At the Marrakech airfield we started the practice of placing a member of the enlisted crew inside the bomber as a guard at night. When relieving the guard on duty, you made sure that he knew it was you. That really complete darkness made anyone nervous and trigger fingers real itchy! I was returning from the ship lighting my way with one of those right angled, inadequate, flashlights we were issued, when I felt a strange presence in front of me. Angling the dim light upward, one of those Senegalese soldiers was revealed. "Cigarette, Joe?" he asked. My heart slowing down again, I replied that I didn't smoke and made signs to that effect. We then parted amicably!

The Major received permission for us to visit the Casbah. With our shouldered holstered 45's in place, as recommended, we found the inner city rather dull and nothing like the movie versions. Didn't even meet, "Pepe LaMoco".

Dejeida, Tunisia. Based at an airfield formerly occupied by the "Jerries". Foxholes here and there, some with discarded German rifle ammo. A sign at a railroad crossing with a neat shell hole right through the metal support post. On the side of the road to Tunis, a shot up, abandoned Panzer tank; this one painted light

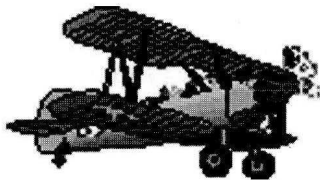
gray. Maintaining our bombers, still without ground crews and without stands. Had to use empty 55 gallon drums and climb out the top hatch to work on the plane. Still made flights along the African coast to keep us proficient. While our pilots and some other of the crew were away on one occasion, orders were received to move our B-24 to another location on the field. With the flight engineer in the pilot's seat and me as co-pilot, we fired up the inboard engines and, guided by another member of the crew outside, successfully taxied the bomber to another location. Cold desert nights and hot days. Check the inside of shoes each morning to insure the absence of scorpions or snakes; Africa having the more poisonous types of the latter. Tunis. Belly dancers and an airfield where we saw various aircraft that we only heard about in the States. British "Spitfire" fighter, the "Wellington", (AKA "Wimpy"), bomber and the Free French "Potez" medium bomber, among others. Major Haldeman borrowed and flew an A-20 attack bomber. Apparently this was a type that he flew previous to his B-24 assignment.

The Major followed the practice of ensuring that all members of the crew could double in another position if necessary. Due to the technical school I attended prior to volunteering for aerial gunnery, the bombardier's duties weren't much for me to duplicate, the navigator taught the mysteries of the sextant; etcetera. I had some "stick time" before, so I was flying the ship from the co-pilot's position after we gained altitude when we left Tunisia on our way to Italy. As we were flying along just below Sicily, the Major punched me in the arm and then pointed to the top of #2 engine. The cowling cover over the oil tank cap was flapping in the breeze because the Dzus fastener wasn't tight. He never missed anything!

Here we are in Cerignola, Italy, located on Torretta Airfield. I knew this airstrip as "Snowman", not knowing the true designation until I joined the 484th Bomb Group Association years later. We lived in tents and watched movies projected on the white wall of a building while seated on metal frames used to transport the fins that were then installed on the 500 pound bombs. The movie I saw on the night before our last, disastrous, mission to Weiner Neustadt, Austria, was "Going My Way" with Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald. It was a good memory to carry with me through the following eleven months as a P.O.W.

S/Sgt Bill Hogan- 827th Sq

178 Seconds To Live
Submitted by member Stan Hutchins 824
Sq.



After JFK Jr.'s accident, everyone wondered how it must be to fly in the weather when you are NOT an instrument pilot. This

article appeared in a brochure published by Transport Canada called "Take Five for Safety" in the early 1980's.

How long can a pilot who has little or no instrument training expect to live after he flies into bad weather and loses visual contact? Researchers at the University of Illinois did some tests and came up with some very interesting data. Twenty student "guinea pigs" flew into simulated instrument weather, and all went into graveyard spirals or roller coasters. The outcome differed in only one respect: the time required till control was lost. The interval ranged from 20 seconds to 480 seconds. The average time was 178 seconds—two seconds short of three minutes.

Here's the fatal scenario: The sky is overcast and the visibility is poor. That reported five-mile visibility looks more like two, and you can't judge the height of the overcast. Your altimeter tells you that you are at 1500 feet but your map tells you that there's local terrain as high as 1200 feet. There might be a tower nearby because your not sure how far off course you are. But you've flown into worse weather than this, so press on.

With no warning you're in the soup. You peer so hard into the milky white mist that your eyes hurt. You fight the feeling in your stomach. You try to swallow, only to find your mouth dry. Now you realize you should have waited for better weather. The appointment was important, but not all that important. Somewhere a voice is saying, "You've had it—it's all over!"

You now have 178 seconds to live.

Your aircraft feels on even keel but your compass turns slowly. You push a little rudder and add a little pressure on the controls to stop the turn but this feels unnatural and you return the controls to their original position. This feels better but now your compass is turning a little faster and your airspeed is increasing slightly. You scan your instruments for help but what you see looks somewhat unfamiliar. You're sure that this is just a bad spot. You'll break out in a few minutes. (But you don't have a few minutes left.)

You now have 100 seconds to live.

You glance at your altimeter and you are shocked to see it unwinding. You're already down to 1200 feet. Instinctively, you pull back on the controls but the altimeter still unwinds. The engine is into the red and the airspeed, nearly so.

You have 45 seconds to live.

Now you're sweating and shaking. There must be something wrong with the controls; pulling back only moves the airspeed indicator further into the red. You can hear the wind tearing at the aircraft.

You are about to meet your Maker; you have 10 seconds to live.

Suddenly you see the ground. The trees rush up at you. You can see the horizon if you turn your head far enough but it's at a weird angle—you're almost inverted. You open your mouth to scream, but. . . You just ran out of seconds. Think about it next time—before you press on into marginal weather.

Four Engine Fighter Pilot

Submitted by Stan Hutchins 824 Sq.

Thanks to Gen. Bruce K. Holloway, USAF (Ret.), and Maj. John T. Foster, USAF (Ret.), of Keene, N. H., a veteran of the 308th Bomb Group.

Fourteenth Air Force B-24s flew many different missions, but dogfighting with enemy heavies was not part of their usual repertoire.

Most of us think of Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force as a fighter outfit with short-nosed P-40s and P-51s. Less well remembered are the Flying Tiger bombers. In January 1944, Chennault had about forty B-25s and fewer than fifty four engine B-24 strategic bombers, the latter belonging to the 308th Bomb Group. There were no strategic targets in China comparable to the great industrial centers of Germany, and those in Japan were beyond the range of the B-24s.

How, then, were the B-24s used? Japan depended on external sources of raw materials, and Japanese armies in China were dependent on the home islands for military supplies. The "strategic" 308th therefore operated largely against interdiction targets: port facilities from Rangoon to Formosa, military depots in China, and traffic on the open seas and the Yangtze River. Many of these targets were beyond the range of Fourteenth Air Force fighters. Those missions were flown deep in enemy territory without escort.

Rarely was the 308th able to put up more than twenty B-24s for a mission. This was not entirely a result of combat attrition. The group also had another demanding mission: flying in its own fuel and other supplies over the Hump from India.

In its first eight months of operations beginning in April 1943, the 308th flew 1,331 round trips over the Hump. The extreme altitude required to cross the Himalayas, lack of navigation aids, unpredictable violent weather, and the relative inexperience of many crews all took their toll. By August 1944, 550 aircraft— transports and bombers—had gone down between Chabua, India, and Kunming, China. Each Hump trip counted as a combat mission—with good reason.

During the early months of bombing operations, the 308th generally attacked from an altitude of 16,000 feet or higher. With some exceptions, results were not good. In January 1944, the group's first priority shifted to low level sea searches to find and destroy Japanese ships. Some of these searches extended as far away as the Philippines.

One of the most unusual coastal searches was flown by Lt. Glenn McConnell, who arrived in China in the fall of 1943. Assigned to the 308th Group, he flew twenty three Hump missions. He liked the excitement and challenge of those flights. By March 1944, he had logged 250 combat hours.

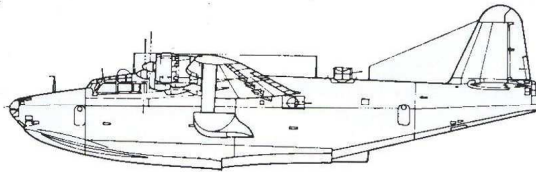
Now an experienced and highly competent pilot, he was given command of a B-24 named Sweepy Time Gal, locally modified for low altitude attacks on shipping. The bomber's lower turret had been removed. Two fixed .50 caliber nose guns were added, fired by a trigger on the control column. A new position

for a radar operator was installed on the flight deck. For surprise and bombing accuracy, sea sweeps typically were flown at 200 feet.

On a March 19 sweep, the crew of this modified B-24 sighted a four engine "Mavis" flying boat. McConnell turned in to the Mavis and opened up with all his forward firing guns. The enemy pilot, no doubt shaken by this display of awesome and accurate fire, ducked into an overcast trailing smoke and may or may not have made it home.

An hour later, a second Mavis appeared, headed directly for Sweepy Time Gal. The enemy plane went into a violent turn. McConnell followed under its left wing. All guns that could bear on the Mavis fired, scoring many hits at close range. The enemy gunners, firing back, wounded McConnell—who would have been

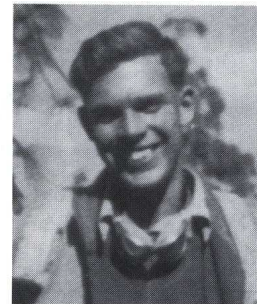
killed had he not been leaning forward for a better view of the action—and two other crew members before the flying boat caught fire and plunged into the sea. Thus ended the only known dogfight between four engine aircraft. With no hydraulic pressure for gear or brakes, the wounded McConnell landed his B-24 safely at Kweilin with photo-



graphs of the downed Mavis.

A month later, McConnell's B-24 was critically damaged by three "Oscars" while 100 feet above the water. The B-24, its two right engines on fire with both props refusing to feather, went in, cart wheeled, and broke up. Several crew members got out of the wreckage, only to be strafed by the enemy fighters. All but two were killed in the water. McConnell escaped by shedding his Mae West and diving under the waves each time the Oscars began firing. He and wounded radio operator S/Sgt. Tony Spadafora were picked up by a Japanese ship and spent the rest of the war as POWs in several prisons, the last in Tokyo. They survived U.S. fire bombing of that city.

Glenn McConnell stayed in the Air Force after the war, flying B-29s, B-47s, and B-52s in Strategic Air Command. He retired as a colonel, probably the only four engine "fighter pilot" of World War II, or any other war, to shoot down an enemy heavy in a dogfight.

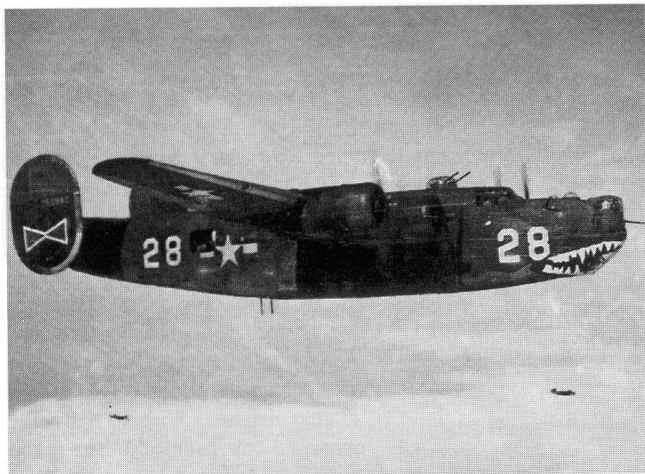


Lt Glenn McConnell

More On The 17/12/1944 Mission

How "Little Joe," Nose No 28, # 42-50934 flown by Charles H Himmler, 824 Sq and (no Name) Nose No 38 #42-51835 flown by Roger A Martin, 825 Sq were shot down

By John Bybee and Peter Kassak



Nose No 28 #42-52680, is a replacement for the one shot down in this story. The lower ball turret is shown retracted with the guns turned straight down to allow the ball gunner to enter the turret. This would occur before entering the combat zone



A 461st Bomb Group B-24 drops out of formation with #4 engine on fire after leaving the combat zone. Note: the lower ball turret is retracted. This indicates that the gunner has exited the turret

Bud: To follow up on my previous reports, This new information was sent to me recently:

Feldweibel Rudi Zwesken, JG300 engaged Ken Smith's 461st BGs 764 42-51324 near Dolone Otrpkovce and shot him down at Trencin. Zwesken then zipped northeast and shot down 484th's Charles Himmler's "Little Joe" 42-50934 of the 824th Squadron at 11:58 AM northwest of Sterberk. Himmler tried to make a crash landing after being shot up, but hooked a wing on a



Vacavov Hill. Zwesken took off at about 10:45 from either Juteborg or Lobnitz flying either a Fw190A-7 or-8. If he lifted off from Juteborg he was a member of Stab or III of JG300. If from Lobitz he was with II JG300. Additional interceptors launched from Borkheide (I JG300) and Reinzdorf (strum and IV JG300) Me-109G-10, G-14s were mixed with Fw-190A-7/8s.

I have found web sites of the old CIA maps and am overlaying modern maps to replot German fighter attacks. More to follow as I work this out. Peter Kassak a twenty-year old biomedical/physics major at Bratislava has compiled a list of German fighter pilots who flew against the 49th BW on 17 Dec 1944. Lt. Roger A. Martin's 484BG, 825 Squadron #38 "Easy 22" 42- 51835 was brought down by Lt. Kraft, in a ME-109, III JG 300 at 12:05 PM. Martin's gunners also damaged Kraft's 109 and he was forced to bail out over Libina. I have forwarded Kassak's data via email to you.

Sincerely
John ByBee
sbybee@netins.net

continued on next page

17 December 1944

By Peter Kassak

The Fifteenth Air Force attacked on 17/12/1944 with 191 "Fortresses" from 5th Bomb Wing's B-17s, the Oil refinery at Blechhammer-North. Blechhammer-South was attacked by 105 B-24 "Liberators" from 55th Bomb Wing. 231 B-24 "Liberators" from 49th and 304 Bomb wings attacked Odertal for a total force of 527 four engined bombers. Fighter cover was provided by 93 P-38 "Lightnings" from 305 Fighter Wing and 207 P-51 "Mustangs" from the 306 Fighter Wing.

Weather over the Reich area that day was poor, that was one thing that played best for the 15th Air Force. But 15th Air Force HQ didn't know that defense of Reich area was held by JG 300 and JG 301. Other units were in Ardennes as support forces for ground offensive, which were also known as "Schlechtwettergeschwadern," bad weather units.

The Luftwaffe pilots had special training from time to time, when they flew at night using radar. So when radio locators "Freya" detected a large force of bombers headed for Germany, the fighters were alerted. At 10:45 they took off from Juteborg airfield, Stab and III. Gruppe, and from Borkheide airfield.

The Gruppe from Lobnitz started at 11:00. Sturmgruppe from Reinzdorf, and Gruppe JG 300 started up too. Stab and II/Gruppe flew FW-190s A-7 and A-8, the other three units were escorted by Me-109 G-10s and G-14s. About 100 aircraft took off. The German fighters were covered by clouds as they approach the bombers. American fighters were delayed, so the Germans attacked first. The combat began at 11:50 over the Czech in area of Olomouc and Poerov.

The first victims were "Liberators" from the 49 Bomb Wing. The German pilots of the Sturmgruppe dropped their additional fuel tanks, and opened fire. These pilots claimed between the times of 11:53 and 12:03 22 "Liberators". Some of them scored twice. Those were, FW. Zwesken and Maj. Lindenberger. For Maj. Lindenberger, it was a great victory, because as a veteran from WWI he had shot down twelve in the first world conflict.

On this day he claimed two US bombers but ended WWII with just 4 victories. Pilots of III / JG 300 were also successful. Between 11:53 AM and 12:20 PM they claimed ten bombers. Hptm. Peter Jenne shot down two of them.

Lt. Kraft, pilot of a Messerschmitt from III / JG 300 shot down "Liberator" B-24J 42-51835 "red 38", from 825th squadron, 484th BG. But Kraft's Messerschmitt was also hit and had to leave his plane by parachute. After landing German citizens took him on their shoulders and took him to village as a hero.

Utfz. Maier from IV / JG 300 claimed one B-17 in area East of the village Kozli. That was sole success for IV / Gruppe in the battle with bombers. Together JG 300 pilots claimed 33 bombers.

But American losses were only 25 machines.

This slaughter was stopped by American fighters, that came to help their "Big friends". American fighters claimed 23-3-6 shot down, but German losses were even higher. JG 300 lost 43 aircraft 36 of them by fighters and 7 by technical failures. Stab lost one, I / JG 300 also one, II / JG 300 and IV / JG 300 lost 14

machines and III / JG 300 lost 13 fighter planes.

But the American fighters had losses too. Three Focke Wulfs chased and shot down P-38J 42-68073 (black 20) "Coon Dog III" of 2/Lt. David R. Miles. The right engine caught fire, and the pilot bailed out. It was over the village of Vinary, CZ. Most probably it was pilot of II / JG 300, Fw. Dohms, who shot him down. Second lost "Lightning" over Czech was P-38L 44-24666 "Melancholy Babe". Its pilot 2/Lt Ernest V. Rountree probably fell victim to Lt. Pipke from IV / JG 300, who claimed a P-38 shot down in area of Nisa. Together fighter cover lost in this battle 4 P-38s and 2 Mustangs. One P-51 claimed was by Lt. Kohler and another by Obgefr. Golja, but "their" "Mustangs" didn't crash in area of Czech. Other American losses were caused by Flak. JG 301 joined the action against the "viermots". "Alarmstart" for their Gruppen came at 10:55. All planes took course toward southwest heading to the area of Hannover. In this area they met a small box of "Liberators" and their fighter cover made of P47s. I / Gruppe attacked the fighters, III / Gruppe, which flew lower than the other two, attacked the bombers.

Fw 190 pilot Willi Reschke III / Gruppe, 9th staffel, claimed one B-24 and one P-51 in area of Gottingen, and Fw 190 pilot Ofw. Hans Todt III / Gruppe, 8th staffel shot down one P-47 in that same area. Also Jffz. Helmut Brenner from 6th staffel, I / Gruppe shot down one B-24 in area between Hannover and Kassel. Losses on German side were Lt. Walter Tauscher from the 1st staffel, was wounded in combat. He flew Fw 190 A/8 "yellow 10" work number #682001.

Also UMz. Walter Dobeles from 8th staffel was lost. But the cause was unknown., probably due to hits in combat. He crashed in area of Sachau. Opponents of JG 30 are unknown. 15th Air Force probably didn't fly so far, but it is possible, and cover of P-47s could have come from the 9th Air Force which made over 1000 sorties that day.

Editors Note:

The mission of 17, December, 1944 to Odertal Oil Refinery was written up in Torretta Flyer #29 Winter Spring 1996 issue, pages 19-27, and; Torretta Flyer No #30 Fall Winter 1996 issue 10-15 by John Bybee. Thanks to John Bybee's latest letter we now know who shot them down, from what Luftwaffe unit, and where they were based. The following list is quite remarkable in that the fighter attacks only lasted about 22 minutes in the shooting down of 31 aircraft, two of which were from the 484th Bomb Group, and nine from the 461st Bomb Group. Considering the assignment of fighter cover from various 15th Air Force units, the Luftwaffe fighters did accomplish a remarkable record. The Author of this page and the following page is Peter Kassak, a twenty year old biomedical/physics major in Bratislava.

continued on next page

Claims of JG 300 on 17. December 1944.

Time	Unit	Pilot	Plane	Fighter Base*
11:53	II / JG 300	Fw. Muller	B-24	Olomouc
11:53	II / JG 300	Fw. Preiss	B-24	Olomouc Kromufiil
11:53	II / JG 300	Fw. Rudi Zwuesken	B-24	IJJ Otrokouice +
+ 42-51324 "Paulette" Flown by Kenneth B Smith 765th Sq 461st BG				
11:53	III / JG 300	Hptm. Hans Gottuck	B-24	Olomouc
11:55	II / JG 300	Oblt. Gramberg	B-24	Olomouc
11:55	II / JG 300	Uffz. Raue	B-24	Olomouc
11:55	V / JG 300	Lt. Klaus Retschneider	B-24	Olomouc
11:55	II / JG 300	Obgefr. Hansel	B-24	Olomouc
11:55	II / JG 300	Maj. Lindenberger	B-24	Olomouc
11:56	II / JG 300	Lt. Lt Mebus	B-24	Olomouc
11:56	II / JG 300	Fw Rudi Zwuesken	B-24	NW of ternberk +
+ 42-50934 "Little Joe" Flown by Charles A Himmler, 824 Sq., 484th BG				
11:57	II / JG 300	Fw. Schauenberg	B-24	Olomouc
11:57	II / JG 300	Maj. Lindenberger	B-24	Olomouc
11:57	II / JG 300	Uffz. Rudi Noske	B-24	Olomouc
11:57	II / JG 300	Uffz. Paul Lixfeld	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Uffz. Weidenbeck	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Fw. Karl Ruopp	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Lt. Norbert Graziadei	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Uffz. Erhardt	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Stsw Bosch	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Fw Hubert Engst	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	II / JG 300	Uffz. Hampel	B-24	Olomouc
12:00	III / JG 300	Uffz. Diestel	B-24	Ratibofi
12:03	II / JG 300	Fw. Schluter	B-24	Olomouc
12:03	II / JG 300	Fw Dohms	P-38	Olomouc
12:05	III / JG 300	Obfhr. Bremer	B-24	Ostrava
12:05	III / JG 300	Uffz. Lambio	B-24	Ostrava - Bielsko -Biala
12:05	III / JG 300	Lt. Rudolph	B-24	S R mafiova
12:05	III / JG 300	Lt. Kraft	B-24	Libina +
+ 42- 51835 flown by Lt. Roger A. Martin ,825, squadron 484th BG				
12:06	III / JG 300	Lt. Kohler	P-51	Olomouc
12:07	III / JG 300	Fhr. Spanka	B-24	S R mafiova
12:08	III / JG 300	Fj.Obfw. Heser	B-24	Ratibofi
12:15	III / JG 300	Hptm. Peter Jenne	B-24	S R mafiova
12:15	III / JG 300	Uffz. Maier	B- 17	E Kolli
12:20	III / JG 300	Hptm. Peter Jenne	B-24	S R mafiov
12:20	III / JG 300	Obgefr. Golja	P-51	Ratibofi- Ostrava
12:30	III / JG 300	Lt. Pipke	P-38	Nysa

* Olomouc and Ostrava are in Czechoslovakia

Tales From The Internet

The Old Soldier

By Bob Glasier

I like to go to the library at lunchtime sometimes, and today was one of those times. While walking amongst the books, I saw a small bent-over old man, hobbling along with a cane, ear piece, and assorted other body appendages visible beneath his shirt. He had on a "World War 11 Veteran" baseball cap, so I asked him which branch he was in.

"Army Air Force", was the reply. "Were you ever in the service?", he asked. Yes, I was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam", I replied. "Where were you stationed?", I asked. "Europe."

"What did you do?" He points to the tie-tac he was wearing. "Recognize this?" It was a B-24 Liberator.

"Sure, my Dad was in the Pacific. Who were you with?" He pulls a business card out of his decrepit old wallet. It says:

John F. Barnacle
450th "COTTONTAILS" Bomb Group, 15th Air Force
Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society
Air Forces Gunners Association
D.A.V - AM. LEG. - V.F.W
2207 Barrywood Rd.
Huntsville, AL 35810
256-852-4126

I asked John, "So, what did you do?"

He replied, "Ball Turret Gunner. I don't want to bore you, but, would you like to hear my story?" "I sure would." He then regaled me with his story, of how he enlisted in the Guard in '38, and got called to active duty in October. '40.

He started out in B-25s as a waist gunner. He was still in the States, out drinking with a bunch of guys. One night, one of them got drunk and told him about this special unit that Col. Jimmy Doolittle was forming up down at Eglin Field. John bummed a flight down to Eglin. He reported to the operations Major, and told him he wanted to volunteer for the special unit he heard about. The Major told him he had to wait for the Col. to come back. Later that afternoon Doolittle landed in his own personal P-40 that he flew. John reported to Doolittle and told him that he wanted to join his outfit. Doolittle told him to get the Hell out of his office. He already had more guys wanting to commit suicide than he needed. That's how John missed the Tokyo raid.

John returned back to his base, only to get disciplined with 120 days of KP and guard duty for running off to Jimmy. He then volunteered to train as part of the first two Heavy Bomber crews for the 450th. He was the small guy, so he got the ball turret.



*No #62 with the Sperry Ball Turret down :
Used by both the B-17 (not retractable) and the
B-24, it was cramped and cold and suffered the
indignity of being in line with the forward relief
tubes.*

John then told me; of the day -one of many days - in which he personally shot down 5 German fighters, a mixture of Me-109s and FW-190s; of how he was wounded three times; of the day his B-24 got shot down over Yugoslavia, and he spent 30 days in E&E (Escape and Evasion) with Tito's partisans before he was repatriated to the Allies; of how they refused to let him return to combat because of the rule that shot down and returned airman might reveal information about the resistance; of about how he went back to the States, and trained new crewmen for the B-29; and how they refused to let him volunteer to be a B-29 crewman in the Pacific - they said he had too much already. He then showed me his beat-up old "Caterpillar Club" card, that he received for having his life saved by a parachute in March 1944.

He had a gleam in his eyes, and that faraway look that warriors get when remembering. I know the look. I was silent, a little dumbstruck.

He then hooked his cane on his arm, and took my hand in both of his. He started shaking my hand vigorously, and with tears in his eyes said, "Thank you for listening to my story."

I was getting a little misty eyed too. I thanked him profusely for sharing it. This just happened within the past hour. I wrote this as a memorial to this great, and aged warrior. They are dying off fast.

I also wrote it because I saw myself - all of us - a few years down the road, as old men, (I mean really old men) forgotten by everyone. I hope somebody wants to hear my story someday. I hope somebody will stop and care.

I am a little misty eyed again.

Rob Glasier, Maddog 19
Greyhound 19, 240th AHC
RVN

Tales From The internet

A very interesting story

By Col. Arthur Rogers

via Al Kline 824 Sq. drkline@earthlink.net

Not all burning B-24 stories have an unhappy ending.

The following is a reposting of the 90th BG's departure from the continental United States in 1942 to Hawaii. My previous job as Squadron commander was upgraded to lead the group out of California for deployment to a Combat Command.

Upon landing at Hamilton Field, the Group Commander, Col. Mussett and I checked with each pilot to ascertain whether his airplane was functioning all right and if it would be ready to make the flight the next morning at daybreak. It was found that two airplanes had difficulties in their short hop over, due to sabotage, and this put fear in everyone's mind to such an extent that many of the pilots stated they would rather fly their old worn out planes, at least they knew the condition they were in. Some of the other airplanes had developed small mechanical troubles that would have to be corrected before they could make the flight. At this time Colonel Mussett and I decided to split the flight in half and we would take the first half the next morning and would leave the other two experienced officers, Colonel Unruh and Major Bullis, to bring the other half after the necessary repairs had been made.

By this time all the crews were on edge as most of them had never flown over any water larger than the Mississippi. None of the navigators had navigated over water and they were none too confident of their ability. It is doubtful whether any of the Group got much sleep that night.

We were faced with the problem of whether to take off at daybreak or dusk. With a completely trained Group of thoroughly confident navigators and pilots the navigation problem would have been simplified by taking off at night, since celestial navigation is much easier because a fix can be made by any two heavenly bodies. In fact the first flight made by the Flying Fortresses before the War, by an excellently trained Group, was made at night and they landed in Hawaii the following morning. The reason we were forced to make an early morning takeoff was due to the fact we doubted the ability of the newly graduated navigators.

Colonel Mussett and I decided we would fly in the same airplane so that one of us could be checking the navigator's work while the other was flying. Our plan was to take off just at dawn and circle the airdrome until our young fledglings were all in sight of us, then strike out for the long distant Island twenty four hundred miles away. To execute this plan we had a great deal to do beforehand such as briefing our pilots on the takeoff procedure, the altitudes at which we could find favorable winds, emergency procedure in case of engine trouble, radio communications and recognition signals necessary to approach the Island of Hawaii. This, in addition to seeing that all the airplanes were properly serviced and a final check on the engines, carried us late into the night.

When the alarm clock sounded at four a.m., I was still awake and though I had not slept I was too excited to be tired. I jumped

out of bed anxious to be off. After our crowd had eaten breakfast and lunches were packed we had a final briefing of all of our crews that were to make the flight. We decided it would be necessary to top off our fuel tanks since it would cost us approximately fifty gallons of gasoline to warm up our engines and we knew that every drop would be precious if we were running short at the other end. Every crew was dispatched to his airplane and Mussett and I departed for our airplane. In addition to our normal combat crew we carried along our flight Surgeon, Captain Mitchell, as an extra passenger.

Due to a dry cigarette lighter belonging to Captain Mitchell, the flight surgeon, I received one of the most exciting moments of my life. All the crew were at their stations and I was checking my radio to see if I had contact with the tower. The big four thousand gallon gasoline truck was filling all of our tanks, which held thirty one hundred gallons of hundred octane gasoline and filling them to overflowing. All of a sudden the darkness was broken by a flash of light and I heard the screaming of our aerial engineer that the airplane was on fire.

Unless you have been sitting on thirty one hundred gallons of hundred octane gasoline and heard the word "Fire" you can never know the feeling that all of us had. We all made a mad rush to jump out of the bomb-bay doors, flames were coming from the concrete as though it were burning and the flames were filling the expanse in which the bombs were usually stored.

We all dove headlong into the flames which by this time were dying down some as the fire extinguishers had been put into action. This made our escape possible with only a few sines. Once on the outside we saw gas burning under the wings and right up to the nozzle of the large gasoline truck. We all grabbed emergency fire extinguishers and soon put the fire out. As soon as the last flame was extinguished everyone with one accord said, "How in the hell did the fire start?"

Our medical officer with a sheepish expression on his face stepped forward and said in a meek voice, "Sir, I did it with this blasted cigarette lighter. It was dry and I decided to fill it with gasoline dripping off the wing.

"When I opened the lighter, a spark sprang up from the flint and the next thing the wing was on fire." There is one thing to be said for the medical officer, after he had started the fire his reaction time was perfect, since the second after the fire started, he played the fire extinguisher back and forth putting out the blaze. I am sure all of our crew facing this emergency credit him with our lives for his quick thinking. It was indeed a shaky crew that went down to their stations just as the first light of dawn came over the horizon.

The End

Tales From The Internet

Subject: Another Lady Be Good Story

By Everett Frank, Internet Service

No one will ever know how close we came to "buying the farm." The members of our crew never really knew how close we were to being another "Lady be Good". Our crew was ferrying a new plane to Italy as hundreds of new crews did. Our trip from Topeka, to West Palm Beach, Trinidad, to Belem, to Natal to Dakar to Marrakech was rather uneventful.

When the alarm clock sounded at four a.m., I was still awake and though I had not slept I was too excited to be tired. I jumped out of bed anxious to be off.

We were held up two days in Marrakech due to weather. Finally operations said it was O.K. to fly on to Tunis and we took off. As we approached Oran the weather really looked lousy ahead and the pilot called in to Oran and they said go ahead, the ceiling was 4000 ft, visibility 2 miles at Tunis and we went on ahead. The navigator finally said we should be over Tunis and we let down to about 3000 ft and were flying through extremely broken clouds. We crossed the marker beacon 3 times and never saw the ground. There were mountains in the area higher than the altitude we were flying. Finally, our pilot said "enough of this, we are getting out of this stuff," and started to climb to the southwest.

We couldn't climb any higher than 13,000 ft because we had no oxygen and had to transfer fuel. We had crossed the marker beacon at Tunis sometime around noon.

We ran into a snow storm as bad as I have ever seen and I lived in Iowa for 31 years. Remember this was about June 20 1944. The pilot was on instruments maybe an hour and a half, plus or minus, The weather was so violent the compass was swinging so badly the navigator couldn't even do any DR (dead reckoning) navigation.

The whole crew was freezing their butts off and the pilot was ringing wet with sweat running off his chin. He had to use the deicer boots to clear snow from the leading edge of the wings a number of times. Finally after 1 1/2 or 2 hours we broke out in the clear sunshine. What did we see??? We saw sand, and, sand, and more sand as far as you could see.

The pilot told the Radio operator to send out a QRM (emergency call) and ask for a heading. Finally the radio operator got a CW contact on the Liason Set and they gave us a heading to Bone which would have headed us right back into the middle of the storm. The pilot said, "no were not going back into that stuff". We had a conference and decided to head east because we knew the Mediterranean was in that direction. They only gave the navigator a 200 mile strip map along our route but fortunately he had picked up a French map of Africa from the briefing room in Natal

Brazil. We flew due east and after a couple more hours we could see water. We saw an abandoned landing strip on the coast that didn't look too good. We knew we were north of Tripoli from the French map and headed in that direction. It was now late in the afternoon and after flying in the direction of Tripoli for 15 minutes or so, the pilot made a decision. He said we don't know if they have lights at Tripoli and it may be dark before we get there. We're going back to land on that strip.

We turned around and went back to that abandoned strip and drug it and dropped a flare to see which way the wind was blowing. The pilot circled and made the most beautiful landing I ever saw, stradling ruts in the dirt runway. He taxied back to the end of the runway and parked the plane. We didn't have any idea where we were. A couple of Arabs walked toward us and we stayed in a bunch with our 45's in our shoulder holsters.

This strip was kind of on a bluff right on the edge of the sea. Pretty soon we heard a boat engine and walked over the edge of the bluff and saw a barge-like boat approaching. It turned out to be a bunch of our British friends.

They had a base on an island in the bay and they serviced Sunderland Flying boats traveling from England to Egypt or somewhere. The strip on which we landed was a dirt strip that was used in the invasion of Malta.

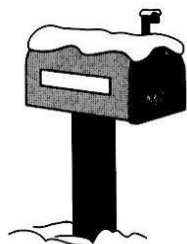
The Brits put guards on our plane and took us over to the island and fed us and put us up for the night. They got on the radio and we finally contacted Tunis and told them where we were.

Tunis asked if we wanted them to send a pilot down to fly us out and our pilot said "Hell no, I flew her in here and I can fly her out." The next morning they hauled 55 gallon drums over to our plane and hand pumped 1000 gallons of petrol into our plane. We had to sign a chit at 50c per gallon.

The next morning he set the brakes and revved her up and let go. I forgot to mention there was a wrecked C-47 laying on the end of the runway we had to clear. He pulled it off and actually settled below ground level after we cleared the bluff to gain more airspeed. Bear in mind this was a 22 year old man with probably total flying time of 2 or 3 hundred hours. God rest his soul. He went on the big mission last year. He was the coolest cucumber I ever met. He set an example for all of us.

With a pilot like this, a little luck and a smile from God, all of our crew except our navigator finished our missions and returned home. Our navigator was killed on his first mission to Ploesti, flying with a different crew on June 24, 1944. Our co-pilot got shot through the guts with flak on about his 20th mission but recovered and returned home. They cleared one other plane through after us, to Tunis. They let down over the Mediterranean and tried to land on a beach.

Letters To The Editor



Poppies and Memorial Day

By Gordon Graham, 824 Sq.

Poppies and Memorial Day, in recent years, have become synonymous. What may not be known is that it was not always that way.

Memorial Day originated during the Civil War when southern women chose May 30 to decorate soldier's graves. This tradition took hold in the northern states and has been carried on through the years and eventually became a national holiday. Today, on this sacred day, we honor those men from all wars who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Poppy Day, although celebrated at the same time as Memorial Day, did not have its origin until 1922, when the Veterans of Foreign Wars conducted the first poppy sale nationwide. After that, other groups working for and with war veterans joined the campaign. The proceeds from the first efforts to sell poppies were used for the benefit of children in France and Belgium who were victims of the First World War.

Why were poppies chosen for the symbol of this program? They were chosen because the fields of France and Belgium were strewn with poppies prior to the tremendous land battles that took place there. These beautiful and fragile creations of God appeared to be completely destroyed in the process, but after the carnage, they reappeared the next spring in all their beauty. This rebirth seemed to be the perfect symbol for the rebuilding of lives after the war and who can argue the point.

Adding to the impetus was the fact that a Canadian soldier penned, what became the well-known poem "In Flanders Field", which reads, in part -

*In Flanders Field the poppies blow,
between the crosses, row on row.
That mark our place; and in the sky
the larks, still bravely singing, fly.*

Today, the poppy remains the symbol of hope with veterans everywhere in this country. However, the proceeds from the sale of poppies today are used strictly for the benefit of our disabled and needy veterans. There are absolutely no administrative costs assessed and 100% of the monies collected go for disabled veterans assistance.

Soon, the men in our local VFW post and comrades across

the country will take to the streets and malls, wearing their caps and carrying a handful of poppies and a canister. These men are the lucky ones and they know it - they survived their war, be it WWII, Korea, Viet Nam or Desert Storm and have not forgotten their less fortunate comrades, who sit in VA hospitals around the country.

So, when you see one of us approach you in your car at a nearby intersection, won't you please stop, crank your window down and buy a poppy. The man in the cap will thank you profusely and you will feel better for doing so. And don't worry about waiting in traffic for that brief moment it takes to buy your poppy, our comrades sitting in the hospital face much longer waits, if you know what I mean.

Dear Bud:

Very seldom can one look back at a war and experience a "good feeling". I am very fortunate in having two such experiences and also of knowing of the kindness of my parents.

The 824th had an Italian tailor who set up shop in our area. Shortly after he arrived, the only needle he had for an antique Singer sewing machine broke. This was a disaster since no replacement needles were available in war-torn Italy. Realizing the importance of that little needle, I wrote to my parents for help. I sent along the broken needle and all of the model numbers, etc., from the old machine. My parents then started a search which involved trying to find people who may have an old machine with an extra needle, plus, they shopped every store in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. About a month later, I received a package containing every type of sewing machine needle they could find. The tailor was, indeed, overjoyed since the needles that wouldn't fit his machine, he was able to sell and thus supplement his income.

The second incident involving my parents in far-off Minnesota, again challenged their generosity and goodness. The Italian boy who served my needs for laundry, water jugs, etc., was wearing a pair of shoes tied on with rope, or anything else he could find to keep them in place. Once again, I became involved. The first step was to make an outline of his feet (on a sheet of paper I could mail). Next, an appeal to my parents with the outline for their help. Once again they came through. My mother took her shoe ration card and the paper with the foot outlined, and went shopping. In turn, she found a pair of Army-type high shoes and sent them on their way.

As I gave the shoes to my young Italian friend, I explained about my parents' involvement and told him he should wear these shoes to protect his feet. The following day he showed up wearing the shoes. However, the day following, he was back to the old tie-on shoes. Of course, I questioned him as to why he wasn't wearing his new shoes. His family, he said, took the shoes away from him and sold them for food. Of course, I never told this to my parents since they would be devastated to know their efforts were wasted. Yet, I knew of the poverty of the people and realized that to them food for the family was more important than their son's comfort. I also learned a lesson. From then on in, I doubled my payment for laundry and service.

Jim Carney, 824 Sq.

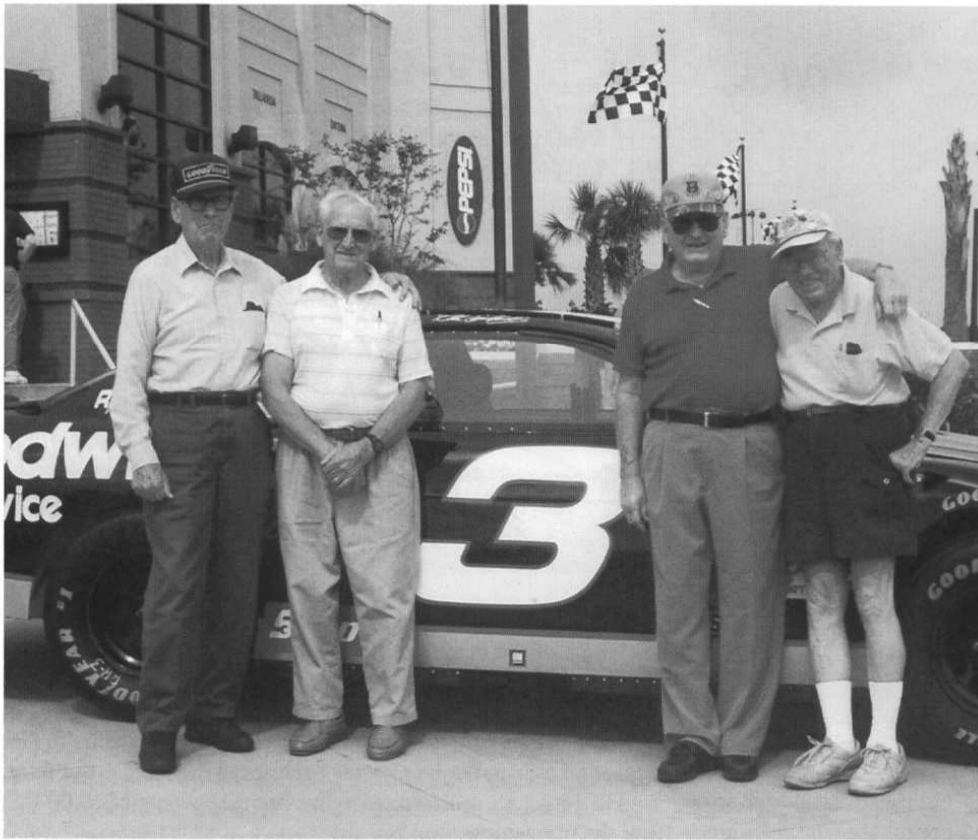


Photo of crew #44. From left: Rua L Petty-P, Wayne L Tompkins-C/P, Ted Janes-T/G, and Clifford E Adams-R/O. Photo Taken at the NASCAR Center in Wilmington, NC.

Eugene, OR
Dear Bud:

The crew No #44 of the 825th squadron, 484th Bomb Group had a mini reunion last October. We met at a beach house in Holden Beach, NC. Out of the crew of 10 plus one replacement five are left.

Harold Parks-engineer was ill and couldn't make it. Rua L Petty-Pilot of Grand Lake, CO, Wayne L Tompkins-Co pilot of Fair Lawn, OH, Ted Janes-T/G of Bossier City, LA, and Clifford Adams-R/O of Eugene, OR were there.

It was great seeing to the guys again. We roamed around looking over the damage left by the recent hurricanes. The enclosed photograph was taken at the NASCAR center in Wilmington, NC. I thought you would like to know.

Best Wishes
Clifford Adams, 825th Sq.

*Interesting Fact::
Klim was the name for powdered milk used by American Forces and was supplied to POWS as well. Klim is milk spelled backwards.*

Dear Bud,
My pilot in the 827th was a fellow by the name of Spaulding and my co-pilot's name was Keffer. Do you know anything about them?

George Mynchenberg

Dear George
Thank you for your e-mail

In reviewing your membership application I note that some of your crew members went down with the squadron commander. That would have been Don Haldeman, Unfortunately missions records from April 29, 1944 to June 13, 1944 are missing. Don Haldeman was shot down between those dates. The good news is that I will probably find more information from the morning reports that I am going through now. If you can remember the date of the shoot down, that would help greatly. The following is a composite crew list when assigned to James P Spalding.

D=Deceased.

Robert W Day-U/G
Box 86 RR#, Luray, MO 63453-9752, 816/866/2329
Edgar T Keffer-C/P
Patrick W Layne Jr-E
121 23 Battlefield Cir, Ringgold, GA, 30736-9805
404/937/4804
James H Marton-G
George C Mynchenberg-B
Lawrence A Moxely-B/G (D)
James P Spalding- P (D)
Judson N Suddarth -N
620-112th St SE, Everett, WA, 98208-5092
425/347/0262
Marvin H Watson- E (D)
Willis Wong-R/O
1971 Sunrise Dr, Monterey Park, CA, 91754-6212

Dear Bud,

Major Haldeman bumped my pilot and took the squadron bombardier instead of me because he was going to lead the group that day. I flew on their left wing with another crew whose bombardier was sick that day and saw them get hit and then blow up. One chute got out. From then on I flew with several crews until I became permanent with Spalding. Thanks for the information .

George Mynchenberg
gcmynch@worldnet.att.net

Editors Note: Bubba is David E Denney (D) 824 Sq, the father of member Daniel L Denney who sent in these two wartime letters :

Italy
Jan 2, 1945
Dear Family:

It is snowy and rainy. Woke up this morning to find the ground frozen hard and just beginning to snow. It was 1/2 inches deep in just 30 minutes. It has been snowing on and off since then and the mud is back again.

Some snow still remains and the clouds are still up there, so may have more snow. Had a little football game a while ago out in the field in front of our tent. Went down to the line to get some gas for the stove. An Italian there told me this snow was the first in seven years.

The snow made a white blanket on the runway and on the ships. Last night was New Years and we had a big dinner of turkey and dressing, about the same as we had for Thanksgiving. Saw a show called "Adventure in Drag," but it wasn't very good.

Took some pictures today, but it will probably take a couple of months to get them developed. I drew a picture of me as I used to look when Conway snapped a picture of me, the face doesn't look like me though, thank goodness. I'm no good at drawing portraits. Sending a copy of a poem I wrote that was finished on Christmas Eve for the boys in the tent. One laid off drinking on Christmas day, so I am very satisfied.

Sent some money home by the government today, should be there in ten days to three weeks. The shoes you sent me feel better every day, I wear them most of all when I'm in the tent. If snow falls again tonight, I'm going rabbit hunting in the morning. I wonder if it's snowing at home, I would like to have been there with all the snow. I wrote you what was in the boxes I sent, that you received so I can check up on anything that is missing.

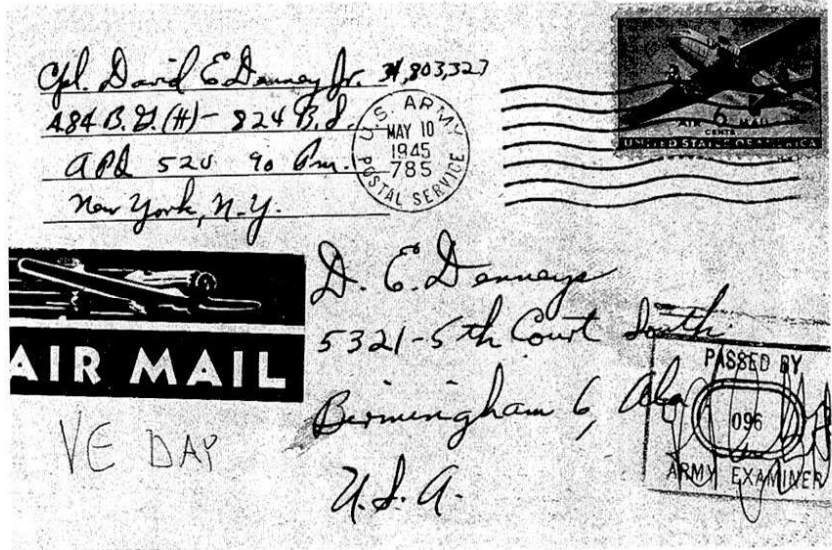
Much love to you all,
Bubba

PS Received the Christmas card signed by Mom and Pop and the one signed Sis. They were the two most beautiful I have ever received and I like the inscriptions on each one. I have two of Charley's Santa Clauses pinned on my wall.

Italy
May 7, 1945
Dear family:

Today is VE day, the day we have been waiting for, almost 6 years now. I was in town when I heard the news. For everyone it hard to believe that the Germans had completely surrendered in Norway as well as the other hold outs.

The Colonel has just spoken to us, and only a few guys are drunk. Most of the fellows felt elated I know, but their hopes are for getting back to the states. The news broadcast of the BBC



gave some of the details of the surrender and also how the news was accepted in the various capitals of the allied nations. Write me all about what went on there.

We had a picture taken when in town today. Enclosing it. Got some good unusual Italian postage stamps at the local post office. Tried to get an accordion case today, but they wanted \$40.00 US, Boy! the prices now.

Got your letter of April 27 mom. Tell uncle Don hello for me. Hope to see you before long. Much Love

Bubba

Bud Markel
Millville, NJ

Dear Bud:

After reading, "The End of World War Two" article by Jud Suddarth in the Fall-Winter issue of the "Torretta Flyer", I broke out my diskette that contains sort of an addendum to his interesting outline concerning memories by Grandpa, relating to the 827th Squadron.

Enclosed is the typed copy lifted off the diskette that might be of interest. Due to my previous inputs to the Flyer, some of it might be repetitious, but I couldn't edit it efficiently. Use it anyway you see fit. (Story on Page 19)

Did you and your staff make it to the B-24 "Liberator Celebration" that was held in San Diego, last December? Reference also to the November issue of the Air Classics magazine, page 4.

Best wishes,
William L.(Bill) Hogan 827Sq

Interesting Fact:
Marge was the name of Richard Bong's P-38. He was the top scoring American Ace in WWII with 40 Victories.

Wuppertal, Germany
 484th Bomb Group
 Dear Mr. Markel,

I thank for you letter . For my book about the air raids of the 15th Air Force against the fuel industry in Germany in the World War II, I need following information: 1) Which objectives were bombed by the 484th Bomb Group (Blechhammer North or Blechhammer South) at following dates:., 07/07/1944, 07/08/1944, 17/11/1944, 20/11/1944, 02/12/1944, 12/12/1944, 18/12/1944. 2) 484th Bomb Group on 14/10/1944? 3) Why was the mission of 30/06/1944 called back? Which targets were bombarded Blechhammer North or Blechhammer South?

Sincerely
 Reinhardt Kapitza

Redondo Beach, CA USA
 Dear Reinhardt:

Bombing Missions flown against Bleckhammer, Germany by the 484th Bomb Group during WWII are shown in the enclosed chart. (See below) The Blechhammer actions of the 484th Bomb Group. On the 14th of October 1944, the 484th Bomb Group went to Edrsetujvac, Hungary. The mission of June 30, 1944 was recalled because of bad weather over the target area. Blechhammer north or south were attacked to reduce the amount of petroleum products available to the German war machine.

Sincerely,
 Bud Markel,
 Founder and President,
 484th Bomb Group Association



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
43	7-7-44	37	69.75	6	0	1				
63	8-744	32	58.25	5	1	3	41-29507		1/Lt HK Ridgway	Cr 456BG airfield
114	11-17-44	32	47.0	4	1	10	42-52641		Reed Sprinkel	Lnd Amendola R.O.N.
114	11-17-44	32	47.0	4	1	10	42-52641	Century Limited	C Roll	Lnd Vis
117	11-20-44	28	46.75	1	1	11	42-51925	El Pagliaccio	Lt .R.A.Dean	FLK-CR Bosan Petrovc
117	11-2044	28	46.75	1	1	10	42-99851	Flak Strainer	Lt RA Brautigam	FLK-CR Plattensse
121	12-2-44	25	44.0	2	0	0				
129	12-12-44	2	3.0	0	0	0				
133	12-18-44	24	33.0	5	1	10	44-41147		2/Lt B H Keller	Lnd Vis
134	12-19-44	22	25.5	5	1	10	42-52641	Century Limited	1/Lt D Zimmerman	Lnd Vis

- 1) Mission Number
- 2) Date 1944
- 3) Number of planes in the attack
- 4) Total tons of bombs dropped
- 5) Number of aircraft returning early due to mechanical causes
- 6) Number of aircraft shot down or damaged
- 7) Number of crew men missing in action
- 8) Serial number of aircraft
- 9) Aircraft Name
- 10) Name of pilot in command of shot down aircraft
- 11) Disposition of shot down aircraft. Lnd vis=Landed at the Island of Vis,

Kingston, PA
Attn. Bud Markel

Dear Bud:

I was the T/G on James Denny's crew in the 825th sq. We were shot down on 4/25/45 over Linz, Austria. First I call your attention to page 30 of Torretta Flyer No. 35, which lists T/Sgt Arthur J. Sullens, who was our engineer, under the date of 4/25/45, which is incorrect. We were, I believe, the last casualty of the 484th, as I had read that only one other mission was flown. Four members of the crew survived; the pilot, 2 waist gunners and myself.

This is a brief story of the mission. Just after the bomb bay doors were opened, we were hit and went into a dive. I kicked out of the tail turret and was slammed to the floor. The next thing I can recall, the plane broke in half just aft of the bomb bay. The only thing I then saw was the radio operator dive out of the waist window. I then followed, was hit in the mouth and knocked out. I awoke about 1-1/2 hours later inside of a house, with my chute hanging from the roof and on a stairway. I then heard a siren and voices. I was picked up, carried to a nearby hospital, which had most of the windows broken. Three days later, after power had been restored, I was ex-rayed. I had a broken back, broken foot and a concussion.

A German major had me put in a cast from my shoulders to my hips and a cast on my left leg. Our forces came through and after several rides in ambulances, I arrived in Paris by plane on my 21st birthday. I was flown via the Azores-Gander Newfoundland and arrived in New York on June 15th. I was hospitalized at the Valley Forge, PA. Army Hospital and was discharged on November 5, 1945.

I have to admit that I shed some tears when I finally saw the list on page 30, and one of the best engineers in the air force, was among our comrades who gave it their all. Bud you do a fine job with the Flyer. I look forward to each one. There were five others on our last mission. I have been trying to find out where they may be buried for you know they went down with the plane with a full bomb load.

Yours very truly,
Earl Harrison

Alma, WV
Dear Bud:

Here is the book I promised, hope it will help you. I thought I had vol two, but can't locate it. Also included are some pages from a book that deals with the political side of the war pages 62-66 with bombings and the foot notes for them. The book is "Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler," by Anthony Sutton.

I have been interested in the political side of the war since taking a German history class in college. It tells how the Germans were ordered not to fire on the British withdrawal to Dunkirk. I have read many books dealing with the political influences of WWII. I would be interested in your comments.

Sincerely,
Charles Marrs, 827 Sq.

Charles Marrs
Alma, WV

Dear Charles:

Thank you for your letter and for the B-24 book. I have not seen this publication before.

As for your remarks regarding certain American-owned companies producing war goods for Nazi Germany and political pressure to alter bombing targets, this could very well be. I am not surprised. There were rumors during and after the war about these activities. I know little about these activities. I would appreciate learning more on the subject.

German leaders criticized the American bombing of German industry for not including the power grids and waterworks, your letter tells how this could have come about. The German war economy did suffer losses of production from the bombing of factories as your enclosures suggests, but when bombing was switched to communication and petroleum targets later in the war, the distribution of goods and war material was greatly effected.

As to the evacuation at Dunkirk, the history books are full of why the British Army escaped destruction, they include supposition, fact, and just plain opinion. The truth may lie somewhere in the middle.

Thanks again for the book and enclosures.
Bud Markel

Lakewood, CO
Bud Markel,

Your envelope came today, and I am very happy to receive all the information. With the full names of the crew I will search the internet. We did remember that Vernon Halliday was from Flint, Michigan.

We have a friend, Luther "Marty" Martinson, in Lakewood who was also in the 484th. He was a Sgt in the staff office, not in the flight group. I will pass your info on to him.

Enclosed is a color print of the crew photo, along with their names. George told us the names and duties several years before he died, and he had it all correct, but he did not remember the first names, except for Halliday.

The information we received from the Military Records reported that the crew flew 16 combat missions, 103:50 combat hours, 136:30 total from February 19 to May 12.

Interesting Fact;

Chetniks, the name given to Yugoslavian partisans led by Draga Mihailovitch. The name meant "men of companies." Chetniks were pro-loyalists and therefore were opposed to Communists under Tito. The Chetniks began the war by actively fighting the Germans, but as the war progressed an unofficial truce developed whereby the Germans left them alone, and in return they did not attack the Germans.



Crew of Vernon Halliday. From left top row: Vernon Halliday-P, John R Dick-C/P, Charles W Woolhan -B, & George W Wehrle. Bottom row from L: Grant W Fox-B/G, Arthur DeAnna-U/G, Edward W McGuire-R/O, Donald M Williams-E, Lowell C Hanes Jr-T/G, & Horace E Harwell-N/G

I have been searching for the bomber group and squadron of my brother-in-law, George W Wehrle, B-24 Navigator in the 15th AF. George died Sept. 26, 1993 and we did not know much of his service record. After contacting the web pages of Steve Riordan and Robert J Giordano, and at their suggestion, I contacted the Military Personnel Records, and have just learned that George served in the 484 BG, 826 Sq in Italy from February 19 to May 15, 1945. His crew members were Vern Halliday, pilot, Dick, co-pilot, Woolhan, bombardier, Wehrle, navigator, Fox, ball gunner, Denna, upper gun, McGuire., radio, Williams, engineer, Haines, tail gun and Harwell, nose gun. I have only the last names from the crew photo, probably taken in US as they all look clean and neat.

Do you have information about any of his crew, or any information of that squadron.

Thank you.
Charles T. Stinson

Redondo Beach, CA
Dear Charles:

Thank you for your e-mail of today. Your information is correct, George W Wehrle and the crew of Vernon D Halliday did indeed fly with the 826th Squadron of the 484th Bomb Group. The crew was comprised of:

ASN	Rank	Duty	First	Last	Status
12164398	Sgt	U/G	Arthur A	DeAnna	enlisted
0833720	1/Lt	C/P	John R	Dick	
42092184	Sgt	B/G	Grant W	Fox	transfer
0834803	1/Lt	P	Vernon D	Halliday	

35071815	Sgt	T/G	Lowell C	Hanes Jr	drafted
34923941	Cpl	N/G	Horace E	Harwell	drafted
32206196	Cpl	R/O	Edward W	McGuire	drafted
02072556	1/Lt	N	George	W Wehrle	(D)
19060238	T/Sgt	E	Donald M	Williams	(D) enlisted
07035550	1/Lt	B	Charles W	Woolhan	(D)

(D) = deceased

As best I know it, they flew missions on: 3/24/45, 3/25/45, 4/2/45, 4/6/45, 4/9/45, 4/10/45, and 4/24/45

In March, and April of 1945 missions were flown to support the ground troops and to prevent escape of the German forces by bombing communication targets in the north, such as bridges and RR traffic

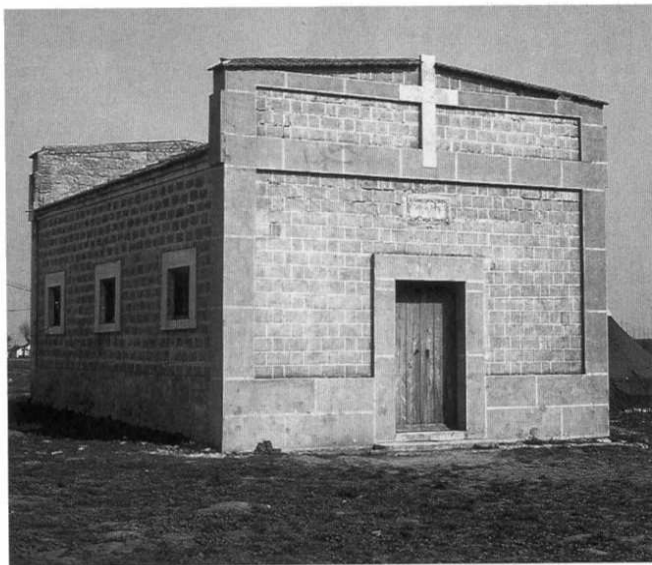
The last operational mission of the 484th BG was flown on April 26, 1945. The war in Europe ended shortly after on May 10, 1945 limiting their missions to a total of seven. Some of the crews positions varied depending on availability on any particular day. By May 10 many of the crews were ferrying their B-24s back to the zone of the interior (USA).

I have enclosed some phone listings from my year old CD ROM disks. You can also search the internet for up to date addresses of the crew. The pilot Vernon D Halliday last lived in Flint, Michigan. I hope this helps you find some of the crew.

Please do have a color copy made of the crew photo and forward the original to me, and I will publish it in the next issue of our magazine the Torretta Flyer. Keep in touch. See our web site at <http://members.aol.com/bud484bg>

Sincerely,
Bud Markel

THE LAST MISSION



One of the Chapels at Torretta Field



Dear Readers:

It is the policy of our association to honor our deceased with an obituary published in the *Torretta Flyer*. It's our way to remember all ranks equally, whatever their achievements. The association can only publish what is known at the time of passing. If you wish to have an obit published in the *Flyer*, do send us the person's life story, a published obit if one is available, and a picture of the member in uniform or at his duties. Also send a crew picture for flying personnel and of their aircraft if available. This is in keeping with the armed force's tradition of honoring the nation's war dead and soldiers and sailors who have passed on since with a full military ceremony at burial when requested.

A Pilots Poem

I hope there's a place, way up in the sky,
Where pilots can go, when they have to die.
A place where a guy can buy a cold beer
For a friend and a comrade, whose memory is dear;

A place where no doctor or lawyer can tread,
Nor a management type would ere be caught dead;

Just a quaint little place, kind of dark, full of smoke
Where they like to sing loud, and love a good joke;
The kind of a place where a lady could go
And feel safe and protected, by the men she would know.

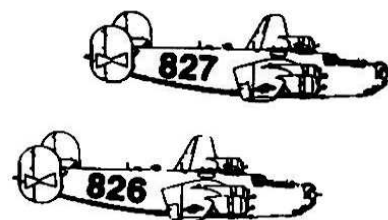
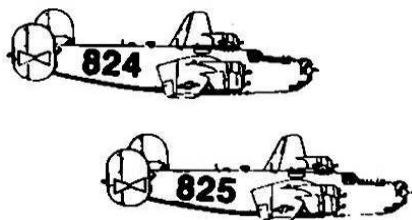
There must be a place where old pilots go,
When their paining is finished, and their airspeed gets low,

Where the whiskey is old, and the women are young,
And songs about flying and dying are sung, Where
you'd see all the fellows who'd flown West before, And
they'd call out your name, as you came through the door.
Who would buy you a drink, if your thirst should be bad,
And relate to the others, "He was quite a good lad!"

And then through the mist, you'd spot an old guy
You had not seen in years, though he taught you
to fly. He'd nod his old head, and grin ear to ear;
And say, "Welcome, my son, I'm pleased that
you're here." "For this is the place where true
flyers come," "When their journey is over, and
the war has been won."

"They've come here at last to be safe and alone" "From
the government clerks and the management clone,"
"Politicians and lawyers, the Feds and the noise,"
"Where all hours are happy, and these good ole boys"
"Can relax with a cool one, and a well deserved rest;"
"This is heaven, my son.... You've passed your last test!"

From the Internet (Stoney) R.Donald@worldnet.att.net



**Personnel of the 484th Bomb Group reported
deceased since the publication of *Torretta Flyer*#35
Fall-Winter 1999.**

F Name	L Name	Unit	Dec Date	F Name	L Name	Unit	Dec Date
Jack L	Abbott	826	1997	George A	Setser	825	
Raymond E	Adler	824	7/31/96	Neal	Spiering	825	
Arthur	Aldene	827	2/7/2000	Walter J	Sysko	825	3/16/86
John P	Benson	824	8/22/44	Charles H.	Terrill	825	5/14/98
Joseph G	Blanc Jr	824	12/22/98	Elmore	Terry	827	10/22/73
Richard D	Boyce	826	11/1999	Robert R.	Tessalone	826	11/1/1983
Harold E	Brocius	826	3/4/45	Kenneth E.	Tetro	825	8/30/83
John J	Burkhardt	827	6/11/1944	Allan	Tewes		11/9/85
Eugene J	Callahan	827	12/25/99	Earl L	Thomas	827	8/16/88
James K	Calvert	825	8/20/90	Aaron L.	Thompson	825	10/10/91
Harold C	Christenson	827	5/10/44	Floyd A.	Timberlake	825	6/14/70
James M	Crockett	826	1997	Clarence	Timock	825	4/8/92
Steven	Cudrack	826	3/4/45	Elmer L	Tindell	827	7/6/96
Henry W	Cushard Jr	826	4/1/99	Joseph L.	Tipton	827	12/15/92
George	Furda, Jr.	826	3/5/97	Leonard J.	Tipton	827	5/7/93
Charles D	Gibbs	827	5/10/44	David E	Titus	826	10/13/83
Kenneth E	Haver	826	3/4/45	George F	Todd Jr	826	4/19/63
Dan	Hurley	827	1/4/98	Vincent J	Tomashek	825	8/30/97
Ralph W	Huss	826	5/10/44	John J.	Tomasian	826	11/11/94
Leonard W	Kiteley	825	11/11/99	Robert	Tomich		12/12/80
Kenneth D	Limbocker	825	12/14/44	Lester E.	Tompkins	826	11/27/84
Andrew	Lopez	826	1/8/00	Deno P.	Tonai	824	6/23/88
Glenn R	Loveall	826		Carl L	Tooley	824	1/5/85
Eugene D	Musser		1/16/46	Claude D	Torgerson	825	10/16/89
Ross A	Netzley	824	unk	Charles R	Westbrook	826	3/4/45
Ralph E	Parkhurst	827	1/13/99				
Stevenson B	Porter	825	1/18/92				
David F	Reese		6/11/44				
Julian V	Ronder		2/20/45	Gretchen	Gifford	824	
Billie R	Sanders	825	6/26/44	Marie	Hicks	826	8/18/99
Alva M	Schick	825	3/31/1986	Betty	Valdez	826	11/25/99

Deceased spouses of 484th Members

Arthur Aldene, 827 Sq.

Arthur Delmar Aldene, 77, of Moline died Friday, Jan. 7, 2000, at University of Wisconsin Hospital, Madison WI.

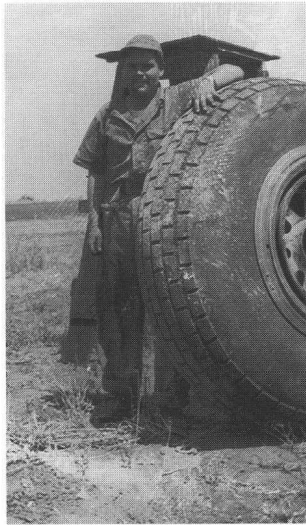
Arthur Delmar Aldene was born on Aug. 4, 1922, in Moline to Arthur E. and Emma (Andregg) Aldene. He married Betty L. Ash on Nov. 25, 1950, at the Evangelical Free Church, Moline.

Arthur was employed with John Deere Harvester Works in manufacturing engineering from Jan. 2, 1952, until Nov. 1, 1982. He also enjoyed cars, golfing, and especially spending time with his grandchildren.

Arthur was a member of First Presbyterian Church, East Moline, at which he was a former Sunday school teacher, elder and church treasurer.

Art Aldene was an Assistant Crew Chief, working long hours with the other mechanics to keep the ships of the 827 Squadron flying such as "War Weary, Knock Out", and Broad Abroad. He was an active member of the association and attended many reunions with wife Betty.

Arthur is survived by his wife, Betty; three daughters, Kathie Aldene of East Moline, Janet Freeborn and her husband, Joseph, of Bettendorf, and Susan Aldene of Madison, Wis.; and a sister and brother-in-law, Mary Lou and Dwight Nelson of Platteville, Wis. Arthur is also survived by his grandchildren, Alex, Samantha, Kyle and Randi Freeborn of Bettendorf. Arthur was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Wade Aldene.



Joseph G Blanc Jr, 824 Sq.

Joseph G Blanc Jr, died in 1998. He enjoyed receiving information about the group and when both he and Maxine were alive, they traveled to several of the reunions and had a great time. He died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage after falling and hitting his head at home. He and his grandchildren (19 & 20) were decorating the house for Christmas; when he fell down the stairs.

Joe Blanc served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and flew 50 missions as a top turret gunner on B-24s. He flew out of North Africa and Torretta Field in Italy. After his discharge, he returned to Walla Walla and resumed farming.

Blanc married Maxine Jensen on June 3, 1946, in Ferdinand, Idaho. They made their home in Burbank, later moving to Spring Creek where they farmed for 15 years. They later moved back to Walla Walla. Upon retirement, they enjoyed traveling, golfing and frequent trips to Nevada with family members. He was active in the Assumption Catholic Church, the Elks, 484 Bomber Group Association, the DeSales Booster Club and the Walla Walla Country Club. He enjoyed fishing and gardening.

Survivors include daughters and sons-in-law Mary Margaret "Muff" and Dennis Balakier of Walla Walla plus Judy and Kerry Hampton of Vancouver; sisters Agnes Long of Livingston, Mont., Elizabeth Howard of Snohomish and Virginia Campbell of Roswell, Ga; brothers Marcel of Dixie, Albert of Livingston, Robert of Pendleton and Raymond of Pascoe; as well as four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife and a sister, Mary Louise Blanc.

Eugene J Callahan, 827 Sq.

Eugene J. Callahan, 78, a World War II veteran who long studied the history of the war, died Saturday, December 25, 1999, of complications from a fall while jogging.

Mr. Callahan served in the, Army Air Forces, 484th Bomb Group with the rank of first 1/Lt. He flew 51 missions as a bombardier in B-24s. and received the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters.

He graduated from Washington University with a degree in business administration in 1948 and worked for American Appraisal and Marshall & Stevens.

After retiring, Mr. Callahan spent summers at Cambridge University in England, studying the war and Winston Churchill's life, about which he liked to speak.

Survivors include his wife, Jeanne Byrne Callahan; two sons, John R. Callahan and Matthew Callahan, a brother, Robert F. Callahan a sister, Patricia Callahan, and three stepchildren.

He is buried in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. shown below.



Aircraft maintenance crew 827 Sq. who were detailed to prepare the airfield for return to the owner of the land, one Baron Sezza. The men are from left: Richard Warrington, Charles Marrs, James Lowry, Art Aldene, Edgar Livingston, and James A Hart. Arthur Barkley photo

Jack Malatsky, KIA, 827 Sq.

Submitted by his nephew Jack Forman

Jack Malatsky, a WW 2 B-24 Bombardier was lost in action Nov. 17, 1944, over the Adriatic Sea. Sidney J. (Jack) Malatsky was 20 years old when his airplane was hit by anti-aircraft fire while on its bomb run over Vienna, Austria. Last seen by other planes dropping out of formation, the "Lady Luck" did not make it back to its base at Torretta, Italy. Knowing they had only about 15 minutes of air time left, the crew, led by pilot Lt. Henry T. Mills, decided to ditch the aircraft rather than parachute into the sea.

The airplane, a four-engined B-24 Liberator bomber, and its crew of ten young men were attached to the 484th Bomb Group, 827th Bomb Squadron. The 484th, part of the 15th Air Force followed the Allied invasion of Italy and was flying from its aerodrome in southern Italy during 1944 and 1945.

Although my mother, Shirley Malatsky Forman had told me the story of her brother's loss and of how I had been named for him, it had been only a vague "family story" until recently. In September of 1998 I was searching the Internet when I came upon links which led me eventually to getting the actual Missing Air Crew Report for that unlucky mission. Also found was a Web site for the 484th BG as well as a letter from a gentleman who wrote to tell me that he knew and served with my Uncle Jack.

The story of Jack's final mission is of course fascinating to me, but certainly not unique in that great conflict. My plan is to post the MACR, with its account by the only survivor of "Lady Luck": Lt. Mills, in this site. I would like to make it available to all those who share my interest in keeping these stories alive.

According to the MACR, (Missing Air Crew Report) at the time, Henry Mills apparently lived with his parents at: 1329 Altamont Rd. Birmingham Alabama. I don't know how my family was contacted, but there were scam artists around at the time who preyed on people who were in situations like theirs. As no body was ever recovered they held out hope that maybe he had swum to shore and would return some day.

A man contacted my grandmother Anne Malatsky and offered, for a fee, to get information on what had happened to him. Maybe he would even bring Jack home. Naturally being in deep grief, she invited him to the house. The men of the family were waiting for him when he arrived and turned him back under threat of physical violence.

The report of Lt. Henry T. Mills, the pilot and lone survivor of the crash of B-24 "Lady Luck" was taken directly from the Missing Air Crew Report November 17, 1944, as follows:

"The aircraft was struck by flak on the bomb run, knocking out two engines and inflicting other serious damage, but no crew member was injured. An attempt was made to reach the Allied Air Base on the island of Vis. Approx. 15 minutes from the ETA at Vis, the remaining engines failed, thus leaving me with two alternatives - to bail the crew out over open sea or ditch the aircraft. I issued the order to prepare to ditch at about 8,000 feet, and the Navigator, F/O P.I. Lynch, replied a few moments later that the crew was ready to ditch. Seven men were in the rear of the ship and the Engineer, Co-pilot and myself were in the front.

"The ditching occurred immediately upon striking the water

the B-24 broke in half and the rear part of the ship from the bomb-bay back had already sunk when I got out of the cockpit. The Co-pilot, H.G. Martin, Engineer, S.A. Farstad and myself got out of the plane alive, but as our life rafts failed to work we were forced to stay afloat by means of swimming and the use of life vests. The Co-pilot and Engineer decided to make an attempt to swim for the island in sight and get help. I remained near the scene of the ditching as I had no life vest and had to concentrate entirely on staying afloat. That was the last I saw of any members of my crew alive.

"Approx. 2 1/2 hours later I was picked up by Partisans in a small rowboat and we immediately searched the area to see if we could find any signs of life but none could be found. The Partisans who picked me up had also found the body of Cpl. Guy Pledger, gunner in the crew, and his body was in the boat with me. I was taken to the island of Bisevo by the Partisans, and although we searched the surrounding areas, we could find no sign of any of my crew. I was taken to the island of Vis by a British Air-Sea Rescue unit, along with the body of Guy Pledger, which we left with the American authorities at Vis. From Vis I went to the hospital at Bari, Italy and then to my base.

"It is possible that the crew members in the rear of the ship bailed out, as I did not have contact with them from 8,000 feet on down. The Co-pilot was listening on interphone and talking to the crew, and I was in contact with Big Fence emergency radio station from the moment after I received the reply that the crew was ready to ditch until we struck the water. The men in the rear were Schultz, Lynch, Malatsky, Kaler, Brewer, Cosgrove and Pledger. I think this is highly improbable, though. I say this only because I am not positive as I am the only survivor."

John Hassan, 826 Sq.

John Hassan died 11/1/99 at 76. For nearly two months, Lt. John Hassan eluded the German army by sleeping in trees during the day and crossing mountains by moonlight. John Hassan, a navigator aboard a B-24 Bomber was one of two crew members who survived when their plane was shot down over Germany during World War II.

His fellow crewman was captured on John's 21st birthday when his plane was shot down," recalled his brother, Adam Hassan. "For two months John lived on wild berries and whatever wild fruit he could find." Eventually he was found by partisans and returned to the base that was under the command of Randolph Churchill, Winston Churchill's son." Hassan was quite ill he added. "He was suffering from malaria and dysentery and a loss of weight." After a short stint as an instructor in the United States, John Hassan was discharged and returned to his home in East Pittsburgh.

John Hassan was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple heart, Air Medal with an Oak Leaf cluster, and an EAME Theater Ribbon with Seven Battle Stars. In 1992, Mr. Hassan was inducted into the Hall of Valor in Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood.

John Hassan, a resident of Penn Hills, died from complications of diabetes on Wednesday, Sept. 1, 1999, in the VA Hospital

continued on next page

Continued from previous page

in Aspinwall, Allegheny County. He was 76.

Born and raised in East Pittsburgh, Mr. Hassan was one of six children of Hetem and Barbara Stadjahar Hassan. His father, who operated a hotel and general store in East Pittsburgh, emigrated from Turkey in 1907. Barbara Hassan emigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

At 16, John Hassan dropped out of East Pittsburgh High School. Two years later he joined the Army. "My brother was a radio operator at Hickam Field in Pearl Harbor, the day the Japanese attacked," recalled Adam Hassan. "John escaped injury, but every plane on the ground was destroyed."

Returning to the United States, John Hassan opted for pilot and navigator training with the Army Air Forces. Upon receiving his commission as a Navigator, Mr. Hassan was based at Torretta Airfield in Italy and participated in the bombing of the oil fields in Romania.

While home on leave, before his discharge, Mr. Hassan was asked to speak before a student assembly at his former high school. "When John was finished speaking, they handed him a high school diploma," said Adam Hassan.

Upon returning to East Pittsburgh, Mr. Hassan married Gelda Sweeney. To support his wife and two children, Mr. Hassan at first took a job at the Union Railroad and he later worked as a sales representative for Design Sales Associates. Gelda Hassan died in 1978.

John Hassan met his second wife, Jean Marsteller, a realtor, when he was trying to sell his home in Plum Borough, Allegheny County. "I met John and appraised his home," said Jean Hassan. "I never did sell John's house. He called me about a week later and invited me out to dinner. We were married soon after and I moved in."

In addition to his wife, Mr. Hassan is survived by two sons, John R. Hassan of Pittsburgh's North Hills and George P. Hassan of Durango, Colo.; and a brother, Adam Hassan of Tampa, Fla.

George J. Scheina, 826 Sq.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
Washington, 25, DC

Scheina, George J.
32366767

24 October, 1951

Mr. William Scheina
Glouster Pike
Barrington, NJ

Dear Mr. Scheina:

Reference is made to the interment of your son, the late Staff Sergeant George J. Scheina, and his comrades, which was made in Grave 73-D, Section 82, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri. It is regretted that because of the fact it was impossible individually to identify the remains of your son, you were deprived of the comfort and consolation which you might have been afforded by interring his remains at home.

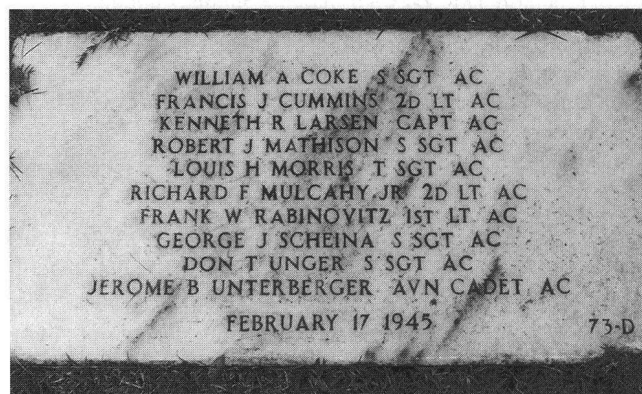
It is felt that you might like to have the enclosed photograph of the stone, which has been placed at the grave.

You are assured that the grave will always be cared for in a manner fully commensurate with the sacrifice your son has made for his country. Any desired information concerning the grave or the cemetery will be furnished upon request.

Sincerely yours,
Lt./Col James F. Watt
Memorial Division

Editors Note:

George Scheina was KIA, as was most of the crew on the mission of 2/17/45 to Trieste (Now part of Italy) The plane "Bells of St Joe" serial No. 44- 48828 collided with aircraft 44-49721 piloted by Abner O McDaniel who died 2/18/45 from his wounds. Edward M Duke was the only survivor of the crew.



Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery

Charles Wayshak, 824 Sq.

Watertown, MA.
Dear Mr. Markel:

Thank you for your kind letter of June 15th. Now that things have settled down I am answering it.

My husband, Charlie had many, stories about the War. But unfortunately we didn't put anything down in writing. So it would be very hard to tell. He had 31 missions in all. As he always said "War was an adventure but it also was Hell."

I am enclosing a couple of pictures maybe you can use. One is Charles in his flying gear and the other is with a group he flew with. We had a flood at one time. Some or most of our pictures were lost. These two pictures have a little damage. Charles has a collection of all your Torretta Flyers to date. He enjoyed them over and over again.

My husband had hepatitis in Italy in November 1944. In fact he said the whole outfit was grounded for two weeks They had nothing to eat then but beef morning, noon and night until they were sick of it. His health wasn't too bad until in Sept. of 1998 he started to feel the hepatitis again. Now almost 55 years later it came back to take him.

Continued on next page

Continued from Previous page

Thank you for offering me membership in the Association. As an honor to my husband's memory I accept. But I don't know how active I will be.

Sincerely
Veronica Wayshak

824th Bombardment Squadron (H)
Office of the Operations Officer
APO 520U S Army

9 April 1945

Subject: : S/Sgt Charles Wayshak, 31302124.
To Whom It may Concern.

1. S/Sgt Charles Wayshak, 31302124, flew thirty-one combat missions as a member of this organization and eighteen combat missions as an aerial photographer. In flying as an aerial photographer, he used both the K-20 and the K-22 cameras, and his work was excellent. Due to medical reasons, it is not advisable for S/Sgt Wayshak to continue flying and it is recommended that he be sent to a technical school for advanced work in ground photography. It is believed that he has a definite aptitude for photography as shown in his reclassification from aerial gunner to aerial photographer with a very short course of intensive training.
Wilson B Wilkes, Major, Air Corps,
Operations Officer

15th AAF IN ITALY

S/Sgt. Charles Wayshak, 94 Hudson St., Boston, Mass., aerial photographer of a B-24 Liberator squadron in the 15th Air Force in Italy, was recently awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for "extraordinary achievement during aerial flights over enemy territory."

During a recent bombing attack on the vital oil refineries at Regensberg, Germany, Sergeant Wayshak remained at his post and took pictures of the bomb strikes of his formation despite the crippled condition of his aircraft which was severely damaged by enemy anti-aircraft fire.

A veteran of 31 missions, he holds the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and is authorized to wear the Distinguished Unit Badge with one Oak Leaf Cluster as a member of a heavy bombardment group which has been twice cited by the War Department for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy.

Sergeant Wayshak was employed by the E. M. Loew's The-

ater Corp., Boston, Mass., until entering the service in March, 1943 He attended school at Buckley Field, Colo., and gunnery school at Laredo, Texas .

His mother, Mrs. Mary Wayshak, lives at 94 Hudson St., Boston, Mass.

Kenneth J. Juster
Certified Passed
By Field Press Censor
US Army

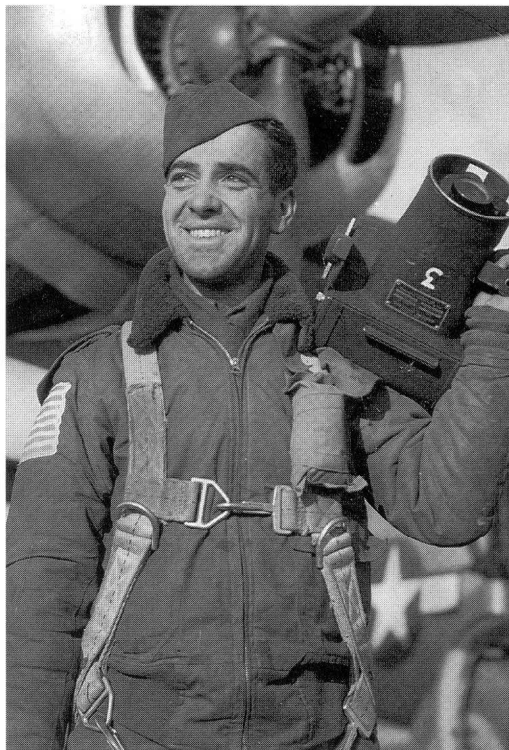
Gretchen Gifford

(wife of William Gifford, 824 Sq.)

Gretchen Mundhenk Gifford, of Marco Island, Florida, passed away of congestive heart failure She was born in Chicago, Illinois; She grew up in Barrington, Illinois; Auburn, Alabama; Denton, Texas and Pearl River, New York.

Gretchen was a graduate of Ohio State University where she met her husband William Ralph Gifford. She was actively involved in charity and community organizations including the Twigs at Overlook Hospital and the American Association of University Women. She frequently donated her time to caring and helping others. A devoted wife, mother and grandmother.

She is survived by her husband William, sons William Ralph Gifford Jr. (grandchildren William Ralph III, Geoffrey Carr, and Grace Elizabeth ; son Russell Mundhenk Gifford grandchildren Ashley Sarrah, Chelsea Lauren and Kara Brooke and son Gregory Kent Gifford .



Charles Wayshak

Marie Hicks

(wife of John Hicks, 826 Sq.)

Marie Hicks of Port Jervis, NY a homemaker and long time resident of the area, died at 77. She was born Jan. 30, 1922, in Jersey City, NJ the daughter of the late Erasmo and Clementina Marzano DiSpirito.. Survivors include her husband, John Hicks, one son, Dr. David J. Hicks ; one brother, Gino Dispirito, one sister, Ida Aber, and several nieces and nephews. Burial was in St. Mary's Cemetery, Port Jervis, NY



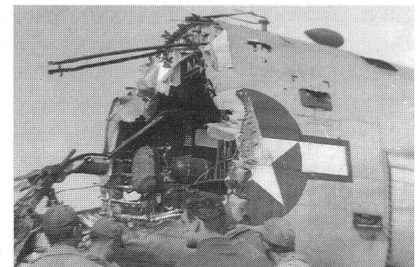
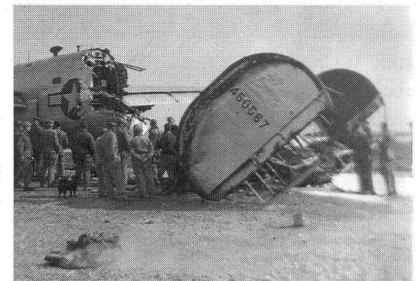
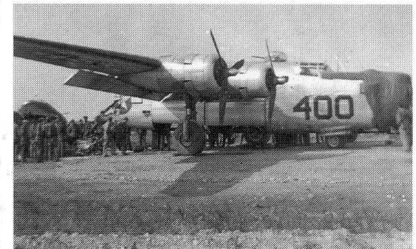
Crew of Donald G Zimmerman 824 Sq. Front Row from left: Dominick J Blanda-B, Donald G Zimmerman-P, Charles R Walters-C/P, Walter Klus-N, Standing: Arthur G Ouellette-B/G, Donald E Kenny-R/O, Rix H DeLambert-T/G, James F Carney-N/G, Michael A Rainy-W/G, and, Marshall Kahn-E



Frank Nuzum, 827th Sq. New member



Crew of Walter Jehli: Standing from Left: Norman A Bennett-N, Melvin Rubin-C/P, Walter A Jehli-P, Arthur J Hill-B, Kneeling: Bernard Kelly-R/O, Herman J White-T/G, James Timmerman-N/G, Frank K Helman-U/G, Harry G Walsh-E, and Charles Wayshak-B/G. Photo taken February 17, 1943.



Fire Mickey Ship #400, 44-50567

The 484th Bomb Group Association
1122 Ysabel St.
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