



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 11, No. 2

December 1994

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA



MILDRED BROWN O'BANNON

August 1, 1919—August 1, 1994

Millie, wife of our President Lieutenant Colonel Frank C. O'Bannon for over 50 years, passed from our ranks on 1 August. She and Frank grew up together in Germantown, Pennsylvania and were married in October of 1943, just before he went overseas with the 461st Bomb Group. Throughout his military career, Millie followed him to various parts of the world, setting up new households in more than twenty locations.

Along with Frank, Millie pulled the 461st Bomb Group Association together, spending countless hours in organizing the Annual Reunions, handling the massive amounts of paperwork and records required to maintain our organization. Her warm, friendly and sincere manner will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Thanks Millie for all you did for us. We know you'll be at the end of the runway with the coffee and doughnuts when we complete our last flight.

The 461st LIBERAIDER
461st Bombardment Group (H)
Activated: 1 July 1943
Inactivated: 27 August 1945
Incorporated: 15 November 1985

CORPORATE HDQRS: 1407 W. 4th St. P.O. Box 5160, Spencer, IA 51301

FEDERAL IRS TAX EXEMPT, Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(19) No. 42-1272736

OFFICERS

Frank C. O'Bannon, President, 9260 Fosteris Drive, Tucson, AZ 85741
Edward N. Chan, Vice-President, 1065 N. 5th St., New Hyde Park, NY 11040
G. "Pete" Peterson, Treasurer, 1407 W 4th St., P.O. Box 5160, Spencer, IA 51301

DIRECTORS—1993-1995

Leonard D. Cole Hdqrs Sqdn Rt #1 Box 495, Osage Beach, MO 65065
John Young 764th Sqdn 1049 Jamaica Ct., Aurora, CO 80010
Gino Pishione 765th Sqdn 850 Temperana, Clovis, CA 93612
Robert V. Hayes 766th Sqdn 31 Grand St., New City, NY 10956
Denothy R. Perkins 767th Sqdn 7128 Salizar St, San Diego, CA 92111

ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

Thomas Javaruski Hdqrs Sqdn
John A. Lewandowski 764th Sqdn 951 N. Railroad Ave., Staten Island, NY 10306
Joel Fish 765th Sqdn 112 McKee, Houghton Lake, MI 48629
George A. Iubelt 766th Sqdn 165K Cross Slope Ct., Englishtown, NJ 07726
767th Sqdn P.O. Box 3134, Carbondale, IL 62902

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Memorial: Edward Izzo, 296 Huntridge Way, Winter Springs, FL 32708
Membership: Ed Chan, 1065 N 5th St, New Hyde Park, NY 11040
Post Exchange: Wally Robinson, 3 E. Cardott, Ridgeway, PA 15853
Publicity: Looking for a volunteer!

1995 Reunion: The Marimac Corporation, 6790 E. Calle Dorado, Tucson, AZ 85715

"Liberaider"

George D. Dickie—Editor—PO Box 615, East Sandwich, MA 02537
The "Liberaider" is published twice a year on behalf of the members of the organization. Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

Dues

Soon you will receive your letter from Tucson, AZ informing you that it is time to pay 1995 dues to the 461st Bomb Gp. You will write your check, place it in the piggy back envelope addressed to Gail Peterson, Treasurer, Spencer, IA, drop it in the mail slot and then realize—Gee, I wonder where that is going. It is going near the center of the Continental United States, arriving at Spencer, IA on the transcontinental highway extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Crossing Highway 71 in the middle of Spencer, extending from west to east is County Highway 'B24' where the letter stops. Yes, I've been keeping as close to the "B24" as anybody in the group. And as you notice, in the background, my neighbors to the west are very quiet and restful.



461st Bomb Group (H) 1943-1945 Inc.

Financial Statement as of November 10, 1994

General Checking Account Balance 1-1-94	\$3,560.43
Receipts From Dues Paid	\$11,134.20
Interest Earned on Checking Account	195.66
Receipt from PX	1,782.50
Total Receipts	\$16,672.79

EXPENSES

Office Supplies	\$711.73
Frank O'Bannon Petty Cash	569.66
Postage	733.95
PX Supplies and Postage	1,699.67
James Hardee (Locating Members)	505.30
Liberaider Publication and Mailing	1,241.00
Plaque placed at Fresno, CA	213.26
General Checking Account Balance 11-10-94	10,998.22
Total Expenses	\$16,672.79

FUNDS TO COMPENSATE DUES FOR LIFE MEMBERS

Vanguard Mutual Fund Value on 9-30-94	\$3,215.61
Stein Roe Income Fund Value on 9-30-94	3,297.61
Scudder Income Fund Value on 10-27-94	4,069.33
Cert of Deposit Frmr's Bank Value 8-31-94	3,509.55

OTHER FUNDS

CD FRMRS BA 350073 Memorial Fund Value 8-1-94	1,076.02
CD FRMRS BK 33469 Reunion Acct Value 8-31-94	9,076.13

OTHER CHECKING ACCOUNT

Reunion Checking Account - 11-9-94	\$1,008.28
From the above Reunion Checking Account, a check has been written in the amount of \$7,500.00 to pay for the deposit on the Caribbean Cruise with the 1995 Reunion.	

Gail Peterson
Treasurer

1994 REUNION—HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

The 8th Annual Reunion was dedicated to the memory of Millie O'Bannon who died on August 1, 1994. Her tireless efforts contributed so much to the growth and strength of the 461st Bomb Gp (H) Association.

Four hundred fifty members gathered at the Holiday Inn, Hampton, Virginia, from October 12—16, 1994, to renew friendships, many dating back 50 years or more. This ranks it near the top of the reunion attendance records.

As many of the members of the Association have attended most of our reunions, they and their wives have established additional friendships. Each year there are members attending for the first time who are able to meet former crewmembers, tent mates, or men from their section. If you haven't attended a reunion, plan to attend one soon—you will enjoy it.

On Thursday our first bus tour was to historic Langley Air Force Base. Langley is among the oldest continuously active air bases in the United States. It was established in 1917.

The present host unit is the 1st Fighter Wing maintaining on of the largest fighter bases in the U.S. They fly the F-15 Eagle. The 1st Fighter Wing has the three oldest and most famous fighter squadrons in the USAF, the 27th, the 94th and the 71st. They all flew in WWI. Eddie Rickenbacker was a member of the 94th. All three units flew P-38's and were based in Italy during WWII. Each received three Distinguished Unit Citations, including one on May 18, 1944, at Ploesti.

An F-15, F-16 and the F117 "Stealth Fighter" were parked in a hanger for our inspection (see centerfold pictures). Air Force personnel were available for questions.

After a tour of the base, an excellent lunch was served at the NCO Club located on the shore of the Back River and Chesapeake Bay.

It was then off to historic Fort Monroe, the largest stone fort in the U.S. which was completed in 1834. It is moat encircled and requires visitors to drive through narrow moat gates to reach the fort and the Casemate Museum. It is still an active army base.

Thursday night Squadron dinners were held for the first time. It was good to meet and socialize in smaller groups. It provided a special opportunity to renew old and make new friendships. Attendance was broken down as follows:

Headquarters	25
764th Squadron	130
765th Squadron	115
766th Squadron	105
767th Squadron	76

Despite heavy rain and strong winds on Friday, two of three scheduled boat cruises of Hampton Roads were completed. We made the best of the rain and windy conditions (the first rainy day for any of our reunions), however, the captain did request that there be no running on the deck.

After lunch, we visited the new Air and Space Museum, located in Hampton. The tour included as IMAX theater showing of "Destiny in Space".

On Saturday, we toured Jamestown and Yorktown. Jamestown was the first permanent English colony and Vir-

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ginia's colonial capital for 92 years.

At Yorktown, our visit coincided with an encampment of colonial troops celebrating the 213th anniversary of General Cornwallis' surrender and the end of the Revolutionary War (see centerfold). We walked the fields where the eight day battle took place.

The rest of the group elected to visit Colonial Williamsburg. We arrived around 10:00 and were met by tour guides who took groups of about 25 people. The guides were very well trained and gave us a good insight into the life and times of Colonial Williamsburg. They turned us loose about noon and we had the rest of the day to explore the area by ourselves (see centerfold).

The Saturday Night Dinner/Dance was one of our best, due in a large part to an excellent dance orchestra, that featured a "Boots Randolph" style saxophonist. Their music had everyone on the dance floor.

The Sunday Morning Memorial Service was conducted by an Air Force Chaplain. It was time for reflection and remembrances of comrades and friends. Then, after a delicious buffet breakfast, it was time for goodbyes until the next reunion—see you there!

Editor's note: Thanks Bob Hayes, Association Director for the 766th Squadron, for providing this summary of the 1994 Reunion.

* * * * *

LOST PERSONS AND MISSING INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

We are still looking for the last 800 or so unaccounted-for men of the 461st, but we're running out of steam. We need more clues and that's where you come in. If you are looking for a specific person, you can help by supplying us with info we may not have, such as the latest city and state of residence, first name of spouse and/or children with the same surname, professional or work interest, school (college) attended, special interest(s), etc.

For those of you who asked me at the reunion to locate crewmembers and buddies, please drop me a line as I may have misplaced my scribblings during the hubbub. Give added info above if applicable. A self-addressed, stamped envelope would be appreciated and will save me time. Mailing address: Ed Chan, 1065 N. 5th St., New Hyde Park, NY 11040.

All 461st Navigators—Lately I've been involved in helping Air Force navigators to re-establish contact with their navigation school classmates. In line with this, I have been amassing rosters (by class) of all navigation schools—especially WWII. The number of names run into five figures but are not impossible to handle if done methodically.

I'm appealing to all navigators and bombardier/navigators for help. If you have not been contacted by me or the Air Force Nav/Obs Association, would you please send me the following info: 1) Your full name 2) Officer Serial Number (T# for flight officers) 3) Navigation school 4) Class designation 5) Graduation date—month/year.

If you still have your graduation orders and any other documents showing your classmates city/state and serial number, let me know, as I may be missing that info and will request same at a later date. Note: If you graduated from navigation class as a flight officer but carry an 01- or 02- serial number on our Group (461st) roster, please send in the info above with your T# as this is how my records are set up. My mailing address appears above in "Lost Persons" article.

Thanks,
Ed Chan

Do You Know About the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Club?

One of New York's best kept secrets

The Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Club (SS&A) is located at 283 Lexington Avenue, between 36th and 37th Street, in the historic Murray Hill section of Midtown New York. It has been there since 1926 serving over a million military personnel of our Armed Forces and Allies.

This is a Not-For-Profit organization, licensed under the State of New York, supported by private citizens to express their thanks for the job our Servicemen and Servicewomen are doing and have ever done. The SS&A is very proud of its Honorary Past Presidents and Vice Presidents who include: President Dwight D. Eisenhower, General John J. (Black Jack) Pershing, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, General George C. Marshall, Secretary of Navy Frank Knox and General Willis D. Crittenger. Colonel John W. Pershing, grandson of the General, serves on the SS&A Board of Directors.

Five blocks from Grand Central Station in one direction and the Empire State Building in another, the SS&A is within easy walking distance of the United Nations, the Broadway theaters and several famous department stores. Restaurants catering to every taste and level of pocket book abound in the area.

It's a small hotel, 29 rooms (70 beds), with a private club atmosphere and restricted clientele: our military personnel, past and present. The SS&A provides safe, clean, convenient and attractive lodging accommodations to all officers and enlisted members of the Total Force and their dependents (12 years and older).

For \$30 a night per person weekends and holidays, you get a comfortable spot to sleep in and use of the SS&A's facilities (\$25 each for weekends, and \$20 each for two or more guests). The SS&A boasts a pool room, TV room (cable services), and two large comfortable lounges with grand pianos and a library, all open for use by our guests.

On Friday nights guests are welcomed with wine and cheese and on Saturday, Sunday and Holiday mornings you can enjoy a hearty breakfast in the Club canteen—no charge.

Take a bite out of the Big Apple without taking a bite out of your wallet. Simply call, toll free, 1-800-678-TGIF for information and reservations.

* * * * *

The 4th Annual Reunion of Kingman Army Air Field was held 30 September, 1-2 October, 1994. They are looking for former military and civilian personnel and families associated with the base. Please contact them for news about future events.

Kingman Army Air Field Reunions
Attn: Rob Chilcoat
6000 Flightline Drive, Box 3
Kingman, AZ 86401
(602) 757-1892

MAIL CALL



September 24, 1994

Dear George,

In reviewing old records and putting them into some sort of order, I came upon the enclosed snapshot. Seated in the 1944 picture taken on the Isle of Capri while on R and R are, left to right:

Lt. Roy W. Wyllie
 Lt. William G. Garrett
 Lt. Arthur J. Marangelo

Bill Garrett
 764th Squadron



Editor's note: I get a lot of letters like this with pictures that aren't as clear as this one and which I can't possibly use because you wouldn't be able to tell who the people are. I love to hear from you and appreciate your efforts but it doesn't tell me or the membership anything. Why not write a story about the hell you went through to earn your trip to Capri or how about a story telling of the hell you went through beating off all the chicks on Capri. It doesn't even have to be true (but no member of the 461st would lie about a thing like that).

Let's hear from you. It only takes time and most of us have plenty of that.

Dear George,

Just in case his wife does not get the news to you in time for the next edition of the LIBERAIDER, I'm sending you a copy of Robert L. Butler's obituary. He was a M/Sgt, crew chief in the 764th Sqdn. He was my good friend and tent mate during our stay in Italy. He will be sadly missed by his wife, family and friends. He and his wife had met with some of us for mini-reunions from time to time. His wife sent me his obituary from the newspaper, so I'm sending a copy to you.

I won't be able to attend the reunion in Virginia this year, although I had really big plans on it. I'm just recovering from triple by-pass heart surgery, which is no fun!!! However, I am doing well! Maybe next year—!!!

Henry A. Jones
 764th Squadron

(Editor: See "Obituaries" on page 23)

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

I am going to relate to you what I saw over Germany in the spring or early summer of 1945. The intent is to receive verification from somebody that flew that mission and/or an explanation from an informed person.

We were on a bombing mission (which one I don't know) over Germany. We were above a heavy cloud formation. I was manning one of the waist guns and searching the sky for enemy airplanes. I saw three round objects as big as a silver dollar each and very brightly illuminated. All I saw was one dimension, the front. They were at 3 o'clock and were just standing still in midair. As to the distance, I am not sure, but they seemed to be far away. They were in a "V" formation at all times. They would move a little bit to the right then a little to the left as if toying with me. After about a minute these three objects flew at tremendous speed to the right and stopped at about 6 o'clock. I wanted to break radio silence but the objects were not threatening so I just watched. They kept that distance for about 30 seconds then moved to the left and stopped at the 3 o'clock position. They held that position for a few seconds and then flew to the left and a few seconds later returned to

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the mid position. Their rate of speed was unbelievable. First they were here and the next instant they were at another position. Finally I saw them fly away in formation at great speed. Speeds that I have never seen or known about. I kept watching for them to come back but they never did.

If anybody out there had a similar experience, please write. I would appreciate it. At the debriefing I tried to tell my story, but it was ignored, so I dropped it.

Victor M. Martinez
766th Squadron
3101 Mountain Ave.
El Paso, TX 79930

* * * * *

Editor's note: I received a letter from William P. Hettinger, pilot of crew 266-13 of the 767th Squadron. He had written to give the whereabouts of his crewmembers. I passed this on to the proper authorities. He also offered this little bidbit:

"I don't believe this story was ever told. Our ship was named 'The Red Head' because so many of our wives had red hair. My wife, the co-pilot's wife and the radio operator and flight engineers wives all had red hair."

I understand that "The Red Head" is at the bottom of the Adriatic Sea having gone down with another crew aboard.

* * * * *

August 14, 1994

Dear George,

The enclosed account is rather embarrassingly tame compared to some of the hair-raising stories our former mess-mates have chronicled in your fine magazine's pages. I am very grateful to all you who found me and allowed me to join the group. Sometimes it all seems so long ago that it is hard to believe any of the people who were there can still be alive. Your magazine is warm reassurance that they are indeed.

Your note indicates that you would like filler for the magazine, so if you have nothing better, this is a little account I've been meaning to write for some time. We had other adventures, and most of us finished our thirty-five sorties, but this is one I remember especially vividly.

Martin Rush
767th Bomb Squadron

"Tower to Seven-seven on approach: Your number three engine is on fire!"

"Seven-seven to tower: Really?"

The mission was to have been our third sortie. Intelligence described it as a "milk run" to Yugoslavia, and I was flying co-pilot. We had run our second mission three days before, and had logged four hours and thirty-five minutes on it. We logged three hours and thirty-five minutes on this one, but since we didn't get to the target, we didn't get any credit for it.

We took off in turn, and slowly climbed to the circling formation where we took our place in the seven plane box. Nowadays, when I'm on a commercial flight and am pushed back into my seat by the force of those big engines that drive those heavy planes straight up into the high altitudes, I remember how painfully weak our old-fashioned windmill engines were. They barely got us off the ground by the end of the runway, and the long labored process of chasing the swarm of planes we were trying to catch and join.

My pilot was Bob Hess, whose bodily configuration earned him the sobriquet of "Satch" (short for satchel), for the size of his beam, and of course, only behind his back. He laughed once when one of the boys referred to his derriere and said, "Well, you can't drive a spike with a tack hammer." We made fun of him, but we respected him for his expertise. He had been an old hillside pilot back in Pennsylvania, and told of having landed with pontoons on freshly we grass once in an emergency. Later, he died as he would have wanted to. He stayed in the air corps after the war, and blew up in a B-29 on a training flight out in California. Every flight was for him a high adventure, and if the rest of us were pretty scared, he bolstered our spirits by his insistence on doing everything strictly according to regulations.

We had slipped into our place in the formation, and I

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was concerned about the number three engine, which was just outside my window. I had synchronized the props, first by tachometers, then finer synchronization by changing prop pitch until you got rid of the changing shadows seen by sighting through the two props on the left, then the two props on the right. Final synchronization was by killing the sound "beat" of the two left props being a little off timing from the right. If you listened, you could hear a varoom-varoom-varoom. I would then speed up or slow down the right pair to sound-synch with the left with gentle nudges on the pitch of the props, resulting in the sweet smooth roar of four well-synchronized engines. I'm pretty hard of hearing now, and I like to attribute it to my glory days as a B-24 pilot and copilot. Well worth it to have had such a once-in-a-lifetime privilege.

That number three engine, just outside my right-side window, sounded rough. It vibrated, to my ear, and didn't sound right. As we climbed up to altitude, the exhaust stream hitting the little bucket wheels locked into the supercharger on the bottom of the engine made a funny vibrating sound. When I leaned over and touched Hess's arm and directed his ear to the engine, he shouted in my ear, so we were not on the intercom and would not perhaps spook the crew, "One of the buckets from the bucketwheel has been thrown off." I knew that this meant that one of the little cigarette-sized coffin-shaped boxes locked into the finely balanced supercharger wheel was gone, and so the wheel, which whirled several thousand revolutions per minute to pump extra oxygen to the engine in the thin altitude, would be vibrating, worse every minute.

"Cut off the supercharger to that engine. It'll tear hell out of the engine if you don't. We'll fly her on three and a half engines."

It was too late. One of the gunners called up and said, "We're dripping raw gasoline off the number three engine." I called back and said, "Thanks." The vibration had torn loose a gas line.

Hess motioned me to lean over to him, and shouted, "We'd better go home." He called the group leader and notified him we were aborting, although we were

half way across the Adriatic. I was thinking about how twenty minutes was all you could count on if you had to ditch this time of year in the chilly water below us.

We rolled out of formation, and headed back for the Gargano Promontory, the spur of Italy's boot. From there we would be able to see Mount Vulture, and a direct line to it led over the airstrip.

Despite a leaking gas line, the engine was still putting out power. As we got down to lower altitude, the other engines lost their advantage from the supercharger and number three was carrying its full load. We entered the landing pattern downwind, did two right angle turns and got on the approach. As we did so, Hess cut back on power to let us sink down for the landing and all four engines burped out a little ball of flame. This was a normally harmless event called "torching". Unfortunately, the number three engine, just outside my window, was dripping hundred octane gasoline off the trailing edge of the wing. The whole engine was suddenly a roaring ball of flame.

The tower called us to say our right inboard engine was on fire, and I felt like being sarcastic, if I hadn't been so busy. The only thing between me and all that roaring flame was a thin quarter-inch-thick sheet of plexiglass window. The heat coming through the glass would have fried an egg.

The next six minutes may be the longest six minutes I will ever experience in my life. The aircraft checklist had a special segment under "In case of fire during flight", as I remember it. It started out with cutting out all electrical power to the engine, then cutting off all fuel, both by shutting off pumps and closing fuel lines. About then it said to activate the fire extinguisher, a handle down on the floor which I had looked at and touched experimentally, but never otherwise bothered. Now was the time. I reached down and gave it a smart tug, and since I couldn't feel anything happening through the cable, I just kept pulling, and it came dangling out on the floor in my hand. The fire at my right shoulder was burning cheerily away, and it never wavered from the effect of the fire extinguisher, that I could notice. I remember wondering if it was simply a handle to pull to make you feel better, like the "window" (chaff), the little spaghetti sized pieces of tin foil our gunners threw out by the handfuls through the open window to confuse the enemy radar. I was told

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later that it had little or no effect on the radar, but was very reassuring to our crew when we were in the midst of enemy flak. It gave them something to do.

Well, during that interminable six minutes, I seemed to have a lot to do. Feather the prop (my first time for that, too). Then suddenly we were whistling into another greased landing by our superb pilot, who had full flaps down to slow us up. We were stewing gunners the whole length of the runway. One at a time, like paratroopers, they dove through the rear belly door, rolling as they hit. Like us, they were mindful of the full load of bombs in our bomb bay, which with the right wing on fire, was a bad combination.

As soon as we came to a stop, I had my usual checklist to run, and suddenly, as always when I get into a task, I was all alone. All switches off, cowlings open, all auxiliary engines turned off, and on and on. And outside my window by my shoulder, that crazy fire was still roaring away.

Finally I got to the item which read, "Replace checklist on hook." As I hung it up, I thought it sure is lonely in here. Everybody's gone and I'm all alone.

I unfastened my seat belt and getting ready to get out, looked to my left, and there sat Hess, that big stupid lovable pilot, patiently watching me. "What in the hell are you doing here?" I hollered nervously. "I thought you'd be gone."

"I'm the goddamned pilot of this aircraft. I'm the last one to leave. Get your ass out of here before it blows."

With him behind me, I squeezed between the seats and out through the bomb bays and all those armed bombs. As we ran awkwardly away with our parachutes bumping our legs, the spray wagons came roaring up and began to douse the fire with sudsy foam. Meadows, our gutsy engineer, stood there defiantly squirting the inferno with a little hand held extinguisher, until Hess threatened to court martial him if he didn't move away with us. By the time we were a hundred yards away, we looked back over our shoulders and we could see the fire was snuffed out. We paused, and as the big I-beam in the wing melted

through, the right wing majestically folded, lowering the right engines to the ground.

As we stood looking at the ruined aircraft, I asked Hess, "What are we doing off the runway? How come we're here out on the grass?"

As though I was a stupid little child, he answered patiently, "We're out on the grass because I ran us out on the grass. If we'd blown up on the runway, it would have made it impossible for anybody else to land." Oh, of course, why didn't I think of that.

Small wonder that they promoted him to Operations Officer, which left our crew without a pilot, and so I was checked out in the left seat and became the pilot. Actually, I sort of liked it better being second in command. When you're the pilot, they make you sign a receipt for the airplane every time before you leave the ground on a mission. That way if anything happens to it, it's your responsibility, and you owe the government or somebody two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for a missing airplane. Part of my mind was worrying about that, along with everything else, on all the missions after that. I kind of liked having Hess be in charge. He was a heck-of-a good guy. Come to think of it, we were all rather wonderful back in those glorious days, weren't we?

Editor's note: Thanks, Marty, that's a great story, well written. It is exactly what I need to keep the "Liberaider" alive. Come on, the rest of you guys, there are many more stories out there waiting to be told. If you can't write them, sit down and tell them to a friend that can.

They're Singing Our Song

Editor's note: On page 12 of the June 1994 issue of the "Liberaider" are the words to the Army Air Corps song. I did not take the proper time to check it out before reproducing it. I now notice that there is a line missing in the third stanza. "Flying men, guarding our nation's borders, - - - - - , in echelon, we carry on, for nothing can stop the Army Air Corps."

What are the missing words?

Send them to me along with an interesting story from your experiences with the 461st Bomb Group.

I'll buy the first person to respond a drink at the next reunion.

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Liberator Crew Gets 14 Nazi Planes In Fierce Fight Over Linz, Austria

Dear George,

This plane is the original number 40, "Sweet Char-iot", that Fritz (Col. Glantzberg) gave to Bob Edwards, Pilot, and Norman Cogswell, Co-pilot, at Fresno. All we had to do was carry the Group Bombardier, George Leffler, overseas.

In Miami, a bunch of us got together and called General H.H. Arnold (Fritz knew him from his service in the Pentagon). The General promised Fritz 40 cases of rum. As far as I know, we were the only Group to take our own liquor overseas with us. The 40 cases were awaiting us at our revetment in Trinidad.

When we crossed the South Atlantic and landed in Marrakesh, we broke out the rum and blankets. Damn! Was it ever cold. After the last gulp (I was drinking it straight) I turned into a "dead engine" and went back to my tent.

As far as I know, our crew was the first to finish their fifty missions together (all except me) and they did it before 24 July 1944. I got shot down on my 47th mission on 25 July while flying with Maj. Burke and Lt. Hesser to Linz, Austria. The "All American" picked off 14 enemy planes as they flew passed her for a record for E.T.O.

Sincerely,
Wm. Harry Logue
766th Squadron



Standing, L to R: Cogswell, Co-Pilot; Muse, Navigator; Logue, Bombardier; Diaz, Nose Turret.

Kneeling, L to R: Campbell, Engineer/Top Gunner; Korchma, Waist Gunner; Kjellquist, Ball Gunner; Mays, Tail Gunner

Editor's note: It appears that the two crewmembers that are missing are Edwards, Pilot and Dumont, Radio Operator/Gunner.

She's a Liberator and her name is "All American". The boys paint footballs on her fuselage instead of bombs to represent missions flown.

The target was the Hermann Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria, one of the most strongly defended areas in all of Germany. When the All-American returned, the Goering outfit no longer was so well defended. The crew of All-American alone painted 14 swastikas on her fuselage in addition to more footballs.

"We had turned at the initial point and were about two minutes into the bomb run when I saw six or seven Jerries of the Yellow Nose fighter group come up from below and get the Group leader with a direct hit in his bomb bays", said 1st Lt. Robert Arbuthnot, Salina, Kansas, the pilot. "Conditions were just right for that attack.

"I saw them about the same time from the nose turret," said Sgt. Warren E. Moss, Ravensworth, W. Va., who is credited with two ME-109s. "And then Massie called out fighters on the tail. God, the interphone was busy!"

They came in six in a line, sweeping up the length of our formation," said S/Sgt. Eliza S. Massie, Dayton, Ohio, the tail gunner who was credited with two FW-190s. "Then, when the fire got too bad for them, they began to hang back and pounced on the stragglers. I saw seven of our squadron go down."

I was at the bombsight trying to get the target when it started," said 1st Lt. Joseph T. Novak, Dunmore, Pa. "What I did get in the sights were a lot of chutes and some burning B-24s. It wasn't a good sight. Then the pilot said to salvo the bombs and I did."

Sgt. Robert L. Molyneux, Danville, N.Y., the right waist gunner, was credited with three ME-109s. He

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

blew the pilot of the third right out of his cockpit with tracers, he said.

"All guns are set to stop firing when they are aimed at parts of your own plane," said T/Sgt. High G. Baker, Memphis, Tenn., top turret gunner, who got two FW-190s and one ME-109, "I was tracking one Jerry all the way around and when the guns cut out suddenly, my stomach dropped right through the bomb bay. But as the turret continued around, the guns cut in again, and the plane exploded about 50 yards off the nose."

The left waist gunner, T/Sgt. Eric C. English, San Angelo, Texas, destroyed two ME-109s.

"That tail gunner, Massie, was all over the place," said S/Sgt. Roy M. Walkama, Ironwood, Mich., who blasted two FW-190s out of the sky. "When I ran out of ammo, Massie came back from the tail turret and gave me enough to stay in the fight."

"Yeah," said Sgt. English. "And the flight surgeon wanted to ground him more than once. He was the coolest guy aboard."

From "The Stars and Stripes", August 1944

* * * * *

Dear George,

I read the "Liberaider" issues with great interest and it brings back a lot of memories. In the June 1994 issue on page 27, you made mention of Col. Lee receiving the D.F.C. for the successful bombing raid on the Creditul Minor Oil Refinery on 15 July 1944. It was Col. Glantzberg that led the 461st over the Ploesti target. The enclosed flight plan (see page 12) shows that "A" Flight of the 461st was led by Col. G flying with Capt. Strong of the 767th Squadron.

This was my first combat mission and it happened to be to Ploesti. I was the radar navigator operator with the second attack unit led by Major Goree and Capt. Bean of the 764th Squadron. This being my first mission, I had no idea of the danger of a combat mission even though we were briefed that Ploesti had

hundreds of anti-aircraft guns. I was just taking this first mission in stride. Just doing my work on the radar set and keeping my mind occupied up to the bomb run and "Bombs Away".

It was a cloudy day and hundreds of smoke pots were trying to cover the target, but the bombardier got the target in sight and got some very good hits. I have the official photo showing the bombs of the 461st hitting this Ploesti target.

Coming off the target at 22,000 ft., the sky became dark with the tons of flak the Germans were throwing up at us. We made it back and I always say that all combat missions are easy if you get back home in one piece.

This was the only mission I flew with the 764th Squadron. On 19 July I was reassigned to the 765th Squadron.

On page 26 of the June 1994 issue of the "Liberaider" (lower right corner) my name Panagiotopoulos is listed. Nobody could pronounce my long Greek name so they called me "Kelly" for short. Years later I legally changed my name to Panas for business reasons.

Sincerely,
John Panas

Editor's note: Thanks for your letter John, you are absolutely right. Col. G did lead the Group as well as the 49th Wing since the 461st was assigned to lead the whole shebang. However, Col. Lee was looking over his left shoulder from the co-pilot's seat in the lead ship of "C" flight with Capt. Walters as pilot (see the flight plan on the next page).

Your letter was very timely since this mission, #62, is summarized under the mission section of this issue of the "Liberaider".



*Have a
Holy & Joyous
Holiday Season
And a
Happy & Healthy*

FLIGHT PLAN FOR MISSION #62
15 July 1944

A Flight (767) First Attack Unit

1 Strong (Col. G) 850
2 Hesser (Maj. Dooley) 858
3 Cahs 65
4 Henry 72
5 Minsberg 61
6 Bush 60
7 Muller 64

B Flight (766)
1 Wood 54
2 Despain 54
3 Settle 47
4 Robertson 48
5 Holmes 43
6 Winter 49
7 Rosen 56

C Flight (767)
1 Walters (Lee) 63
2 Trohman 70
3 Huggard 75
4 Crume 67
5 Kane 66
6 Bowyer 71

A Flight (764) Second Attack Unit

1 Bean (Goree) 903
2 Sayre 13
3 Wastman 10
4 Trenner 18
5 Baker 2
6 Russell 19
7 Britton 7

B Flight (765)
1 Kostka 24
2 Taylor
3 Garrison 21
4 Fulks 27
5 Jenkins 36
6 Sage 32

C Flight (764-5)
1 Weeme 22 1/2
2 Grimm 26
3 Huber 37
4 Weir 6
5 Johnson 12
6 Wilson 15
7 Burton 1

Bomb Strike Photo—Mission #62
Creditul-Minier Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania



Editor's note: In the December 1992 issue of the "Liberaider", I printed the official report of Mission #20 from the history of the 461st Bomb Group. It is reproduced here for reference.

Mission #20
7 May 1944

Target: Marshalling Yard, Bucharest, Roumania

Back to the familiar target area of the Chitila Marshalling Yard. The Group employed practically the same procedure in attacking this target as had been used the previous day at Pitesti. The briefed aiming point was in front of a group of rectangular buildings located near the round house at the northwest end of the marshalling yard. The mission was led by Capt. Goree, but the bombs from the first section were somewhat scattered and many of them were to the right of the target. Lt. Faherty, lead bombardier of the second section, however, rang the bell with a beautiful pattern on the briefed aiming point. Reconnaissance pictures showed the target was very hard hit by a concentration of 39 percent of our bombs within 1,000 ft. of the briefed aiming point. Only a few enemy aircraft were seen and only three of our bombers were damaged by flak.

HERE IS THE REST OF THE STORY!

(As found in Maj. Goree's file. Author unnamed)

History of a Successful Mission

7 May 1944

Plan "Able" arrived from Wing Headquarters about midnight. Very plain were the words—Bucharest Chitila Marshalling Yards. The staff looked it over and the precision planning began to take shape. The lead crew, who could picture the entire trip from memory, were to have another chance. The fourth Group effort to put the marshalling yards on the dead list. (Editor: Missions 6, 12, 14 and 20)

Lt. Elmore already had the late weather report in hand. His prediction for the trip was bad enough to cancel the mission. But it looked like the big planners meant business when they concluded that the 15th would have to take weather losses if there was still a chance of destroying the vital target.

Not much time lapsed between planning and crew awakening hour. It was wet, dark and dirty when the trucks rolled out of the squadron area, filled with crews bound for briefing. The mission was still "standing up" because the long black ribbon stretched across Albania, Yugoslavia through Rumania almost to the Russian fighting line. Two hours still remained before take off and lots of minds held hope that the bad weather would cause the mission to be cancelled.

Two hours later we took off. The low clouds at the base prevented a normal Group assembly. The boys were at a fine stage in their progressive improvement and an assembly above the stratus overcast was affected on schedule. Trouble could be seen out toward the Adriatic as we started for the Wing rendezvous area. The cumulonimbus build-ups predicted a rough journey.

The lead crew had been to Bucharest twice before under extremely poor weather conditions, so the experience was no novelty.

Lt. Veiluva, the lead pilot, and Capt. Goree, the Group commander for the mission, traded off at frequent intervals because of the necessity of flying instruments in the haze which eliminated a horizon or view of the surface. However, in the mile visibility, the wing men managed to hold position. Lt. DeWitt did a superb job of navigating. We missed all of the flak areas en route and the undercast was solid.

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

As we neared the Danube the undercast began to climb to 20,000. The lead group of the Wing was too low to make it, so it turned the lead over to us and left for an alternate target or home base. About the same time the radio was jammed by other groups who were abandoning the chase. Someone in our group called up and asked if we were going to give it up. When they received the negative reply, he answered, "I don't go for this hero ____."

On we went feeling very lonely. Like the break of day, the weather cleared about the middle of Rumania. We were to have a clear shot at the target; the reward for hanging on just a little longer.

A few fighters began to appear but they weren't aggressive after their first pass assured them that we could defend our formation. We didn't have the aid of fighter cover. The target was coming into range and we still had thirty miles to go.

Rotten luck hit the lead ship. With the target almost discernible and twelve minutes away the nose section oxygen supply failed. Sgt. Pusso rushed two large walk around bottles up through the bomb bays to the nose section. New life for Lt. Iconis and Lt. DeWitt on the bomb run. Here was zero hour and Lt. Iconis discovered that the pilot's direction indicator wasn't working. He gave Lt. Vieluva several oaths that sounded like, "Left, God dammit, left." Then came the dark flak clouds; they were putting up barrage flak some distance ahead of us. The sweetest words ever spoken, "Bombs away," followed the last course correction from little Ike. They started the gentle slow roll of the maneuver called, "Let's get the hell out of here." The flak was near and the familiar sound of hail was in our ears, but it seemed as though we were successfully evading the worst part by our horseshoe turn.

It wasn't all missed, for the tail gunner, Sgt. Kursawe, called to slow down for cripples. About the same time, Sgt. Zimmerman, a cool boy, began reporting that the bombs were knocking the hell out of the yards. He could see our first pattern, then the second sections which filled in all spare openings. With these words of encouragement, the dark trip home seemed unimportant for a minute. I believe that most who have been through it know the solid feeling that comes from being out from under attack with the target well hit and the cripples all successfully covered.

As we approached the Danube, thunderheads began to take shape once again. This time the problem was the reverse. The Group had to get down through the weather and back to the base. Capt. McQuillan dropped behind with the second section. I could see Koska take B flight out wide as soon as he was called. The flight loosened up and about one hour later we were over the Adriatic in the clear. Everyone was accounted for and it looked as though our work was through for the day.

When we checked the ditching channel on the radio the words came in all too clear. "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" and then the long count for the fix. Once more "Mayday" and that was all. We contacted "Big Fence" * and they gave us a heading from our position in the middle of the Adriatic to a point due south and thirty minutes away. We told them we could stretch our gas and take up the search. Then we turned to 180° and started for the indicated spot. We knew it could be no more than an oil slick on the smooth rolling sea. Within one minute of our ETA we spotted a possibility. As we circled lower we could make out two rafts with ten men. Right here was the most successful hunt any of us ever experienced. As we circled the wet and poor crippled men, a Spitfire came into view. The Spitfire would head for us and then head back to direct the rescue launch. One hour after the first contact with the rafts, the launch pulled along side and took the men aboard.

Our gas was very low so we headed straight for the field. We all agree that this was the end of as successful a day as any of us would ever know.

* BIG FENCE RESCUE
(From "Sortie", 15th Air Force Association Newsletter)

This week the 341st Signal Company and attached NAV AIDS detachment, known as Big Fence, were

(Continued on page 15)

awarded the Meritorious Service Plaque, the highest award authorized a unit of this type. The presentation was made by Brig. General Dean C. Strother at HQ Fifteenth Fighter Command. Big Fence has participated in one of the greatest stories of the aerial war over southern Europe and the Balkans. Giving damaged or lost aircraft their exact position and the location of the nearest field in a matter of seconds, Big Fence has given aid to almost 4,000 aircraft in a five month period, many for emergency homing because of engine failure or low fuel.

THE CITATIONS

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

GENERAL ORDERS)

15 July 1944

NUMBER 1865)

AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded the following named personnel, Air Corps United States Army, residence and citation as indicated.

EDWIN T. GOREE, O-724610, Major, 764th Bomb Sq, 461st Bomb Gp. For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as pilot of a B-24 type aircraft. On 7 May 1944, Major Goree led his group on a bombing mission against vital enemy strategic installations in Rumania. Through superior leadership, coordination, and maintenance of strict flight discipline, he brought the entire group through extremely severe and adverse weather conditions directly to the target for a highly successful bombing run which caused heavy damage to be inflicted on vitally important enemy installations. Through the use of exceptionally efficient combat tactics, Major Goree accomplished this difficult and hazardous mission without loss. By his outstanding airmanship, gallantry, and devotion to duty, Major Goree has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: San Diego, California.

Edit: Similar citations and the DFC were awarded to the following men who flew on this mission. These citations have been omitted for brevity.

1st Lt. John D. Iconis, 764th B.S.—Bombardier
1st Lt. Edward F. Veiluva, 764th B.S.—Pilot
Capt. David P. McQuillan, 767th B.S.—Pilot
1st Lt. Robert Alkire, 767th B.S.—Pilot
1st Lt. Patrick J. Faherty, 767th B.S.—Bombardier

By Command of Major General Twining

R.K. Taylor
Colonel, GSC
Chief of Staff

Editor's note: It is always good to know the whole story. I would never have been able to tell this story if Major Goree's sons had not made his personal file available to me. Come on you lead crews and staff officers, this is the stuff that your newsletter is made of. Unlock the safe, free the moths and send me your stories. They make good reading. The following is a good example.

HEADQUARTERS
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
A.P.O. #520, U.S. Army

Subject: Commendable Action of Crew Members of the 461st Bombardment Group (H) 10 July 1944
To: Commanding General, 49th Bombardment Wing (H), A.P.O. #520, U.S. Army

1. On 26 June, First Lieutenant Wesley E. McClure, O-806479, was flying the number four position in the low box of the second attack unit of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) on the way to attack a German synthetic oil refinery in the Vienna area. En route to the target the formation was violently attacked by enemy fighters and Lieutenant McClure's airplane was so badly damaged that he was not able to maintain his position in the formation.
2. The pilot continued over the target alone, continuously harassed by enemy fighters and with only two engines operative, attempted to return to his home base by direct route. Unable to contact his formation or fighter escort by radio, he jettisoned all removable equipment, applied as much power to his two operable engines as he dared, and together with his crew, fought a heroic running battle with thirteen enemy fighters.
3. In the Zagreb's area, he was overtaken by a formation of the 461st Bombardment Group (H) who observed the plight of the crippled airplane and its crew. Two B-24's of the 461st Bombardment Group piloted by First Lieutenant Edward Felix Veiluva, O-682924 and Second Lieutenant Mac Lewis Lucas, O-168355, both of the 764th Bomb Squadron, flying airplanes Number 129362 and Number 440632 respectively, left the comparative safety of their formation and came to the aid of the single cripple, offering the protection of their additional fire-power. The three airplanes flew a tight formation and kept up such a deadly and accurate fire that the enemy fighters left and attacked the remainder of the 461st Bombardment Group (H).
4. The crippled airplane, with its escort, proceeded to the Italian coast, flying on instruments a portion of the time and landed at a British fighter base at Penna Point, due to fuel shortage. The two escorting planes stood by until the landing was effected and then proceeded to their home airdrome.
5. The gallantry of the two pilots of the 461st Bombardment Group (H) and the heroic battle of their crews was, beyond reasonable doubt, responsible for saving a bombardment airplane and the lives of the crew. By their unselfish action and willingness to assume personal risk, they have demonstrated the high esprit and devotion to duty of the personnel of the Army Air Forces.
6. The officers and men of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) join me in expressing our gratitude and our highest praise for these gallant airmen.

Robert E.L. Eaton, Colonel, Air Corps
Commanding

Hq 49th Bomb Wing (H), APO520, 12 July 44
To: CO, 461st Bomb Group (H), APO 520.

1. The undersigned notes the foregoing with pleasure and desires to add his appreciation to the personnel responsible for this most worthy commendation.
2. It is also desired that the personnel embraced in letter of commendation be highly recommended for the Silver Star and a copy of this letter be attached to the recommendation for Awards and Decorations.

William L. Lee, Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding

**Men Returning From Detached Service
6-1-94 to 11-21-94**

HDQ George G. Dias, 935 Center Road, Newville, PA 17241-9449
 Milton L. Woody, No Information

764 Norman L. Carter, 816 E. Shadow Ridge Dr., Casa Grande, AZ 85222
 James D. Gandon, 3104 Country Club Lane, Kearney, NE 68847
 Earl C. Jones, 1518 Heathervale Drive, Jackson MI 49203
 James D. Lovvorn, 2664 Rm Rd. 2702, Stamford, TX 79553
 Donald E. Miller, 5923 Shimerville, Emmaus, PA 18049

765 Richard H. Amoroso, 73230 Lone Mountain Lane, Palm Desert, CA 92260
 Edwin H. Dendor, 3704 River Hall Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32217
 Orville C. Gregg, 4101 Valley Rd., SW #202B, Cleveland, OH 44109
 William C. Grettum, 707 Summit Loop, Rogers, AR 72756
 Alfred W. Henry, 17217 Kent Rd., Sisters, OR 97759
 Jerome Josephs, 8470 Limekiln Pike #422, Wyncote, PA 19095
 Harold Kurzberg, 47 Wyoming Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652
 Lloyd Lind, 1100 Union St. #206, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
 Dallas C. Main, 945 Bent Ave., Las Animas, CO 81054
 Max B. Oltman, 321 W. Main St., Lansdale, PA 15446
 John A. Peterson, 300 Grand Ave. W., So. St. Paul, MN 55075-2004
 Charles O Rauworth, 2510 Commonwealth Ave., Joliet, IL 60435-1325
 William G. Scarborough, 714 Old Fallston Rd., Fallston, MD 21047
 Donald R. Vaughn, 5622 SW 88 Terrace, Cooper City, FL 33328-5168
 Benjamin Weathers, HC02 Box 636, Bay City, TX 77414

766 Herman C. Bixler, 213 W. Grand Ave., Tower City, PA 17980
 Thomas F. Byers, 117 Coming Tee Range, Summerville, SC 29485
 Richard W. Harnes, P.O. Box 126, Hamburg, IA 51640
 Irving L. Hastings, 9 Woodland Pl., Tallman, NY 10982
 Mark P. Lemons, 2114 Fredonia St., Muskogee, OK 74403
 Edward P. Marquis, 2 Brassie Dr.—Rt. 3, Iola, KS 66749
 Warren E. Mays, 5802 Lantana Cir. #H, Frederick, MD 21701
 Earl W. Morrison, 90 Morrison Dr., Columbia, KY 42728
 William A. Murphy, 136 Clay Ave., Rochester, NY 14613
 Francis H. Pierce, Jr., 100 Montgomery St., #6D, Jersey City, NJ 07302
 Roy E. Phillips, Jr., 4829 SW 83rd Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32608
 James M. Sisson, 931 Rodonda Ct., Radcliffe, KY 40160-9624
 Verble O. Smith, 428 N. Timber Rd., Midwest City, OK 73130
 Robert C. Williamson, 59 Waterford Drive #704, Weston, Ontario, Canada M9R 2N7

767 John J. Baumgartner, P.O. Box 265, Springfield, GA 31329-0265
 Harvey E. Duncan, 7305 Cirete Pkwy, Sacramento, CA 95823
 Edward C. Elsenmann, 423 Pirates Pt., Venice, FL 34277
 Henry W. Finley, 4205 S. Stone Hocker, Box 161, Blair, OK 73526
 Norman J. Geary, P.O. Box 25818, St. Louis, MO 63136
 John R. Metzgar, 237 Beaver Run Rd., Apollo, PA 15613

767 Winfield Miller, 385 Ridge View Dr., Grand Junction, CO 81503
 W.W. Runyon, 815 Mark Rd., Leesburg, FL 34748
 Daniel J. Silvis, Jr., 1105 Heron Ave., Ft. Pierce, FL 34982
 Joseph E. Stafford, 2400 Sierra Blvd. #68, Sacramento, CA 95825
 Robert Sturm, 4632 Joana Place, Cincinnati, OH 45238
 Melvin Wagner, 3730 Sherwood Ln., Temple, TX 76502

Corrections to Roster

765 Joseph S. Curtin, 928 Beacon Way, Annapolis, MD 21401
 Lawrence M. Rosenberg, Box 1241, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067

The All American 1994 Tour Ends Abruptly

It is with deep sadness that we notify you that as of July 18, 1994 our WWII 1994 Veterans Tour was cancelled. There were **two** major factors which led to this conclusion. The **first** was a series of increasingly troublesome encounters with the FAA in Washington and Oregon which: caused us to miss a stop with the B-24; directed us to operate the B-17 with a pilot and co-pilot only (not a safe practice); and involved limitations preventing us from flying veterans, media, guests, volunteers and contributors. The **second** factor was an increased concern regarding contaminated gas which we had taken on in California. The gasoline refiner—Chevron—recommended that we have our engines overhauled as they wanted to eliminate any risk of injury or damage because of engine failure on these historic aircraft. They agreed to bear the costs of the engine overhauls (without the need to involve lawyers or lawsuits) in a very professional and timely manner.

Hopefully, at this point you are thinking—What can I do to help? We suggest **three** things. **First**, if the historic flying of these aircraft has “touched” your life in some special way ... perhaps you flew one last mission in it; got a chance to tour through it with a spouse, dad or grand-dad; sat in your old position or whatever ... please drop us a note relaying your experiences. Over the years many of you have communicated your experiences and gratitude but *unfortunately* we haven’t stored them and we now need to be able to show the FAA, Congressmen and Senators how important it is to keep this history alive. Handwritten or typed, anything will be fine ... it’s your story. **Second**, as we are in discussions with the FAA about resolving these issues we may need your support with your Senator, Congressman, etc. Please hold off on this for the moment. If we don’t have success with our discussions we will be back to you. **Third**, as you know we collect signatures on contribution checks and we can definitely use your help at this time.

* * * * *

Disabled Veterans Receiving Bigger Checks

Washington (AFNS) -

Service-disabled veterans will receive a 2.8 percent increase in their compensation payment effective Dec. 1, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced.

The cost-of-living allowance was included in legislation signed by President Clinton October 25. Veterans will begin receiving the higher payment in their January checks.

More than 2.2 million veterans are affected by the increase. Their monthly compensation payments will now range from \$89 for a single veteran with a 10 percent disability rating to \$1,823 for a single veteran with a 100 percent disability rating.

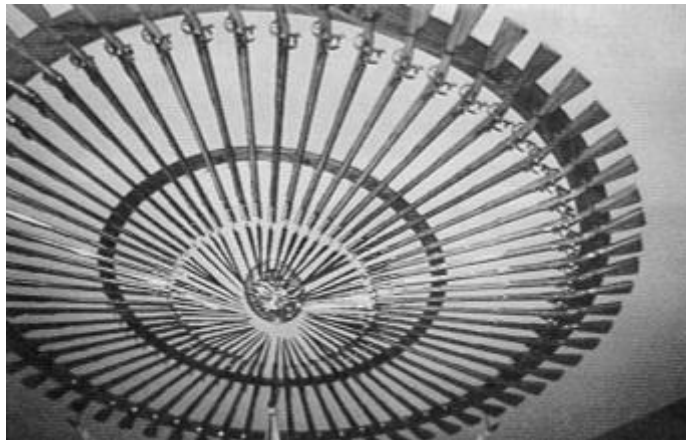
Desecration of the American Flag

At the reunion in Hampton, VA, the 461st Bomb Group Association voted to join the Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc. which is a grass roots coalition formed to amend the United States Constitution to protect the American flag from physical desecration (see the American Legion Magazine from October 1994). We also voted to contribute \$100 to the cause. The following article appeared in the Bombardier's newsletter "Crosshairs" for September 1994.

KENTUCKY NIXES BAN ON FLAG DESECRATION

It hardly seems possible that state government would *fail* to join 42 others in passing a resolution petitioning Congress to amend the United States Constitution whereby Congress and the states could prohibit physical flag desecration, but that is exactly what the legislature of Kentucky has done! According to an article in the Apr-May edition of **Kentucky Veterans News** the Kentucky Senate let die in committee just such a resolution! Surely there is more to this than meets the eye at this time.

Editor: Can you Kentuckian 461st members contribute a story relative to your state's action?



Revolutionary muskets on the ceiling of the Governor's Palace, Colonial Williamsburg

* * * * *

The following items were copied from the AFEES newsletter

Used Stamps Needed

DAV workers and the Senior Citizen Volunteers of the Buffalo, N.Y., Chapter of the American Lung Association collect and donate cancelled postage stamps to VA hospitals in Buffalo, Washington and Tucson, Arizona. You can send used stamps to Stamps for Veterans, c/o Bernie Elmore, P.O. Box 398, Depew, NY 14043-0398.

DFC Society Planned

The first Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to Charles A. Lindbergh in 1927 and the only civilian to ever receive the award was Amelia Earhart. Al Ciurczak, USAF (Ret.) is interested in forming a Distinguished Flying Cross Society. If you have earned the award and are interested in Al's project, you may contact him by writing Alexander D. Ciurczak, 34552 Camino Capistrano, Capistrano, CA 92624-1232.



**The F-15, F-16 and Guests,
Langley Field**



The F-117 “Stealth Fighter”



**Governor's Palace,
Colonial Williamsburg**

**The Magazine and Guardhouse,
Colonial Williamsburg**





**The Courtly Carriage,
Colonial Williamsburg**

**Fife and Drum Corps on
The way to Palace Green**



Setting up came at Yorktown

**“Straighten up there!
Suck in those bellies!”**



TAPS
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE FOREVER.

<u>SQD</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DECEASED</u>
HDQ	Corton, Edward L., Jr.	1993
	Leffler, George V.	1973
	Ryser, William A.	1953
	Wagener, John A.	1994
764	Auston, Jack J.	1994
	Bates, Clyde E.	1994
	Butler, Robert L.	1994
	Doherty, James H.	1974
	Gooder, Wilbur J.	1994
	Harsough, Robert J.	1986
	Hendricks, Kenneth I.	1967
	Kitchens, Milan D.	1993
	Littell, Donald R.	1994
	Newman, Herbert L.	1984
	Rathfelder, Marvin W.	1994
	Scogins, Oscar L., Jr.	1994
	Ware, Robert E.	1982
765	Cento, Peter A.	1994
	Githens, Kenneth O.	1994
	Goforth, Robert F., Jr.	1994
	Melvin, Carl D.	1994
766	Bay, Delmar, Jr.	1993
	Boswell, Archie K.	1984
	Duval, Clay H.	1982
	Junge, Paul F.	1975
	Loomis, Robert H.	1994
	Nerborn, Robert	1978
	Silber, Alfred	1975
767	Blundy, Walter H.	Unk
	Danko, Albert A.	Unk
	Dubina, Walter	1988
	Esposito, Michael N.	1978
	Estrada, Raymond P.	1994
	Godek, Anthony C.	1992
	Hegert, Anthony C.	1994
	Kuntz, Jerome L.	1981
	Oritz, Gilbert	1975
	Racawich, Nicholas J.	1965
	Roemer, Robert J.	1994
	Rutter, James M.	1994

TAPS
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE FOREVER

<u>SQD</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DECEASED</u>
767	Stockton, Floyd C.	1994
	Swartz, Philip	1960
	Vana, Raymond F.	1949
	Vermillion, Roy D.	1993

OBITUARIES

Your editor receives many requests to print special obituaries for members and spouses of the 461st Bomb Group. He has discussed this with the officers of the Group with the general consensus that it is not practical nor within the preferred content of the newsletter. Therefore, a general policy was established that special obituaries would not be published in the "Liberaider". There will be, from time to time, a need to override this policy, as is the case with Millie O'Bannon, to whom this organization owes so much. We will, of course, continue to print "TAPS" which is a list of deceased members your officers have confirmed since the last issue of the newsletter. In addition, your Editor may make special note of members that have passed away shortly before the newsletter goes to print. The following is a list of names your Editor recently received:

Ken Githens, Pilot, 765th B.S., October 1994
Betty Yount, spouse of John Yount, 765th B.S., June 1994
Robert J. Roemer, Pilot, 767th B.S., November 1994
Robert L. Butlar, Crew Chief, 764th B.S., Spetember 1994

* * * * *

**Optional Switzerland Excursion
(Just Prior to Italian Tour)
12 April thru 18 April**

This trip includes stops at Geneva, Lucerne, Lugano (Join Italian Tour).

Tour Cost: \$1,248.00 per person double
 Single supplement—\$323.00

This option is only available on the dates shown. A deposit of \$200.00 per person is required to confirm space. Cost includes all transfers between trains and hotels. Continental breakfast daily, accommodations in 4 star hotels and train tickets. Final payment is due 25 February 1995.

Names: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ Phone: _____

Enclosed check #: _____ in the amount of \$ _____

Application For Return To Italy Tour 17 April thru 2 May

Tour Features: Round trip transportation by Alitalia Airlines
First class hotel accommodations with double rooms
Continental breakfast daily, 13 dinners and one lunch
Ground transportation by deluxe private A/C motor coach
English speaking escort throughout, local guides, entrance
fees, tax and service charges

The trip includes stops at Lugano (Switzerland), Milan, Verona, Venice, Padua, Florence, Pisa, San Marino, Cerignola, Pompeii, Sorrento, Capri and 2 days in Rome.

Tour cost: \$2,995.00 per person double, from New York
\$3,055.00 per person double, from Chicago or Miami
\$3,155.00 per person double, from Los Angeles

You should plan to depart from the city nearest you. MariMac will be happy to assist you with those additional flights.

Cancellation Policy: Up to 90 days prior to departure—\$200.00 per person
From 86 to 46 days prior to departure—\$250.00 per person
From 45 to 21 days prior to departure—30% of cost of tour
From 20 to 8 days prior to departure—50% of cost of tour
From 7 to 0 days prior to departure—100% of cost of tour

Cancellation insurance is available at \$99.00 per person.

Names: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Enclosed check #: _____ in the amount of \$ _____
(Deposit \$500.00 per person—final payment due by 25 February 1995)

Send payment to MariMac, 6790 E. Calle Dorado, Tucson, AZ 85715

During the 93 trip it was determined that the 461st Windbreakers were of extreme value in assisting the tour escort in maintaining control of the group. Also, they were very nice in the northern part of Italy. Therefore, MariMac has arranged to furnish jackets to all participants. Please indicate jacket size when you send in your deposit.

S 34-36 M 38-40 L 42-44 XL 46-48 XXL 50-52

MERRY



CHRISTMAS

461st BOMB GROUP (H) INC.**1995 ANNUAL REUNION****ABOARD THE CARNIVAL CRUISE SHIP "CELEBRATION"****September 9-16, 1995**

The fun begins when you board the Celebration in Miami for a 7-day cruise of the Eastern Caribbean, with stops in San Juan, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, and St. Maarten in the Netherlands Antilles. You may board the ship any time after 1:00 P.M.

We'll enjoy a one hour cocktail reception with hot and cold hors d'oeuvres on arrival day, and once the ship is at sea, the casino opens for gambling. The attire for the first night is casual. On the second night, the ship's captain hosts a "Welcome Aboard Reception". Dress for that occasion is coat & tie for men and dressy dress for ladies. It is no longer necessary to have formal wear—in fact you will see very little of it.

Every evening's dinner attire, except first and last nights is coat and tie for men, dress or pants suit for ladies, or casual resort wear. Short and T-shirts are not allowed in the dining room during dinner.

COST OF THE CRUISE IS \$868.50 PER PERSON, DOUBLE AND INCLUDES:

COST OF THE CABIN (ALL WILL BE OUTSIDE CABINS)

ALL PORT TAXES

ALL MEALS

ALL GRATUITIES

PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINMENT NIGHTLY

A deposit of \$110.00 per person is required upon booking and must be by check to MariMac. (Normal deposit is \$200.00 per person). The second deposit is due 12 May and is \$175.00 per person. Final payment is due 11 July, 1995. All monies are fully refundable up to 60 days prior to departure, which is when final payment is due. You may want to buy cancellation insurance when you sign up. This coverage is \$69.00 per person.

If you have never cruised—this will be the experience of a lifetime, as there are many things to do almost 24 hours a day if you choose, or you can relax and visit as much as you like. If you have cruised before—you know how exciting it will be.

SIGN UP FAST, AS SPACE IS LIMITED. FIRST COME FIRST SERVED!

THIS SPECIAL RATE REQUIRES EARLY BOOKING, SO DON'T DELAY.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____ Check # and Amount: _____

Editor's note: The material presented here for the Italian tour (including Switzerland) and the 1995 Reunion has been condensed from that supplied by the MariMac Corp. If you are interested in either trip—contact MariMac for more details. Address 6790 E. Calle Dorado, Tucson, AZ 85715, Phone 1-800-292-1490.

Fifteenth Air Force

The Fifteenth Air Force was activated during World War II on the first day of November 1943 and launched its first combat strike less than 24 hours later. The legendary General Jimmy Doolittle, already famous for leading the daring raid on Tokyo, was its first commander. Operating from captured Italian bases, Fifteenth Air Force's B-17's and B-24's attacked targets in southern and central Europe beyond the effective range of allied forces in England.

During nearly two years of operations, the Fifteenth's combat crews logged over 239,000 sorties, dropping some 300,000 tons of bombs on enemy targets from the Balkans to the Berlin doorsteps of Nazi Germany. Historians credit the command's destruction of enemy petroleum production in the famous Ploesti oil raids as a deciding factor in the defeat of the axis powers.

During most of the intervening years, the Fifteenth Air Force was headquartered at March AFB in Riverside, California where it served an historic role as a major component of the Strategic Air Command.

During the cold war years, the Fifteenth commanded significant elements of our nation's nuclear deterrence—bomber, tanker, missile, and reconnaissance forces based throughout the western United States and Pacific rim. It served with distinction in every major engagement from the Korea conflict to the Vietnam War and Desert Storm.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact forces, the Air Force was reorganized to effectively respond to the changing conditions and the new challenges of the post Cold War period. The Fifteenth Air Force was reassigned to the new Air Mobility Command where it assumed a significant role in its continued service to our nation.

In July of 1993, Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters moved to Travis AFB in northern California. There the men and women of the Fifteenth continue to serve in the same great traditions of duty, honor, and country pioneered by countless unsung heroes who answered our nation's call since that fateful day of November 1, 1943.

The Fifteenth Air Force Association was founded in 1981 at March Air Force Base to preserve this proud heritage. The Association is committed to the task of insuring that the distinctive achievements of its past are recognized and proudly remembered.

The Association runs a clearing house operation to reunite old friends and comrades who have become separated over the years. Reunions and special events are periodically held to provide members with opportunities for fellowship. The Association also publishes a newsletter, "Sortie", with emphasis on the historic achievements of the command and its people. As many of you already know, the Association is actively involved in erecting memorials at the March Field Museum and in the Air Force Museum to recognize and honor those who served our country during this long and distinguished history.

Annual dues are only \$20. If you are not already a member, I encourage you to join and become involved in this worthwhile endeavor to preserve an important part of the Air Force history and heritage. You would be most welcome and would certainly be among friends of like interest and values. You can send a note requesting a new member package to: Fifteenth Air Force Association, P.O. Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518 or call: (909) 655-3603 and leave your name and address.

Copied from "The B-17 Combat Crewmen & Wingmen" newsletter.

THE HERITAGE OF THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE—1944

Autumn Assault

During the summer rush across France, the Allies had hoped the Germans might dissolve as a fighting power by autumn 1944. When that failed to materialize, they tried to get their armies across the lower Rhine in late September. That failing, they undertook to defeat the German armies west of the Rhine and to penetrate the Ruhr basin.

Air commanders shared the general disappointment of other Allied leaders who had hoped and planned for final victory in 1944. Late in September, General Arnold frankly confided to Spaatz his disappointment that the ground campaigns in western Europe had not progressed more rapidly. He thought that the armies had been too slow in forcing their way out of the Normandy bridgehead, and the heartening advance across France later in the summer, he attributed mainly to Patton's aggressive tactics.

Spaatz felt that another massive breakthrough might yet bring the Allies to the Rhine. "If that proves sticky as a barrier," he concluded, "it may still be possible to beat the insides of Germany enough by air action to cause her to collapse next Spring."

Oil First Priority

After the strategic air forces reverted to CCS direction in September 1944, Spaatz and Air Marshall Bottomley drafted the governing directives for an all out offensive. Oil was named as first priority with ordinance depots, armored vehicle assembly plants, and motor vehicle assembly plants in a composite second place on the targeting list. The German Air Force was to be policed when necessary, or to be more precise, when its supporting facilities could be located. The directive reflected the widespread hope that the enemy could be prevented from refitting armored units withdrawn from France. But it spoke more noticeably of General Spaatz's persistent belief that the destruction of enemy oil would neutralize the enemy's ability to wage war.

Fifteenth Is Ready

As the Italian and Balkan campaigns came to a stalemate during the Fall of 1944, Fifteenth Air Force found itself free to devote its effort to the strategic offensive against Germany, which it did with great skill and heartening success. The Fifteenth had already destroyed most of the German petroleum production in the Ploesti and Balkan areas which cost the enemy about one-fourth of its total supply.

The Stage Is Set

The Allies knew, however, they would have to keep up the pressure on facilities in Germany to prevent the Germans from reconstructing bombed refineries faster than they could be destroyed. 350,000 laborers were devoted to the reconstruction efforts and Speer made restoration of oil production his top priority. The Germans were also dispersing their entire synthetic oil industry to make locations of targets very difficult. The Germans were also making extensive use of smoke and camouflage and were concentrating heavy flak guns around the chief oil installations.

Fifteenth Destroys Oil

During the last half of September, Fifteenth Air Force sent bomber fleets of 100 to 150 aircraft which dropped 287 tons on Blechhammer North, 272 tons on Oderal, 235 tons on Oswiecim, and 253 tons on Budapest.

In October, the campaign went ahead with as much force as operating conditions permitted. Eighth Air Force was able to carry out no more than four extensive oil missions.

(Continued on page 28)

(Continued from page 27)

Fifteenth had a considerably better month. It hit the synthetic plant at Brück, which had been previously rated as out of production for four months, and it unloaded large tonnages on Blechhammer South on 13 and 17 October. Blechhammer North was bombed effectively on 14 October, as was Odertal, and three centers in Austria were attacked on the 7th, 13th, and 16th.

Fifteenth initiated its November oil bombings with one of the greatest efforts it had yet carried out: 1,000 tons dropped by 500 bombers on the large crude oil refinery at Floridsdorf on the 5th and on the next day, 403 tons on Moosbierbaum, both of these targets in the Vienna area. Because of forbidding flying conditions over the Alps, no significant missions against Nazi oil were again possible until 17 November when Blechhammer South received 199 tons and Floridsdorf got 402. Then Floridsdorf and Korneuberg caught another 510 tons on the 18th. The month ended with major attacks on Vienna-Löbau, Linz, and Blechhammer South. Fifteenth Air Force crews proved their expertise as the Allied oil busters!

From the Fifteenth Air Force Association "Sortie".

**Mission #138—Blechhammer South Oil Refinery
20 November 1944 (see above)**

**Note the destruction caused by previous raids by the Fifteenth Air Force.
Also note the smoke pots on the left edge of the picture.**



MISSIONS

Mission #62 15 July 1944

Target: Creditul Minier Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania

The all-out mission of the Fifteenth Air Force against the Ploesti Oil Refineries on the 15th of July had been designed as the final knock-out blow. On the 26th of June, the Air Force had conducted a meeting with representatives of all the Groups to discuss this mission and to clarify pathfinder bombing. The day following this conference Captain Leffler began both a bomb trainer program and an air training program to continue pathfinder methods which were already well developed in this Group. Carefully selected flight leader crews were withheld from combat missions during this intensified training program. For days they flew practice missions against Pianossa Island.

Fully two weeks before the mission was flown, the 461st Group had been designated as the Group to lead the Wing. This put Colonel Glantzberg in the lead plane. With him were the old reliable team of Captain Strong, Captain Leffler, Captain Pruitt, Lt. Sullivan, and Lt. Gizelba. Colonel Lee flew as Wing Commander with Captain Walters.

The Creditul Minier Oil Refinery, three miles south of the city limits of Ploesti, was the Wing target. Using pathfinder methods, Lt. Gizelba completely saturated the vital installations of the refinery with bombs. The success of the mission earned for Colonel Lee and Lt. Gizelba the Distinguished Flying Cross. The target was partially obscured by six-tenths cloud coverage. Intense, accurate and heavy flak damaged fourteen of our planes and knocked down the one piloted by 1st Lt. William L. Weems.

Mission #63 16 July 1944

Target: Wiener Neudorf Aircraft Engine Factory, Austria

The Group continued the use of pathfinder methods with a formation of four flights against the Wiener Neudorf Aircraft Engine Factory in Austria on 16

July. Bombing through an almost complete under-cast, the Group missed the target when the bombs fell short and to the right.

Mission #64 18 July 1944

Target: Manzell Dornierwerke Aircraft Components Factory near Friedrichshafen, Germany

Lt. Colonel Hawes maintained his personally unpleasant tradition on this mission of being the hard luck leader in the Group. For more than three months he had drawn more than his share of rough missions to lead. He had led formations around, through, and over weather that would have turned back a less determined leader. His formations had repeatedly been attacked by fighters and his targets had repeatedly been obscured by clouds, haze, or smoke pots. Despite all this he was still trying to turn in another really superior mission. Fate, on the other hand, refused to smile on his efforts.

En route to the important Manzell Dornierwerke Aircraft Components Factory near Friedrichshafen, Germany, Lt. Colonel Hawes, leading the Wing, ran into bad weather which caused many of the pilots to return to their respective bases. When the weather cleared some thirty miles short of the target, the Colonel rallied the Wing formation for the bomb run. Weather over the target was CAVU, but anti-aircraft fire was extremely intense and accurate. A total of 27 percent of the 1000 pound RDX bombs scored within the prescribed 1000 foot circle.

COMMENDATION

“From: Lee CO, 49th Bomb Wing (H), APO 520

“To: Commanding Officer, 451st, 461st, 484th Bomb Group, APO 520, US Army

“Confidential, with reference to raid made 18 July 1944 and Commendation received from Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, on same, I wish to add my hearty congratulations and deep appreciation of a job superiorly performed. This well performed mission indicates that the mission was expertly

(Continued on page 30)

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planned and excellent judgment on the part of the Combat Wing Commander was used in its execution. It also indicates superior air discipline on the part of all Groups and the personnel thereof. Please convey the above Commendation to all personnel of your Command and carry on smartly."

Mission #65
19 July 1944

Target: Schleissheim A/D Installations, Munich, Germany

Success still crowned the efforts of Major Burke as a Group leader on the difficult mission to the Schleissheim Airdrome Installations at Munich. The target was partially obscured by clouds and the flak holed eighteen of the twenty-three planes over the target, but 43 percent of the 1000 pound general purpose bombs were within 1000 feet of the briefed aiming point.

Mission #66
21 July 1944

Target: Brux Synthetic Oil Refinery, Czechoslovakia

Targets selected by the Fifteenth Air Force continued to be rough. Lt. Colonel Knapp led the Group on its first mission to Czechoslovakia. The target was the synthetic oil refinery at Brux. The bombs were dropped through a five-tenths cloud coverage by the pathfinder method.

Mission #67

22 July 1944

Target: Romana Americana Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania

Still rough. Despite the efforts of the Air Force on the 15th day of July to finish off Ploesti, the Romana Americana Oil Refinery was assigned to the Group as its target for 22 July. Colonel Glantzberg led the Wing. In the lead plane with him were Lt. Specht, Captain Leffler, Major Pruitt, Lt. Simeroth, and Lt. Gizelba. After the Group was on the bomb run, Colonel Glantzberg's plane had No. 4 engine knocked out by flak and the No. 3 engine set on fire. Captain Leffler salvoed

the bombs as the plane went into a circle to the left. After losing 8000 feet, Colonel Glantzberg and Lt. Specht were able to level off the plane. The fire in the engine was extinguished by feathering the prop. After the fire had been extinguished the prop was unfeathered and the crew came home on three engines.

All the planes dropped their bombs as briefed on the Group leader. All of them fell short of the target. Of the twenty-two planes on the bomb run seventeen were hard hit by flak and four others were lost. Two planes, one piloted by 2nd Lt. Clarence W. Bloxom and the other one by 2nd Lt. Elias R. Moses, both of whom were flying their second combat mission, left the formation after the target and disappeared. 1st Lt. Taylor bailed his crew out near the base when he had but one engine left. 1st Lt. Holmes also bailed his crew out near the base when leaks in his gas line caused him to run out of fuel. One man on Lt. Taylor's crew, F/O Irving Smithkin, was fatally injured in parachuting to earth.

While the planes were away from the base on the mission, a fire, which had started in a wheat field west of the base, swept up to the fire barrier which had previously been burned around the edges of the field. No damage was done to the installations or equipment on the field, but the bomb dump was set on fire. Smoke from the conflagration covered the field with the result that only five planes, including the one piloted by Colonel Glantzberg, were able to land. Captain Donovan, who had flown the mission as deputy group leader, took about half the planes in the formation to Pantanella. The remainder of the planes landed at various fields in the area of Torretta.

The 280 heavy anti-aircraft guns at Ploesti had turned the trick for the first time of keeping the 461st from reaching its target.

Mission #68
24 July 1944

Target: Troop Concentrations at Pljevlja, Preje-polje, Sjenica, and Andrijevisa, Yugoslavia

By the end of the third week of July most of the original combat crewmembers had completed their missions. Replacement crews were coming into the Group very rapidly. The co-pilots of several flight

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(Continued from page 30)

leader crews, often having the "ranked" out of the missions by staff pilots and so being behind their respective crews in the number of sorties flown, had recently been made first pilots and assigned to fly with the new crews. The Air Force decided that a "freshman mission" led by experienced personnel was needed by the Group. As the result of this decision, together with the request of the Yugoslavs for help, a comparatively easy mission was assigned to the Group. The targets were German troop concentrations which were not defended by heavy anti-aircraft guns.

Since there were four targets and since the Group was authorized to prepare the details of its own field order for this mission, it was decided that each of the four flights would hit a target. All of the targets were hit successfully. The 766th Squadron, which had the largest target, dropped 88 percent of its bombs on the briefed aiming point. The mission, on the whole, was good.

Mission #69 **25 July 1944**

Target: Herman Goering Tank Works, Linz, Austria

And then it happened. Major Burke's long string of highly successful missions was broken by disaster. Now the Commanding Officer of the 766th Squadron as a replacement for Major Dooley, who had returned to the United States, he led a flight formation of twenty-one airplanes in an attack on the heavily defended Herman Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria. Just after the bomb bay doors had been opened and the formation had begun its bomb run, it was attacked by twenty-five twin engine and 125 single engine enemy planes.

Taking advantage of the fact that most of the planes flown by new crews did not have their ball turret down on the bomb run, the twin engine planes came up under the lead flight of the formation and began throwing rockets through the bomb bay doors. The first plane to go down was Major Burke's lead plane. Instead of packing the formation in close, the inexperienced bomber pilots spread the formation. Captain Franklin, 1st Lt. Henry, Lt. King, Lt. Sullivan, and Lt. Gizelba, flying the deputy lead plane, salvoed their bombs and attempted to rally the formation. By

this time, however, the single engine fighters, still attacking low but now from the rear, picked off planes in the struggling formation. Eleven bombers were knocked down as parachutes, tracers, rockets, enemy fighters, and exploding bombers filled the air with confusion. The nose gunner on one of the crews which returned from the mission counted two parachutes in the air at one time.

The pilot in the lead plane with Major Burke was 1st Lt. Joseph B. Hesser. Pilots of other planes lost were: 1st Lt. Edwin W. Boyer, 2nd Lt. Robert W. Fisher, 2nd Lt. Richard E. Freeman, 2nd Lt. Glenial Fulks, 2nd Lt. Kenneth O. Githens, 2nd Lt. John J. Kane, 2nd Lt. Grover F. Mitchell, 2nd Lt. Rolland T. Olson, 2nd Lt. Wray M. Stitch, and 2nd Lt. Robert A. Warren, Jr. In addition to the eleven bombers shot down over the target, four more were lost on this mission. The plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Douglas A. Herrin, one of the eight that returned to the base, was so badly shot up that it was salvaged. 2nd Lt. Casper T. Jenkins, with three wounded men aboard, washed out his plane when he attempted to land it at Foggia. 1st Lt. Edgar M. Trenner, using parachutes as a substitute for flaps and landing with a punctured tire, washed out his plane at the base. 2nd Lt. Robert G. Wester bailed his crew out over the friendly Isle of Vis.

The last flight in the formation was led by 1st Lt. Robert E. Arbuthnot. As the enemy planes flew past his plane in attacking the bombers in the front of the formation his gunners had a field day. They claimed 14 enemy aircraft destroyed, 6 probably destroyed, and 3 damaged. The claim of the twelve crews which finally returned to the base were 31 destroyed, 19 probably destroyed, and 9 damaged. Of the 19 planes claimed as probable it is likely that many of them were actually destroyed, but the gunners were too busy to follow the downward flight of crippled planes to the ground.

Of the 113 officers and men who went down on this mission, seven officers and nine enlisted men were flying their fiftieth sortie. 1st Lt. Ernest R. Henry was the only individual flying his fiftieth sortie on this mission to return to the base.

For the first time in its history, enemy fighters successfully turned back the 461st Group short of its tar-

(Continued on page 32)

(Continued from page 31)

get.

Mission #70
27 July 1944

Target: Pec, Yugoslavia

The Air Force gave the Group a day off on the 26th of July to lick its wounds, and on the following day the field order specified another “freshman mission” to Yugoslavia. The weather was CAVU. There was neither flak nor fighters. 1st Lt. Patrick J. Flaherty, still shaken by his experiences at Nimes, France on the 12th of July when his face was cut by flying glass, failed to identify the conspicuous target of Pec. The town, a center of German resistance, was missed completely. Lt. Flaherty was permanently grounded from flying combat missions following this incident. Colonel Glantzberg flew this mission as an observer in a P-38.

Mission #71
28 July 1944

Target: Phlorina, Greece

Another chance for the jittery old crews and the completely inexperienced new crews to convert a “milk run” into a successful mission. This time the Group, led for the first time by the new Group Operations Officer, Captain Joseph N. Dovovan, turned the trick by dropping 40.7 percent of the bombs on the briefed target. Greece became the ninth country in Europe in which the 461st had bombed when the railroad station and marshalling yard at Phlorina was hit with a good pattern of bombs.

Lt. Colonel Hawes flew the P-38 as an observer on this mission, but Colonel Glantzberg chose the spot of co-pilot in one of the last planes in the bomber formation. At the critique following the mission the Commanding Officer radiated his old confidence. Smilingly he told the crewmembers that he felt ten years younger after seeing the formation flying and the pattern bombing done that day.

The last paragraph of Intops Summary No. 388, dated 13 August 1944, reads as follows:

“5. BOMB DAMAGE—A ground report recently

received indicated the success of the attack of 28 July by B-24’s of the 461st Bomb Group on Phlorina M/Y. This report states that the railroad station was badly damaged and casualties to the Germans approximately 250 killed, 750 wounded, many while waiting to entrain.”

Mission #72
30 July 1944

Target: Budapest Duna Aircraft Factory Buildings, Hungary

Off again to bomb a rough target after the freshman missions and the Linz catastrophe. The Group, with Colonel Glantzberg leading, did a good job on the Duna Aircraft Factory buildings in Budapest, Hungary, despite the fact that one flight in the formation dropped its bombs at the initial point. The cloud coverage was two-tenths, the flak was moderate, accurate, and heavy and the enemy planes over the target were nine. Twelve of the nineteen planes over the target were hit by flak. A total of 28.6 percent of the 500 pound RDX bombs were scored on the briefed aiming point. This was the first time the Group had been back to the Duna Aircraft Factory since its highly successful mission of 13 April 1944.

Mission #73
31 July 1944

Target: Bucharest, Prahova Oil Refinery, Roumania

Back to Bucharest for the last mission of the month with the usual results over that target area. The target was the Prahova Oil Refinery which is located near the railroad tracks in the northwest section of the city. The cloud coverage was five-tenths. As usual there was moderate, inaccurate flak. Only 8.8 percent of the bombs were scored within a 1000 feet of the center of impact. The mission was led by Major Word who had succeeded Major Burke, first as Group Operations Officer and now as the 766th Squadron Commander.



Editor's note: The month of July was a bad one for the 461st. We lost 20 aircraft to enemy activity, mostly enemy fighters, as reported in the mission summaries. The following crews, only the pilot's name is given, were listed as missing in action on the dates shown.

<u>PILOT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TARGET</u>
2nd Lt. Mac L. Lucas	3 July 1944	Bucharest, Hungary
1st Lt. William J. Barnes	12 July 1944	Nimes, France
1st Lt. Richard S. Fawcett	12 July 1944	Nimes, France
1st Lt. Chester A. Ray, Jr.	12 July 1944	Nimes, France
2nd Lt. Frederick L. Dunn	12 July 1944	Nimes, France
1st Lt. William L. Weems	15 July 1944	Ploesti, Roumania
1st Lt. Edwin L. McCrary	22 July 1944	Ploesti, Roumania
1st Lt. Clarence W. Bloxom	22 July 1944	Ploesti, Roumania
2nd Lt. Elias E. Moses	22 July 1944	Ploesti, Roumania
2nd Lt. Wray M. Smith	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
1st Lt. Glenial Fulks	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
2nd Lt. Robert A. Warren, Jr.	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
1st Lt. Edwin W. Boyer	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
2nd Lt. Rolland T. Olson	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
2nd Lt. Kenneth O. Githens	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
1st Lt. Richard E. Freeman	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
2nd Lt. John J. Kane	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
1st Lt. Joseph B. Hesser	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
1st Lt. Grover F. Mitchell	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria
2nd Lt. Robert E. Fisher	25 July 1944	Linz, Austria

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
A.P.O. 520

GENERAL ORDERS NO. 1865

15 July 1944

AWARDS OF THE SOLDIER'S MEDAL

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the Soldier's Medal is awarded the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, residence as indicated, with the following citation:

For heroism at voluntary risk of life at an Allied airfield in Italy. On 10 May 1944, a B-24 type aircraft crashed on landing and caught fire. Rushing to the scene these officers discovered that one man had been rendered un-

(Continued on page 34)

conscious and was trapped in the wreckage of the airplane. Bravely ignoring the personal risk involved from the possible explosion of the burning gasoline and live ammunition still in the plane, these officers succeeded in removing the injured man from the ship without further harm. By their heroism and gallantry, in risking their lives to save the life of another, these officers have reflected great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

EDWIN T. GOREE, O-724610, Major, 764th Bomb Sq, 461st Bomb Gp.
Residence at appointment: San Diego, California.

DANIEL E. NATHAN, O-438282, Captain, 765th Bomb Sq, 461st Bomb Gp.
Residence at appointment: Fort Valley, Georgia.

CHESTER A. RAY, JR., O-809872, Second Lieutenant, 766th Bomb Sq, 461st Bomb Gp.
Residence at appointment: Detroit, Michigan.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R.K. TAYLOR, Colonel, GSC
Chief of Staff

* * * * *

Bomb Strike Photo—Mission #65
Schleissheim Airdrome, Munich, Germany
19 July 1944 (see Page 30)



Editor's note: At the 1994 Reunion in Hampton, VA, I met with Tod and Randy Goree, the sons of Major Edwin T. Goree, former commander of the 764th Squadron. They had brought several files from their father's records of his service with the 461st Bomb Group. They were kind enough to allow me to take these files home so that I could review the material for use in "The Liberaider". The following are excerpts from the 764th Squadron News-Bulletin which was first published in April 1944.

SQUADRON ACTIVITIES

Cash awards for the most perfect B-24 model airplane constructed by a squadron member. It has to have a 6 in. wing span and be made to scale. (Editor: It was a high stakes game.)

1st Prize	\$5.00
2nd Prize	\$3.00
3rd Prize	\$1.00
Booby Prize	1 package of genuine Raleigh cigarettes

HOME FRONT NEWS

We see that due to a surplus of linen the mercantile industry has suspended the manufacture of sheets. Have you noticed it?

We see the war workers are complaining again since they are now cut to only 3 steaks per week. Tough isn't it. Maybe a new strike is brewing.

MEDICAL MUSING

Capt. Emil Koenig, the 764th Flight Surgeon, wrote an article on malaria and the anopheles mosquito that transmits the malaria parasite. This prompted the following bit of poetry.

Let's beat the pesky mosquito
By the name of Ann Opheles,
Don't forget your atabrine
And you'll always feel just fine.

By A. Contributor

1944 HUMOR

(Hasn't changed very much)

Tom: "Do you believe in free love?"

Redhead: "Have I ever sent you a bill?"

"What you all goin' to name your baby, Liza?"

"I hain't decided yit, but if hits a boy ah reckon Ize goin' ta call him Furlough."

One of Adam's greatest faults was he was constantly turning over a new leaf!

The hardest time to put a baby to bed is when she is seventeen!

Life is an eternal struggle to keep one's earning capacity up to one's yearning capacity.

Tome marches on! Nowadays live wires are picked up on every street corner and nobody is shocked.

When a girl knows she's not the only pebble on the beach, she's apt to be a little bolder.

* * * * *

THE MOST OFTEN ASKED QUESTION HAVE YOU WRITTEN HOME LATELY?

Editor's note: The 764th Squadron news-bulletin, was issued about every week from late April to early July. The staff, as far as I can determine, consisted of:

Editing:	Lt. R.M. Sayre
Sports:	Lt. E. Trenner
	Lt. W. Parker
Typing:	Corp. S.E. Anderson
Layout:	Corp. B.L. Williamson
Contributors:	Capt. Emil J. Koenig
	Capt. Edwin T. Goree
	P.G. Rasmussen, Chaplain

The news-bulletin seems to vanish after the 1 July issue. It resurfaces on 27 September, however, as the 764th "You Name It" news, Volume 2, No. 1. A few issues later it receives its name "The 764th Putt-Putt". Major Goree completed his missions in early November and left for home with issue No. 9, dated 22 November.

Mission #43
10 June 1944

Target: Porto Marghera Refinery, Italy

On the 6th of June many of the groups in the Fifteenth Air Force had gone to Ploesti. On the 10th of June, the Air Force resumed its policy of bombing the enemy sources of oil supply. Our mission was against the oil refinery of Porto Marghera, Italy. The 765th Squadron Bombardier, Lt. Murphy, found the target for the other bombardiers who turned in an excellent score of 44 percent on this important target. Not too much flak was encountered and no enemy aircraft were seen.



764th Sqdn News Bulletin

A Paper For the
764th Squadron Personnel

Edition No. 3

Italy

May 20, 1944

Page 1



This is the story of a B-24-H Army 42-52458 more commonly known to us who have an interest in her future as #13. Her name has become a squadron symbol—yes—even an inspiration. Now let me tell you the story of how she was acquired by the 764th, and some of the highlights of her career. Chippiedall is a product of Henry Ford—built in his Willow Run plant, and later sent to Fort Worth for modification. She was ferried to Hammer Field with less than 25 hours on her, and nearly assigned to the 767th, but it so happened that her pilot was quicker on the draw and through fast action and maneuvering was finally assigned to the 764th, where she was designated #13 after her crew who was to fly her. The shake-down flights were very satisfactory and her crew Chief M/Sgt. James Hardy, who must be credited for the greater part of her present success acclaimed her a fine ship and predicted a great future in store for her.

Early in February after being outfitted for combat at Hamilton Field, she started on her first leg of the flight to the combat area. Flown by her crew, and

carrying the crew chief and 3 extra passengers, she made a series of flights without a hold over to the Port of Embarkation. Then on over water and dense jungles without even faltering she went, making an enviable record. The reputation she has made in combat speaks for itself. As of this date, she has flown 27 sorties in succession, a record, to our knowledge, which hasn't been equaled in this Air Force. But not without a few tense moments, and times of anxious anticipation. There was, for instance, the time she returned with 3 large holes in #2 gas cell—caused by flak. But, a faithful and kindly engineering staff had her ready to go the following day after an almost impossible all night job. Then the time when she must have an engine change. But again our boys had her ready to fly the next mission. Perhaps it's the Good God's graciousness, nevertheless we all look forward to her future and would like to see her go back home to symbolize the spirit and effectiveness of the 764th Bomb Squadron.

Long may she fly.

There are countless tales of men and their deeds,
How our Sailors and Navy have conquered the seas.
How our Marines had landed and taken the Isles,
How the infantry chased the Nazis for miles.
Now there's a tale to be told to each one and all
Of a B-Twenty-Four which we call Chippiedall.
There wasn't a bomb run she wouldn't make
And there wasn't a flaking that she couldn't take.
She had that old spirit of do or die,
And the day never past that she wouldn't fly.

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A record had been set by a ship gone before,
But Chippie would tie it and then add some more.
So she started to fly every mission as planned,
She flew like a veteran and expertly manned,
Came thru every one with her head flying high
To land in the pink and still ready to fly.

S/Sgt. Bud McGuire

Editor's note: Chippie flew the first 31 consecutive Group missions. She flew 37 of the first 44 before going down over Yugoslavia on Number 44.

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HAD TO GO TO WAR

By

Thomas L. Yates

Continued from page 39 of the June, 1994 issue of the "Liberaider".

Another time when we were coming off a target the pilot called out for the whereabouts of our fighter escort and the reply was "Here we are, boss, just six little blue birds." There were some squadrons of black pilots flying both P-51s and P-38s out of Foggia. We always liked this escort for if we got into trouble and had to start home alone one of them usually peeled off and came back with us. I heard later that this group of pilots received many citations for their actions and accomplishments.

I have to tell this "Believe it or not" story that I kept the whole 15th Air Force down while I had breakfast. As it happened I was not scheduled to fly one morning and all of a sudden I was awakened by the operations officer. He said I was needed to fly as an engineer with the lead ship as their regular engineer had suddenly taken ill. Now I'm a breakfast person and there is no way I can function without it. I also didn't want to get shot down with no food in my stomach. I told the officer I had to have my breakfast so he told me to get my gear ready and he would go to the mess hall and get some food. He brought it back and I sat on my cot and had my breakfast. I really don't remember the menu but it must have been sufficient. After eating I got in the Jeep and we went to where the lead ship was parked. I had not flown lead before and had to be checked out on the auxiliary power plant. The lead plane has a radar unit for navigation. This is called a Mickey. Lt. Wilson was there flying as a nose turret navigator so I asked him where we were going and he said Munich. I knew why the lead engineer suddenly got sick. This is the one place I had no desire to go but we had cloud cover and the run was fairly easy.

I was present at a rather strange situation quite by accident. I had not realized that many guys did not know how to drive for they were city boys and had no need to drive. In Texas we all drove at an early age. Anyway, an officer wanted to go to the flight line and there was no one to drive him so I offered. In fact, I was delighted to drive anything again. As we were nearing the field we saw a plane coming in with no rudder or stabilizer on the left side. As we pulled up to where others were viewing the landing, they remarked what a great job the pilot was doing. When the plane touched down it hurried to a parking place and shut down the engines. The pilot hurried out of the plane for he too wanted to see the plane that had only one stabilizer. Little did he know that it was he that the tower was talking about. It seemed that his plane had mechanical problems and was late taking off. He tried to take a shortcut and went through a dark cloud. The turbulent cloud put the plane in a spin causing the bombs to be thrown through the side of the plane and shear off the rudder and stabilizer. We can't pull a B-24 out of a spin, but this pilot did. After they got control, one of the officers went back to the waist position and all he found was a spilled chute. We all carried an extra chute so this was not alarming. At the time the pilot landed he really didn't know what happened to the members of the crew. Later we learned they chuted behind enemy lines but made it back safely.

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When I think of Ploesti, I think of my last mission, or supposedly my last mission. I was flying just as an engineer with a major and it was the last mission for the both of us and we were scheduled to fly in the "Tail-end Charlie" position. I questioned the major's position for with his rank surely he could have had a better position, so I thought. He said, "Sergeant, I flew this position on the Ploesti raids, they went over the target and I went around." I'm sure this was not true, but he made me feel better. We were to hit a target near Florence and it was coordinated with other flights and when it was our time to drop our bombs there was a flight just beneath us so we went to the Adriatic, got rid of our bombs and came home. It wasn't our fault we didn't drop but operations had a problem deciding if we should get credit for the mission. They scheduled me to fly the next day with an officer I knew pretty well. He had been a co-pilot and was trying out as a first pilot. Maybe they picked me because someone thought he needed an experienced engineer. This was a low altitude mission and the Leaning Tower of Pisa was an identifying marker. We lost an engine so we feathered the prop, shut off the gas to that engine and came on home. It was a short run so the loss of the engine was not a problem. When I got back I was notified that the previous mission counted and this was just an extra mission.

While in Italy our squadron base was a farm house and the barns and the buildings that go with a farm. I don't know where the farmer lived, but he brought his oxen to the watering trough at the barn. The barn had a brick floor and we built a heating stove from a 55 gallon drum and used 5 gallon cans staked to form a chimney. The chimney was about 30 to 40 feet high to reach the top of the roof. One morning, Bill and I decided to light the fire. It was kind of dark and we couldn't see how much gas we were releasing in the barrel. We threw in a match and it sent fire way above the roof. It was like a rocket taking off for outer space. Later on we got a tent of our own and our crew really enjoyed the privacy. We also heated our tent the same way and sparks often burned little holes in the canvas. The Provost Marshall came in almost daily, when we weren't flying, and told us that we needed to repair the holes. He had a saying that sticks with me, it was, "I'm Sheriff Mitten and I ain't shitten." We saluted him once a month for he was the payroll officer and it was regulations to salute the person who pays you.

The other night some of us were talking about WWII American generals and General Patton's name was mentioned. I told about the time we flew oil, ammunitions, and gas to Lyon, France. You may have read or seen in the movies that Patton's troops pushed further than their supply lines reached. During this emergency we stripped some of our planes drastically, including the guns, and loaded our bomb bay to the hilt with gas, oil and ammo. With only a pilot, co-pilot and engineer we made the deliveries to Lyon. We didn't need a navigator for all we had to do was miss Marseille to the west and follow the Rhone River to Lyon. We were told that the front lines were only 14 miles to the east.

We didn't need much money. Cigarettes were a nickel a pack and six was the limit for the week; candy bars were a nickel, but there was a limit of three. I don't remember the price of beer, but the limit was three. Occasionally we could buy soap, toothpaste and a toothbrush. Once in a while we could buy razor blades. We were not required to shave but when the whiskers interfered with the oxygen mask we didn't have to be told. Most of us were too young to shave anyway.

Sometimes when we had been flying all day and had finished talking to the G2 officers about the mission, got out shot of whiskey and had finished cleaning our guns, we could get on the truck and head for camp. Once in a while we would see black smoke coming from our camp and this meant hot showers. Drums of water were heated with 100 octane and there was great excitement with the anticipation of this luxury.

Toward the end of the war we finally got smart and had some sandwiches prepared by the mess hall. They froze while in flight but they sure did taste good when we were at lower altitude and safely on the way back to our base.

Catholic mass was held every Sunday just three or four miles from us. We caught a truck most of the time, but sometimes we just walked. I was sitting in church and in walked Michael K. LaRock. I had flown with him all this time and never knew he was a Catholic. I asked him about his presence there and he said that the next day was his last mission and he wanted all the help he could get.

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Most of the time our missions were to Munich, Linz and Vienna. One night we were assigned to a night harassment mission to Innsbruck. Our crews didn't want to go, and especially me. One plane at night with no night experience and no radar in a plane that could barely fly 180 miles an hour seemed awful foolish to me. We just knew we would get hit so we planned our escape route to Switzerland. While we were on the runway ready for takeoff, the tower sent up a yellow flare, meaning to wait, and a few minutes later the red flare was fired and this meant to stand down or cancel. I think my prayers were immediately answered.

I don't think John Glenn felt any better when he finished orbiting the earth than I did knowing I wouldn't have to ever fly another mission. It was always a great feeling to land from a mission, open the top hatch, and sit on top of the plane. Engineers were required to look out the hatch or ride on top to alert the pilot of things not visible from the cockpit. When sitting up there it was as if we were saying to everyone, "We did it again, world."

I was sent to Naples on May 1, 1945 and boarded the Mariposa on the 11th. While in Naples on the 7th, we heard a lot of shouting in the streets and we later learned that the European war was officially over. Of course, my war was already over, but I felt better about the trip across the Atlantic. We arrived at the New York harbor on May 20th, and it was as if we had won the war by ourselves. We received a greeting from ships with bands playing and other ships had water spouting everywhere. We were impressed with the people of New York and never had any idea that such a reception was in the offing.

On July 22, 1945, I was given an honorable discharge and it certified "Thomas L. Yates, 38460982, Technical Sergeant, 766 Bomb Squadron, is hereby awarded this certificate as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful service to this country."

The participation in combat was one of the greatest times of my life. I know I did things that thousands of others had done, but to me it was my experience, my contribution, my memories, and my special corner of my life.

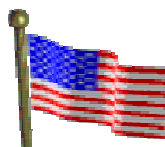
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