



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 26, No. 2

DECEMBER 2009

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

Tulsa, OK – 461st Bomb Group Reunion - 2009

Thursday, October 8,
was arrival and check
in day.

The registration table
was open all day as
was the hospitality
room with refresh-
ments and display ta-
ble. The weather was
the story of this day.
With record rainfall
(6+ inches in some
areas around Tulsa),
many flights were de-
layed into Tulsa.
Speaking from experi-

(Continued on page 4)

Diary of Philip R. Hawes

February 21st:

Left Belem for Fortaleza, Brazil, at
about 06:00 AM. About 900 miles.
Altitude 9,000 feet. Cloud coverage
the same as the day before. Trip un-
eventful. The Brazilian Coastal re-
gions were considerably drier as we
approached Fortaleza from about 200
miles NW. We actually observed cat-
tle grazing here and there as in Texas!
Fortaleza is not quite the easternmost
point of Brazil and South America but
is close enough to be a good jumping-

off point for Dakar, French West Af-
rica.

February 21st & 22nd:

In Fortaleza, Brazil. Adjacentto Field,
Fortaleza, was booming with four-
engine aircraft about to take the jump
across the pond and a few two-engine
aircraft heading for Natal, Brazil, for
the shorter hop to Ascension Island.
Most of the boys quartered in tents but
I 'finagled' quarters in a very cool

(Continued on page 9)

Election Time

by
Hughes Glantzberg
Nominating Committee Chairperson

Yes, it's time to elect officers for the
461st Bombardment Group (H) Asso-
ciation for the next couple of years. I
was named as Chairperson of the
Nominating Committee. The other
members of the committee are Barbara
Alden, Dave Blake, Glenda Price,
Linda Titus, Marilu Meredith and
Mary Jo Belak. Together, we will
strive to come up with a slate of officer
to match the current officers in ability
to manage this organization over the

next couple of years. But we will need
your help. This committee has been
charged with producing a slate of offi-
cers composed of the children. This
slate of officers consists of the Presi-
dent, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secre-
tary, Directors for the Squadrons and
the Headquarters Detachment. Cur-
rently Glenda Price is serving as Secre-
tary and David St. Yves is serving as
Treasurer. Both of these are children
and are doing a fantastic job. Unless I
hear an objection, I suggest they con-
tinue to serve in their current positions.

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Taps

May they rest in peace forever

Please forward all death notices to:

Hughes Glantzberg

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Gunnison, CO 81230

editor@461st.org

Headquarters

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Rider, Richard L.	Hollywood, CA	2162-5	11/17/2003

764th Squadron

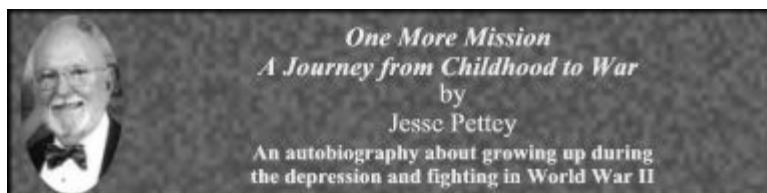
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Braun, William R.	Old Fort, NC	1035	06/08/2009
Edwards, Harold H.	Gallipolis, OH	612	2/23/2009
Grossberg, Milton	Desert Hot Springs, CA	1035	01/02/2008
Hughey, Wilburn L.	Des Moines, IA	612	12/06/2008
Newbury, Paul T.	Midland, TX	612	07/03/2009
Rowe, James J.	Sodus Point, NY	612	06/05/2009
Smith, John J.	Fresno, CA	1035	10/01/2009

765th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Hanley, Hugh H.	Cornwall, NY	1035	04/24/2009
Shaffer, Paul D.	Wexford, PA	1035	06/30/2009

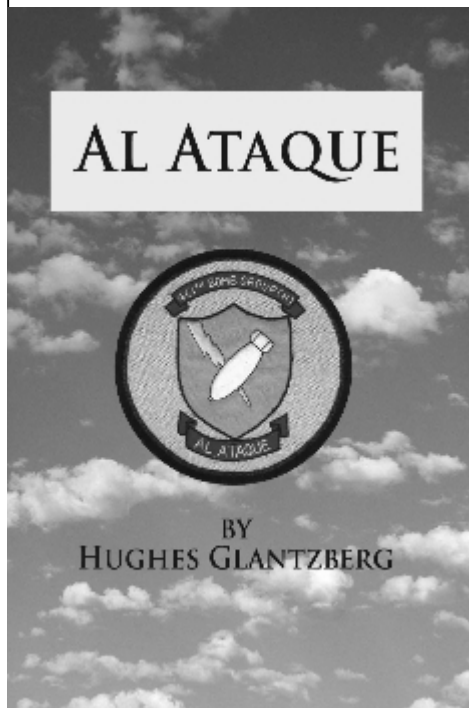
766th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Falkowski, Christ	Irvine, CA	1035	11/17/1996
Molin, John E.	St. Paul, MN	70	10/07/2009
Slaven, Archie R. Jr.	Wichita, KS	612	05/07/2009
Strano, Francis F.	Cheektowaga, NY	748	10/28/2008



With a special interest in World War II and the 461st Bombardment Group in particular, I found this book excellent. Most of the men who fought during WWII were in their late teens and early 20s. It's amazing to be able to read about their activities. Liberaider Editor

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and Xlibris (at a 15% discount) (<http://www2.xlibris.com/bookstore/bookdisplay.asp?bookid=11013>).



Al Ataque

History / General

Trade **Paperback**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$26.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-41572-5**

413 Pages

On Demand Printing

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc

To order call 1-800-AUTHORS

Trade **Hardcopy**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$36.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-86486-4**

Al Ataque is an excellent book that describes the preparation a bomb group goes through before being deployed overseas as well as the problems of shipping over five thousand men and supplies along with some eighty B-24 aircraft from a stateside base to a foreign country. The book details the establishment of Torretta Field which was used by the 461st for the duration of the war in Europe. The 461st Bomb Group flew two hundred and twenty-three combat missions between April 1944 and April 1945. Each of these is described in the book. Personal experiences of veterans who were actually part of the 461st are also included.



Music Bravely Ringing

by

Martin A. Rush

767th Squadron

This is the story of a small town boy who, during WWII, wandered onto the conveyor belt that turned civilians into bomber pilots. Initially awed and intimidated at the world outside his home town, he began to realize that this was an opportunity to have a hand in stimulating and challenging dealings larger than he had expected. He had a few near-misses, but gradually began to get the hang of it. His story is that like the thousands of young men who were tossed into the maelstrom of war in the skies. He was one of the ones who was lucky enough to live through it.

This book is at the publisher now and should be available early in 2008.

(Continued from page 1)

ence, driving in was a bit of a chore, also, but we made it! Those flying in were not as fortunate and were rerouted to Wichita and bussed in or delayed until Friday.

A brief meeting was held at 7:00.

Friday, October 10

Two buses took off at 9:30 for the Tulsa Air and Space Museum. There the participants enjoyed seeing a display about the B-24 "Tulsamerican" and the 461st Bomb Group. The Tulsamerican was the last B-24 built in Tulsa. Later in the morning, many members went to enjoy a show in the planetarium while others enjoyed a talk about Tulsa, its aerospace industrial history and its part in the WWII war effort.



Tulsa Air and Space Museum

The 461st Bomb Group display included video of Val Miller. He was on the final flight of the Tulsamerican. This was his final mission and he had never been on the plane before or with that crew. There were details on the damage sustained by the plane and the attempts to make an emergency landing on the Isle of Vis, but the plane fell just short. The plane is still at the bottom of the Adriatic Sea. Val was rescued by local fishermen and he was hospitalized for 18 months after the crash. It wasn't until 1997 that he learned there were others who had survived the crash also.

The next stop was the Will Rogers Museum in Clare-

more, OK. The group was welcomed into the auditorium with our Bomb Group name on the marquee. We enjoyed a great box lunch while listening to a Will Rogers impersonator talk about Will Rogers and perform a few rope tricks. There was also a short film about the man and his significance during his life and his influence on prominent people of the day.



Will Rogers Museum

Friday evening was the Squadron dinner held in one room. The hotel put out a great buffet and we enjoyed the company of our table companions.



Squadron Dinner

Saturday, October 11

(Continued on page 5)

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The buses left at 9:30 on this day and the first stop was the Oklahoma Aquarium. Wow, was this a great surprise! This aquarium surpassed all expectations. There were great saltwater exhibits and specimens of all kinds. The walk through the shark exhibit was fun and several interactive exhibits made this a pleasurable time for all. At 11:45, we took a short bus ride to the Tulsa Riverwalk. This was mainly a series of restaurants right on the Arkansas River. Everyone had a chance to eat and stroll along the storefronts. It was a little cool but the sun was shining. Everyone enjoyed a nice lunch in a variety of restaurants and a pleasant time visiting and walking outside.



Oklahoma Aquarium

That evening was the Group Banquet with a sit down dinner. After dinner, there was music and many folks enjoyed the opportunity to visit late into the evening.

Sunday, October 11

Our last function, all too soon, was the Memorial Breakfast which was another buffet. President Al spoke briefly and thanked everyone for coming and those who helped put the weekend together. We had the presentation of colors by a local Air National Guard Color Guard Unit who reported that they were honored to be in the presence of some of the men that pave the way for the modern Air Force of today. After breakfast, Gene Brock led us in song. Val Miller spoke in person to the group about his remembrances on the last flight of the Tulsamerican. Lee Cole and Jim Watson read the names of those no longer with us. Chaplain

Emile Hawkins gave an address and closing prayer. And Al St. Yves spoke brief farewell and hopes to see us all next year.



Memorial Breakfast

For those who could stay on longer, a trip back to the Tulsa Air & Space museum was organized to attend a small but impressive air show that was taking place the weekend we were there. We were able to see several WWII aircraft in flight and on display including a Mitchell B-25, P-51 Mustang, a couple of AT-6 Texans, a BT-13 "Vultee Vibrator" and a PT-17 Stearman bi-plane.



P-51 at Air Show of WWII aircraft

It seemed like the weekend was over all too soon. In a flash, we were saying good by to new friends and old friends. See you next year!

Minutes from General Meeting October 8, 2009

Al St. Ives called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm at the Radisson Hotel in Tulsa, OK.

Al stated that the Nominating Committee has been tasked with nominating younger generation officers across the board. Hughes Glantzberg was chosen to be the chair of the Nominating Committee. He will pick the other members.

Al mentioned that there were 38 vets at the reunion last year and 33 vets this year. He said that he received last minute calls from 5 vets who could not come due to illness.

Al had Bob Hayes come up and speak to the group. Bob talked about having the children of members become the officers. He mentioned that many groups have disbanded although some have continued to meet. However, their treasuries are no longer available and they have to start over. The 461st wants to keep going on as it has the past several years. The treasury will be able to stay in tact and the history of the Bomb Group can keep going. Bob suggested that there be seven members on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will select the following:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer – Currently Dave St. Ives
Board – to consist of one representative from each Squadron including the Executive department

Bob Hayes returned to his seat.

Al mentioned that donation will continue to be welcomed. James Dooley made a donation at this time.

Hughes took the floor. He discussed his efforts to find a permanent home for the 461st records he had as well as the records on the website, etc. He initially contacted the 15th Air Force but while they would accept original records, they would not accept anything electronic or maintain the website. He then contacted the Air Force Museum in Dayton. He

asked them several questions about donating the records he has. First, can you get the information back? They said they would get the information back and so far they have. Second, what about donating the information to the museum archives? The museum would like relevant records. Hughes has several boxes of records. After discussion, it was determined to try to inventory the records and then donate the records to the Dayton Air Force Museum. If Hughes can bring some records to future reunions, there would be several people to help go through the records and determine what to save.

Dave Blake took the floor and spoke briefly about the weekend activities. The hospitality rooms will be open about 3 pm after tours returns. It is on the second floor and follow the signs from the elevators.

Hughes took the floor again to ask about making a change to a DFC mentioned in the official history. Thomas Moss has the wrong middle initial in his name and wants it corrected. After discussion, it was decided to leave the record as it was originally recorded but to add a footnote with the correct initial.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenda Price
Secretary



The 461st Bomb Group 2010 REUNION *Chicago, Illinois*



Thursday, September 23rd—Sunday, September 26th

Look for complete details and registration information in your June, 2010 issue of *The Liberaider*. You can also keep up on developments as they happen by visiting your web site: **www.461st.org/reunion**

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

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The 461st Liberaider
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The Liberaider is published twice yearly on behalf of the members of the organization.
Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

President's Corner

Hello, Everyone. It was great to see such a large turnout at the reunion in Tulsa. It was a fantastic reunion with some really good tours. It was very well organized by the Reunion Committee consisting of children of the veterans. I'm sure their contribution is more and more precious to the veterans as the years go by. It sounds like next year we'll be gathering in Chicago. I hope to see everyone there as I'm sure the Reunion Committee will have another great agenda planned. Reserve the dates now for September 2010

Al St. Yves

Vice-President's Comments

Through the Eyes of Others

Leonard H. "Len" Bathurst

Ordnance Section 765th Bomb Squadron

It was a typical evening in early November, while relaxing after dinner, that I found myself sitting in front of my recent acquisition, a "Windows 7". (A computer which tends to create many challenges for a "smoke signal" communicator of the earlier century.) As a form relaxation, I usually browse through, and catch up on my incoming E-Mail.

That evening, I received an E from our very good friend, the Editor of the Liberaider, Hughes Glantzberg, asking me to submit an article for the December 2009 issue of the publication. Although I had not responded to Hughes' request, my initial reaction was, "Let George do it!" As I pondered for some days, drumming up several, what appeared to be fairly sound reasons why I could refuse his request, I realized that I am a member of an organization that survived, and still functions and exists, due in no small way to the fact that, we are a unit which has always relied on the contributions of each member. It was true when the 461st Bomb Group (H) was

first formed in 1943, and it remains true today as the 461st Bomb Group (H) Association continues to serve the purposes and objectives stated in our By-Laws. We shall continue to be a viable contributing organization so long as each member participates as he or she can.

Once I came to the realization that I had a responsibility to make an attempt to satisfy Hughes' request, I had to create a message which I thought might be of value to our members.

On November 9 as I was browsing through several DVDs, my eyes caught a glimpse of an attractive, and colorful disk, "461st Website" (as of October 2005). I stopped what I was doing and inserted the DVD in my computer and soon realized I had the theme and purpose of this article.

I have observed that throughout the years many of the members, their families, associate members and guests of the 461st Association have enjoyed telling, listening and/or sharing experiences with those of us who participated with our unit. The many individuals who took part in these informal, and at times formal gatherings were attempting to glean as much information as we could during these, all too brief, sessions. Many of the individuals were gathering historical data in an attempt to maintain a viable, living history of the 461st in order to keep it alive for future generation. Many of the family members have desires to learn about their fathers, their grandfathers, and of those with whom their family member served, as they gave their all, during a time of great need.

As I spent much of the evening viewing, and listening to the information recorded on the 461st DVD, I soon realized that there were hundreds of photographs of individuals, crews, groups, functions, bombings, targets, individual, as well as

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BOQ for the five officers on my ship. We had arrived at noon, and at about 2 o'clock I managed to get a staff car to take myself and Capt. Word into Fortaleza. Quite a city! The road to town is lined with thatched huts and giant avocado and mango trees. Natives, dirty, abject, walk to and fro carrying giant loads on their heads. As one enters the town things look better and it turns out to be a city not unlike Monterey, Mexico - at the same time a Mardi Gras festival was going on, so between local beers at side-walk cafes we paraded in the streets with the others.

There were thousands of well-dressed Portuguese in town - white suits by the hundreds and gay varied-colored dresses on the women. None of the women paraded - it is against tradition or modesty.

However a great number of the men were dressed as women in the parades. The 'parades' were numerous and consisted of bands and dancers with little organization, playing and dancing to the swingiest tropical music I have ever heard.

Everyone in town had "ether" squirt guns and we were squirted continually with fragrant ether as we walked the streets. The idea is that ether makes us more passionate. However, we had been briefed so continually on venereal diseases that we did not respond to the many amorous possibilities that presented themselves.

That evening we - in shirt sleeves - attended a formal ball at the "Country Club". The attendance was approximately 1,000 and it was entirely formal except Capt. Word and me, a fact which did not faze us in the least. We drank Scotch and Sodas until 2:30 AM on a Senhor Purcell - Englishman who was in New York last in 1895. We drank also with the American Consul, the CO of Adjacent Field, who eyed our attire disapprovingly, also with a "big" banker Baker. Also with an old guy who ran society in Fortaleza and who had lived in Brazil 45 years --- so we got along famously & danced with many women to their tropical music which had plenty of fire to it. I often found myself in the center of a circle all alone doing a tropical jig and undoubtedly looking very foolish.

The next day at Fortaleza I had a slight hangover until about noon, but slept also in the afternoon until suppertime.

The mess at Fortaleza abounded in fruits - bananas and oranges were always present and at night mangoes and also giant avocados.

At the Officer's Club one of the favorite drinks was ice-cold orange juice during the hot day - Coca Colas were also obtainable in the PX or Club. Lest I be misunderstood about the quality of the post: the PX and club although colorful were poor imitations of the real thing. The native waiters made them colorful and interesting. There were no white or colored (native) women whatsoever. At the PX I purchased some mosquito boots for \$5.75, a good imitation of cowboy boots, and also a riding crop in which is a stiletto about six inches long.

On the evening of the 22 at 10:00 PM, we took off under a tropical starry sky for Dakar, French West Africa at 9,000 feet. The usual misgivings and worries beset our minds. What if our engines should fail? What if our gas was insufficient? It was a trip of over 2,200 miles with no land whatsoever along the route. We hit Dakar almost on the nose to our great delight (we were very nonchalant about it) at about 1:30 in the afternoon (Greenwich time - also African time) after a flight over water of twelve hours and thirty minutes.

February 28th at Marakech, Morocco, North Africa.

To resume the flight narrative — yesterday we took a good look at Tindauf — town of 3rd importance - and decided that the U.S. was the place for us. Tindauf was merely a Mohammedan village with a sand-swept desolate airport nearby. The population was about 300 or 400, I should say, and for hundreds of miles on all sides there was no sign of life — just stretches of light tan sand and rock.

The Sahara has proved to be one of the wonders of the earth for me. There is very little life on it for 1,300 miles on the route we flew — not even plant life. At times we flew over a hundred miles over dazzling white sands without seeing a plant, tree,

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bush of any sort below us or in the distance. It would be horrible to be forced down there. Caravan trails are outlined on the maps but they are impossible to find from the air and they are only sand anyhow. The distance between oases is sometimes 500 — 600 miles, a long stretch. We are briefed to remain with the airplane four days if forced down. ATC will search four days then give up. If one is not found in four days in that desert he might as well shoot himself.

At Marrakech - French Morocco:

The field is cluttered up with hundreds of combat planes: B-17s, B-24s, B-26s, C-47s and a few British and French ships. The living conditions on the post are primitive in comparison to past conditions - tents, mud, rain, dirty officer's lounge, dirty mess, eating out of mess kits. The boys are rapidly becoming acclimated to combat conditions, and we are still 1,000 miles from combat.

Being a field officer, I have been quartered in Marrakech in the Hotel Mamounia, reputedly one of the finest, if not the finest, hotels in North Africa. The city is French Mohammedan, built for the most part of a reddish stucco or clay composition and the hotel is no exception, but the hotel is exquisite throughout. Turbaned servants greeted us at the entrance and ushered me to my room. The room is very attractive and compares most favorably with the finer hotel rooms in the U.S. But in addition, has that foreign appeal that makes an American go for it in a big way. It is large - two writing tables, two very comfortable 3/4 beds, one side of the room glassed in with French doors opening out to a large balcony which overlooks an attractive garden. On the balcony I have another table - a circular wicker table with two chairs. Very large mirrors are found in the bathroom, the hallway, and in one wall of the main room. All are about six feet high. The floor is inlaid tile of Mohammedan design. The bathroom is very modern with excellent French fixtures - a bathtub I can almost swim in, a shower, a large wash basin, several cabinets, mirrors, a table, and - get this - a douche bowl. I at first thought the douche bowl was a water closet and I urinated in it. Then I started

wondering how excrement would go down for there was only the usual drain one finds in a wash bowl. Then I noticed the hot and cold water handles and a nozzle shooting up in the middle of the darn thing. They say the French nearly always install these douche bowls in bathrooms and they are often used instead of contraceptives. The water closet was difficult to locate at first, and I finally discovered it behind a sliding door, all by itself in a little room next to the bathroom.

Finis de douche

This morning our flight to Tunis was cancelled because of bad weather. Tomorrow the outlook is doubtful.

Purchases today:

- 8 packages of cigarettes and 3 Raleigh Pipe Tobacco, 6 Chesterfield & 2 Philip Morris for 32 francs or 6¢.
- A Berber knife supposed to be 400 years old and a powder horn with shot pouch for 650 francs \$13.00. Too much but will be valuable some day in a den.

Tonight: Crap game at the field. Won \$120. Lost \$120.

February 29th: Hotel Mamounia

Weather poor. No clearance. Slept 11 hours. Had a wonderful piping hot bath in that tremendous French tub. This afternoon had 5 other officers in for baths and brandy and admiration of my douche bowl.

Went to French Town with Harrison. Bought a billfold for Jean. Note: Marrakech is predominantly Mohammedan but Arabs are present in large numbers - women with veils can be seen everywhere - a most unattractive lot. They are very dirty for the most part. The French are clean. The natives - Mohammedans - and Arabs are filthy — they dress in grimy sacks, dirty rags.

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Diseases in Marrakech:

- Typhus - We are immune for the most part.
- Smallpox - We are immune.
- Malaria - We are not immune.
- Bubonic Plague - Most of the native section is "off limits" because of this.
- Dysentery - Never eat in any but the Mamounia or Mahgreb Hotels - controlled by army.
- Venereal: Every known variety. French women and natives. Solution: Abstinence and Prophylaxis, if weak.

A note on the Bubonic Plague: The X-ray Medic tells me that they have been crushing fleas taken off of Bubonic patients, and for research sake blowing this dust into the eyes of Arabs coming to the Army for treatment of minor diseases - result is that about 80% catch the bubonic plague. However it is treated quickly and only a few of those who have this dust blown into their eyes die. They do not know, of course, that they are being subjected to the plague. The medico - a Capt. Bull - explained the few deaths to me thusly: "Oh - Arabs are expendable!" The good old U.S. Medical Corps at work again!

Medina - the native section of Marrakech - is off limits for the U.S. Army because of disease and because there are constant clashes between the French who rule and the Arabs. A French officer got knocked off last night. Americans are not immune for four have been lost in that section of Marrakech the last few months. Checked off as dead - still, they may have deserted.

Americans are as a rule in great favor in Morocco, for we have been pouring a lot of money down the

drain. So we are troubled by the natives very little.

Letter from Philip R. Hawes to Jean E. Hawes

Tuesday, May 16, 1944

We have located a swell spot for a rest camp; the only trouble being that all the boys can do there is rest. It's an old castle, just below the peak of a mountain and on the brink of a mighty nice little lake. The castle dates back to 1059 so we know the plumbing is better than ordinary. There are several privies in the place, neither of which has been flushed since Columbus discovered America. Running from the castle back into the side of the mountain is an ancient chapel with old masters on the walls. The whole business really drips with antiquity. There are approximately 40 rooms, some of them in very nice condition on the third deck; they get worse as you go down, and on the first floor (you can drive your Jeep right into the rooms, the doors being very large) you find piles and piles of ancient encrustations which, upon first glance, seem to be stalagmites or stalactites, but upon closer inspection are definitely analyzed as centuries old accumulations of what comes out of horses, oxen, sheep, pigs, and goats and Italians. This lower floor which we shall call the hold, is where the peasants were privileged to live if they didn't take the other delightful alternative of cutting their throats. There is a sheer drop of 400 feet from the top floor into the brine below, and you can well imagine that those charitable knights of old pushed many a character whose face they didn't like, over into the high dive with a full suit of mail. This idyllic spot reeking with tradition and dung will become our rest camp. For those who thought to bring their fishing tackle (one out of 1,000,000,000) there is excellent fishing...an old native thinks he got a bite in 1856 and he says his grandpapa actually caught a frog in 1763. So there's no end of possibilities.

Visited a British Officer's Club last night and came home fuming, because I know now that the British excel the Americans in getting drunk and making asses out of themselves. However, they have been in this war five years and consequently have had more practice.

Good News For B-24 Men

The attached is a small excerpt from a curious document that came into my possession some years ago under representation as being part of a transcript from an interrogation at a preliminary hearing for a Judgment Day trial. The document was rather illegibly and chaotically scrawled and fragmented. But from various annotations it could be inferred that the upper case script represented the questionings and comments of either God Almighty Himself or of a major deputy prosecutor. And that the lower case script represented the responses of a defendant who was a man who lived through much of the 20th century, and in one brief phase of his life put in some time as a B-24 Liberator pilot in a Fifteenth Air Force bomb squadron based in Italy.

The thought occurred to me that this matter, therefore, might be of interest to this assemblage, and should perhaps be presented to you for your consideration and appraisal.

Personally, I have been all but convinced of the authenticity of this document, seeing as how the statements about the relative flyability of some well known heavy bombers of World War II are so startlingly and scientifically accurate.

But this sort of thing should always be regarded with extreme caution, if not skepticism, and as many good minds as possible should be brought into the evaluation process, and so therefore it is hereby presented for your considered opinions.

Now, on to the actual transcript, taken up at a point where the defendant makes bold to interject a question which has doubtless bothered many men who had similar experience:



Pray, tell, Your Reverence, how come You stuck me flyin' one of them damn hard flyin' B-24's, and gave so many of them other loafers them B-17's that was so easy on the controls that an old lady coulda flown'em with her little finger? Us B-24 guys hadda horse'em and sweat'em and work work work, and

them B-17 jaspers was floatin' along lookin' at comic books!

**QUITCHER BITCHIN' YOU INGRATE!
MOST OF THOSE B-17 PEOPLE HAD
ENOUGH ON THEIR HANDS, BATTLING
THE LUFTWAFFE WITHOUT HAVING
TO FIGHT THEIR OWN AEREOPLANE
TOO! THEY NEEDED ALL THEIR
STRENGTH FOR IMPORTANT THINGS!
AND ANYWAYS, JASPER, YOU COULD-
N'T EVEN MAKE A DECENT LANDING
WITH THAT TRICYCLE LANDING GEAR
THAT I REVEALED TO THE WORLD ON
PURPOSE FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOME
OF YOU CLODHOPPER PILOTS FROM
THE HINTERLANDS!**

Well, I guess maybe that explains it all, Your Reverence. That's a true fact about the landing gear, anyways, so I guess I believe it if You say so.

WAL, I DO SAY SO!

Yezzir, Yezzir, I believe! But anyways, to give You an example of why I thought I had a good case for my appeal, listen to this: I flew one of them B-17 kites once after I'd been flying them B-24's a long time. Talk about easy on the controls! I went to put on just enough control pressure to do a standard rate B-24 90° half hour turn, and I'll be damned if that bugger didn't do six or seven snap rolls before I could get it to stop a twirling!

**HAWR! THAT WAS ONLY 'CUZ YOU
WAS SO HEAVY FOOTED! YOU BOG-
GLED THAT PRETTY BAD, JASPER!
THREE TWIRLS WAS ABOUT PAR FOR
THAT SITUATION!**

Whaddaya mean, 'heavy footed'? The girls used to say I was real light on my feet when I would take them out to a stomp.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

IZZATSO, TWINKLETOES? WELL, I KNOW BETTER, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE WORDS ARGUING WITH YOU. TIME'S A WASTIN'! HOWSOM-EVER THAT WAS AN INTERESTING SITUATION WITH THOSE B-24'S AND B-17'S. YOU SHOULD OF SEEN THOSE B-17 JOCKEYS WHEN THEY WOULD TRY TO FLY A B-24! MOST OF THEM WOULD PUSH AND TUG AND STRAIN AT THE CONTROLS A FEW MINUTES AND THEN PANIC AND BAIL OUT! THEY'D FIGGER THAT THE GROUND CREW HAD ACCIDEINTAL LIKE LEFT THE LOCKS ON THE RUDDERS AND ALERONS! LOST QUITE A FEW B-24'S THAT WAY!

Well, Your Reverence, that all sounds very plausible, from my experience. But, Your Reverence, there used to be a story going around that a fly landed on a rudder pedal of one of those B-17's and that made it do a wing over. Was there any truth in that?

NAH! HELL NO! THAT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE BLANKETY BLANK APOC-RYPHAL TALL STORIES WHEREBY SOME OF THOSE WISE GUYS WITH THE FEVERED IMAGINATIONS WOULD AMUSE THEMSELVES BY PUTTING ON SOLID, RESPECTABLE DUMBKOFFS LIKE YOU.

Well, it all don't seem very fair to me, Your Reverence, but it's all over and done with now, and no use crying over spilt milk and water over the dam, etcetera. Thy will be done!

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, JASPER! THAT'S THE SPIRIT! FOR THAT PRAISEWORTHY SPIRIT OF HUMBLE RESIGNATION, I HEREBY REVEAL TO YOU THE

GOOD NEWS! THOSE B-17 JASPERS DON'T GET NO SPECIAL DISPENSATIONS FOR FLYING THOSE KITES, BUT ALL OF YOU B-24 MARTYRS GET TIME OFFA YOUR STRETCH AS FOLLOWS:

EACH HOUR AIR- 10 YEARS
BORNE

EACH HOUR IN 100 YEARS
FORMATION

EACH HOUR IN 12000 YEARS
FORMATION IN
WEATHER

ANY OF THE FORE- TRIPLE CREDIT
GOING IN COMBAT
CONDITIONS

TAKE OFFS WITH 1,001 YEARS
BOMB LOAD

LANDINGS, REGU- 10 YEARS
LAR

LANDINGS, CRIP- 999 YEARS
PLED

AND OF COURSE THERE ARE APPROPRIATE MATCHING GRANTS TO GROUND CREWS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, ETCETERA, WHO DIDN'T FOUL UP TOO BAD. USUAL ALLOWANCES FOR DEPENDENTS, AGE IN GRADE, AND SO FORTH. EXCEPTION: SQUADRON COOKS AND GROUP COOKS. FOR THEM: NOT A PRAYER! NOT A PRAYER! SO YOU SEE, JASPER, THERE IS A BRIGHT SIDE TO IT AFTER ALL!

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

Goodie! Jubilation! Your Reverence, pray tell, You didn't perchance write out any table of allowances like that for them old B-17 jaspers, did you?

WHO EVER SAID THEY KNEW HOW TO READ?! HAWR! HAWR! HAWR!



Closing Remarks

Well, ladies and gentlemen, that is the end of as much of this transcript as seemed appropriate to present at this time. But I would like to make a few closing remarks and a suggestion.

First, it may have come to mind for you, of course, as it did for me, that this may be merely a cruel and malicious hoax perpetrated by some insensitive, despicable fiend of a bigot with an axe to grind.

But on the other hand, it might well seem to you, as it almost does to me, that this is indeed genuine 24 karat Revelation, in which case there would be good reason for not only general rejoicing and celebration among us here assembled, but also ample reason for spreading the Good News to other B-24 people who are still on earth.

I do not pretend to be an infallible judge of such high level matters. Therefore, I place the matter before the house, so to speak, for the consideration and appraisal of all of you. I have noticed your tense and solemn expressions during the reading of this curious document, and therefore trust your mature judgment to prevail.

Now, one final thought, put forward in a spirit of brotherly love and charity and compassion.

B-17 men are or were, after all, brother airmen and human beings, and those still on earth might be greatly chagrined and dispirited if this news were to reach their ageing ears.

Worse yet, they might succumb to a spirit of peevish resentment and blind rage unworthy of broad minded true Americans and launch harsh retaliatory vituperations about "flying box cars" or "tricycles," or even become violent.

Therefore, I suggest that we here do all highly resolve to keep this matter Top Secret among B-24 people in order to spare the tender sensibilities of those old B-17 men in their declining years.

Thank you.

ATTEST: Robert M. Kelliher, ex-officer, U.S.A.F.

Actual Exchanges Between Pilots and Control Towers

Tower: "Delta 351, you have traffic at 10 o'clock, 6 miles!"

Delta 351: "Give us another hint! We have digital watches!"



Tower: "TWA 2341, for noise abatement turn right 45 Degrees."

TWA 2341: "Center, we are at 35,000 feet. How much noise can we make up here?"

Tower: "Sir, have you ever heard the noise a 747 makes when it hits a 727?"



From an unknown aircraft waiting in a very long take-off queue: "I'm f...ing bored!"

Ground Traffic Control: "Last aircraft transmitting, identify yourself immediately!"

Unknown aircraft: "I said I was f...ing bored, not f...ing stupid!"



O'Hare Approach Control to a 747: "United 329 heavy, your traffic is a Fokker, one o'clock, three miles, Eastbound."

United 329: "Approach, I've always wanted to say this.. I've got the little Fokker in sight."

(Continued from page 1)

I do need suggestions for the Nominating Committee to consider for the other positions. I have organized my list of children into squadron and Headquarters. Please take a moment to look over this list and submit names to me accordingly. I will compile the responses for review by the Committee. Please get your suggestions to me by the end of the year. Don't forget that we're looking for President and Vice-President as well as Directors.

Headquarters Detachment

Leonard "Lee" Cole III
Hughes Glantzberg
Hal Parvin
Craven Rogers

764th Squadron

Kenneth Alexander
Nancy Bernstein
Sherry Biggs
Ken carter
David Crecelius
Charles Crook
Lynn Delameter
Gregory Emmert
Donna Fernandez
Bruce Frank
Terry Frank
Randall Hartwell
Jeanne Hickey
Niles Hipps
Elaine Hodges
Gladys Johnson
Ira Josephson
Bruce Kimball
Neil Kimball
Dale Krauchick
Edward Lang
Ranee Langner
Connie Jo LaTendresse
Kristin Lundberg
Gary Mackay
Randall Miller
Glenda Price
Howard Sharp

Cynthia Simonton
Jane Snyder
David St. Yves
Pamela Thompson
Richard Tiffany
Jonathan Toothman
Heather Underwood
Randall Wooten
Dale Zobal
Robert Zobal

765th Squadron

Skye Bathurst
Norma Beard
Dave Blake
Sandy Blake
Frank Boerger
Marti Boyce
Linda Donaghue
Robert Donaghue
Jack Dunlap
Lynn Ellenberger
Walter Fries II
Roland Gosnell
Robert Heinze
Linda Krause
Michael Krause
Brandon Leong
Brayden Leong
Jane Lyon
Randall McGaugh
Jon Moran
Sheryl Prien
Emma Salzer
Kenneth Sipple
Raymond Sipple
Elizabeth Soch
Karen Wilcox
Colin Winham

766th Squadron

Barbara Alden
Mary Jo Belak
Mark Brown
Bobby Dooley

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

Christopher Garrett
James Harris
Beverly Kehs
Joseph Kobell
Bonnie McGara
Marilu Meredith
Michael Pettey
Jan Pinder
Vicky Serio
Janet Shields
Stanley Shields
Carl Stempel
Linda Titus

767th Squadron

Vincent Bosso
Thomas Dearnell
Mary Dougherty
Nancy Downey
Wayne Fitzpatrick
James Fitzpatrick
William Golden
Cathy Hanson
Jeff Henspeter
Vicki Larson
Mike Roederer
Joe Roederer
Robert Roemer, Jr.
John Sheafe
Harvey Silverstein
Mark Young
Robert Young

(Continued from page 8)

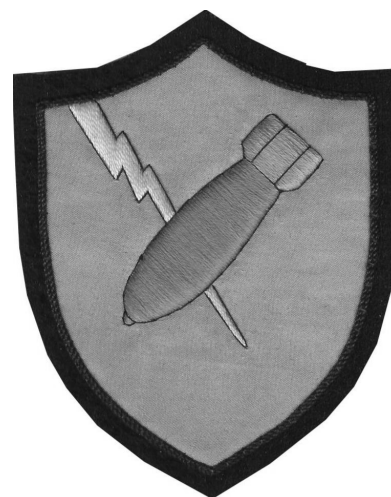
formations of aircraft in action on missions, crash sites, results of missions, cities and towns in Italy, Italian countryside, historical sites,, living quarters of our members in Italy, climatic conditions, landing strips and the environment, various recreational activities, dignitaries, awards, monuments, support group work sites, and many photographs which provide an accurate image of life in Italy from January 1944 through June 1945.

While viewing the DVD I was also reminded that Hughes, and a large number of individuals, Association officers, historians and many family members, have contributed material which have been published in various issues of the Liberaider, as well as being placed on the 461st website (www.461st.org). Specific inquiries can be placed via editor@461st.org or mailed to 461st Bombardment Group (H), P.O. Box 926, Gunnison, CO 81230. Inquiries are forwarded throughout the 461st "informal networking system" and the favorable responses have been overwhelming.

Several books which provide historical information about the air war over Europe have been

published in recent years. Some are more general, whereas others are focused on individual air crews, types of aircraft, etc. The best, and most complete, historical and interesting book that describes many of the events of the 461st Bomb Group (H) is "Al Ataque", available in soft or hard cover from Hughes Glantzberg, Editor.

An excellent means of gathering information on a more personal note is to make contact with former crew members, or the families and keep in touch via E-Mail, postal, fax, or telephone on a regular basis, and, of course, attend the 461st Bomb Group (H) Association reunions. The reunions are designed for you and your family to enjoy.



461st Bombardment Group (H) Association Membership

For membership in the 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association, please print this form, fill it out and mail it along with your check for the appropriate amount to:

Dave St. Yves
5 Hutt Forest Lane
East Taunton, MA 02718

If you have any questions, you can E-Mail Dave at treasurer@461st.org.

The 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association offers three types of membership:

- **Life Membership** – Men who served in the 461st during World War II and their spouses are eligible to join the Association for a one-time fee of \$25.00. This entitles the member to attend the annual reunions held in the fall each year, receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461st Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.
- **Associate Membership** – Anyone wishing to be involved in the 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association may join as an Associate member. The cost is \$10.00 per year. No renewal notices are sent so it is your responsibility to submit this form every year along with your payment. Associate membership entitles you to attend the reunions held in the fall each year and receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461st Liberaider. You are not a voting member of the Association.
- **Child Membership** – Children of men who served in the 461st during World War II are eligible to join the Association as a Child Member. The cost is \$10.00 per year. No renewal notices are sent out so it is your responsibility to submit this form every year along with your payment. Child membership entitles you to attend the reunions held in the fall each year, receive

Type of membership desired:		Life <input type="checkbox"/>	Associate <input type="checkbox"/>	Child <input type="checkbox"/>	Father's name:	
First Name:			Last Name:			
Street Address:						
City:			State:		Zip:	
Phone number:			E-Mail address:			
Squadron #:		Crew #:		MOS:		ASN:
Check No.:			Amount:	\$		

SR-71 – Groundspeed Check

by
Unknown

There were a lot of things we couldn't do in an SR-71 Blackbird (The Air Force/NASA super fast, highest flying reconnaissance jet, nicknamed, "The Sled"), but we were the fastest guys on the block and loved reminding our fellow aviators of this fact. People often asked us if, because of this fact, it was fun to fly the jet. Fun would not be the first word I would use to describe flying this plane - intense, maybe, even cerebral. But there was one day in our Sled experience when we would have to say that it was pure fun to be the fastest guys out there, at least for a moment.

It occurred when Walt and I were flying our final training sortie. We needed 100 hours in the jet to complete our training and attain Mission Ready status. Somewhere over Colorado we had passed the century mark. We had made the turn in Arizona and the jet was performing flawlessly. My gauges were wired in the front seat and we were starting to feel pretty good about ourselves, not only because we would soon be flying real missions but because we had gained a great deal of confidence in the plane in the past ten months. Ripping across the barren deserts 80,000 feet below us, I could already see the coast of California from the Arizona border. I was, finally, after many humbling months of simulators and study, ahead of the jet. I was beginning to feel a bit sorry for Walter in the back seat.

There he was, with no really good view of the incredible sights before us, tasked with monitoring four different radios. This was good practice for him for when we began flying real missions, when a priority transmission from headquarters could be vital. It had been difficult, too, for me to relinquish control of the radios, as during my entire flying career I had controlled my own transmissions. But it was part of the division of duties in this plane and I had adjusted to it. I still insisted on talking on the radio while we were on the ground, however. Walt was so good at many things, but he couldn't match my expertise at sounding smooth on the radios, a skill that had been

honed sharply with years in fighter squadrons where the slightest radio miscue was grounds for beheading. He understood that and allowed me that luxury. Just to get a sense of what Walt had to contend with, I pulled the radio toggle switches and monitored the frequencies along with him.

The predominant radio chatter was from Los Angeles Center, far below us, controlling daily traffic in their sector. While they had us on their scope (albeit briefly), we were in uncontrolled airspace and normally would not talk to them unless we needed to descend into their airspace. We listened as the shaky voice of a lone Cessna pilot who asked Center for a read-out of his ground speed. Center replied: "November Charlie 175, I'm showing you at ninety knots on the ground."

Now the thing to understand about Center controllers was that whether they were talking to a rookie pilot in a Cessna or to Air Force One, they always spoke in the exact same, calm, deep, professional tone that made one feel important. I referred to it as the "Houston Center voice." I have always felt that after years of seeing documentaries on this country's space program and listening to the calm and distinct voice of the Houston controllers, that all other controllers since then wanted to sound like that and that they basically did. And it didn't matter what sector of the country we would be flying in, it always seemed like the same guy was talking. Over the years that tone of voice had become somewhat of a comforting sound to pilots everywhere. Conversely, over the years, pilots always wanted to ensure that, when transmitting, they sounded like Chuck Yeager, or at least like John Wayne. Better to die than sound bad on the radios. Just moments after the Cessna's inquiry, a Twin Beech piped up on frequency, in a rather superior tone, asking for his ground speed in the Beech. "I have you at one hundred and twenty-five knots of ground speed."

Boy, I thought, the Beechcraft really must think he is dazzling his Cessna brethren. Then out of the blue, a navy F-18 pilot out of NAS Lemoore came up on

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

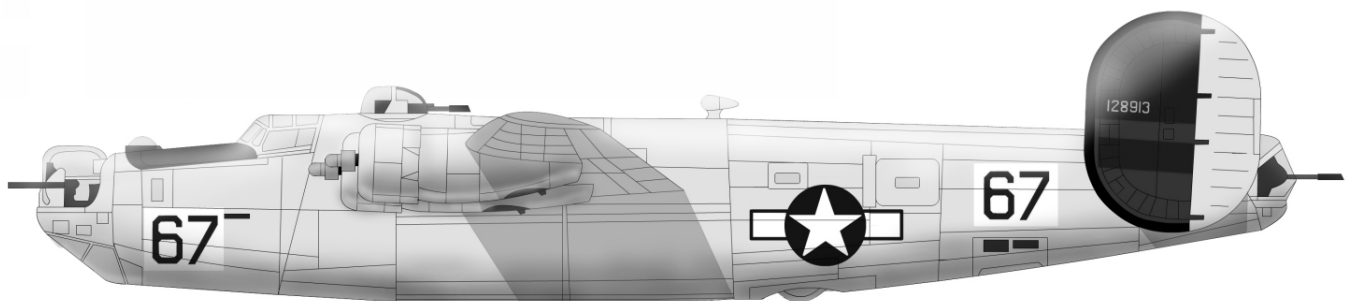
frequency. You knew right away it was a Navy jock because he sounded very cool on the radios. "Center, Dusty 52 ground speed check." Before Center could reply, I'm thinking to myself, hey, Dusty 52 has a ground speed indicator in that million-dollar cockpit, so why is he asking Center for a read-out? Then I got it, ol' Dusty here is making sure that every bug smasher from Mount Whitney to the Mojave knows what true speed is. He's the fastest dude in the valley today, and he just wants everyone to know how much fun he is having in his new Hornet. And the reply, always with that same, calm, voice, with more distinct alliteration than emotion: "Dusty 52, Center, we have you at 620 on the ground."

And I thought to myself, is this a ripe situation, or what? As my hand instinctively reached for the mic button, I had to remind myself that Walt was in control of the radios. Still, I thought, it must be done - in mere seconds we'll be out of the sector and the opportunity will be lost. That Hornet must die, and die now. I thought about all of our Sim training and how important it was that we developed well as a crew and knew that to jump in on the radios now would destroy the integrity of all that we had worked toward becoming. I was torn. Somewhere, 13 miles above Arizona, there was a pilot screaming inside his space helmet. Then, I heard it - the click of the mic button from the back seat. That was the very moment that I knew Walter and I had become a crew.

Very professionally, and with no emotion, Walter spoke: "Los Angeles Center, Aspen 20, can you give us a ground speed check?" There was no hesitation, and the replay came as if it was an everyday request. "Aspen 20, I show you at one thousand eight hundred and forty-two knots, across the ground."

I think it was the forty-two knots that I liked the best, so accurate and proud was Center to deliver that information without hesitation, and you just knew he was smiling. But the precise point at which I knew that Walt and I were going to be really good friends for a long time was when he keyed the mic once again to say, in his most fighter-pilot-like voice: "Ah, Center, much thanks, we're showing closer to nineteen hundred on the money." For a moment Walter was a god. And we finally heard a little crack in the armor of the Houston Center voice, when L.A. came back with, "Roger that Aspen. Your equipment is probably more accurate than ours. You boys have a good one."

It all had lasted for just moments, but in that short, memorable sprint across the southwest, the Navy had been flamed, all mortal airplanes on freq were forced to bow before the King of Speed, and more importantly, Walter and I had crossed the threshold of being a crew. A fine day's work. We never heard another transmission on that frequency all the way to the coast. For just one day, it truly was fun being the fastest guys out there.



**461st BOMB GROUP
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE TEN MONTHS ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2009**

Cash Balances - January 1, 2009	
Checking account	\$3,362
Vanguard investments	<u>18,092</u>
	<u>21,454</u>
Income	
Interest and dividends	617
Unrealized gain on investments	1,606
Reunion income	13,388
Donations	660
Dues and memberships	<u>615</u>
Total Income	<u>16,886</u>
Expenses	
Reunion expenses	16,245
Postage and mailings	84
Travel	<u>50</u>
	16,379
Transfer to Liberaider account	<u>1,000</u>
Total expenses	<u>17,379</u>
Net loss for period	(493)
Cash Balances - October 31, 2009	
Checking account	651
Vanguard investments	<u>20,310</u>
	<u>\$20,961</u>

History of the Liberaiders

Out of the blue skies
With a lurch and a roar
Came big Col. G.
In an old 24

He landed at noontime
on Hammers lush land
Notables to greet him
Including the band

“I’ve come here to work”
He said with a shout
“Out with the big gears
Who sit around and pout”

“I’ll form a new group
Of which you’ll soon hear
From London to Washington
Over glasses of beer”

All day long and on
Into the night
His crews came in
Chortling with delight

For they were green
And tho’t it might
Give lots of pleasure
A Focke Wulf to fight

For three long months
They stayed there to work
While the ringmasters whip
was wielded by Burke

At last came the day
They’d all waited for
Going to combat
In a B-24

From Hammer to Frisco
To Florida and Brazil
They flew on and on
Led by the great will

And finally to Italy
They set their wheels down
Not far from Cerignola
That quaint old town

At last in April
Came that great day
Of the first combat mission
The Jerries must pay

They took off at dawn
Over Melfi to group
Headed out to course
On over the soup

Over the target
Everybody was shaking
Bombs hit the ground
The earth began quaking

When they got back
The pictures were poor
No bombs hit the target
Was the Colonel sore

The same thing happened
Twice more in trips
Air Force was disgusted
Leff’s pants were in rips

Big Leff was sad
Like a love spurned pup
Kept muttering to all
“My racks hung up”

“I’ll wager my wings”
said the Colonel one morn
“We’ll devastate today
No more plowing the corn”

They went up north
The eye-ties to batter
Hit the railyards soundly
The bombs didn’t scatter

They went down together
In one little space
Wiped out the target
Saved the Colonel’s face

From that time on
The Liberaiders haveled
The Air Force in bombing

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)

Krauts out of their bed

For all this grand work
Each pilot a silver bar
sad stories for the Colonel

Not even one star

Now have more hash
While I finish the story
Of the 461st

All covered with glory

You'll see them daily
Covering the sky
All linked together
With an invisible tie

Though the flak is heavy
Fighters on each tail
We generally get home

In time for the mail

The scene is our mess hall
It's a sight to see
Everyone for dessert
gets the D.F.C.

Now listen my son
If you yearn for glory
Join the 461st
And no venereal story

But glory is fleeting
And fate deals the hand
I'd much prefer
Oklahoma's red sand

To be a civilian
My wish forevermore
With my longest bomb run
To the bathroom door

More Actual Exchanges Between Pilots and Control Towers

A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asked, "What was your last known position?"

Student: "When I was number one for takeoff."

~~~~~

A DC-10 had come in a little hot and thus had an exceedingly long roll out after touching down. San Jose Tower Noted: "American 751, make a hard right turn at the end of the runway, if you are able. If you are not able, take the Guadeloupe exit off Highway 101, make a right at the lights and return to the airport."

~~~~~

Pan Am 727 flight, waiting for start clearance in Munich, overheard the following:

Lufthansa (in German): "Ground, what is our start clearance time?"

Ground (in English): "If you want an answer you must speak in English."

Lufthansa (in English): "I am a German, flying a German airplane, in Germany. Why must I speak English?"

Unknown voice from another plane (in a beautiful British accent): "Because you lost the bloody war!"

~~~~~

Tower: "Eastern 702, cleared for takeoff, contact Departure on frequency 124.7"

Eastern 702: "Tower, Eastern 702 switching to Departure. By the way, after we lifted off we saw some kind of dead animal on the far end of the runway."

Tower: "Continental 635, cleared for takeoff behind Eastern 702, contact Departure on frequency 124.7. Did you copy that report from Eastern 702?"

BR Continental 635: "Continental 635, cleared for takeoff, roger; and yes, we copied Eastern... we've already notified our caterers."

~~~~~

One day the pilot of a Cherokee 180 was told by the tower to hold short of the active runway while a DC-8 landed. The DC-8 landed, rolled out, turned around, and taxied back past the Cherokee. Some quick-witted comedian in the DC-8 crew got on the radio and said, "What a cute little plane. Did you make it all by yourself?"

The Cherokee pilot, not about to let the insult go by, came back with a real zinger: "I made it out of DC-8 parts. Another landing like yours and I'll have enough parts for another one."

A “Horseshoe Nail” Tale

The February 13, 1945, B-24 Bomber Crash Landing
Small Fragment of Flak..... Huge Consequence.....

For the want of a nail, a shoe was lost ... for the want
of a horse, the battle was lost.

Those are a few of the lines from an old folk saying. I heard it first from my mother when I was a very young boy, in the late 1920's or early 1930's, and often again after that, and I was usually appropriately impressed by the pathos of it. Later in life, I was to experience a similar “horseshoe nail” event, albeit on a smaller scale, but with its own tragic outcome.

It was in the course of my service in the 15th Air Force in Italy in World War II. I was the pilot of a replacement crew, flying the Consolidated B-24 Liberator 4-engine heavy bomber of the era. The air war for us later arrivals in the theater had been made much easier by the valor and sacrifices of the crews that preceded us. They had attacked the most heavily defended targets, opposed by the guns *and* by the Luftwaffe, before it had been drastically weakened by their bombings.

In the winter of 1944-45, during my tour, there were still some major targets that were strongly defended by increasing concentrations of intense and accurate flak, but there were only sporadic opposition by fighter aircraft. The obstinate insistence of Bomber Command on attempting to send large formations of bombers through the blinding cloud-fronts of the weather of winter actually produced some of our most hair-raising and hair-graying experiences. But even so, many of our combat sorties were of a milder variety dubbed as “milk runs”.

On February 13, 1945, my 8th combat mission was seemingly to be such a milk run, in contrast to previous missions, which involved flying over the Alps to attack targets formidably defended at Blechhammer, Regensburg, Munich, and Linz. The target was the railroad marshalling yard at Maribor, in the northern part of then Yugoslavia. It involved little more than a five-hour round trip and a modest bombing altitude of 21,500 feet, as contrasted with the nine-hour round trip and 26,000 feet bombing altitude that would be involved in attacking a target in or near the likes of Munich.

Our mission to Maribor was an impromptu one, to begin with. A larger mission to a major target had been launched early in the day, and the weather ship that had preceded it had found that the railroad yard at Maribor was filled with a large quantity of rolling stock and would be worth attacking. Therefore, the takeoff of our small group of reserve aircraft was at 11:25 a.m., i.e., “bomber's hours”. I was flying in number 5 position in our squadron of six aircraft, and our plane was number 39 (T for ‘Tare’), an older one that required pulling excess power to stay with the formation. Although there was no wing rendezvous involved, and although we were briefed for “only” forty flak guns, it wasn't quite the joyride it might have seemed to be. The flak guns were all heavies, and the gunners were very accurate. The exploding shells on the bomb run were so close we could hear them, and they tossed us about quite a bit, and our plane was holed in several places, including a big one in an aileron, dangerously close to control cables. Nevertheless, all planes of our squadron got through all right and made a good strike on the target, dropping eight 500-pound RDX bombs per plane.

But the “horseshoe nail” for our aircraft and crew was a small shard or two of flak, which caused damage we weren't aware of until we got out of the target area and gunner Jim Cornish got back down into the ball turret in the belly. He called up to inform us, “We must have a gas leak — there's red stuff all over the ball turret.” Flight engineer Art Yarbrough got down out of the Martin top turret to look around and soon reported some bad news. Flak fragments had penetrated the nose wheel area near the left accumulator and severed several hydraulic lines, with the fluid being pumped out and lost via the bomb bay. Some of that hydraulic fluid was being sprayed over the batteries and inverters, and they were already smoking, with imminent danger of not only a short-out, but also of the ship catching fire. There was no alternative for the moment but to feather the number three propeller, and shut down its engine, which powered the hydraulic pump. That stopped the fluid pumping, and Art and Jim went to work to try to crimp the hydraulic lines closed so that we could re-start engine three. After several tries at re-starting number three, we decided it was a no-go, as the leak persisted with fire danger.

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We decided that we had to keep No. 3 engine shut down all the way to base and therefore reviewed procedures for landing without hydraulic power. That would involve manual crank-downs of wing flaps and of landing gear, tying parachutes at waist windows to function as brakes, and positioning the crew for various duties. In the meantime, since we were on the long down-slope run toward base, there was little difficulty in hanging in with the formation.

Alas, as we neared our Torretta Field base near Cerignola, at a landing pattern altitude of 1,000 feet or so, No. 4 propeller “ran away”. In that strange phenomenon, the propeller pitch flattened out of its own accord, due to a malfunction of its governor. With a much reduced “bite” on the air, the revolutions per minute of the propeller speeded up to, and perhaps beyond, the maximum of 3,600 that showed on the tachometer. Paradoxically, the high RPM did not furnish more pulling power. Instead, they made a quasi-“disk” of metal that imposed a tremendous drag on the aircraft. A baffling further aspect of the phenomenon was that the runaway was unstoppable, at least in the short time we remained airborne. It kept running away even after all of its life support had been cut off. Featherbutton, throttle back, gas cut off, and electric power cut off, all had no effect. I never did get a rational explanation for that miracle, either from our base engineering personnel, or from post-war inquiries.

Since we now had power on the left side only, on No. 1 and No. 2 engines, and since the right side was not providing any power, but drag, instead, my co-pilot, Jack, and I had to use every ounce of muscle we had in pressing on left rudder, while also nosing down sharply to maintain a non-stall airspeed, to keep from flipping over and nose-diving in. We made a hasty unfeathering of No. 3 propeller and re-started No.3 engine, but that promptly re-started the smolder and fire-threat, and was given up on.

It was obvious by then that we were not going to be able to make it to our nearby airfield, and that there was no time to manually crank down landing gear or flaps, even if it had been advisable to do so, so we decided to belly in, and Jack went on intercom and ordered the crew to “ditching” positions.

We really didn’t have enough altitude or maneuverabil-

ity or power to *choose* a landing place. But by the grace of God a large plowed open field was “presented” to us, and we were able to belly in fairly smoothly on the soft soil. The field, we were soon to find out, was only a few hundred yards from our own squadron’s tent encampment.

The landing went smoothly from “touch-down” until the forward momentum was slowed to the point that the right wing, the drag side, dropped, and its runaway prop dug in. The wing was wrenched back, and the plane slewed around and came to a stop, a broken bird. My co-pilot and I were in a shock daze for a moment, but then flames licking around our heads “brought us to”. The area behind us was on fire, blocking the usual escape route from the flight deck. But fortunately the crash had jolted the glass out of our windshields, and we were able to unhook chutes (seat packs?) and clamber out through the openings. We both ran off about 75 feet and threw ourselves flat in expectation of an explosion. A look back, though, revealed that flight engineer Art Yarbrough was only part way out the co-pilot side window and waving for help. We ran back and lifted him out, after I reached into the inferno and unhooked the chest type parachute that had him hung up. We carried him off a way, Jack gave him a morphine shot after we smothered the flames on his clothing and what with badly burned legs and many skin grafts, he never flew again. Good man. I put him up for the D.F.C.

Except for injuries like wrenched backs and sprains, all of the rest of my regular crew survived the crash, waving to us from beyond the tail. Familiar with our ditching routine, they had been in good position. A sad exception who didn’t survive was my borrowed navigator, young Don Williams. He had been detailed to my crew to replace my regular navigator, “Papa” Heatley (all of 28 years old!), who was co-opted, on seniority and ability, to serve on Barnes’ crew, in deputy lead. Don was in the nose wheel compartment, perhaps looking for his ‘chute, when we hit. And there his cremated remains were found the next day. It’s a glum feeling for a skipper (that’s what some called me) to lose a crewman, whether regular or “borrowed”.

The price of the “horseshoe nail” — a young life full of great potential.

Robert M. Kelliher, T-201, August 31, 1998

Mission Diary

by
Charles T. Lomax
767th Squadron

Introduction

The missions that follow below were typed in July 1984 from my diary kept from July 1944 until January 1945. Many of these missions are still vivid in my memory, but as I typed this diary many things were refreshed in my memory that had long been forgotten.

As you read these missions you will notice that there is a total of 34 recorded, that would have been enough to complete my tour. I checked my log book and found that on 7 August 1944 we went to Germany and I had recorded a 6 hour flight time. I checked the book "15th Air Force History" for 7 August 1944. They recorded B-24s going to Blechhammer, Silesia on that date. I do remember going to Blechhammer one time when we lost an engine. We could not feather it due to it seizing up. I remember how difficult it was to fly home. We lost our electrical system, and a second engine was registering low fuel pressure which we expected to lose. With much difficulty we got back to the base okay. This was an aborted mission, but we must have been awarded a mission credit which could have made mission #7.

We took phase training as a crew at Boise, Idaho before being assigned to the 767th Squadron, 461st BG, 49th BW, Fifteenth AF based at Torretta, Italy, 10 miles southwest of Cerignola, Italy.

The following are the crew members:

Pilot: Bob Roswurm
Co-pilot: Chuck Lomax
Bombardier: Ross Young
Navigator: Howard Sossamon
Engineer: Cottengain

Radio Operator: Chapman
Nose Gunner: Wyatt L Busbee
Ball Gunner: J Johnson
Tail Gunner: D Moore
Waist Gunner: Eisenberg

Eventually Bob Roswurm, Ross Young, and Howard Sossamon went into operations. They now flew group lead with different crews. I checked out and took our original crew.

Mission List

Linz, Austria. Ship #74. 25 July 1944

Bomb Load: Five 1,000 lbs., Fuel: full tanks
2700 gallons.

Four groups took part in the raid on the Tiger & Panther Tank Works which was 2,000 yards square. Fighter escort met us over the Adriatic Sea. Fighters were P-47s, P-38s, and P-51s. The group was hit extremely hard by ME-109s, FW-190s, and JU-288s, for a total of 150 attacking enemy fighters. Our gunners set all kinds of records, one ball gunner shot down 8 fighters; another crew reported 13 enemy shot down; a third crew reported 12 more enemy destroyed. Our crew and one other had to abort before hitting the IP. Our #4 engine had dropping oil pressure.

Mission No. 1

Pec, Yugoslavia. Ship #74. 27 July 1944

Bomb Load: Six 1,000 lb. Demolition bombs.
Fuel: 2300 gallons

The 461st BG was the only one taking part in the raid. Mission was on the marshalling yards in the City of Pec. We hit the wrong town. No fighter escort, no flak, or enemy fighters seen. Time: 4 hours 5 minutes

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Mission No. 2

Thorina, Greece. Ship #74. 28 July 1944

Bomb load: Six 1,000 lbs. Fuel: 2300 Gallons

The 461st BG was the only group to take part. Raid on rail bridgehead at Thorina. We completely destroyed the bridgehead and part of the town. No fighter escort, No enemy fighters, and only one flak burst. Bomb Accuracy 88.2%. Time: 5 hours 30 minutes.

Mission No. 3

Budapest, Hungary. Ship No. unknown. 30 July 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. high explosive. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

Target: Duna Aircraft Factory. The 49th BW composed of the 451st, 461st, and the 484th Bomb Groups hit the target along with other units. One B-17 and one B-24 were shot down. One FW-190 was shot down. The flak was extremely heavy, our ship was hit in the tail. Fighter attacks were not intense. The target was destroyed as far as the observers could see. A good bomb pattern was seen in the photos, but the target was missed. Time: 6 hours, 30 minutes.

Mission No. 4

Bucharest, Rumania. Ship #74. 31 July 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. high explosives. Fuel: 2700 gallons.

Target: Prahova Oil Refinery. 49th BW comprised of the 451st, 461st, and 484th Bomb Groups took part. P-38s and P-51s flew escort. Flak was extremely heavy, no enemy fighters were seen. 484th and 451st were hit hard with flak. As far as the observers could see, the bombs fell short, some hit the target. Time 7 hours, 30 minutes. Bombing height: 23,000 feet.

Mission No. 5

Oberraderch Chemical Works. Ship #60. 3 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 High explosive. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

49th BW 451st, 461st, 484th BG, and 5th BW (B-17s) took part. Fighter escort P-38s and P-51s. Opposition was about 74 flak guns, and 100 to 125 single engine fighters, and 15 to 25 twin engine fighters. We could not locate the target due to cloud cover. We bombed the first alternate target, which was Friedrichshaven Zahnabrik Works. Bombing accuracy was not known. Flak was moderate, but our ship did receive three holes in the left wing. Time: 7 hours. Bombing altitude: 22,000 feet.

Mission No. 6

Miramas, France. Ship #60. 6 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. high explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Marshalling yards. Escort was provided by P-38s and P-51s. The flak was very heavy and accurate. A close burst hit our nose gunner Busbee, cutting his oxygen hose in two. The target was hit and completely destroyed as seen from the air. Time: 7 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing height: 22,000 feet.

Mission No. 7

See second paragraph of introduction for explanation.

Mission No. 8

Ploesti, Rumania. Ship #65. 10 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

Target: Xenia Oil Refinery. P-51s flew escort. We flew #3 in Able flight of second attack unit. 50 single engine enemy fighters encountered by other bomb groups. The flak was like one big cloud, and was very accurate. There was a heavy smoke

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screen over the target so target damage could not be observed. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes. Bombing altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 9

Genoa, Italy. Ship #63. 13 August 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

Target: Coastal guns. No fighter escort provided. We flew #4 position in C flight in the second attack unit. Encountered no enemy fighters, but ran into very accurate flak. Missed the target. Time: 6 hours, 45 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 10

Southern France. Ship #68. 14 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Coastal defenses. No fighter escort was provided. We flew #2 position in A flight in the first attack unit. Encountered no fighters or flak opposition. Target hit with very good pattern. Good mission. Time 6 hours, 5 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 18,000 feet.

Mission No. 11

San Raphael, France. Ship #63. 15 August 1944

Bomb Load: Thirty-six 100 lb. general purpose demolition bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Coastal defenses and beach (264A) in preparation for the invasion of southern France. We had the most pinpoint target to hit, supposedly our group has the best bombing score. Our mission was to soften up the beach for the invasion forces. No flak or enemy fighters were observed. We hit the target with a good pattern. We observed many naval ships and aircraft carriers in the waters off of the target. Time: 6 hours, 15 minutes. Bombing height: 14,000 feet.

Mission No. 12

Ploesti, Rumania. Ship unknown. 17 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. high explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Rumania American Axis Refineries. We were the second group to go over the target. 31 planes started over Ploesti, 20 made it over the target. The rest aborted. Fighter escort: P-38s, and P-51s. Flak was very accurate and very thick. One ship in what was left of our squadron was damaged heavily. T. C. Moore feathered one engine and was losing another. Rosencrans flew his wing toward home. T. C. got as far as the Yugoslavian coast and bailed his crew out. They were picked up by a German E boat. Time 7 hours, 45 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 23,000 feet.

Mission No. 13

Budapest, Hungary. Ship #67. 20 August 1944

Bomb Load: 4,000 lbs. fragmentation bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Szolnok Airfield. With no fighter escort and very little flak. One ship in our wing was shot down. We hit the target and destroyed many airplanes on the ground. Time: 7 hours, 5 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 18,000 feet.

Mission No. 14

Vienna, Austria. Ship #69. 22 August 1944

Bomb Load: Four 1,000 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Lobav Oil Refinery. We were supposed to have P-38 escort, but they never showed up. We were the second group to go over the target. Col. Applegate led the group. Approximately 10 minutes before the IP about thirty-five FW-190s and three ME-109s hit us knocking down seven B-24s in the group in front of us. We went over the target and received a hit in our #4 engine, which we had to feather. Busbee our nose gun-

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ner shot down a FW-190 which exploded almost immediately. The German pilot ejected safely. The tail gunner, D Moore, was wounded in the foot with flak over the target. Time: 6 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 15

Vienna, Austria. Ship #65. 23 August 1944

Bomb Load: 4,000 lbs. fragmentation bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Military Airfield. We had P-51s & P-38s to escort us. We were the third group to go over the target. Approximately 15 minutes before the IP the German fighters hit us again. They shot down ten B-24s in the group in front of us and one out of our squadron. We did not have any flak until we left the target. We lost our hydraulic system due to one of the accumulators being hit with flak. Cottengain, our engineer, repaired it sufficiently so we would have pressure to land safely. Time: 6 hours, 50 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 16

Bucharest, Rumania. Ship #68. 26 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Military Airfield. We had P-51 escort, they did a good job. We were the second group over the target. No enemy fighters or flak encountered. Bomb pattern was very good destroying the field. Time: 7 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 23,000 feet.

Mission No. 17

Budapest, Hungary. Ship #68. 28 August 1944

Bomb Load: Four 1,000 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Bridge on the outskirts of Budapest. We were squadron lead and were supposed to have P-51s escorting us. We saw no enemy fighters, but there was quite a bit of flak. Szolnok RR bridge was destroyed. Time: 6 hours 55 minutes. Bombing altitude: 20,000 feet.

Mission No. 18

Ferrara, Italy. Ship #68. 1 September 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

Target: Railroad bridge. We were deputy lead of the group. Some flak was experienced, but no fighters were encountered. We hit the target, but it was found to be the wrong bridge. Time: 5 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing altitude: 24,000 feet.

Mission No. 19

Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Ship # 68. 3 September 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

Target: Slips for barges. We had no fighter escort, and did not encounter any enemy fighters or flak. We hit the target as briefed. Time: 5 hours, 35 minutes. Bombing altitude: 18,000 feet.

Rest Camp. 4 September 1944

We went to the Isle of Capri for a week's rest.

Mission No. 20

Lyon, France. Ship #72. 13 September 1944

Fuel: 3600 gallons

Mission: Transporting supplies. Two 55 gallons of oil. Ammunition and empty drums for motor fuel. The railroad and highway bridges over the Rhone river were destroyed by the Germans and

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the Allied Armies and Air Forces. It was difficult getting supplies to our armies who had moved up the Rhone River valley in the vicinity of Lyon.

Mission No. 21

Lyon, France. Ship #60. 17 September 1944

Fuel Load: 3600 gallons

Two 55 gallons of oil. Ammunition and empty fuel drums. We lost an engine on our way up to Lyon, the weather was bad, and getting worse as we flew north. We decided that we should land at the first available landing strip, and so informed the crew. We had to be careful as some strips were still being used by the Germans. One of the crew spotted a strip as we hit a break in the clouds. We started to circle and let down to get a better look. When we found it, it turned out to be a P-47 strip on a farm field. We decided to land in a driving rain storm on this short field. This would be extremely tricky even under ideal conditions. When we landed our main wheels locked and we slid the whole length of the runway across a concrete highway into the mud on the other side where we became stuck. We spent the rest of the day digging the plane out. In the afternoon a C-47 with a load of sailors on board slid down the runway just as we did and headed right for us. At the last possible moment he did a controlled ground loop avoiding a nasty wreck. We were in Valance, France for a week.

Mission No. 22

Athens, Greece. Ship #68. 25 September 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Dock installations. We had no fighter escort as it was not needed. Flak was weak. Newton's crew went down and crash landed on an island that the British had just recaptured. They were returned to the squadron later. Time: 6 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission No. 23

Vienna, Austria. Ship #63. 7 October 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

The whole air force was to hit various targets in the Vienna area. There was no fighters to be seen, but the flak was very intense as always in this area. We dropped our bombs on a secondary target in Hungary, and received one mission credit. We destroyed the marshalling yards there. Time: 7 hours, 35 minutes.

Mission No. 24

Venice, Italy. Ship #69. 10 October 1944

Bomb Load: Ten 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

Target: Marshalling Yard. We were escorted by P-38s which provided good cover. One ME-210 came out of the clouds and was as surprised as we to see him. He quickly returned to the clouds upon seeing our P-38 cover. We encountered some flak. We did not drop our bombs because the target could not be seen. Time: 5 hours 50 minutes.

Mission No. 25

Bologna, Italy. Ship #63. 12 October 1944

Bomb Load: Thirty-six 100 lb.

Target: German Store House. This was an all out raid in conjunction with the Fifth Army to take the city of Bologna. Our escort was provided by P-38s. We did not see any enemy fighters. There was some flak, but it was very inaccurate. Our bombing was good. Time: 6 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission No. 26

Vienna, Austria. Ship #65. 13 October 1944

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Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Oil refinery. We had P-38 escort which seemed to be spread out all over the sky. We saw two enemy aircraft that stayed out of range near the clouds, and never did attack. This was a real bad luck Friday the 13th. A plane blew up on take off, and we had a serious mid-air over Mt. Melfi during assembly. One crew was killed. The other ship made it back to the base. Our target was an oil refinery right in the heart of Vienna. The group took a lot of damage from very accurate flak. We could hardly get to the strip when we got home due to damaged ships cluttering the runway. Many had wounded aboard that had to be tended to immediately. I flew with Herbert's crew today. He is a good pilot and commander. A large plume of smoke came up from the target. Time: 8 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission No. 27

Blechhammer, Silesia. Ship #71. 14 October 1944

Bomb Load: Seven 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Oil Refinery. Escort provided by P-38s and P-51s. We could not make Silesia due to poor weather encountered. We picked a target of opportunity in Czechoslovakia. Bombing results were good. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes.

Mission No. 28

Milan, Italy. Ship #71. 20 October 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Automotive works. We had no escort. We saw four German airfields, two of which had no parked aircraft. Two of the airfields were observed to have single and twin engine fighters

on them. Bombing results not known. Time: 8 hours.

Mission No. 29

Augsburg, Germany. Ship #75. 4 November 1944

Bomb Load: Six 500 lb. clusters of incendiary bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Escort was provided by P-51s. We made it as far as the Alps, when 3 and 4 superchargers gave out. It was impossible to go on and we could not stay with the formation. We were flying number 4 position. I lowered the landing gear to signal those flying my wing. We dropped our bombs on a marshalling yard in northern Italy. We must have hit oil storage, when the Fifteenth returned from Augsburg they reported a black plume of smoke reaching 23,000 feet. This was my first mission as first officer. Time: 5 hours, 35 minutes.

Mission No. 30

Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Ship #60. 5 November 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

We had good escort provided by P-38s. We couldn't drop because of cloud cover. We returned to base with the bombs. Time: 4 hours, 5 minutes.

Mission No. 31

Bolzano, Italy. Ship #60. 6 November 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. RDX explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Middle transformer. We took the Germans by surprise. They were just beginning to smoke the pass as we arrived. The flak was very intense. We were told that the flak guns were mounted up to 10,000 feet in the mountain.

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tains which almost put us in a cross fire situation. One co-pilot was killed instantly by a burst that hit close to him. We had two main fuel cells punctured in the right wing that had to be replaced. Time: 6 hours, 50 minutes.

Mission No. 32

Munich, Germany. Ship #63. 16 November 1944

Bomb Load: Five 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: West marshalling yard. We had 52 P-51s fly very good escort for us. The flak was very intense, but we didn't go through it due to an accident. The P-51s seemed to be dog fighting above us. Through all of the confusion we dropped our bombs just past the IP. As far as I know, we did not hit anything. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes.

Mission No. 33

Villa Franca, Italy. Ship #60. 18 November 1944

Bomb Load: thirty-six 100 lb. frag bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

We were supposed to be escorted by 55 P-51s and RAF Spitfires. The fighters were also supposed to strafe air fields in the area. We hit the target and did quite a bit of damage. Time: 7 hours, 5 minutes.

Mission No. 34

Munich, Germany. Ship #60. 22 November 1944

Bomb Load: Six 500 lb. RDX explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: West marshalling yard. We were to be escorted by P-51s and P-38s which we did not see due to the poor weather we were flying in. We did not see the flak, but knew it was there be-

cause we could feel it. After bombs away the group split up due to a poor rally off the target. Ships were all over the sky in the clouds. Two ships collided, but both made it back to the base okay. I tried to enter our group three times, but the formation was so messed up I could not get back in. I joined another flight of three B-24s headed in the right direction. One crew from our squadron was missing. Time: 7 hours, 50 minutes.

Mission No. 35

Blechhammer, Silesia. Ship # 60. 2 December 1944

Bomb Load: Six 500 lb. RDX explosive.

Target: Oil refineries. We were escorted by 50 P-51s and 50 P-38s. The P-51s flew very good cover into the target, and the P-38s were supposed to fly cover on the withdrawal. We did not see them. There was no fighter opposition although the flak was very intense. I flew #6 position. Podwolski was in position #3. Just as bombs were released a shell went through Podwolski's number 4 engine nacelle. He lost the engine and almost the wing. He flew it back to base okay. We missed the target. Time: 8 hours, 15 minutes.

Author's Notes:

The following is a list of those crews that I recorded as going down and what happened to them. Some of those listed as unknown may have been captured. The information was probably known after I had returned stateside.

Original crews lost: Fisher – Captured; Kane – Unknown; Boyer – Captured; Swinehart - Unknown

Replacement crews lost: Moore – Captured; Rosencrans – Captured; Olson – Captured; Newton - Escaped twice; Crinkly - Escaped from Yugoslavia; Krahn - Ditched in the Adriatic Sea; Lang – Unknown; Capalbo - Blew up; Galvan – Unknown; Bailey – Unknown; George - Unknown

Mail Call

The 764th, One Eyed Jack , identified as #2, was assigned to my crew #5628 shortly after our arrival as a replacement crew in September 1944. The plane was very reliable. We returned once with one engine shot out. Landing once on the Isle of Vis, extremely low on fuel, flying home to Torretta the following day. The plane was later retired from bombing missions. With the guns removed the One Eyed jack was used to transport personnel to Rome and Naples for R and R. Later I learned that this plane crashed a few miles south of Torretta. I never learned if anyone was injured. I did visit the site - the plane had made a clean belly landing in a level grassy field. The fuselage was totally intact with minimal damage expected as a result of the belly landing.

Lloyd Emmert
764th Squadron



I'm the granddaughter of Tom Qualman, and I just wanted to thank you for posting the article about him. He's gotten very old, & has Alzheimer's disease, and is unable to speak a complete word. He mostly just mumbles now, and you can really only tell how he is feeling and what he is trying to say by his expression. When I go to see him, he throws his hands up in the air and puts on a big smile, and when I leave he cries. My grandmother has passed on, but if she could read your article right now she would be just as thankful as I am. Due to his inability to speak, his written story and your article are all we have. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,
Sarah Qualman



I received the following in a PowerPoint presentation and thought it was worth repeating here. Instead of showing a picture of a one dollar bill, I'll ask you to take out out of your wallet and look at it while you ready this.

The United States One Dollar Bill

On the rear of the One Dollar bill, you will see two circles. Together, they comprise the Great Seal of the United States .

The First Continental Congress requested that Benjamin Franklin and a group of men come up with a Seal. It took them four years to accomplish this task and another two years to get it approved.

If you look at the left-hand circle, you will see a Pyramid.

Notice the face is lighted, and the western side is dark. This country was just beginning. We had not begun to explore the west or decided what we could do for Western Civilization. The Pyramid is uncapped, again signifying that we were not even close to being finished. Inside the capstone you have the all-seeing eye, an ancient symbol for divinity. It was Franklin's belief that one man couldn't do it alone, but a group of men, with the help of God, could do anything.

The Latin above the pyramid, **ANNUIT COEPTIS**, means, "God has favored our undertaking." The Latin below the pyramid, **NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM**, means, "a new order has begun." At the base of the pyramid is the Roman Numeral for 1776. (MDCCLXXVI)

"**IN GOD WE TRUST**" is on this currency.

If you look at the right-hand circle, and check it carefully, you will learn that it is on every National Cemetery in the United States. It is also on the Parade of Flags Walkway at the Bushnell, Florida National Cemetery, and is the centerpiece of most hero's monuments. Slightly modified, it is the seal of the President of the United States, and it is always visible whenever he speaks, yet very few people know what the symbols mean.

The Bald Eagle was selected as a symbol for victory for two reasons: First, he is not afraid of a storm; he is

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strong, and he is smart enough to soar above it. Secondly, he wears no material crown. We had just broken from the King of England. Also, notice the shield is unsupported. This country can now stand on its own. At the top of that shield you have a white bar signifying congress, a unifying factor. We were coming together as one nation. In the Eagle's beak you will read, "**E PLURIBUS UNUM**" meaning, "one from many."

Above the Eagle, you have the thirteen stars, representing the thirteen original colonies, and any clouds of misunderstanding rolling away. Again, we were coming together as one.

Notice what the Eagle holds in his talons. He holds an olive branch and arrows. This country wants peace, but we will never be afraid to fight to preserve peace. The Eagle always wants to face the olive branch, but in time of war, his gaze turns toward the arrows.

They say that the number 13 is an unlucky number. This is almost a worldwide belief. You will usually never see a room numbered 13, or any hotels or motels with a 13th floor. But think about this:

- 13 original colonies,
- 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence,
- 13 stripes on our flag,
- 13 steps on the Pyramid,
- 13 letters in, "Annuit Coeptis,"
- 13 letters in "E Pluribus Unum,"
- 13 stars above the Eagle,
- 13 bars on that shield,
- 13 leaves on the olive branch,
- 13 fruits, and if you look closely,
- 13 arrows.

And finally, if you notice the arrangement of the 13 stars in the right-hand circle you will see that they are arranged as a Star of David. This was ordered by George Washington who, when he asked Hayim Solomon, a wealthy Philadelphia Jew, what he would like as a personal reward for his services to the Continental Army, Solomon said he wanted nothing for himself but that he would like something for his people. The Star of David was the result. Few people know that it was Solomon who saved the Army through his financial contributions but died a pauper.

Torretta Field Today

All the men who served in the 461st at Torretta Field have memories of the facilities that existed in 1944-45. Those who flew mission back then have memories of the hardstands, taxiways and runways. Torretta Field was very real back then. At the end of the war, Torretta Field was to be returned to the Baron Michele Zezza in the same condition it was when Torretta Field was first established.

This was the end of Torretta Field. It was once again part of the estate of the Baron. Or so we thought. In truth, Torretta Field still exists today. Yes, in the memories of those who served at Torretta Field for sure. But in addition there are still traces of Torretta Field that can be seen today.

For those who are aware of some of the technology available today know about Google Earth. To quote the introduction to Google Earth -

Welcome to Google Earth! Once you download and install Google Earth, your computer becomes a window to anywhere, allowing you to view high-resolution aerial and satellite imagery, photos, elevation terrain, road and street labels, business listings, and more.

By using Google Earth, you can zoom to Cerignola, Italy and get a view of the town as it exists today along with the surrounding area. Move a little southwest of Cerignola along the Autostrada Napoli-Canosa to 41°11'16.01"N, 15°46'09.70"E. Zoom in to an altitude of about 14,000 feet. You can still see an outline of Torretta Field. The dual runways are still visible running slightly northwest to southeast across the Autostrada. The hardstands are still visible on either side of the runways with the 461st being on the west side and the 484th being on the right side.

I'm not positive, but I believe the Headquarters complex is still there at 41°10'08.17"N, 15°45'19.59"E. By getting down to around 2,000 feet altitude, you can make out the building and the briefing room behind.

Engineers Report on Torretta Field

Dated October 15, 1943, Revised April 14, 1944

Compiled by S-3 Section

21st Engineers

Name and location: Torretta, Cerignola

Geographic position: 41 10' 50" N Latitude, 15 45' 52' E Longitude

Map reference: 1:100,000 sheet 175 Cerignola

Magnetic variation: 2' 51W January 1943 Annual change 3' East

Landmarks: 1/4 mile West of Mass Torretta. 1 mile south Cerignola, Candela Road. 8.6 Miles Southwest of Cerignola

Dimensions: 8000 feet North/South by 8000 feet East/West landing ground.

Runway 150 by 6000 feet, bearing North 21 degrees West. Taxiways, Runway, and Hardstands are gravel topped. 112 H/S Surface. All in cultivation. Black loam soil. 18 inches top soil over chalice subsoil. Runways, Taxiways and hardstands are of clay gravel.

Markings: No Markers on the runway. No circle and name at the time of reconnaissance

Lighting: None

Obstructions: Secondary power line on east side of field 30 feet high

Hangars: None

Repair facilities: Service squadron units

Fuel and oil: 1 1000 barrel storage tank for 100 octane fuel located 1/2 mile north of 3 outlets located at north end of the field. Fed by 4 inch pipeline

Communications: Telephone to Cerignola with connections to Bari and Foggia.

Radio communications: Unknown

Weather service: Portable field unit.

Transportation: No regular transportation, military only from areas south side of field

Prevailing Winds: Unknown

Precipitation: Unknown

Visibility: Fog reported less than 20 days a year during which time visibility is not greater than 2½ miles

Operated by British R. A. F.

Remarks: Field Operational. Hardstands and drainage system still under construction.

Nearest seaport: Manfredonia port of entry for 100 octane fuel. Bulk of supply shipments to Bari. 5000 feet of pier space. Capacity 14 Liberty ships

Defensive Installations: Units of British 40 millimeter anti aircraft guns

Civil Operations: None. Tactical operations only

Hospitals and First Aid: Field medical units. Nearest field general hospital in Cerignola

Railroads: Nearest railroad and sidings at Cerignola station 3.8 miles north of Cerignola. Three sidings 1800 feet each. Two sidings 900 feet each.

Highways: Macadam highway 16 feet wide Cerignola to Bari and Foggia. 14 feet wide gravel top from Cerignola to field. 0.7 Mile gravel access road of Candela road to field.

Waterways: None

Electric Power: No electric power service, except individual field units

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Location of facilities:

Water point. Aqueduct way station at Candela 0.7 miles northeast of field. Four outlets, 1000 gallon storage tank and pump, used in conjunction with San Giovanni.

Fuel tanks and three outlets at North end of field.

Radio Antennas: transmitter and receiver one mile north of the field. British field units

Expansion Ability: Expansion used to the fullest extent.

Construction Capacity: Cross wind runway not feasible.

Air Units: British squadrons of Wellington bombers.

Fire fighting equipment: Unknown

Additional Information. This field is under the complete operation of the British R. A. F.

Mean monthly precipitation in inches and temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

Rainfall in inches: Jan: 2.1, Feb: 1.1, March: 1.3, April: 1.4, May: 1.8, June: 1.1, July: 0.6, August: 1.2, September: 1.4, October: 2.1, November: 2, December: ?

Days of rain per month: January: 8, February: 7, March: 7, April: 9, May: 7, June: 6, July: 2, August: 4, September: 5, October: 8, November: 9, December: 7

Temperature: January: 44, February: 49, March: 45, April: 60, May: 69, June: 76, July: 79, August: 77, September: 71, October: 61, November: 52, December: 47

Additional Field Information from Data Compiled April 14, 1944.

Landing Area:

Runways: 150 feet by 6000 feet surfaced with gravel. 1000 feet of Pierced steel planking on south end of dual runways and 500 feet at north end.

Control tower and windsock located east side and at midpoint of right runway.

Markings: Circle " TOR " at Northeast corner of runway. Red and white wooden markers along the runway.

Lighting: Runway lights for emergency landings.

Airport Description

Dispersal area: 128 hardstands gravel and pierced steel planking. Taxiways surfaced with clay gravel.

Facilities: Unknown

Hospital and First Aid: Dispensaries, ambulances at field. Hospital at Cerignola.

Accommodations: Tent areas, and administration buildings approximately 3000 feet south of the runway.

Transportation: GI bus runs hourly to Cerignola

Hangars: None

Repair Facilities: Service squadrons

Communications: Telephone, and Administration Teletype at field. VHF, ADC being installed. No HF or DF.

Fire fighting: Mobile units.

Electric Power: Portable field units and part time Italian power source 160-165 Volts, 260 volts 3 phase 50 cycles.

Weather service: Station at Cerignola.

Prevailing winds: Northwest Southeast.

Miscellaneous Information:

Air units: Two heavy bomb groups, United States Army Air Forces.

Prelude to Glory

'Twas early in the morning
His head filled with lead
When the O.D. awoke him
Shook him and said

“Come on eager pilot
Get out of the sack
There's a mission to fly
And I hope you get back”

He crawled out shivering
Pulled on his pants
Shook out his shoes
To evacuate the ants

He punched his mates
Who continues to snore
And wants more sack time
Even five minutes more

They finally got up
With nary a grin
Allowed “This to early
To fight a war in.”

The four went to chow
Of dried eggs and spam
Drank muddy coffee
And cursed at poor Sam

Then off to the briefing
Hearts filled with lead
Muscles still stiff
Eyes were all red

They leaped off the trucks
All curious now
Like an eager young bull's
First look at a cow

Crowded in the doorway
In a hurry to see
The target for today
Must be old Germany

Then they relaxed
All ready to toil
The target to be
Distant Ploeti's oil

Tallant got up
To call out the roll
His eyes were still sleepy
In his hands a pole

Everyone was present
Except Major Goree
Tallant looked pained
“Must be in the hay”

Up popped Spivak
To describe the deal
(Afterwards to the sack
After a hurried meal)

“This is a milk run
Only four hundred guns
I'll wait on the ground
Have fun with the Huns

“Three hundred fighters
Don't think there'll be more
If you don't knock them down
We'll all be sore

Thunderhead was next
And to himself said
“As soon as I finish
I'm returning to bed”

“Weathers good at the target
Poor all the way
Visibility ten miles
Probably rain all day”

Col. G. stepped forward
“Formation must be good
So leff'll hit the target
(As if he could)

“Dismissed” shouted Tallant
“Eager birdmen lets go
Get em up in the blue
And earn your dough”

And so they went out
To complete the story
Some to return
Others downed in Glory

Article Published 17 May 2006

by
John O'Connor

Connecticut Valley Historical Museum

Several years ago an elderly person wrote a letter complaining that the Genealogy and Local History Department was much too noisy, not like when he was young. My answer was that without a little talking it was difficult to exchange ideas. One day a patron said that she was having difficulty obtaining death records from Malone, New York. Someone said that she had the same problem. The explanation was that the death records may be in either the town or village clerk's office, depending on where one died. Unlike here at the Genealogy Room, there seems to be little exchange of ideas between either office. Incidentally, I had the same experience when searching for my great, great grandfather's record.

Regular readers may remember last year's May column about Russell W Meyrick and Jacob Herman, both of whom were casualties of World War II, shot down over the skies of Czechoslovakia. This was prompted by an inquiry from Jan Mahr, the historian at the Czech Air Museum. The last time I attempted to contact Jan, my E-Mail was undeliverable. However, last week I received an E-Mail from Jan Mahr with an attachment, a picture of his office in the Air Museum. His book is near completion, but one more request. This time the search is for 2nd Lieutenant William C. Rundbaken, who was also killed during World War II.

Getting back to the first paragraph. On Saturday, May 6, I taught a class here at CVHM from 9 a.m. until noon and several participants remained during public hours. Earlier, using the 1930 Federal Census, I determined that William C. Rundbaken was the son of Frederick and Sarah (Ginsburg) Rundbaken and that he had a sister, Joan. I couldn't resist the opportunity to deter-

mine how much the class members had learned. How could we ascertain whether Joan had married and what was her married name? And once again we were exchanging ideas. I let the patrons carry on the discussion with little prompting and soon decided to see whether Frederick Rundbaken had died, when and where and could we obtain a copy of his obituary. A search of the Social Security Death Index and the Connecticut Death Index, 1949-2001, both on www.ancestrylibrary.com listed Frederick's date of death as August 5, 1979 in West Hartford, CT. I then contacted Dick Roberts at the Connecticut State Library, who provided Frederick's obituary from the Hartford Courant. Surviving Frederick was a daughter, Mrs. William (Joan) Singer, also of West Hartford. Joan died in West Hartford on April 25, 1982. William and Joan had a daughter, Wendy, who married Gary Chessen and the search goes on.

Second Lieutenant William C. Rundbaken died on December 17, 1944 over Prešov, CZ. He was a member of the 15th Air Force, 767th Squadron, 461st Bomb Group. For further information, send E-Mail historian@461st.org. William's remains are interred at Beth Israel Cemetery in Hartford, CT. Rest in peace, Bill.

Our exhibit here at the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum entitled *Sea Bag of Memories: A Grandson Discovers His Grandfather's Past* will continue until the end of June. This is part of the story of Lucien Lacroix, grandfather of Paul J. Chenevert, was killed in action in March of 1945, when his patrol craft, PC 564, was attacked by three German U-boats. For further coverage of this exhibit, you may wish to read Stan Freeman's article in the Neighborhood Plus section next week.

As always feedback and suggestions for future columns are greatly appreciated.

I Wanted Wings

from Torretta Flyer No. 10, Spring 1984

I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddamn things,
Now I don't want 'em any more;
They taught me how to fly; and sent me here to die.
I got a belly-full of war.
You can save those zeros for those goddamn heroes,
But those DFCs do not compensate for losses.
Buster, I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddamn things,
Now I don't want 'em any more.

I don't want to fly in a damn old PBV
That's for the eager – not for me.
I don't trust to luck, to be picked up in a duck,
After I've crashed into the sea.
Oh, I'd sooner be a bell hop, than a flier on a flat-top
With my hand around a bottle – not around a goddamn throttle.

Chorus

Buster, I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddamn things,
Now I don't want 'em any more.

I don't want a tour over Berlin or the Rhine.
Flak always makes me bolt my lunches.
For me there's no hey-hey
When they holler “bombs away”
I'd rather be home with the bunch.
And there's one thing you can't laugh off -
That's when they shoot your ass off.
And I'd rather go home, Buster,
With my ass than with a cluster.

Chorus

They wake you up to fly in the middle of the night,
Breakfast as a quarter after four.
You crawl out of the sack, and you think about the flak.
That's what's so tough about this war.
Now you take the truck to briefing, you can hear a lot of beefing.
If the target's not a milk haul,

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You had better go on sick call.

Chorus

You walk into S-2, and you wish you had a few.
Christ, there's the target on the wall.
It's rougher than a cob, and I'll bet you this, by God.
That you'll be listening for recall.
You can bet you old banana, that we're heading for Vienna;
If you thought a little faster,
You'd have joined the quartermaster.

Chorus

Air combat's called romance, but it makes me wet my pants.
I'm not a fighter, I have learned.
I'll take the dames, and let the rest go down in flames.
I've no desire to be burned.
You can save those Mitsubishi, for those sons-of-bitches,
But I'd rather have a woman, than the cockpit of a Grumman.

Chorus

They filled me full of poop, when they sent me to the Group.
That's where all my troubles began.
If I had stayed at home and never crossed the foam,
I'd have my ass out of this jam.
When the rockets start a-bustin' and the gunners start a 'cussin',
That's the time I wish I was back in Ohio or Cleveland.

Chorus

They got me in the middle, and they tho't they had me diddled,
That's where I fooled them one and all.
In 1944, I fought this goddamn war.
Boy, I was really on the ball.
Said the General, "Ain't it purtty", when he pinned it on my shirtty;
For a moment I was ABTO, but now I'm just another "Joe".
Buster, I wanted wings, 'til I got the goddamn things,
Now I don't want 'em any more.

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Webmaster Comments

In the June 2009 issue of the Liberaider, I mentioned that the size of the website has grown beyond what would fit on a standard CD. I said that instead of offering the Website CD, it would now be the Website DVD at the same price. Since the June issue came out, I've been reworking the 461st website to make it more attractive and conform to today's standards for web design. Currently the website is nearly a gig in size. I'm still making changes, but for the most part, the new website is online. I hope everyone enjoys the new look. A lot of the changes are under the covers and won't appear to make any difference, but there are some obvious changes as well. I would very much appreciate any comments anyone has concerning the new look. BTW, if your 461st Website CD needs replacing, the cost is only \$15.00. It might be time to think about replacing your older version.

I also mentioned the album I found among my father's records with photographs of the 461st. I have

all of the photos on the website now in the CO Photo Album. Some of these were familiar to me and some I had never seen before. I've added captions to those I can identify, but would appreciate help with a lot of the pictures. Please take the time to go through the CO Photo Album and see if you can identify the scene and/or the people in the photos.

The Fifteenth Air Force website—www.15thaf.org—is coming along nicely. If you haven't been there, you might want to stop by and see what's there. I've organized this website according to the structure of the Fifteenth so, for example, you'll see a link to the 49th Bomb Wing and in there you'll see a link to the 461st Bomb Group. This just links to our website. I've used this same approach for other organizations as well. If an organization doesn't have its own website, I supply whatever I can about the organization right on the Fifteenth website.