



461ST BOMB GROUP (H)



Vol. 29, No. 2

DECEMBER 2012

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

Indianapolis, IN – 461st/484th Bomb Groups Reunion - 2012

The 461st & 484th Bomb Group (H) 2012 Reunion was held in Indianapolis, IN Thursday, September 20, 2012 through Sunday, September 23, 2012.

The reunion location was the Radisson Hotel Indianapolis Airport, located on 2500 South High School Road in Indianapolis, IN. Some reunion committee members began arriving late on

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Lightbody Crew #97R

Mission No. 1 15 February 1945

**Mission No. 175
15 February 1945
Target: Vienna Penzinger Marshal-
ling Yard, Austria**

Again, a double header mission, Vienna, and ten-tenths cloud coverage. Again pathfinder bombing and unobserved results. Again good protection against the flak by the cloud coverage.

Major Poole, who started out leading the Red Force, was forced to abort. The lead was taken over by the Deputy, Captain Cooper. Only one plane in this formation was hit by flak, but a man on that plane was wounded.

Major Mixson was the leader of the Blue Force. No flak damage was sustained, but oxygen failure cost the life of Corporal John O. Moore.

Escorted Army Air Force heavy

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A Veterans Day Remembrance

Reprinted with permission of the Lexington (KY) Herald-Leader

My father survived war, and took its secrets to his grave

On April 2, 1945, Richmond native Stanley Todd and a dozen other American POWs stood before a Nazi SS firing squad. At the last moment the execution was canceled. Decades later, his family is still trying to find out why he was spared.

by
Becky Todd York

We arrive at the Austrian military

headquarters in Graz, the country's second-largest city. Driving through the gates in an Austrian Army van, we are guests of 1st Lt. Georg Hoffmann, a reserve officer who is a historian investigating war crimes committed against Allied airmen during World War II. As we pass the covered entranceway, Hoffmann points to the waist-high stone wall just inside the compound — it's the spot where my father and a dozen other airmen faced a Nazi firing squad but somehow lived.

Stanley Todd, then 22, son of a farmer from Richmond, Ky., had entered this

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Taps

May they rest in peace forever

Please forward all death notices to:

Hughes Glantzberg
P.O. Box 926
Gunnison, CO 81230
editor@461st.org

764th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Dillmon, Keith S.	El Dorado, KS	748	10-24-2012
Kendle, Kenneth K.	Dover, OH	612	7-23-2012
Mattheis, John W. Jr.	Maple Grove, MN	612	6-13-2012

765th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Gribble, James B.	McMinnville, TN	612	6-10-2012
Staples, Robert S.	Chico, CA	1092	8-28-2012

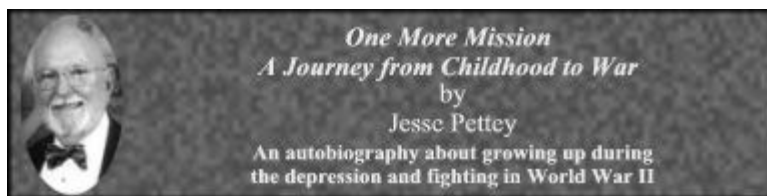
766th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Duke, Leroy B.	Gregory, MI	757	11-15-2012

767th Squadron

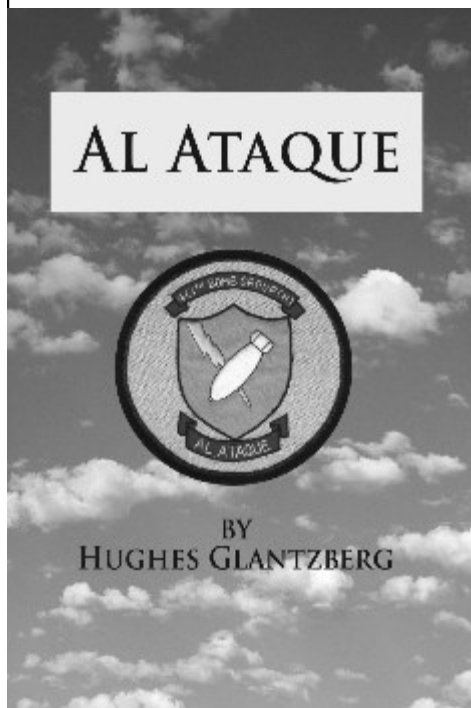
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Brabham, Paul C.	Richardson, TX	612	9-10-2012
Elliott, Edward A.	Morris, NY	612	5-3-2003
Smith, Alvin L.	Tulsa, OK	747	11-12-2012
Young, Ross W.	Macomb, IL	1035	7-26-2011





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.

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Tuesday, September 18, 2012 and trickled in over the next few days.

Keeping with tradition, on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 the reunion packets were assembled by Linda Titus, Barbara Alden, Peggy Hayes, and Claire St. Yves. The hospitality room was set up for fellowship and snacks for the hospitality room were purchased. Bob Hayes drove the Gardner girls, Barbara and Linda to the local Costco with the shopping list of items to be purchased. They celebrated the beginning of another great reunion with dinner in the Radisson's restaurant Wednesday evening.

Thursday, September 20, 2012 was arrival and check-in day. The registration table was open all day just outside the hospitality room with the familiar red Liberaiders' 461st Welcome sign which was hung on the joint registration table. There were smaller Welcome signs for each bomb group on display near the entrance to the hospitality room as well. Thanks to our efficient committee members everything was in order and check-in was quick and easy.

Each bomb group had their own General Meeting at 7:00 PM. The 461st met in the Victory Lane Room. Hughes welcomed the attendees and Dave gave a brief overview of the itinerary for the upcoming weekend. At 7:10 PM Hughes introduced Col. L. Dean Worley Jr. as the commander of the newly activated 461st Air Control Wing, located at Robins Air Force Base, Ga. There was an interesting PowerPoint Presentation, with a lively Q & A session. The new patch of 461st ACW was distributed to the attendees. At 8:00 PM the General Meeting was adjourned.

Friday, September 21, 2012:



Buses were loaded and left the Radisson parking lot at 9:30 AM with much anticipation for a visit to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway! Our guides were great and we enjoyed our tour of the "Circle City" passing Monument Circle, the State Capital, Scottish Rite Cathedral, oh, and some football stadium, I think it is called, Lucas Oil Stadium!!

We were able to enjoy a narrated lap around the fa-



mous 2.5 mile oval track, enjoy an 18 minute movie about the history of racing and take photos of the past racing cars in the IMS Hall of Fame Museum.

Although we had planned on having lunch at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, we had lunch along the banks of the very scenic river with views of downtown Indianapolis.

Our buses returned to our hotel around 3:00 PM. Some of us went straight the hospitality room to visit with established friends, meet new friends, and some of us even went up to our room for some R&R.

Friday Evening each Bomb Group had their own Squadron Dinner with the 461st meeting once again in the Victory Lane Room. Social Hour began at 6:00 PM, and Dinner to begin at 7:00 PM.

At 7:00 PM Danny Wasserman took professional group photos of the 461st and 484th vets just outside dining room of the 484th. Danny took the time to stage the area, and coordinate all the vets for a very professional photo.

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We enjoyed a very nice sit down dinner, with salad, and dessert included! We had a very interesting presentation by Michael Wasserman, Scott Douglas and Gerry Reese about the loss of "Arsenic and Lace" on December 17, 1944. After that, Brent Duff spoke for a few minutes about how much the 461st and the Association has come to mean to him.

Hughes presented a Proclamation by the Indiana Governor Mitchell E Daniels, Jr. declaring Friday, September 21, 2012 to be **The 461st Bombardment Group (H) and 484th Bombardment Group (H) Reunion Day**. He also presented a **Certificate of Appreciation** from Indiana Senator Dennis K. Kruse; both of which were arranged for by Brent Duff of Fort Wayne Indiana.



Once dinner was over, some retired to the hospitality room, hotel bar, or retired to their hotel rooms for the evening.

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Like clockwork, our two buses each with a tour guide departed the Radisson hotel for another day of reunion activities arranged by Dave and his reunion committee members. Our tour included a view of the Indiana War Memorial Plaza Historic District, which contains two museums, three parks, and 24 acres of monuments, statues, sculptures and fountains in the heart of downtown.

We had the opportunity to visit the Indiana History

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Center, home of the *Indiana Experience*. Located along the Central Canal in downtown Indianapolis, we were able to experience Indiana's past—with Destination Indiana, and You Are There. Bob Hayes especially enjoyed the Cole Porter Room. We were able to eat our lunch "under the stars" at the Stardust Terrace Café.

History repeats itself, as our buses returned to our hotel around 3:00 PM. Some of us made a bee line straight to the hospitality room to visit with our established friends, meet new friends, look at scrapbooks from past reunions and assorted WWII memorabilia or venture to our rooms to watch some college football.



Indiana Historical Society

Saturday evening the Formal Social Hour began at 6:00 PM with a cash bar in the common just outside the dining room. You could feel the excitement when you walked into the area with many photo ops, the laughter, and genuine fellowship taking place. It was a moment to treasure. The Group Banquet was a sit down event and we had a surprise guest speaker who was absolutely delightful.

Ms Marty Wyall is one of the few surviving Women Airforce Service Pilots from WWII. Brent Duff arranged for Marty to share with us the activities of the WASP during WWII when they shuttled aircraft around the country.

At the conclusion of the Saturday evening dinner, each veteran from the 461st and 484th received a copy of their respective bomb group veteran photo. Those

vets who left the dinner early were able to receive their copy of the photo Sunday morning before their



Marty Wyall and Hughes Glantzberg

departure.

Sunday, September 23, 2012

Our last event of the weekend was the Memorial Breakfast with a sit down breakfast in the Victory Lane Room. We had the Presentation of the Colors by the Indiana National Guard, TAPS read by Jim and Kristy, Chaplain's Address, and the Missing Man Table. During the closing remarks by Hughes, the reunion destination for the 461st & 484th 2013 reunion was disclosed: Omaha, NE. Danny Wasserman distributed 461st & 484th window clings for those interested along with the installation instructions.

With emails exchanged, hugs, tears, warm embraces, one last look at all who attended, and one more photo just in case, the 2012 reunion was coming to a close.

Indianapolis, IN was a challenge for the planning committee and a special round of thanks goes to Dave Blake for all his time and efforts to make this another great reunion for the vets of the 461st and 484th!!

To our vets who have been coined, "The Last Great Generation", as your sons, daughters, and grandchildren, we thank you for all that you have done for us and for our country! Be safe, we love you, and we will see you in Omaha, NE in 2013!

The 461st/484th Bomb Group
2013 REUNION
Omaha, Nebraska
Thursday, October 10th—Sunday, October 13th

We don't have any details for the reunion next year at this point in time. For now, please mark your calendars for these dates and check the website as we develop the plans for what promises to be another fantabulous reunion.

Look for complete details and registration information in your June, 2013 issue of *The Liberaider*. You can also keep up on developments as they happen by visiting your web site: **www.461st.org/**

A Note From The Reunion Committee Chairman

I have been on a "recon mission" to Omaha and am happy to report that I found this to be a really interesting and friendly city. The hotels I saw were first rate and the tour opportunities are many and interesting. Everyone I talked to was very personable (they're even polite in traffic!) and all of the vendors are ready and willing to bend over backwards to accommodate us. My visit there was a real treat and I hope you'll see it that way too when the next reunion is over.

I'm sorry to say that although plans are coming along nicely, I don't have anything "carved in stone" to report yet. What I can say though, is that you'll stay in a very nice hotel, see some great sights and it is looking like this will be one of the more affordable reunions in some time.

I can't wait to see you all again in Omaha!

Dave Blake

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

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Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

President's Corner

In 2011, the 461st Bomb Group invited the 484th Bomb Group to join us in Bloomington, MN. It was the first time the two groups had met together since 1984 when they held a joint reunion in Orlando, FL. It was a challenge as each group had their own ideas as to how a reunion should be conducted. The reunion committee did a fantastic job of trying to please everyone and smooth over the rough edges. It was difficult, but I think they did great and made the reunion another very successful one.

We went into 2012 wondering if the two groups could continue to hold joint reunions, but the reunion committee had taken all the recommendation from both groups to heart and ended up with an even better reunion in Indianapolis, IN this year. Comments from everyone who attended the reunion indicated that the two groups should continue to meet together for as long as we are able to have reunions.

As the two groups were gathering in Indianapolis, I received word from Win Jones of the 451st Bomb Group. He was inviting the 461st and 484th to join with the 451st in Phoenix, AZ in 2013. Wow! This sure sounded interesting. It would be the first time all three groups that made up the 49th Bomb Wing would meet together. Unfortunately, the Reunion Committee had already made plans for the 2013 461st/484th reunion to be in Omaha, NE. It would be possible to change, but the Reunion Committee had been asked to keep the reunions in the center of the country. Phoenix was just too far west. We declined the invitation, but suggested that we might get together with them in 2014. I'm looking forward to that reunion with great expectations.

I continue to remind everyone that GoodSearch is not only a great tool for finding things on the Internet, but a great way to contribute to the 461st treasury. You have to sign up for GoodSearch in order for it to know your favorite non-profit organization. Once this is done, every time you use GoodSearch, they make a donation to the 461st. It doesn't amount to much, but if everyone uses it, the 461st gets a nice check at the end of the year.

In addition to GoodSearch, there's also GoodShop and GoodDining. GoodShop provides great deals with companies you probably shop with anyway. And by using GoodShop to make your purchase, a

percentage of your purchase is contributed to the 461st.

Do you eat out? Eat at one of the restaurants on the GoodDining list and a percentage of your dining pleasure is donated to the 461st.

It sounds simple and it really is. If you haven't taken a look at GoodSearch, GoodShop and GoodDining yet, please do so. Start earning money for the 461st today.



(Continued from page 1)

bombers attacked marshaling yard and other targets in the Vienna, Austria area, Thursday. No results were observed. It was the third day in a row Viennese objectives were attacked. Communication targets were bombed Tuesday and oil refineries on Wednesday.

The next morning at breakfast, I looked around and, thankfully, saw the same faces that I had seen at breakfast yesterday. Nobody was missing. I said a quiet prayer, "Thank you, Lord." We now had one mission under our belt. We were not experienced by any means, but we were not "green horns" anymore, either.

Mission No. 2

20 February 1945

Mission No. 179

20 February 1945

Target: Fiume Shipyards, Italy

Thick Cirrus at the head of the Adriatic with tops over 23,000 feet compelled the Group leader, Major Mixson, to abandon the Bolzano Marshalling Yard, Italy, as a primary target on 20 February 1945. The second alternate target, the shipyards at Fiume, Italy, was bombed visually for a score of 37.3 percent. The main concentration of bombs fell in the built-up area near the docks with hits on the docks, warehouses, and harbor jetty. This mission resulted in three cases of frostbite, an unusual experience for the flying personnel of this Group.

We were briefed for a target in and around the Brenner Pass, which was heavily defended by anti-aircraft guns mounted on railroad cars. However, since this sortie was briefed to be a "visual run" (meaning no instruments bombing would be employed on this target), total cloud cover drove us to hit our #1 alternate at Trieste, just on the Italian-Yugoslavia border. Trieste is one of Italy's main Adriatic

seaport towns. The results were fair, photo reconnaissance proved, though we observed occasional bursts of flak. All planes and personnel returned safely.

Mission No. 3

22 February 1945

Mission No. 181

22 February 1945

Target: Kempton Marshalling Yard, Germany

Colonel Lawhon took off in the lead of a thirty-plane four box formation to attack the marshalling yard at Ingolstadt, Germany, on 22 February. Due to impassible weather he was compelled to abandon the primary target and search for a target of opportunity to be bombed visually. The target selected was the marshaling yard at Kempton, Germany. The choke point of the target was well hit but the mission was not scored by the Air Force because the target was a non-briefed one. Six airplanes were damaged on this mission and three men were wounded.

The *Stars and Stripes* read:

Carrying the greatest tonnage of bombs ever lifted from Italian bases in a single operation, escorted heavy bombers of the Fifteenth Army Air Force today smashed at enemy communications lines in Germany, Austria, and Northern Italy.

We bombed a rail center at Kempton, just a few miles southwest of Munich. Returning home from the mission, we sighted what turned out to be the first German jet fighters that we had ever seen! We were astounded at the high speed the planes were flying at very low altitude. All of our planes and personnel returned.

Mission No. 4

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1 March 1945

Mission No. 186

1 March 1945

Target: Moosebierbaum Oil Refinery, Austria

The first mission of the month was a double header with the oil refinery at Moosebierbaum, Austria as the target. The Red Force, led by Colonel Lawhon, got through the bad weather over the Alps and reached the target. In the Lake Balaton area the impassible weather made it necessary for Colonel Lawhon to abandon the briefed route. Instead of attempting to take his formation under the weather, he did a 360 to gain altitude and swung far to the right and east of the Russian bomb line in an effort to find a deck low enough to get over. The formation was lost by the time it got up above the weather. The radar navigator, Lt. Loverin, finally picked up Vienna, which he used in orienting himself at the initial point.

By this time the formation was an hour late. The combination of bad weather and another formation immediately ahead of Colonel Lawhon's Red Force made it impossible to drop the bombs on the first run. Despite the flak, the formation made another run on the target and Captain Churchill, finding a hole with only three-tenths cloud coverage, bombed the target visually. The Red Force was one of four out of forty-two formations in the Air Force scheduled to attack the target which bombed visually.

Photographs show that a concentrated pattern of bombs fell at the north edge of the refinery. Several direct hits were scored on the distillation plant, the compressor house, the cracking unit, and the hydraulic acid plant. Other bombs fell on the railroad siding and still others in the building area at the west edge of the refinery. The mission was scored at 33 percent.

The Blue Force, led by Major Mixson, was unable to find a passage under, above, or around the weather in the Lake Balaton area and returned its bombs to base.

We were briefed for a target in the Vienna area, at Moosbierbaum, Austria, which was a

pretty "flak happy" area. En route, somewhere over Yugoslavia, we hit an uncharted flak area where possible railroad anti-aircraft shot out our #1 engine and did other damage to the nose of our plane. We could not maintain sufficient airspeed to keep in formation, so we turned around for home base. The anti-aircraft gunners, seeing that the rest of our group formation had passed beyond their range but that we were returning directly over them, concentrated their guns on us and threw up everything but the "kitchen sink." I do not recall at any time during combat seeing any more black smoke in the air than we saw on this mission. How in the world they missed hitting us directly is beyond me! Our bombardier, Don Hermanson, made a hurried bomb run on what he thought to be enemy gun installations, and we salvoed our bombs. Then the flak stopped, and by now we were approaching the mountain range in Yugoslavia. We were not losing any altitude since we had dropped our bombs, but neither were we able to climb any higher. Tommy and I discussed the situation and made a decision to throw everything loose out of the plane with exception of the parachutes. So, Mac, Rosie, Larry, John, and Paul threw everything out the waist windows of the B-24. We reduced our weight to the point that we were slowly climbing then and began to clear the mountain range. We saw some enemy planes in the distance, so we called for fighter protection, as we were a lone B-24 in the midst of bad fighter country. By the time we had the ship under better control two U.S. P-38s were covering us for home base. All planes and personnel returned safely. Fighters from the U.S. Tactical Air Force shot down 5 enemy fighters in the area where we had been a "lone wolf" for a while. Flak over the target was intense but somewhat inaccurate. Results

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were reported fair.

Here's an article from *Stars and Stripes* that brings this part of the air war into prospective:

Not since the pre-invasion of last summer in France and western Germany has the already damaged transportation and communications system of the German Army undergone such a prolonged air battering as during the current record effort by the Fifteenth Army Air Force which yesterday completed 16 straight days of attacking enemy targets. This is the first 16-day stretch of good weather since September of last year — that enabled the Fifteenth to send out more than 15,000 aircraft, most of them heavy bombers.

The *Stars and Stripes* continued its report of the episode as follows:

Earlier in the year, factories and airfields, which based German interceptor planes, received priority in attention. As fighter opposition was reduced, attention was then turned to oil plants and reservoirs which are the lifeblood of the Wermacht. After Ploesti, Fifteenth Army Air Force heavies ranged far into Poland and over the southern Reich, until enemy oil plants were severely damaged and knocked out. On the first day of this series of attacks, marshaling yards at Vienna and Graz in

Austria were the principal targets. In succeeding days every important freight yard and switchyard in southern Reich came under severe attack. Take a look at the map and pick out these towns: Innsbruck at the northern end of the Brenner Pass, Linz, Salzburg, Villach, and Vienna, the hub of them all. They represent the main feeder points for enemy troop and material movement by rail to the Italian, Yugoslav, and Russian fronts. All have been bombed heavily.

The *Stars and Stripes* completed the article with the closing comments:

Reconnaissance shows that continuous bombing clogs the railroads with damaged rolling stock, tears up rail sidings and cuts main lines much faster than they can be repaired. Movement to the fighting fronts of German reinforcements and supplies is being reduced gradually. By the same token, these attacks would greatly hamper any possible withdrawal, especially from Italy. To all destruction wrought by the heavies, add that caused by strafing fighters, which during 16 days have averaged at least 10 locomotives destroyed each day. Oil cars have been left burning, troop trains shot up, casualties inflicted, and radio installations and power lines crippled.

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Mission No. 5

16 April 1945

Mission No. 216

16 April 1945

Troop Concentrations in Bolgna Area, Italy

The following day the Group again sent a large force to Bologna in support of the Fifth Army. Enemy troop concentrations were the objective, Major Trommershauser, who led the formation, upon finding the target effectively screened by eight-tenths cumulus at 10,000 feet, ordered the formation to return to base with all its bombs. The Group did not take credit for a mission, through the Air Force allowed sortie credit.

On this day we went all the way to the target, but cloud coverage controlled the dropping of our bombs. We were briefed for a "secret mission" which I can now relate. The British 8th and U.S. 5th Armies had started a big push in northern Italy. The U.S. 5th was trying to push out of the Apennines, and take Bologna, Italy. Our job was to "bomb out" some of the German troops in an approximate three mile area. This was so the 5th could start rolling at that particular point and thus cause a breakthrough in the enemy lines. One of the most interesting facts about this mission was our briefing. We were instructed that as we neared the front lines, if there were complete cloud cover, the U.S. anti-aircraft guns would fire shells into the air that would explode at about 10,000 feet. This was in anticipation that with heavy cloud coverage we could not distinguish where the front lines were located. As we flew along, we began to see puffs of flak smoke in something of a line, coming nearer and nearer, at altitudes below us. Seeing an occasional shell that did not explode at 10,000 feet but that came on up to our altitude, exploding near our aircraft was, to say the least, a little nerve wracking! What a thought—being shot down by your own ack-

ack guns! After we identified the front line, we flew a specific number of seconds to a certain point and dropped our bombs. With the bomb groups scattered out, this pattern bombing was to strike the enemy at just behind their front lines.

The *Stars and Stripes* simply said:

The heavies of the Fifteenth were out today in great strength, bombing targets in support of the 5th Army offensive.

Mission No. 6

17 April 1945

Mission No. 216

17 April 1945

Troop Concentrations in Bolgna Area, Italy

This last mission to Bologna in support of the Fifth Army brought Operation Buckland to a close. Major Trommershauser led the formation of forty-two planes against German troop concentrations. Only thirty-five planes in this force were able to bomb. One box of six planes found the target obscured by smoke and had to abandon it after three unsuccessful attempts. Photos show that the bombing was good and the pattern well concentrated. No enemy resistance from either flak or fighters was encountered.

On this date, I flew my sixth mission. We supported further U.S. 5th Army advancements near Bologna, Italy. I flew in "C" box. We made three passes at the target (our box) and still didn't drop our bombs. After our first pass, the Germans went into action with their anti-aircraft; however, the "flak" was inaccurate at our box. The group ahead of us did get shot up pretty much. Strange that we didn't get any more "flak" than we did! We destroyed a German headquarters and supply dump. All ships and personnel returned safely. We returned with a feathered prop.

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Stars and Stripes said:

Returning to the Bologna area, the Fifteenth Army Air Force Liberators and Fortresses plastered the target area, in support of the Fifth Army assault drive on Bologna. This sustained effort began 15 April, the day the Fifteenth broke all records for planes operational and bombs dropped, and was continued 16, 17 and 18 April.

Mission No. 7 **19 April 1945**

Mission No. 217

19 April 1945

Avisio Viaduct and Railroad Diversion, Italy

The Avisio Viaduct, located approximately six miles north of Verona, is one of the vital links in the Brenner railway line. It was frequently visited by Groups of the Fifteenth Air Force and made inoperative on several occasions. Notwithstanding this, the enemy by the ingenious use of pre-fabricated spans was able to remedy the damage and continued to funnel traffic through the Brenner Pass at night. To make interdiction of all railway lines feeding into the Brenner absolute and complete, the Air Force assigned several Groups to destroy the Avisio Viaduct. The 461st Group participated in this operation.

The field order called for a maximum effort of thirty-six aircraft; the Group supplied thirty-nine aircraft. Major Thackston led the Group formation. Haze partly obscured the target but good bombing results were obtained. The pattern fell across the Viaduct and continued to a point one thousand feet west of the aiming point. Air Force scored the mission at 40.3 percent.

Flak was moderate at the target but not very accurate for not a single plane sustained damage. The Luftwaffe was out in force. Both FW-190s and ME-109s were seen in comparatively large numbers in the vi-

cinity of Lake Garda. Enemy fighters, however, did not engage the Group formation.

We were briefed for a railway bridge in the Brenner Pass area. The target was described as having accurate and intense flak. At the briefing that day, we were told that the Brenner Pass was a natural flak alley. The briefing officers said, "The German guns are located mostly on top of the mountains surrounding the Pass, so when you fly up the valley at a reasonable altitude, they could blast at you from all sides." In flying the mission, as we actually entered the valley preparing to bomb the target, the ack-ack guns were blasting away, throwing up a box barrage of flak. Flying in, we just missed the barrage flak by a matter of a few feet. In the formation just ahead of us, I saw a B-24 get a direct hit (probably in the bomb bay) and explode in mid-air. One minute the plane was there---and the next second it was gone. All we saw was debris falling down below us. We couldn't tell airplane parts from people as it fell away! No one got out of the ship! We hit our target, rallied, and scrambled for home. We were all nervous and disturbed at seeing the B-24 explode and disintegrate.

Mission No. 8 **20 April 1945**

Mission No. 218

20 April 1945

Lusia Road Bridge, Italy

Major Phillips led the successful mission of 20 April against the Lusia Bridge in northern Italy. This bridge, one of the few left standing, spanned the Adige River and was being used by the retreating Germans.

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One thousand pound RDX bombs were dropped to obtain excellent results. Flak at target, described as slight, inaccurate, and heavy, damaged one plane; save that it interfered little with the accuracy of the bombing, for the mission was scored at 91.9 percent. Direct hits were observed on abutments and approaches of the bridge, as well as the span itself. One lone JU-262, pursued by two P-51s, was seen in the area of Bologna.

On this mission, we were briefed for a main highway bridge in the Bologna, Italy area, which, if knocked out, would hinder and slow down the Germans' inevitable withdrawal from Northern Italy, or their unconditional surrender. No flak was briefed, but we did encounter some just before the target, going down the "bomb run." The fighter situation was briefed as questionable because the remaining Luftwaffe in northern Italy, German ME-109s flown by Italian pilots, still operated when adequate fuel was at their disposal, and they had the odds in their favor. We hit our target good and solid, and smoke, dust, water, and "busted bridge" cement climbed upward in a never-ending spiraling column that we could see for miles as we flew away from the target. We did see about five or six enemy fighters cruising off to our right but staying a good safe distance away from the Liberators as they waited to pounce on a lone straggler. All planes and personnel returned okay. I fly again tomorrow.

Mission No. 9

21 April 1945

Mission No. 219

21 April 1945

Attnang/Puchiem Marshalling Yard, Austria

The briefed target for this mission was to be the marshaling yard at Brenner, Italy. En route, in the vicinity of Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, the formation encountered impassable weather and was forced to abandon the primary target in favor of alternate target No. 2,

the marshaling yard at Attnang, Austria. Major Poole led the formation. Bombing through a three-tenths undercast, which necessitated as many as five passes at the target by some boxes, the Group nevertheless obtained good results. Air Force scored the mission at 61.1 percent. The pattern began just short of the marshaling yard and carried well into it. Neither flak nor fighters were encountered.

I got off Mission #9 on this date. We were briefed for a marshaling yard in the Brenner Pass area. Marshaling yards were where troop concentrations and supply collect. This target the last few days had grown from a very sparsely flak-defended objective to one of the hottest targets in northern Italy. Also, in this area, the Italian pilots were still sporadically operating with their ME-109s, however, bad weather encountered over the Alps Mountains caused us to turn to an alternate railway target in southern Austria, just below Munich. Due to other groups attacking the target, in accordance with bad cloud coverage, our Box made five runs before "bombs away." In that period of time, the Germans got wise and pulled most of the rolling stock out of the yards into sidings. However, we completely uprooted the tracks and nearby installations. All planes and personnel returned okay but not without incident. We had to fly about half the mission on instruments. I saw one squadron get "vertigo," i.e. dizziness, from failure to establish in mind actual directions and altitudes because of poor-to-no visibility. However, the colonel talked the lead plane back into proper position and out of a slow spiral, and the mass of planes that had suddenly grown to look like a swarm of bees circling in the narrow mountain valley below the clouds re-formed into a smooth formation, once again safe and upright. Formation flying was extremely hazardous and laborious on this mission because the clouds were so thick sometimes we could hardly see our wing tips, much less the plane we were

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trying to fly off of. My war diary says, "I'm doggone tired tonight, and I've hit the sack early with no dinner—no '150 proof shot'—I need pure rest."

Mission No. 10

24 April 1945

Mission No. 221

24 April 1945

Rovereto Marshalling Yard and Gun Emplacements, Italy

Major Baker was in command of a force of thirty-seven planes which bombed the Rovereto Marshalling Yard in northern Italy on 24 April 1945. The bomb load consisted of 500 pound RDX's; three aircraft, however, carried fragmentation bombs for the purpose of bombing gun emplacements at Rovereto. Results were good. The marshaling yard was effectively hit, but it was not possible to determine whether any of the gun emplacements were hit. One aircraft was damaged by the slight flak at the target.

I earned this tenth mission, with sweat and a bundle of nerves. If anyone can imagine how it feels to be a human "clay pigeon," that would just about dramatically describes it. The 461st bomb group was briefed for a marshaling yard in the Brenner Pass (Rovereto). As an experiment, the high command decided they needed three volunteer crews who would get credit for two missions if they participated. We volunteered and we were told that the last three B-24s in our Box were to attack "flak guns" at the target before the rest of the bomb group came in to bomb the main target. Just before the initial point (IP), the last three ships—piloted by Lightbody, Carlisle, and Alexander (I was flying co-pilot on this mission)—peeled off, got ahead of the group formation, and made a bomb run on the ack-ack guns. When our three B-24s flying at 5,000 feet came lumbering over the pass without fighter escort, the Krauts cut loose with everything they had to shoot at us.

We were carrying experimental bombs that had to be dropped with precision. The bombs had atmospheric fuses that would ignite the bombs a few feet overhead of the ack-ack gunners, hopefully destroying them and their guns. We needed one minute of straight and level flight with Bombardier Don Hermanson flying the plane through automatic pilot with his Norden bomb sight. Shells were popping right and left, leaving big plumes of black smoke. The air currents were tossing the ship around some, and excitement was everywhere! Since we had to fly with such precision through the bomb drop, we could not rally out of the flak barrage until all of the bombs were clear. Due to the long period before rallying, we just about got shot out of the sky. No person got hit. We had lots of holes in the airplane, but we were successful! The rest of the bomb group went in and really plastered the target with bombs, without another single round of flak being fired. Our experiment was tried and proven. A new method of attack had been perfected by the Fifteenth, but I didn't like being one of the guinea pigs. However, we never had to do that again!

One of the saddest memories I have about the air war in Europe happened one day after bombs were dropped away and we rallied for home base. We saw a B-24 on fire in a slow spiral headed for the ground. Hanging underneath in an opened parachute was an airman with his opened chute hung up in the plane's bomb bay. He was swinging back and forth underneath the plane, as it spiraled to earth. I often wondered ... did he get too excited about bailing out and pull his rip cord too soon, getting the chute tangled in the plane's bomb bay? Was he conscious or unconscious? If he was conscious, then he witnessed his own death ... seconds away!



Standing L-R: Theodore J. Rose (G); Lawrence M. Swanson (TG/Photographer); Robert H. Woods (RO/TTG); Paul A. Hoffman (WG); Richard C. McCann (E/G); John F. Otero (BTG)

Squatting L-R: Thomas B. Lightbody (P); Jeff L. Brown (CP); Riley Ashorn (N); Donald W. Hermanson (B)

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 the newsletter for the Association, The 461st Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.

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 #:				ASN:	
Check No.:				Amount:		\$			

Daily Log of a World War II B-24 Pilot

by
2nd Lt. Robert E. Harrison
1944-1945
767th Squadron
Crew #81-R

Overseas Log of R.E. Harrison and Crew

Wellington A. Gillis
Pat R. Macarelli
Edward A. Loyko
Ernest E. Gilbert
Richard G. Bickel
Bertrand A. Benedict
John G. McGarr
Lester M. Friedman
Clarence E. Farris

October 1944 – June 1945

Part I

Thursday, October 5, 1944

Takeoff from Mitchell Field, N.Y. was made at 1140 into an overcast, based at 1500 feet. We broke through at 3000 feet and began contact flight by the time we reached Bridgeport, Connecticut. The flight was uneventful to Boston. While passing over Boston we circled the city for ten or fifteen minutes and continued on up over Portsmouth, Portland, and Augusta into Dow Field, Bangor, Maine. Landing time was 1405. Length of flight, 2:25. The crew was processed and then billeted for the night. We were briefed at 1900 and learned that we were headed for the Azores by way of Gander, Newfoundland. Briefing on weather will be at 0800 tomorrow morning.

Today's flying time 2:25
Total flying time 2:25

With the help of the Officer of the Day, I called Ruth. She had arrived home OK even though it was with only \$2. Makes me feel better to know all is well with her.

Friday, October 6, 1944

Weather briefing was at 0800, and although it wasn't good at the field it was expected to clear by noon. But at 1200 the flights were cancelled and we had nothing to do but hang around. Took in the afternoon show and wrote to Ruth at night. Weather briefing again tomorrow morning.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Saturday, October 7, 1944

They didn't even bother to wake us this morning. Evidently the weather was bad at Gander. Except for some ground fog in the morning this was a beautiful day here. Just warm enough and the air was wonderful. Such a difference from the south.

Some of the crew went to a football game but I had to go to Link for a "letdown on the Azores range." Otherwise there was nothing to do.

Took in the show at night and wrote Ruth again. I imagine it will be some time before her mail catches up to me. But it will be something to look forward to.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Sunday, October 8, 1944

And still the weather is king. It rained most of the night and that is the state of affairs as I write this. It's a little past noon and I am sitting at the radio table listening to the rain and wind. More ships came in yesterday, and the field is quite filled.

I'm beginning to feel attached to this ship now and the crew is beginning to treat it like a baby. They came out in the rain last night to put the covers over the nose and hatches. I hope we can hold on to it when we get over there, but that becomes more doubtful every day.

And so the day dragged along with nothing to do and all the time in the world to do it. Took in a show at night, wrote to Ruth, and called it a day.

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Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Monday, October 9, 1944

Same story today, broken only by the excitement of having twenty minutes of Link. It's nice to still be in the U.S. but hanging around like this is beginning to wear us out. There is so much to write home that it's beginning to get hard to write any kind of a letter.

Saw a special afternoon show and did my usual writing at night. At least we're getting a little sleep.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Tuesday, October 10, 1944

We love Dow Field. Still here and with no indication of leaving until Thursday at least. For a while, it looked as if we might get out tomorrow. But the latest reports say no.

Bought Ruth a compact and mailed it home and saw a show in the afternoon. What more is there to say?

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Wednesday, October 11, 1944

Well, things look a little better for tomorrow and we shall see how things work out.

Today was the same as any during the past week or so. Just hanging around, seeing the show, writing and into bed.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Thursday, October 12, 1944

This was the day. We were briefed at 0700 and took off at 1150, when the weather cleared. Our destination was Gander, Newfoundland, a small ATC refueling stop on the eastern tip of the island. An hour after leaving Dow, we opened our orders – eventually we are to report to the Fifteenth Air Force at Gioia, Italy. The flight to Gander was uneventful. We didn't see much of the ground until we were in sight

of our destination. We landed at 1635. The traffic pattern was not unlike the pattern we used to have at advanced. From then until 2330 we waited and waited for processing and orientation. The bed felt good. The field is not much to speak of and is 60 miles from civilization. Gillis wasn't feeling well and is to report to the hospital in the morning.

Today's flying time 3:45
Total flying time 6:10

Friday, October 13, 1944

It looks as though we're going to be here for the best part of a week. Gillis went to the hospital and they say he'll be there for a week or so. We didn't have to do anything until the 1300 briefing so I didn't get up until 0900. From then until lunch time I just dubbed around the field. It certainly is a rugged place. I can imagine how mean it will be in a few weeks. At briefing, we were given the low down on the crossing to the Azores. The usual stuff of what to expect along the way and at the destination.

Saw Gil again during the afternoon but otherwise, didn't accomplish very much. At night, I went to the show and then wrote to Ruth.

The four officers of each crew live in one room. The place is steam heated so it's not too bad.

Because of weather conditions there were no departures tonight.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Saturday, October 14, 1944

Today was a little different than the past few. I didn't get up until late and after visiting Gil for a while it was time for lunch. After eating, I went down to the small lake about 2 miles from the field and got myself a row boat in which I spent the next three hours rowing all over the lake. It was just the right kind of day – not too warm or too cold. It was fun and except for the few blisters that I acquired on my hands, I feel none the worse for it. There is also a nice lodge by the lake and if it weren't for the Army atmosphere – one would think it was some sort of hunting or fishing trip.

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**461st BOMB GROUP
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2012**

Cash Balances - November 1, 2011

Checking account	\$3,262
Vanguard investments	11,569
	<hr/> 14,831

Income

Interest and dividends	229
Unrealized gain on investments	119
Reunion income	17,249
Donations	0
Dues and memberships	350
	<hr/>
Total Income	17,947

Expenses

Reunion expenses	21,647
Liberaider expenses	957
Other expenses	0
	<hr/>
Total expenses	22,604

Net loss for period	(4,657)
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Cash Balances - October 31, 2012

Checking account	4,257
Vanguard investments	5,917
	<hr/>
	<u>\$10,174</u>

(Continued from page 19)

At night I wrote to Ruth and then went to the late show. I saw Gil again – and he's coming right along. Maybe he'll be out by the middle of the week.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Sunday, October 15, 1944

Winter is beginning to show up around here. It was cloudy and very windy today, and not exactly warm. It was 1000 before I climbed out of bed this morning – and I didn't do much of anything all day. Saw Gil, had lunch, went out to the ship, and then went to the show. After that Dave Harris, his co-pilot, and I played Ping-Pong until almost eight-thirty. Then we found out that our bunch (AQ-8 excepted) was scheduled for briefing and departure at midnight. I hope we can catch up to them soon. It's just so much longer that we'll be away from those we love by hanging around; so the sooner we get over there, the sooner we're coming home.

Wrote to Ruth again. I'd wish we'd get mail here.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Monday, October 16, 1944

Not much to write about today. Visited Gil in the hospital this morning. He should be getting out within a day or two. We're the only crew left of our bunch from Mitchell. The rest went out as scheduled last night.

I spent the afternoon out in the ship and at night went to the show before writing to Ruth.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Tuesday, October 17, 1944

Not an awful lot to say about today, either. Saw Gil this morning and he gets out tomorrow, but will be DNIF until Sunday. This afternoon, Mac and I played Ping-Pong for three hours or more and then went to the early show. I wrote to Ruth later.

The funeral for the boys who were killed Sunday night is to be held tomorrow morning.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Wednesday, October 18, 1944

Gill was released from the hospital this morning, and before lunch, he and I played a dozen games of Ping-Pong. I spent the afternoon at the Red Cross music room listening to some records. Before supper, Gil and I played some more Ping-Pong and then, with Mac, went to the canteen. I wrote to Ruth and got to bed fairly early.

Ruth and I have been married six months now. Time has certainly made its way along not too slowly. Hope it's the same way between now and the next time I see her and the baby.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Thursday, October 19, 1944

Not much doing today. Up late and then just hung around playing Ping-Pong and took in the show. Spent some time out at the ship.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Friday, October 20, 1944

Still waiting around. Same schedule today as yesterday except for the movie. I've been playing so much Ping-Pong that I'm picking up a few blisters here and there. One on my foot no less.

We learned today that ATC has sent a co-pilot up to fly in place of Gil. He was due here last Sunday, but was held up. Tomorrow, we'll see if Gil can't be released so that he can take off if we are scheduled. I don't want to leave him here now. We shall see how things turn out in the morning.

Wrote to Ruth – and that was all for today.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Saturday, October 21, 1944

Things turned out OK – although we're still here

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same gate in the back of a Nazi troop carrier in the spring of 1945 with other captured U.S. airmen.

The red-roofed Bavarian-style buildings that today serve as the command post for the Austrian Army were built in the early 1940s to house senior SS officers and soldiers.

It was not a place where any American would want to find himself in the closing months of the war.

Taken into the Graz-Wetzelsdorf SS garrison, my father and 12 other men, including seven of his B-24 crew members, were shoved against a stone wall, stripped to their waists, and told to keep their hands over their heads. A group of riflemen appeared, with a cart to wheel away the bodies.

Then, for reasons still unclear, a senior SS officer ordered the firing squad to disband, and the airmen were marched to a holding cell in a nearby barrack.

We consider this a miracle in our family history, and it is one we are especially mindful of this Veterans Day after visiting this spot in May.

It had been a mystery to historians Hoffmann and his colleague Nicole-Melanie Goll of the University of Graz. The two have spent more than five years documenting some 739 U.S. crashes over Austria and Hungary during World War II. They have traced more than 2,300 airmen who died and 6,300 other airmen who came to the ground over the countries in 1943-45.

A key focus of their research has been atrocities committed against U.S. airmen. But after years of research, including numerous interviews of witnesses and an exhaustive review of available Allied and German documents and records, Hoffmann and Goll cannot explain why the executions did not take place.

As we learned this past year, the April 2, 1945, firing squad incident is still part of "an open war crimes case," according to Hoffmann. That's because on the same day, just a few hours later, the SS troops carried out a mass execution of more than 200 people, including Hungarian Jews, British, Russian and French POWs, as well as freedom fighters and partisans on the SS barracks property.

This ill-fated group arrived about two hours after the group of airmen, Hoffmann said. "They were brought to the eastern part of the barracks, and all of them were shot there that night. The corpses were thrown into some bomb craters. So looking on all this, I think your father was lucky to survive that day."

On our May trip to Austria to explore our father's war experience we walked among the bomb craters at the former SS compound; the site has been excavated, and the bomb craters are now part of a memorial to those who were killed.

My brother Stan Todd of Richmond, our father's namesake, joined us on our trip. My husband Michael and I brought our two children James and Natalie, now in their 20s, so that they might understand more about their grandfather's history and the sacrifices made in a different time.

Our trip also included a visit to the idyllic Austrian village of Kindberg where his plane had crashed, killing his pilot Raymon Spehalski, and where eight of the surviving nine crew members were captured. We met with the town's mayor and a local newspaper columnist who had witnessed the crash as a young boy.

Like many World War II veterans, my dad never really talked about his war experience.

As he was dying of prostate cancer a decade ago, I tried to ask him questions after locating a 1945 newspaper clipping about the firing squad and finding the Missing Air Crew Report where I learned the date of his crash, March 26, 1945, for the first time.

(Ironically, I got married on March 26, 1983.) I wrote a story for the Lexington Herald-Leader about my father's prisoner of war experience that was published just five days before he died in 2002 at the age of 79.

Even then, try as I might, I never got much information from my father. Now, I know I wasn't even asking the right questions.

Around Veterans Day for the last several years, I've found myself wondering about my father's experience. Last November I stumbled across a message

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Hoffmann had posted on an online military forum seeking relatives or living crew members of my dad's



Stanley Todd (NG) after he was liberated from Stalag VII-A in Moosburg, Germany in 1945.

crew.

Hoffmann and Goll had spent nearly two years working on the SS barracks Graz-Wetzelsdorf war crimes case when we first connected last November.

The human remains in the bomb craters were discovered in 2010, as part of the historians' investigation, when the long-forgotten bomb craters were excavated at the direction of Austrian Defense Minister Norbert Darabos. The Austrian government erected a granite memorial stone and held a commemoration ceremony at the site last December.

Among the incredible documents Hoffmann and Goll unearthed at The National Archives and other loca-

tions is a report in French from a French spy (masquerading as a U.S. airman) who had ended up with my father's crew in the firing squad line and who noted my father's assistance in trying to saw through the bars of a prison cell earlier.

Hoffmann also located a hand-drawn map of the barracks with blue dots marking the place where the firing squad was lined up and also a photo of SS leader Willi Schweitzer who was believed to be among the perpetrator group.

Interestingly, the researchers also found a full transcript of an Austrian war crimes trial from May 1948 in Salzburg. The U.S. government had actually charged Schweitzer for "encouraging, siding, abetting and participating in the wrongful killing of about 13 American airmen" on or about April 2, 1945. He and others were acquitted, after defense lawyers argued that the execution of the airmen never occurred. Strangely, no one at the war crimes tribunal seemed concerned with the hundreds of Jews, Russians and others who were massacred under Schweitzer's command.

Our family knows more than ever now, thanks to Hoffmann and Goll and connections we've made with other families who have preserved and shared photos, writings, letters and other documents with us. We are inspired by the bravery of these men and grateful for their service during World War II. We salute the life of Raymon Spehalski, the pilot who saved his crew that fateful day when he told them to "hit the silk, boys."

I'm also reminded of the words of Paul Hartal, a well-known Canadian painter, poet and author. Hartal says his life was saved because of the bombing mission over the Strasshof railyards that was the last of the war for my father and his crew. The bombs upended the cattle car on the tracks where Hartal, then an 8-year-old Hungarian Jewish boy, was loaded with his mother and sister headed to another concentration camp. It was his sister's fourth birthday.

"Their lives and mine are connected through the whimsicality of fate and the capriciousness of history," Hartal wrote. "I have admired the courage of freedom fighters in the Second World War, especially the bravery of those young aviators who flew dangerous missions risking their lives to liberate the

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(Continued from page 23)

world from the claws of evil. They are my heroes and brothers."

We will continue our research, but know that we will never have all the answers of that long-ago time.

Still we are left to wonder about what my father truly experienced and might have witnessed or heard. Why were my father and the others spared that Easter Monday 1945?

Was it because my father and others in the group had been registered as war prisoners?

Was the decision not to execute the Americans somehow linked to the mass execution at that very place a few hours later? We may never know. And if our dad knew, we still might not have learned the answer even if we had asked the right questions.

While we talked in his room just days before he died, my father made it clear there were some lines he could not cross, even in those last days.

"Some things are best left in the past," he said, clos-

(Continued from page 21)

waiting to leave. There were departures tonight but we weren't listed.

The flight surgeon released Gil and we sent the ATC fellow on his way.

The rest of the day was the same routine – Ping-Pong – movie – and more Ping-Pong. I can't say very much for the pictures today. One of them wasn't bad – but the other isn't much to discuss.

Perhaps tomorrow will find us a little closer to getting to Italy – and a day nearer to coming home.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Sunday, October 22, 1944

Well, we almost left here tonight, but this time the ship was sick. The high winds the other night loosened the cables to the ailerons and the wheel was off center. The ship was grounded and we were taken off the departure list.

ing down the conversation. "It was hell."

Becky Todd York, a former Herald-Leader reporter, is a native of Richmond, Ky. She and her husband Michael, another former Herald-Leader reporter, live in Vienna, Va., outside of Washington, D.C.

We all went to the show this afternoon and saw "Kismet" which was pretty good.

I wonder how far along the other fellows are – probably have reached Italy by now.

I wish to goodness that we could receive some mail. Hope Ruth is all right.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Monday, October 23, 1944

And today was the day – at least we knew we were scheduled to depart and that everyone was able.

I didn't get up until late this afternoon – I mean morning – and spent from then on, in the rec hall.

The departure list was posted early so we tried to sleep until briefing time. But I guess there was too much to think about.

Briefing was at 0230 GMT, so we got up an hour

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before and started to get ready.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Tuesday, October 24, 1944

Briefing lasted about an hour, and as we weren't scheduled for takeoff until 0500 we had a little to eat. Takeoffs were late, and our ship didn't leave the ground until 0530. As GMT was three hours ahead of local time, there was still three or more hours of darkness. Everything went fairly well during the first couple of hours. The landing gear didn't want to come up, but after a couple of attempts, it did. About 2 ½ hours out – no, it was 3 ½ - we ran into weather, and for an hour we were on instruments flying through three or four rainstorms. There was no icing. About 45 minutes out of the Azores and flying at 1500 we hit a storm and called in for QDM and at the same time climbing to 5000. The approach at Lagans was rough, but it set down OK, although I thought the thing was falling apart on that steel mat runway. The island is pretty, but the army here is a rough deal. We landed at 1330 and after eating a few hours later, we were between two blankets and asleep by 1830. 1500 miles. I'm writing this in the air on our way to Marrakech, Morocco.

Today's flying time 8:00
Total flying time 14:10

Wednesday, October 25, 1944

Our stay was short at the Azores. We had briefing at 0700 and at exactly 0900 we took off. Gil was at the controls and he flew it on up to 7000 feet, passing through a rain shower and a thousand feet of clouds. It didn't want to climb, and come to find out, we took off with the cowl flaps open. The Solenoid on the landing gear stuck and started to burn, but after we found the trouble everything was all right. We set up the C-1 and flew on top of the overcast all the way to the African coast, where the clouds disappeared. Marrakech is about ninety miles inland and about thirty miles west of a chain of mountains having height of thirteen and fourteen thousand feet. The country from the sea to the field is flat with native ranches scattered about. The movies certainly help to take the strangeness away from the place. You certainly almost expect the things you see. We

landed at 1540, were billeted, washed up, and ate. Twenty cents for supper. Then we went to a G.I. show and to bed. And were they hard. Goodnight.

Today's flying time 6:40
Total flying time 20:50

Thursday, October 26, 1944

They woke us up at 0600 this morning for route briefing which was at 0800. The weather was bad at times, so we didn't leave. I didn't mind, because this is a fairly nice place. There is nothing to do, but it's warm during the day and in all, it's better than gander. I imagine, though, that in a few days it would become tiresome.

We spent some time at the ship and then just walked around looking the place over. Half the field is French and of course the language is more or less the same.

I picked up some of the money they use and sent it home to Ruth when I wrote. It's fun listening to the language and trying to figure out the valuation differences in the money.

At night we went to the open air theatre. I had seen the picture before, but it was good and didn't mind seeing it over again. It was nearly midnight before we got to bed. I didn't sleep too well last night as the mattress is straw filled and quite hard.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 20:50

Friday, October 27, 1944

They didn't even bother to wake us this morning. Evidently the weather is still bad at Tunis. We stayed in bed quite late, and didn't do much when we did get up.

Spent some time at the ship and in the PX during the afternoon. I got up enough courage and had my hair cut. Then took a shower, had supper, and went to another movie. It was late again when I wrote to Ruth, but not as late as it was last night.

The weather is certainly nice around here. Not too hot during the day and just cool enough at night.

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I think we'll leave here tomorrow.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 20:50

Saturday, October 28, 1944

We were up at 0500 for briefing and took off at 0745. The country we flew over was barren and desolate. We flew over Oran and Algiers and along the Mediterranean Sea. It was pretty but quite rugged. The mountains came up to four or five thousand feet on course, and up to ten thousand a few miles off course.

Two hours out of Tunis, we hit weather, with clouds up to 8000. We decided to fly over water, and stay contact. At two thousand we still flew in and out of clouds and hit some heavy rain showers. The clouds lifted to three thousand and it was fairly clear by the time we were a few miles out of Tunis. We landed, on a rough, dirt runway – at 1405. Then after the regular procedure with operations, we were billeted. Before supper, we went to the PX and then I wrote Ruth. We were all in bed by 1930. I was tired too. The bed was better than at Marrakech, but no pillow.

Today's flying time 6:20
Total flying time 27:10

Sunday, October 29, 1944

We had to get up at 0715 this morning after a very rough night as far as sleep is concerned. It was noisy and the blankets itched. We had briefing at 0815 – but immediately following it, I learned that our ship was grounded because of a defective hydraulic pump switch. Gil, a couple of the enlisted men and myself fooled around with a softball bat and had a little game among ourselves. It was fun, and the first exercise I've had in quite some time.

Then, before supper I took a shower, or reasonable facsimile. The water was very cold. After supper, we took in the movie, which Ruth and I saw in Charleston, and then I wrote to her. It was after ten when I got to bed.

The field still shows the scars of battle – wrecked planes, holes in walls and there are still land mines around.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 27:10

Monday, October 30, 1944

Weather briefing was at 0915, so we didn't get up very early this morning. After a little delay in a mix-up of Form 1A's – we left the ground at 1025, bound for Gioia, Italy. Our destination, more or less. The trip was over water most of the way. We skirted around the coasts of Sicily and Italy. The base here is only a few minutes from Sorrento. We landed at 1355 and proceeded to unload all baggage and equipment from the ship. I guess this is where we part.

We're living in tents, writing by candle light and eating c-rations. The facilities here aren't so hot. We're allowed in town for a few hours at night so that's where the boys are. I didn't feel like going in so I'm just dubbing around. The ship has been taken away from us, and will be modified here before being sent to a squadron.

Today's flying time 3:30
Total flying time 30:40

Tuesday, October 31, 1944

Stayed in bed this morning such as it was. I didn't sleep very well and was tired all day. There was nothing to do but hang around and wait.

We were supposed to get mail at 1700 but at 1530 they told us to pack and move out. There was a plane waiting to take us to our base.

After packing everything in the truck, it developed a flat, and that, together with a little slow moving on my part and fast moving by Gil, we managed to get what mail there was waiting for us. I received five letters from Ruth, and one from home. NOS. 7, 9, 10, 11, 12.

A captain flew us about 100 miles north to our base. I don't know the name of it but we're with the 767th Bomb Sqdn., 461st Bomb Group. It was dark when we landed so we didn't see much of the place. There isn't much to see, I guess. They put us up in another crew's tent for the night.

Wednesday, November 1, 1944

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The crew, in whose tent we spent the night, is at a rest camp in Capri. All except the bombardier, who came in about 2230. So after writing to Ruth, I slept on the A-3 bags. Not too comfortable, but I slept fairly well. We didn't do much today. Another crew is building a hut, and when they move out, we can take over their tent. Then, later on, we can perhaps build our own brick hut. It's hard to get any sort of material. Most of the "conveniences" are parts of wrecked planes, together with shell casings and old oil drums. During the morning we went through the whole personnel routine and met some of the squadron officers. They seem to be a nice bunch of fellows. Of course, there may be one or two exceptions. There are three other squadrons in our group. They are situated at different ends of the field. Our location is with the group – so we are better off in that respect. There is not much to the place; the only buildings being what have been here for years. After we get straightened out, things may not be so bad. Wrote Ruth a long letter tonight – it's good to have letters to answer.

Today's flying time

Total flying time 30:40

Thursday, November 2, 1944

Another day with not much accomplished. Mac, Gilbert, and I did fly for an hour or so this morning. We were up with the assistant operations officer in a stripped down B-24D. I flew as a co-pilot. We were "heading" a formation of seven ships from the squadron, up on a practice mission. I guess we'll get as much practice time as we will combat time.

We made out our papers for pay and per diem this afternoon. I don't know how much extra that will be. So far haven't spent any money in Italy.

The C.O. Major Donovan saw the officers for a few minutes. Just asked us a few questions and answered any we may have had.

At night, we all went to the show and then I wrote to Ruth. Also played a few games of solitaire.

The bombardier of our borrowed tent is away somewhere – so I was able to relieve the A-3 bags of another night, as a bed.

Today's flying time 1:25

Total flying time 32:05

Friday, November 3, 1944

Not very much to talk about today. We didn't do much, except dub around and try to pick up some odds and ends for our tent. Loyko and Mac came in with a hand pump and an oxygen bottle. We have all kinds of pipe and hose for the water and heating systems.

The group went on a mission this morning up into Germany – they didn't get to the target but picked on someplace else.

At night we were supposed to see Major Donovan, but at the last minute, it was cancelled. There was a party at the officers club, so we went there. The supper was good and then I just hung around the rest of the night, meeting and talking with the fellows in the squadron. Some South African nurses came – but they weren't much to look at. But the fellows danced with them. I didn't get back to the tent until almost midnight – and then finished my letter to Ruth.

Saturday, November 4, 1944

Today we started working on the tent. The other fellows moved out after noon time – and we moved in some of our equipment. Loyko installed the stove or at least part of it. He has to dig up a few more connections before we can put it into operation. We're still chasing Major Bennett for a truck to get some bricks – and it's beginning to look as though we might make it tomorrow.

At 1300 we had an hour and a half lecture and movie about ditching procedure – and the air-sea rescue set-up around here. It was interesting, and something that is good to know. Hope we never have to use it.

After supper I went to the movies. It was a G.I. show and one that I hadn't seen before.

Jesse, the bombardier, came back tonight but we used one of our own cots – cheated A-3 bags again.

Sunday, November 5, 1944

Nothing much happened today. We slept in the bor-

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rowed tent again last night and this morning, moved a few things to the tent that is to be ours. It needs a lot of fixing up. We fooled around all morning with the stove and fuel system. The system is OK, but the stove is still causing trouble.

The boys acquired a truck about two to go after some pricks that the major had seen yesterday. He gave Pat the directions for getting there. It was almost seven-thirty when they got back with a load of bricks that weighed fifty or seventy-five pounds apiece. They didn't find the stuff they set out for. So – I guess that leaves us out in the open for a while as far as getting a hut is concerned.

Jesse's crew doesn't come back until tomorrow, so we decided to stay in his tent again tonight. It has more and better facilities than we would have in our own tent.

Missed Ruth a little more than usual tonight.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 32:05

Monday, November 6, 1944

There was a little change in the routine today. Our group, together with another, was awarded a citation this morning by Gen. Twining, C.G. of the Fifteenth. We had a formation at 0800 and from then until 1100, when the Gen. arrived we went through two dry runs of the ceremony and review. It was rather nice except that it was a little chilly out there in that field. Our group got it for a Ploesti oil field raid last summer. The Gen. stayed for dinner – and we had a good meal.

In the afternoon, I went into town – Cerignola which is about eight miles from here. It's nothing to talk about. I got my pay, visited the officers club, and went to the PX. The ride in was bumpy – the ride out was worse; for I became a little lost before getting back to the field.

Tonight we stayed in our tent – with no door, a hole in the roof, and an ailing stove.

Still no mail – perhaps it won't be too long.

Tuesday, November 7, 1944

I thought we might go on a practice mission today, but evidently operations changed their minds. Instead, we had two lectures – one for two hours, the other a half hour shorter. This morning's was just a general lecture on the tactics and operation of the squadron. This afternoon's session was with Headquarters – dealing with censorship, escape and evasion, and different things pertaining to intelligence. They were both really interesting, and, of course, material that we may need.

During the rest of the day we worked on the tent so that tonight we have a fairly good heating system and a partially built door. At least it won't be as cold as it was last night which was plenty rough. I froze. That's about all there is for today.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 32:05

Wednesday, November 8, 1944

A fairly strong wind came up last night and although it wasn't too cold, the stove pipe and tent pole got together and the noise kept me awake a couple of hours. The door also blew down and the fire went out before dawn. Don't we have fun though?

Today we dubbed around with the tent again after flying. They woke me up about 0745 and left for the line a half hour later. Just Gil, Gilbert and I flew. It was a practice formation mission. The air was rough and there was a 30 MPH crosswind. I tore up a tire on landing. The assistant operations officer rode as co-pilot. After lunch we had to go down to the line and check in with personal equipment. Then Mac and I went in to town. Gil and Loyko worked on the tent. We didn't stay in town long – just picked up a few things at the PX. Part of the ride back was made on the hood of a Jeep. We had supper and went to the show. I wrote Ruth and we were all in bed by 2130. Last night it was a half hour earlier.

Today's flying time 2:00
Total flying time 34:05

Thursday, November 9, 1944

Last night was a good one as far as sleeping went. Everything was as it should be and I must have logged almost nine hours.

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The day was just about the same as usual. We dubbed around this morning and at 1130, had to brief for a gunnery mission. After an hour or so while waiting for a few repairs on one ship, the field was closed because of the forty-five mile an hour cross-wind. Some of the ships that went up had to land at another field.

Gil, Mac and I took off for town after getting back from the line, and on the way decided to go on all the way to Foggia which is about thirty miles from Cerignola. We just looked around a little, bought some souvenirs and came on back. It was a rather cold and windy ride back and I didn't get in until almost eight. I received a couple of letters from Ruth today. They were older than the others that had come through. But who cares how old they are. The night promised to be a bad one, the wind was blowing up when we went to bed.

Friday, November 10, 1944

I don't know how accurate a report of the day's doings this will be because three days have passed since. Last night was terrifically windy and we thought the tent was leaving us again. It kept me awake for quite some time.

It seems to me that we had a lecture this morning and then this afternoon we were scheduled for a practice formation flight. It wasn't a very good afternoon and just before we were ready to take off – they cancelled it.

I just fooled around the rest of the afternoon and at night went to the show. The picture was "Lady's Courageous" and was pretty good. I wrote to Ruth afterwards.

I can't think of anything else that happened today.

Saturday, November 11, 1944

Today was one of leisure. Or rather more than leisurely if that is possible. After a rather cold night, during which my feet complained – we found that there was nothing scheduled for us, so we decided to go to town. Mac and Gil went to Bari, about 75 miles, while Loyko and I went to Cerignola, after dropping plans to continue on to Foggia. We dropped in at the "Club" and bought a few things at the PX including a mattress cover. After that, we

went to a barber shop for a haircut and shampoo. Boy, was my hair filthy! Then we went hunting for the post office where I got a couple of money orders and mailed Ruth the box I bought at Foggia the other day. At 1430 we saw "Tampico" at the Music Hall after which we left the mattress covers to be filled. It won't be a "beauty rest" but then this isn't exactly heaven either. We got a ride to within a mile or so of our squadron and did little walking before being picked up again. It was quite cold.

There was a USA show after supper that was very good. I lasted an hour and it was nine before I started writing to Ruth. Still no mail.

Sunday, November 12, 1944

This was just another day. We had a lecture this morning and as all morning lectures so, prevented us from accomplishing anything until after noon. Then they scheduled us for a practice gunnery mission. We were back at three or so and I found five letters from my wife waiting for me. It was swell hearing from her and it makes me feel good to know she's OK. It was supper time by the time I finished reading them and there was another show to see so we took that in after which I wrote to Ruth.

As I was getting to bed, Mac came in with 3000 bricks he had gone to get. So by the time the enlisted men and I had unloaded the things, it was going on midnight.

I don't know how things are going to turn out, but we're rationed 14 gallons of fuel each ten days and I don't think that will last us very long.

Today's flying time 2:15
Total flying time 36:20

Monday, November 13, 1944

This morning we had to fly. It was supposed to be formation, but we were split up just before takeoff and we went an hour or more looking for the formation. We had quite a time for ourselves, buzzing the various formations looking for our boys. When we finally did get them, it was just about time to start home. This afternoon they asked me to fly high and have Loyko drop some bombs, but I'm catching cold so they had him go with another crew. Mac, Gil and

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I went in to town to buy a few things. I met "Pop" Kain and we talked for a couple of hours. He graduated with me from Stuttgart. I got to ride back in a fire truck. The best ride I've had. Gil and Mac were doing errands for the PX girls.

There was no show tonight and I started Ruth's letter early, but the cold began to get over my eyes and I started to bed at 2015. We had all the beds drawn up around the fire which I think is just about done as far as the fuel is concerned. We also have no top on the tent. It should be rather cold tonight.

Today's flying time 1:40
Total flying time 38:00

Tuesday, November 14, 1944

Today was no good. It rained and blew last night and the fire went out early this morning. I was also awake with my cold for an hour or so. It rained all morning and the mud is beginning to become evident. After breakfast I went to the dispensary, had my nose sprayed and got some pills to take. At ten we had a target identification and at dinner I was notified we'd be flying formation. We did, but only for an hour – the weather was lousy and only three ships got off. The fourth crashed on takeoff. Everyone is OK though.

That was about all there was to the day. I have a nice head cold now. I had my nose sprayed this morning.

At night I went to the show and then fooled around with the stove until nine. I haven't been writing a very good letter to Ruth lately.

Today's flying time 1:05
Total flying time 39:05

Wednesday, November 15, 1944

Until supper time, this day wasn't too good. I guess it was mostly me. The night wasn't bad but they scheduled us for a gunnery mission and we took off at 1100. That wasn't so bad because we figured a 1300 landing would give us the afternoon to ourselves. We landed at one all right, but at another field. When we took off the wind was 35 MPH crosswind and they closed the field soon after. Consequently we sat on the other field until almost five.

When it came time to leave we had to push the ship backwards in order to get out. We hit a little rain and then couldn't contact our tower. I landed south and the other ships behind me landed north. While on the other field, Benedict just about ran into a prop and on the gunnery mission, Friedman cut his finger.

But the day was saved when I saw the mail. Twenty-one pieces and fourteen of them from Ruth. It took me 1 ½ hours to read everything. Maybe I wasn't happy about the whole thing! There are only two letters missing now. It will take me a week or more to answer them at the rate I've been going lately.

Today's flying time 2:40
Total flying time 41:45

Thursday, November 16, 1944

This was a fairly easy day. Easier than we thought it was going to be. We were scheduled for a bombing practice mission at one, but at noon it was cancelled.

During the morning I had the flight surgeon check my ears and then I wrote a couple of short notes. After lunch I dubbed around a little while and then addressed fifteen or so Christmas cards. Somehow the day went by fairly fast.

The Italian workers started breaking ground for our "new" home. With a little good luck we may be able to move into it the middle of next week. I'd like to get my things unpacked and live halfway decently.

We went to the show tonight, but we should have used the time to better advantage. The picture was absolutely no good – and then some.

I wrote Ruth a fairly long letter. At least a little longer than I have been writing lately. I got to bed by ten.

Friday, November 17, 1944

Today was the day for Mac. They woke me up at 0415 this morning, but I was only going up as co-pilot on the weather ship. Mac, however, was going on a mission as the navigator on another crew. It was a long trip into Germany and he wasn't back until 1600. I was only up for an hour and a half, but we went to twelve thousand and it was plenty cold.

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The rest of the day was not much to speak of. After lunch we got a Jeep and trailer and went to town to pick up the mattresses and also our weeks rations at the PX.

I was back early and didn't do much until supper except address a few Christmas cards.

At night we went to see an Italian road show. It was pretty good, especially two or three. The "chorus girls" were a scream.

The foundation for our house is nearly in. Slowly but surely, it's coming along.

Today's flying time 1:35
Total flying time 43:20

Saturday, November 18, 1944

Mac went on another mission today with the same crew he flew with yesterday. The rest of us didn't do anything. We moved some brick for the hut and also got some lime. Loyko and I spent some time throwing knives. During the afternoon, I wrote a couple of letters and addressed some more Christmas cards. It was the first day that we have actually loafed through while we've been here. No one bothered us except someone came to our tent three times this morning looking for another crew.

After supper we all went to the show (all except Mac – he was in town). Then I found out that we are on tomorrow's mission. So I wrote a very short letter home and got to bed by eight-thirty or a little later.

Sunday, November 19, 1944 Mission #1 – Vienna, Austria

After a good night's sleep we were awakened in time to up and get to the 0615 briefing. The target was an oil refinery in Vienna – a hot target so they tell me. Another first pilot came with us, but Gill also came. Everything went off OK on the ground and on take-off. We were flying number seven spot – I mean number six. The formation wasn't too bad, but it wasn't too good especially after getting to the target. The flak looked pretty thick and one burst came close to our right wing. It wasn't too bad, but I'd just as soon be doing something else, back at Charleston, or somewhere. It took us six hours and forty minutes but we spent a lot of time circling

around after we got back. My back is a little tired – very tired. The other fellow flew co-pilot up and Gill flew it back. I didn't think much about it until I saw the flak ahead of us.

There was a critique at seven tonight to talk over the mission. I received a letter from Ruth - one written on the seventh of the month. I wrote to her and got to bed before nine again.

Today's combat time 6:40
Total combat time 6:40

Monday, November 20, 1944

Not much doing today – there was nothing scheduled for us today except for a short lecture at two this afternoon. Gil, Loyko and I got a Jeep this morning and got some sand for the workers on our hut. We also moved some brick and that just about did it for the morning. During the afternoon we dubbed around and shoveled some dirt from the inside of our tent.

The mission today wasn't too good. Three ships didn't come back. One ditched and another landed at Foggia. The other, we don't know.

At night we went to a show and then found out that we're scheduled for the mission in the morning. Don't know anything about it or where it is. We'll see in the morning.

Today's combat time
Total combat time 6:40

Tuesday, November 21, 1944 Mission #2 - Sarajevo, Yugoslavia

It was windy last night and we were awake about three hours. No one woke us this morning and we thought the mission had been called. But at 0715 someone announced that the briefing was at 0800. The target was a troop concentration in Yugoslavia. Supposedly it was easy, but we did just about everything but hit what we were supposed to. The weather was bad and the bomb run was messed up. It was hard keeping formation. The flak was moderate, but accurate. We came back with a few small flak holes, but I guess that was the extent of damage to us. It was a five hour trip and at critique at night, the Colo-

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nel was pretty well peeved about the whole situation.

I wrote a fairly long letter to Ruth tonight, but I was tired and my eyes ached. We were all in bed before nine.

Today's combat time 4:50
Total combat time 11:30

Wednesday, November 22, 1944

There isn't much to be said about today. It rained and the wind blew hard last night, but it only kept me awake for a few minutes.

This morning we had a lecture out on the line at 1000 and Gil and I were scheduled for Link at 1100. We were twenty minutes late getting to it and were excused by the "good" Capt. Henry who was taking the time himself.

At 1300 we had another lecture that took up more than an hour's time. After that I got some water and five gallons of our fuel ration. I had quite a time getting it into the barrel. Quite a bit blew around over me. We needed some more rock for our hut and are using some that was meant for a hut for the fellows who went down in Yugo the other day. They are all safe although a couple of them are injured. Six of those who ditched were picked up too.

At night we took in the show or rather I did. Gil and Mac were in town. I had seen the picture but it was OK.

Thursday, November 23, 1944 Thanksgiving Day

Nothing much to talk about tonight. The mission was cancelled so no one had to fly except for a couple of practice missions. We had a lecture after lunch, but it didn't last very long. I dubbed around all day. Dug a little bit for our drain and didn't accomplish very much.

The Thanksgiving dinner was at five. We started at four to wash up and dress. It was the second time I put on my good clothes since leaving Mitchell. The meal was swell. We had everything and it was good. I spent a little time at the club afterwards listening to the radio, but the power wasn't very good and I finally gave it up. I came back to the tent about 1000 and

wrote to Ruth. That just about covers the day – not very exciting.

Today's combat time
Total combat time 11:30

Friday, November 24, 1944

This should be a very short and sweet write up. There was nothing much to do as far as flying and ground school are concerned. In fact, there was nothing to do along those lines. I spent most of the morning writing a couple of letters.

Mac and Gil went to town. Loyko went out to requisition a few things and I dubbed around picking up some odds and ends and getting some more of our fuel ration. Late in the afternoon, I took a bath with the aid of a basin and pail. It was comical, but I feel much cleaner. Loyko and I also figured out our water system for the new hut. It's quite the thing if it works. There was a G.I. show after supper that we took in. It wasn't too good. Then I wrote Ruth and that brings me to this point. So far, there is no one scheduled for the mission in the morning so I don't know what we'll have to do. There was no mail today.

Saturday, November 25, 1944

There isn't much to talk about today. There was no mission so everyone was on the ground this morning. We spent the time fooling around the hut. They're making progress on the thing and it's coming along nicely.

This afternoon we had to fly – just Gil Gilbert and me. It was a formation practice flight. I was supposed to fly number five, but four got off late so we took that position. It was all right. We flew until a little after four.

Tonight a mission was posted. We had the sixth position, but it's been called off. I imagine that it's because of weather.

I spent the evening writing to Ruth. There was no mail except for a letter from Mr. Davis. I hope I hear from Ruth soon or I won't be able to make my letters very long.

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Today's flying time 2:20

Total flying time 45:40

Sunday, November 26, 1944

Today was much along the same line as yesterday except for one fact – I received a letter from Ruth. It was older than some I've received but at least it's something. It was two letters combined in one.

This morning was spent cleaning up the tent and area for an inspection that was due this afternoon. Loyko and I also fooled around a little while with the drain pipe for our shower. Gil was leveling the ground around the hut.

Again this afternoon we had to fly some more formation. Three spot this time. We fooled around for a couple of hours.

At night there was a show. I had seen it before, but saw it again. We're up for the mission tomorrow – one of ten ships. I wrote to Ruth, but it wasn't a very good letter. I wasn't thinking I guess.

Today's flying time 2:30

Total flying time 48:10

Monday, November 27, 1944

They woke us up about 0430 this morning and we were sorry they did when we went to briefing. The mission was to go to Brux – almost 600 miles into Germany – past Munich with its flak and fighters and the weather all the way up was terrible – until about 10 minutes before starting engines they called a stand-down. After unloading the bombs, they called a standby. Then they were going to have us drop the time bombs in the Adriatic but called another standby. Finally about nine the whole thing was called off.

Loyko and I went down to the line for some tubing and it was noon before we got back. In the afternoon I went into town for my ration.

Bennett wants us to move tomorrow. I don't think that we can do it. We want the floor in and the piping before we move into it.

Received a couple of more letters from Ruth and one from home. Wrote her a nice long one tonight.

Tuesday, November 28, 1944

No mission today. Weather kept us on the ground. It wasn't so very good here either. There were light rain showers on and off all day.

We had a busy time of it. We worked on the hut. During the morning I went around the post with a wheelbarrow picking up bricks and rocks to fill our drainage pit. By mid-afternoon it was filled and covered over with dirt. Gil worked on the windows and Ed put in the main part of our hot water system. It was quite a day. The Italian workers were going to start putting in the floor but it began to rain. There are new crews coming in and we have to be out tomorrow. I don't like to rush into the new place as it is now.

At night we took in the show and I wrote to Ruth. There was no mail today.

Today's flying time

Total flying time 48:10

Wednesday, November 29, 1944

It rained all night and part of the morning. The mud is beginning to be a problem. It's slimy and slippery.

We spent the day working on the hut. The floor is going in and the top is on. We were lucky enough to get a new canvas. Loyko installed a lot of piping underground for the water and we put in the stove and fuel line.

At night, Mac and Ed moved in and Gil and I stayed in the tent. The new crews came in, but they didn't put any in with us.

Tomorrow Gil and I will move to the hut. The floor would be finished and perhaps we will have running hot water. Who knows.

We had an engineering class this morning, and then a parachute lecture after lunch. The weather is really lousy and I pity the new boys as it's not very encouraging.

Thursday, November 30, 1944

Today was another 'good' one as far as the mud was concerned. It rained part of the afternoon. We didn't do much of anything all day. That is any one thing. Gil and I moved this afternoon. It wasn't very cold sleeping in the tent last night. We got the water set in temporarily and it's running pretty good. We have a

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little problem with steam, but we can take care of that in the morning. We haven't got the door in yet, but that will be done in the morning. They completed putting in the floor just before supper. We still have the sink and the shower floor to be put in yet. That will be done in a few days. It will be a week or more before we can get the shower fixed up. At night there was to be a show, but there wasn't enough power for the sound so we came back to the tent and I wrote to Ruth. Received two letters from her today.

More from Robert Harrison's daily log in the next issue of the Liberaider.

WWII Trans-Atlantic Flight Back to the U.S.A.

by
Robert M. Kelliher
Pilot, crew 89R
765th Squadron

Saga of makeshift, make do and can do by left-behinds of the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy

This story is not nearly as dramatic as was its obverse eight months earlier. That one was on a surface vessel in a large naval convoy when the remnants of the German submarine fleet were a lurking menace.

Instead, this is a story of flight by very young men in war-weary 4-engine B-24 heavy bombers that were the patched-together dregs of the mighty armadas of the Fifteenth Air Force. The more select crews, aircraft and staff had gone ahead some time before, for rest, retraining, and reequipping in preparation for being dispatched to the Pacific theater of operations.

This story is about the personnel dregs of that air force with all of their sundry weaknesses, limitations, biases, etc. coping to the best of their abilities with the limitations and weaknesses of their aircraft, the flight plan and land and sea support systems, and also with the challenges of weather extremes.

It is also the story of the great "can do" optimism of youth, at times to reckless extremes, adventuring while under the lure of faraway places, and of the mightier lure – home, sweet home.

Sunday, June 17, 1945, Torretta Field to Gioia Depot / Port of Embarkation

1010 takeoff in B-17 sent down from 98th Bomb Group. H. H. Gammage – Pilot. 185 MPH, 3000 feet.

In nose for takeoff, then up to flight deck for some stick time.

B-24 normal rudder pressure slow roll this aircraft. Land at Gioia 1035. Art Yarbrough (E), Al Bradford (TG) and "cousin" Jack McCarthy, clerk 765th Squadron were among those left behind at 765th, now lonesome, all air echelon departed.

Check-in at Gioia orderly room. Encountered an exasperating snag. Pilots must have a night landing in last 15 days, co-pilots an instrument card. A colonel barked, "Get 'em outs here!"

Processing was held up while they made plans to get rid of us. But around 1600 they started jumping again to process us. Our call back to 461st Group Headquarters had gotten Col. Rogers on their necks to keep us moving and co-pilots might get their instrument cards on 461st Group typewriters.

Monday, June 18, 1945

1st Lt. Peterson, a bombardier, and 1st Lt. Chilla, a navigator, ex-Eighth Air Force men who have been working here in processing, are assigned to us as passengers. They are "in" with the engineering officer so we were shortly at the field to select a fly-away. They are a sorry bunch of Mickies and Panthers, passed up because they are heavy, bad gas guzzlers and are jammed with radar equipment making it hard to find a place to sack on a long flight.

Andy Garnes (E), Charles Wilbanks (CP) and I looked over a more extensive list of J and H models and had it narrowed down to two when Peterson came running out with a hot tip - #388 is just down from a test hop and the pilot says it's "terrific", etc., etc., etc., so we got carried away and signed up for it sight unseen. So #388 turns out to be old #7 of the 764th Squadron, a plane which had "had it" many times in combat. It now has gasoline tanks in the forward bomb bay because the Tokyo tanks in the wings are leaky and it has a Panther radar set on the flight deck in place of the usual settee. ¢\$!xxuu Peterson!

1600 takeoff in #388. Test hop with Dunlap (CP), Marion (X), Chille (N), Garnes (E), Stack (RO). Airspeed calibration below Taranto while Stack checked the radio. 0-1 auto-pilot check, compass swinging, 50-3 instrument check for Dunlap. Land at 1800. Gas consumption 438 gal. 219/hour is not bad for a jockey flight. (Gun turrets had been removed to lighten weight as I recall it.) 765th pilots Baran, Heinze, Holly and Winkowski are here. Also Reuben and Kaiser.

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Tuesday, June 19, 1945

Peterson and Chille are paying off as passengers. They bluffed us onto the list today to fly to San Giovanni for night landings. Captain Bannister supposed to come from 765th early with Dunlap's gage card, but no show. We have to leave after 1000, after planes take off for the USA and then before 1200 when planes from closing bases start arriving. 1100 takeoff at Gioia with CP, N, E and Cholly Wilbanks who is coming along to get a night landing just in case and to try for a gage card. More 50-3 test checks for Jack – climbing turns on Lessina range. Land San Giovanni 1140.

San Giovanni field is base for 455th Bomb Group. Cholly's buddy, Lt. Hudson, is P.E. officer for 941st Squadron and has a magnificent casa, all set up for playing gin rummy. Captain Bannister came over while we were gone with a gage card for Dunlap who forgot Wilbanks! 2000 briefing. 2100 takeoff for practice night landings. With wing lights. One bump and go, then a full stop for Cholly at 2120.

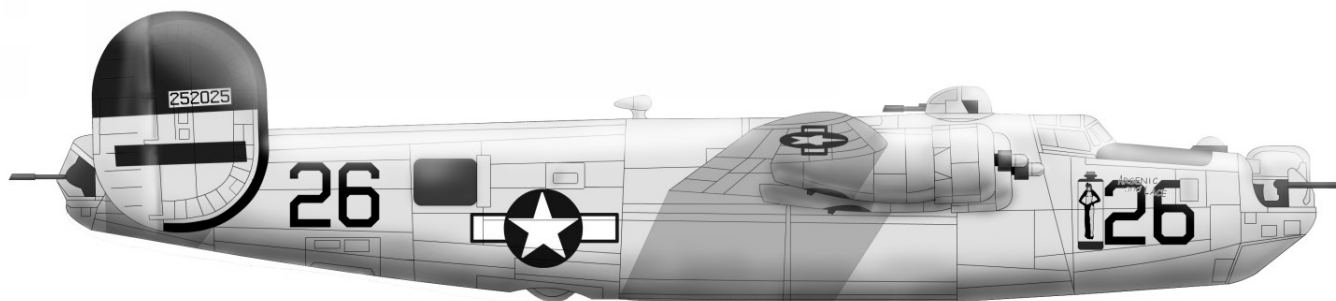
No quarters provided for us here so we have to sleep on the hard stand under the wings of our parked B-24. Engineer Andy Garnes decided it's too drafty out there for me with the cough and talked me into the small base hospital building.

Wednesday, June 20, 1945

The medics may have thought the hospital deal last night was a goldbrick scheme, but after my coughing the roof off and keeping them awake much of the night, they decided to intern me for more treatment. Luckily, there was a back door.

Hitched over to 461st Group Headquarters at Torretta Field to find Captain Bannister and get a gage card for Cholly. Got a mild tail chewing from Major Crumb, but he cruised the area and found him at 484th with the cards in his Jeep. 1030 takeoff by Wilbanks, 50-3 check flight in extreme turbulence and landing (multi buona) at Gioia at 1110.

Processing in the afternoon – medical passed, various records, baggage, tech supply, etc., and plane loading. “#100 in the nose” (min? or max?) Hydraulic leak in the bomb bay doors. Lire trade in for good old greenbacks.



WWII Bomber Pilot's Poem

by
Hugh C. Weaver

A low incessant rumbling cracked the stillness of dawn
With a whir that grew in volume to a quake;
Armored monster birds of battle hit the runway, then were gone
Leaving only deadly silence in their wake.

Turbo's churning, engines roaring, ever driving toward the sun,
Rank on rank, in vee and echelon they stacked;
Bucking broncos, pitching inward as they tightened for the run,
While the lashing, steel drawn 50's slowly tracked.

Then for minutes all was silent, save for ceaseless engine din
As the heavies drove like arrows to their ring-
Just as cluster upon cluster plunged from bomb racks deep within,
Raging hell came bursting upward on the wing.

First it puffed, and then it bellowed, like a clashing cannonade
Belching ragged steel which ripped and then destroyed;
Tough metal twisted, engines coughed, heavies fought and then they swayed,
'Til they finally hit the rally and deployed.

Then the crippled journey homeward bound for those who still remained
For the others – peaceful rest from the battle flight;
Once again above the runway clashing engines were unchained,
As the combat – wearies peeled off to alight.

Shaded talking, ever softly, came from grim – faced lips of men
As the ground crews heard of battle's latest fate
Then in strained and reverent silence, each returned to work again
“For they also serve who only stand and wait”*.

*Quote from John Milton

Another View of Mission 180 February 21, 1945

by
Jay W. Jackson
Nose Gunner
Brewster Crew #1/22
765th Squadron

On February 21, 1945, the 765th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group was scheduled to bomb the South Station area of Vienna and our plane, piloted by 2nd Lt. Robert L. Brewster, was in position four in the formation directly behind and slightly below the lead ship, piloted by Major Robert K. Baker, the group leader and CO of the 765th Bomb Squadron.

We were on the bomb run and everything had gone smoothly to that point. That is when all hell broke loose. Those who have seen it will remember that the Germans put their flak up in bursts of five. The first burst was directly under the lead ship and caused an engine to start smoking. The second burst was about half way between our ships and I just knew (from my view in the nose turret) that the next one was going to be a direct hit on us.

Fortunately, it was below us but it was close enough that I heard the “whoop” and felt the ship rise slightly in the air. A crew check was called and not a one of us had been scratched. I do not know where the other two bursts were but since there were some other ships damaged, I suspect they might have hit the ship in number seven position.

We toggled our bombs when the lead ship dropped and then everyone started peeling off to the right to get out of the flak. The lead ship continued straight on to the east to get to Russian held territory. When we attempted to close the bomb bay doors, we learned that we had a problem – they would not close. Our engineer checked and found a hydraulic line shot in to.

This open bomb bay was creating so much drag that we could not keep up with the squadron and it was causing us to burn too much gas – so we might not have enough to get back to the base. We tossed out all the stuff that we didn’t need to reduce weight but this still did not help a great deal. We were not going to have enough gas to get back to Torretta, Italy.

Since we were a lone bomber heading south we were also concerned that German fighters might come after us, but our luck held and none did. Our pilots and navigator had been informed of an emergency landing strip at a place named Zara, on the Adriatic coast, that was being operated by the British. They had slipped into the area of Yugoslavia and succeeded in setting up this field in spite of the Germans. So that was where we headed.

We did not know if the brakes would work when we landed so we gunners all got ready in the waist area to run to the back of the ship and drag the tail if the brakes failed. We also tied some parachutes to the waist gun mounts and got ready to pop them open when we hit the runway. This plan worked real well and we popped the chutes and rushed back and put the tail on the runway but fortunately, the brakes were OK and we rushed back to the waist as soon as we found out we were not needed to drag the tail. When we stopped and crawled out of the plane, we could see that it was shot full of holes on the underside from the nose to the tail. Dragging the tail tore up the fuselage but not much worse than it was already. The mechanics at Zara replaced the hydraulic line and gassed us up so we took off for home.

We landed at Torretta just as it was beginning to get dark. We went through the debriefing process, had our shot of whisky, ate and headed back to our tent. When we got there we found a man sitting inside, reading by the light of a candle. When we asked, “What are you doing here?” he replied, “They thought you guys were not coming back so they sent me to stay with your stuff.”

Our co-pilot was 2nd Lt. Frank C. Spargo, Jr.; our navigator was 2nd Lt. William N. Kuendig; our flight engineer was Lewis M. Hallier; our radio operator was James Manolakelli; our ball gunner was George C. Cusiter; upper turret gunner was Lionel W. Schultze and our tail gunner was William H. Price.

The reason I called this “Another View” is that there was a story about this mission carried in the Liberaider six or eight years ago that was written by a member of Major Baker’s crew. I looked for it but

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could not find it in my copies of back issues. When I read the story then, I was tempted to write this account but just kept putting it off. When I received the spring 2012 issue of the Liberaider I decided that it was time to act, so here it is.

Also about this crew, in the "Summary of the squadron history for the month of April" that I found on the website, we find this, "On April 16, a freak occurrence took the life of an aerial gunner. While assembling over the local area in adverse weather, two airplanes suddenly went into spins. Both pilots leveled off their bomber after considerable loss of altitude, but before this occurred, a total of seven airmen had parachuted from the two aircraft. One gunner was killed when he bailed out at such a low altitude that his parachute had no time to open. Expert judgment and superb flying skill prevented what could have been another calamitous even." One of the pilots was Lt. Brewster and the gunner killed was Schultze.

I quote this from the website because I was not with the crew when it happened. Also, from the website

we find that on March 28, "An aerial gunner accidentally shot himself in the leg while cleaning his pistol. The bullet shattered the bone and he was rushed to the hospital in serious condition." I was that gunner so I was in a hospital at Bari when this happened. I developed hepatitis and was confined to hospitals for four and one-half months. I returned to the states on a hospital ship and landed in Charleston, SC the day before VJ Day.

The history on the website also tells us that there were three planes lost on the February 21 mission and that all three landed on Russian held airfields and the crews made it back safely.



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We're on the web!
Visit
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Webmaster Comments

If you haven't visited the 461st website recently, take a look. Specifically, look in the Reunion section. Scroll down past all the information about the 2012 reunion in Indianapolis, IN to **Past Reunions**. Here you will find information on all the past reunions of the 461st going all the way back to 1981 when the 461st and the 484th met in Torrence, CA. I don't have a lot of information on some of the reunions, but you might find what is there of interest. For example, there's a slide show from the 2012 Reunion in Indianapolis, IN. You might recognize some of the faces in there.

Have you checked out the Organization Chart. Do you know who was the Commanding Officer of the 461st at the end of the war? No, it wasn't my father; he was gone long before the war ended. The font size I had to use on this page is really small and some of you may have a hard time making out the names. Here's a little trick you might try. Hold down the <Ctrl> key and tap the plus key while viewing this page. The entire page should get a lit-

tle larger. Repeat this until you're able to read the small print. To return to normal print, use the <Ctrl> and minus keys or just close your browser window.

Are you tired of trying to find information about your squadron? I know the organization of the website can be a little frustrating at times as one area has the roster while another area has the crews, etc. From the main page, you find everything dealing with the 765th Squadron, for example, in one place. Just click on the 765th Squadron on the left side of the main page. You'll then see links to all the information about the 765th Squadron. It's the same information you'll find elsewhere, but I've pulled it all together in one place to make it easier for you.

As we head into 2013, be sure to check the Reunion section for information on the Omaha, NE reunion.