



2017 Bomb Group Reunion

Our 2017 Reunion was held in New Orleans, Louisiana Thursday, September 14, 2017 through Sunday, September 17, 2017. Our reunion home was the Doubletree New Orleans Airport Hotel, which offered complimentary airport shuttles to the Louis Armstrong International Airport 24 hours a day.

Our hospitality rooms were on the second floor so we pretty much had the area to ourselves. As far as I know no one had any

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James Sipple

Right Waist Gunner
Githens crew #21-1
765th Squadron
461st Bombardment Group

Since this is to be a resume of my life in the service, I'll list the many places and a few of the highlights or incidents that took place at the camps and schools where I spent my time.

I began my time by enlisting in the Army Air Corp in Shamokin, PA on August 11, 1942 along

with two of my good friends, Jack Boyer and Bob Snyder. We were shipped to Harrisburg, PA and then taken to Indiantown Gap, an army base where we were given physicals and a few sets of uniforms.

We spend a few weeks at this camp doing calisthenics, drilling and taking various tests so as to

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Norman Elzeer

Top Turret Gunner
Hefling Crew #9
764th Squadron
461st Bombardment Group

Last November 4th, members of the French Consulate in Atlanta, Georgia came to Nashville and awarded the French Legion of Honor to eight WWII vets. I was one to receive this honor. I consider this award a tribute to all my comrades in the 461st.

Congratulations, Norm!

In the December 2014 issue of the Liberaider, I ran an article about the French Legion of Honor. Norm is the first one to have received this honor in the 461st since then. I will run that article again here for those who didn't see it back in 2014.

The 461st flew a number of missions to France during WWII. If you flew one of these missions then you may qualify for this award. You should contact the French Consulate.

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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>
Bradley, Frank T., Jr.	Dallas City, IL	239	01/13/2017
Kincaid, Frank N.	Evansville, IN	612	03/18/2015
Robinson, Donald J.	Ridgeway, PA	1035	05/22/2017
Stillman, Howard R.	Fort Wayne, IN	1092	07/19/2015

765th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Migatz, Robert M.	Goodland, Fl	757	07/30/2017

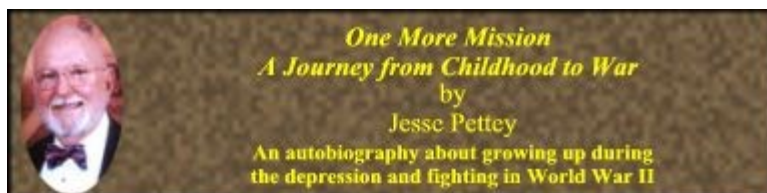
766th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Burton, Hager H.	Columbus, OH	748	05/02/2002
Coleman, James M., Jr.	Asbury Park, NJ	805	04/12/2014
Morris, Samuel R., Jr.	Charlotte, NC	612	05/30/2017

767th Squadron

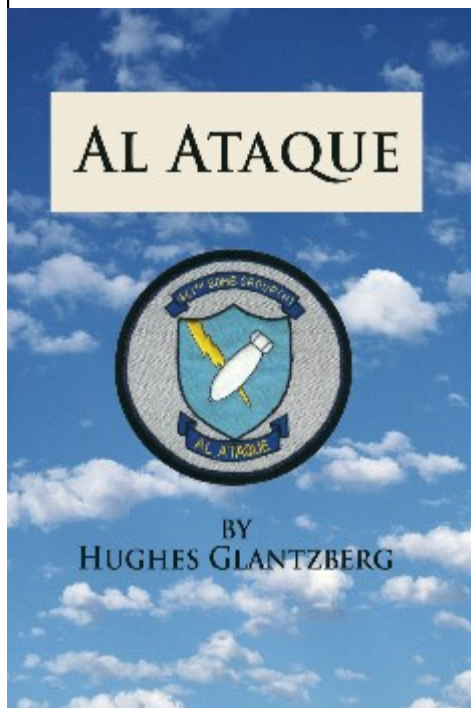
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Dahlander, Noel L.	St. Petersburg, FL	2161	11/14/2017





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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difficulty finding the hospitality rooms as there was always a crowd there. To make it even more appealing, there was a deck outside for extra room and the ability to move from room to room without having to go out into the hall.

The reunion committee did an excellent job of getting everything set up on Wednesday, September 13, 2017.

Wednesday, keeping with tradition, the snacks and beverages were purchased for the hospitality revelries. Dinner was on your own, with many great places to explore within easy reach of the hotel. Cajun cuisine was the most popular evening meal.

The weather in New Orleans was not nearly as hot and muggy as it could have been—no hurricanes. People started arriving early and were still showing up into the evening..

This year we were blessed with the 376th, 451st, 455th, 461st, 464th, 465th, 484th, and 485th bomb groups. Wow! This meant close to 300 attendees. Although planning for the reunion made sure there were sufficient rooms for everyone, a few people had to stay at the nearby Crown Plaza Hotel.

The display by Gerald Weinstein, the son of Seymour S. Weinstein the Group Photographic Officer, 485th BG (Heavy) provided a glimpse at life during WWII in Italy with black and white photographs mounted on poster boards and easels depicting rural Italy during the war years. These wonderful time period photographs appeared everywhere in the hospitality rooms and even down in the lobby area of the hotel.

The 461st Business meeting was held at 4:00 PM. Unfortunately, we didn't have a quorum so minimal business was conducted..

At 6:00 PM in the Jefferson Ballroom there was an informal Italian buffet which was well attended by everyone. At 7:00 PM there was our informal informational meeting where all the bomb groups in attendance were recognized; the Reunion Planning Committee, and the 461st Board of Directors were acknowledged, overview of the scheduled events for the weekend. At the conclusion of the informal meeting, the group dispersed throughout the hotel,

some to the hotel bar, some in the atrium, some in the hotel lobby, and some to the hospitality room. We had once again taken over a hotel for a weekend. Late check-ins, conversations, and storytelling was in full swing.

The main attraction for the reunion this year was the National World War II Museum. There was so much to see and do at the museum that two days were allocated for this event. On Friday, September 15, buses took everyone to the museum and dropped them off. Arrangements had been made for shuttle buses starting at 2:00 in the afternoon to take those who wanted a break from the museum down to the French Quarter and from there back to the hotel. The shuttles made continuous trips from the museum to the French Quarter to the hotel until late in the afternoon.



The National World War II Museum, New Orleans, LA

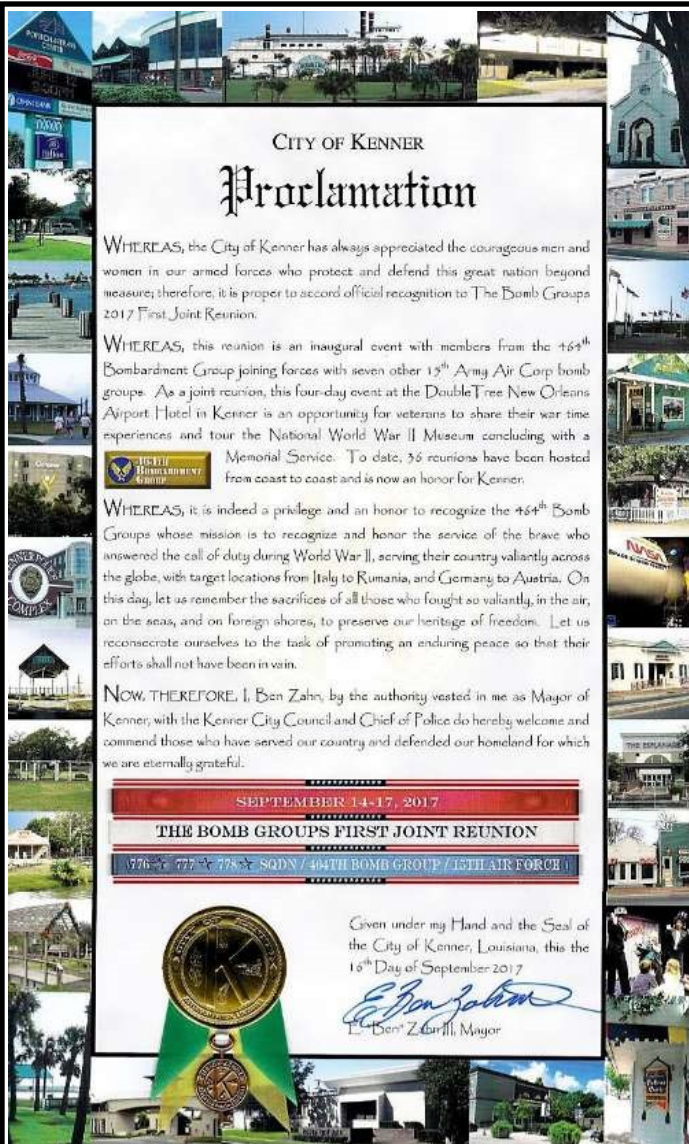
The Social hour with a cash bar followed by Individual group dinners began at 5:30 PM.

Saturday after our breakfast buffet, we headed off for our second day at the National World War II Museum. We boarded the busses at 9:00 and made our way to the museum. As was the case on Friday, shuttle buses were available starting at about 2:00 PM to take people to the French Quarter and the hotel..

In conjunction with the museum, presentation by veterans on life in Italy during WWII were offered Saturday afternoon.

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Proclamation by the Mayor of the City of Kenner, LA
Proclamation can be viewed and read on the 461st website.



Key to the City of Kenner, LA.

Social hour again started with a cash bar at 5:30 followed by our Reunion Banquet in the Jefferson Ballroom. Although the meal was delicious and the music well received, the highlight of the evening was

the presentation by E. "Ben" Zahn III, Mayor of the City of Kenner, Louisiana of a Proclamation welcoming everyone to New Orleans and the City of Kenner. As part of this presentation, the reunion was presented with a Key to the City of Kenner.

Our Memorial service was held at 8:30 AM Sunday morning. At noon, we boarded buses again for a driving tour of the City of New Orleans with a stop at an above ground cemetery for which New Orleans is noted.

The Sunday evening meal that started at 6:00 PM brought our 2017 Reunion to a conclusion. Chow After dinner there was one more opportunity to retreat to the hospitality room for more sharing of stories.

Although the 2017 Reunion is finished, we all will go home with memories to treasure. To our veterans who have been coined, "The Last Great Generation", as your sons, daughters, grandchildren, and extended families, we thank you for all your sacrifices for us and our country! We love and treasure you. See you in Dayton, OH, in 2018.



Veterans in attendance at the 2017 Bomb Group Reunion

THE 2018 BOMB GROUPS REUNION
September 13-16, 2018
THE CROWNE PLAZA DAYTON HOTEL
(Downtown Dayton, Ohio)



- Single, Double or Handicap Accessible rooms are all \$114 per night (plus taxes).
- TO RESERVE CALL 1-800-689-5586 AND MENTION THE BOMB GROUPS REUNION.
- All walks in this hotel are short but if you have mobility issues, be sure and ask them to house you close to the elevators. Handicap accessible rooms are available. Please ask if you need these accommodations. They won't know your needs if you don't tell them.
- Complimentary airport shuttle is available but you'll need to call the hotel in advance with your flight information to reserve a ride to the hotel.
- Room rate includes full, hot breakfast buffet for all.
- Includes complementary valet parking. This is a downtown hotel. The parking garage is across the street with a 2nd floor enclosed skywalk to the hotel. You can leave your car at the front door, check in and they will park your car for you. Of course you can always park yourself if you prefer.
- Group rates are good from 9/8—9/20, 2018
- ROOMS ABSOLUTELY MUST BE RESERVED NO LATER THAN AUGUST 16, 2018. Reservations after that date are NOT guaranteed at the group rate and are subject to room availability. There are no overflow hotel options available in downtown Dayton so make sure to get your room reserved. Cancellations may be made WITHOUT PENALTY IF CANCELLED NO LATER THAN 24 HOURS PRIOR TO CHECK-IN DAY.

2018 REUNION

Dayton, Ohio

Thursday, September 13th—Sunday, September 16th

Details are all undetermined at this time but here's what we know so far.

The National Museum of the United States Air Force will be the featured tour.

Complete details and a registration form will be available in the June 2018 issue of The Liberaider. Information will be posted periodically on your website, www.461st.org. It has proven to be a very rewarding experience to meet with other heavy bomb groups that were also based in the Cerignola area. Many new friendships have begun.

THE NEW AND IMPROVED LIBERAIDER

Just a note to let you know of an exciting change to the production of our newsletter and how it is possible. I am acquainted with three brothers, owners of a print shop, Shawnee Copy Center, located at 12211 Shawnee Mission Pkwy, Shawnee, KS 66216. They are Jim, Bill and Jon Shippee. Their father is a WWII veteran and these fine gentlemen are happy to help us perpetuate the memory of the 461st BG and its veterans, stating that "we want to do our part to honor these heroes". Starting last June they are producing the print and bindery work on our booklet for only the cost of paper. They also print the color name tags and other miscellaneous work related to the reunions. The great looking pictures and unparalleled print quality now found in The Liberaider is thanks to them and their digital print equipment which produces work that is state of the art. If you have the chance, send them a note of thanks.

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.

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be classified. We went to some lectures and drew a few days on KP duty.

On August 22, we received orders to get ready to ship out. We went to Harrisburg where we changed trains and left Harrisburg in a sleeper car at 5:00 PM. We had dinner at 8:00 PM in the dining car after we left Altoona, PA. We got to Pittsburgh, PA at 9:45 PM and left at 11:00 PM. On August 23, we had breakfast at Gary, IN at about 8:00 AM. We pulled into Chicago, IL about 8:30 AM. We got a cab and went to the Northern Pacific station and left Chicago at 10:15 AM. We crossed the Mississippi River at Clinton, IA at 2:15 PM. We had our supper at about 5:00 PM. We got into Omaha, NE at about 10:00 PM. On August 24, we had breakfast in Daxton, NE. We pulled into Cheyene, WY at about 12:30 PM for a short stop and left about 1:45 PM. We had supper near Green River, WY at about 8:30 PM. We got to Ogdon, UT at 2:30 AM on August 25. We passed over the Great Salt Lake Flats the night of August 25 and got up in Elkton, NV about 10:00 AM. We went through Reno, NV about 6:30 PM and entered CA at 6:45 PM. We climbed to 6,800 feet above sea level and looked down on two large lakes before going through a tunnel and arriving in Sacramento, CA at 12:00 PM. We got to our camp at 2:00 AM.

The camp was on what is now McClellan Field, Sacramento, CA. On August 26, our first day at the camp we were up at 5:30 AM. We were given a short detail to do for about an hour. The rest of the day we just loafed around.

On August 27, we were sent to another part of the camp. It was like a shanty and we loafed the rest of the day.

On August 28, we loafed until noon and were then sent over to the kitchen for KP duty gutting chickens until about 7:00 PM.

On August 29, we loafed most of the day except for getting a shot in the afternoon.

On August 30^t we went to Sacramento and did some roller skating.

On August 31 (Monday), we started basic training. We started out the day at 5:50 AM with exercises until 6:30 AM and then had breakfast. We went on a march from 8:00 to 11:30 AM. We then had a lunch break until 1:00 PM and then drilled until 6:00 PM. We went to town and got back to camp about 11:30 PM.

On September 1, we drilled again and I got one good sunburn across my forehead. I spend the rest of the day sewing insignia on clothes and wrote a letter home. Spent the next few days drilling, watched first aid films and spent the evenings writing letters.

On September 5, I received word from Jane that a fellow by the name of Weir Lucas from Mt. Carmel was killed on his assignment.

On September 11, we drilled in the morning and in the afternoon we were on the parade grounds for the presentation of a purple heart.

On September 12, we played softball and I got my little finger knocked out of joint by a low throw.

On September 14 & 15, we had rifle practice and machine gun training. The 16 was another similar day.

On the 17, I did C.Q. Duty from 6:00 PM until 9:00 AM and had the rest of the day off. I did my wash today and later we were moving

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our things to another hut - #C-5. I spent the next few days as the last few. There was not much doing so I wrote some letters home as I usually do each night when I have free time.

On September 24, I was on duty at the air field doing guard duty of a B-25 from mid-night until 8:00 AM. I then had the rest of the day off.

On September 28, I got some shots, signed some insurance papers and we were told where we would be going to school. I was told I was to go to aircraft electrical school. Jack was to attend machinist school and Bob Snyder didn't ship out with us.

On September 29, we left camp at about 6:30 PM on trucks to Sacramento and arrived about 7:15 PM. We boarded a Pullman about 8:15 PM out of Sacramento. We arrived in Los Angeles on September 30 at about 11:15 AM. We then boarded a bus and got to our new home, Chaffey Junior College, in Ontario, California at 12:30 PM. We were in 5-man tents just in back of the college stadium.

On October 1, we did some drilling, inspections, and spent the evening writing letters home or a visit to Pomona in the evening skating. It so happened that on my birthday, October 8, I was lucky enough to be on KP duty and got my fill of pie.

We spend our days at school at the small air field just outside of town. We left in trucks each morning and came back to the camp later in the day. We did some drilling also once we got back to camp on most days.

On October 13, I received birthday boxes from both Mon & Jane and Jack got one from his gal that worked at the Marble Hall when we were there. Jack & I went to Hollywood

& L.A. For the weekend and saw Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra at the Palladium and we went to the Hollywood Canteen. We spent the night in a hotel in L.A. & the next day we returned to camp.

The drill team that we have at the camp, and to which Jack and I belong was to participate in an Armistice Day Parade in the town of Glendale, California about 50 miles from camp. Most of the remaining days at Ontario were pretty much the same routine. One of the big things each day was mail call, of course, which then meant we were left with the job of answering it all. That was quite time-consuming, but it was an enjoyable time to be sure.

Believe it or not, it is now sneaking up on Christmas time, my first one away from home & in the service at that. I received a nice black onyx ring from Jane, and I had my mother pick up a nice robe to give Jane for Christmas from me.

Finished school about this time and we were awaiting shipping orders. We finally were shipped to San Bruno, California on January 2. We arrived there on January 3 in a replacement camp, which previously operated as a race track, Tanforan Race Track to be exact. We were in make-shift barracks as I called them. I ran into Max & Buddy Bear, the pro boxers. Buddy later appeared on TV as Jethro on the show.

After about two weeks of mostly loafing we were moved to an area known as the shipping wing on January 11, 1943 (my 5th month away) in the service. We had a pass and went to San Francisco, the nearest town with Jack and John Folkomer, who has been with us since we left Harrisburg, on an 8-hour pass.

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It's now January 19, 1943 and we had another pass. We went to Frisco and this time we went to see Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf and Golden Gate Bridge. I did a lot of walking and sightseeing with Jack Boyer and John Folkomer. We received word thru letters from hometown people that Bob Snyder, who signed up with Jack and me is on his way overseas.

Rumors now have it that the camp will be emptied in the next five weeks. I am doing KP duty a few times a week & loafing waiting for shipping orders. I checked and was surprised to find I had received 65 letters up until this time from Jane.

Well, rumors of moving finally came to pass as I left camp Tanforan February 17, 1943 and arrived at Santa Marie Army Air Base on February 18. I am now assigned to the 389th Service Squadron, 64th Service Group, Santa Marie Army Air Base.

Jack Boyer & John Folkomer are still at Camp Tanforan. I had guard duty for a 24 hour period. We worked two hours on and two hours off for the 24 hour period.

On March 3, I moved to another barracks, #418. Had an interview and was asked to go to radio maintenance school. Sounded good to me as we were advised we would move up in rank when we returned.

Departed via Pullman on the way to Sioux Falls, SD to attend radio school there. My new address – 807 Technical School Squadron, Barracks #817, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This is one of the better living arrangements I had for some time. I had word from Jack Boyer & John Folkomer on March 23, 1943 that they are in a camp in Georgia.

The school days run from about 5:30 AM to 2:30 PM followed by exercising, hiking & competing in some form of sport. Some are pretty tough days. One day, March 31, I had a good day in sports. Threw or caught 3 touchdowns in a football game. I won 8 of 12 ping pong games. I am spending time at the dentist having work done also this month.

The barracks leader and I went to town on April 2, 1943 and spent the night in a private home.

On April 6, I was given a real good physical exam to see if we would be eligible as an aerial gunner.

April 26 was Easter Sunday and the camp had an early service at 5:15 AM with all the fellows out on the field in the shape of the cross, and a PA system was used for the sermon. I went to town with Cathers and attended an evening church service.

I received word from Jane that Jack Boyer was home on a furlough for Easter, and that Bob Snyder is in Africa. April is now over and I am building radio receivers and taking them apart so the next student can work with the equipment later. We are now into May and I am building transmitters that we use on the planes for communications.

I got involved in a ball game today & Cathers pitched. I caught and we lost it in the last inning 8-7. I got paid today and plan to call mother on Mother's Day. Jane said she would rather hear from me on her birthday (June 11) so I will call her then.

May 11 meant nine months since I enlisted in the service. I am glad to hear that Mom & Bert are planning to come to visit here on June 9 for a short stay. I am sending Jane some money so she can come along for a vis-

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it. Gene Audrey was here and put on a show on the base.

On May 24, we got a new instructor from Mahoney City who had graduated from there in 1938. I enjoyed the two week visit with Mom, Jane & Bert while they were here. I looked up Sisak, the new instructor who had a leave and went home. He was glad to see me.

On June 22, I went swimming at the YMCA in town and then played the guitar along with another fellow who played the piano.

On August 14, I went to see the Major as I was advised that I was to be held back due to the grades I had received in the code classes. He wasn't in so his secretary took the info as I said I was on detached service from a service squadron and was sent here to become a radio repairman. The Sgt. Major said he thought I had a good case & should graduate as a radio mechanic.

On August 17, I won a race at the roller skating rink.

On August 19, no more code classes and I will set up equipment for other theory & maintenance classes.

On August 25, I received word that two fellows from Mt. Carmel that I knew, John Burns, a neighbor of mine & good friend met up with one of the Ballant boys, whose father & I had worked together before I left the colory for the service. It was in India where they met each other, and had a chat about the home town and the people they each knew.

On September 15, I am now in specialized training class for radio mechanic, and expect

to graduate on October 4 as far as I know now.

On October 15, I left Sioux Falls on my way to Laredo, Texas to start aerial gunnery school. We arrived at Laredo on October 18. On November 8, I started gunnery school. This was a good training school & was an interesting program & schedule. We did some skeet shooting on that range with shot guns from the various stops, so as to get the idea of how to lead your target from different approaches. It was very good experience. We also had training on the 50 caliber machine guns. We not only learned to fire them, but were shown how to break them down, reassemble them and how to clear a gun that would jam. This we had to be able to do blind folded. We also had to attend aircraft recognition classes where we learned to recognize the various planes from all different approach angles as would be necessary when in flight. Graduation day was December 20 and I was promoted to the rank of Private First Class (PFC).

On December 23, I left Laredo, Texas with a 10-day delay in route pass on my way to Fresno, California which meant I headed home for a few days before going to Fresno. I had my mother take Jane to pick out an engagement ring for Christmas since I wasn't sure if I would be home for Christmas so we became engaged while I was on this trip home.

On January 8, it is time for me to start on my way to Fresno. On January 12 I arrived in Fresno, California. I didn't do much in Fresno as was shipped out to March Field, Riverside, California. On January 21, I was assigned to crew #A15 for training.

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On January 28, I was transferred to crew #3A32, whose captain was James B. Robinson. The crew turned out to be a real nice bunch of men. It was here that our crew was formed and trained for our various positions. We did some formation flying, ran missions to make believe target areas, dropped dummy bombs on targets, etc. On March 5, 1944, we left March Field for Hamilton Field, San Francisco, California.

On March 15, we were assigned to a new B-24 that we were to fly to our ultimate destination. On March 30, we arrived at Morrison Field in Florida. We made stops in Phoenix, Midland, Texas, Memphis, Tennessee and Atlanta before we arrived at Morrison Field in Miami, Florida.

On April 1, we left Morrison Field for overseas at 2:00 AM. After being in the air only about 15 minutes, we had to return to Miami due to a busted fuel pump on #3 engine.

On April 2, we departed Morrison Field for the second time at 4:00 AM headed for Trinidad and arrived there at about 2:00 PM.

On April 4, we left Trinidad and arrived in Belem, Brazil, South America. On April 5, we left Belem and went to Adjecento Field, Natal, Brazil. During our stay here we had to do maintenance checks so since no ground personnel were available our engineer, George Peterson took charge and we all pitched in as per his instructions and completed the necessary maintenance.

On April 7, we departed Natal for a long flight over the pond to Dakar, Africa which took 11 hours and just about all of our fuel.

Before we departed Natal, Brazil for the long jaunt we gave our navigator, Everett Kamps, the needle about no mistakes on his calculations

or we all would be in for a long swim. We had about half an hour of fuel left when we got to Dakar.

On April 8, we headed for Marrakesh.

On April 9, we left Marrakesh and headed for Tunis where we spent two days and slept in the plane.

On April 11, we left Tunis for our final stop that was to be our home field for the rest of our flights, Cerignola, Italy. The date of arrival marked 1 year 8 months from the day I enlisted in the service.

Now that we are ready for action, I think it is time to let you in on who makes up our crew since I haven't done this earlier. Pilot – James B. Robinson – Pennsylvania. Co-pilot – Ken Githens – Oregon. Navigator – Whitney Kamps – New York. Bombardier – Scotty Moore – Indiana. Engineer/left waist gunner – George Peterson – Maine. Top turret gunner/radio operator – George Esser – California. Nose turret gunner – Howie Farr – Illinois. Tail turret gunner – Don Wendte – Nebraska.

On April 14, the crew hopped a plane while I attended a class on cameras.

On April 16, our first mission assignment to Brasov, Romania was forfeited.

Mission #10 (My 1st mission)

17 April 1944

Target: Belgrade Zemun Airdrome, Yugoslavia

The primary target for this mission was the last resort target of yesterday. This time the target was completely obscured by clouds and no fragmentation bombs were dropped.

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This was Major Knapp's first mission as Group leader.

Mission #12 (My 2nd mission)

21 April 1944

Target: Chitila Marshalling Yard, Bucharest, Roumania

Again the target was the Chitila Marshalling Yard, Bucharest, and again the weather was bad. A solid undercast prevented bombing with the result that all bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic. Forty enemy aircraft were seen, several were encountered and one was shot down. A nose gunner, Sgt. W. G. Rollins, became the first casualty on a crew when his face was cut by shell casings from another plane.

Mission #14 (My 3rd mission)

24 April 1944

Target: Chitila Marshalling Yard, Bucharest, Roumania

For the third time during the month the Group went to Chitila Marshalling Yard at Bucharest, Roumania. This time the weather was CAVU with haze. The target was picked up by the lead plane, but unfortunately a bomb rack malfunction temporarily held up the bombs in the lead plane, which overshot the target. This was also true of most of the planes in the first attack unit who were dropping on the section leader. The second Section saved the day for the Group by getting 11 percent of all the bombs dropped by the Group on the briefed aiming point. The flak was intense and heavy, but inaccurate. Of the twenty-five enemy fighters seen, several were encountered, one was destroyed, and one was damaged.

Mission #18 (My 4th mission)

5 May 1944

Target: Ploesti Marshalling Yard, Ploesti Roumania

Major Knapp led the formation on the first mission this Group ever flew to Ploesti. About 30 enemy planes were seen, and a few were encountered. There were no claims. Flak at the target was intense, accurate and heavy. Crew members were surprised at the amount of flak coming from guns placed in open fields outside the city limits.

Seeing that his target had been hard hit and was completely obscured by smoke, the lead bombardier, Lt. King, swung from his briefed target to the large South Marshalling Yard which was hit with fair results. The decision by Lt. King brought repercussions from the Group Commander, the 49th Wing, and the Air Force.

On the return route, the formation passed over the defended Bor Mines area and was shot up badly by flak. As a result of this flak, the Group brought back with its first man killed in action, 2nd Lt. Joseph F. Meyers, a bombardier. Two other men were wounded and every airplane in the formation was hit.

Mission #20 (My 5th mission)

7 May 1944

Target: Marshalling Yard, Bucharest, Roumania

Back to the familiar target area of the Chitila Marshalling Yard of Bucharest, the Group employed practically the same procedure in attacking this target as had been used the previous visit at Pitesti. The briefed aiming point was in front of a plot of rectangular

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buildings located near the round house near the northwest end of the marshalling yard. The mission was well led by Captain Goree but the bombs of the first section were somewhat scattered and many of them were to the right of the target. Lt. Faherty, lead bombardier of the second Section, however, rang the bell with a beautiful pattern on the briefed aiming point. Reconnaissance pictures showed the target was hard hit by concentration of 39 percent of our bombs within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point. Only a few enemy airplanes were seen and only three of our bombers were damaged by flak.

Mission #23 (My 6th mission)

13 May 1944

TARGET: Imola Marshalling Yard, Italy

Missions of the Fifteenth Air Force on this day followed the general pattern of those for the 12th of May. The target assigned to this Group was the marshalling yard at Faenza. From the initial point at Marradi the lead bombardier, Lt. Murphy, picked up the wrong target. As a result, the Group bombed the marshalling yard at Imola, which is but a short distance northwest of Faenza on the Rimini-Florence Railway Line. A beautiful bombing pattern covered the target with 28 percent of the bombs within a 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point. As was the case on the previous day, no enemy airplanes were seen. This was the first mission the Group had flown without one or more early returns.

Mission #25 (My 7th mission)

17 May 1944

Target: Porto Ferrajo Steel Mill and Harbor (Elba Island)

Continued good weather and good bombing marked this mission. From a coordinate in the Tyrrhenian sea as an initial point, the bomb run resulted in a splendid pattern and a score of 29 percent. The steel mill and some of the harbor installations were hard hit. Lt. Stiles was the Lead Bombardier.

Mission #27 (My 8th mission)

19 May 1944

Target: Recco Viaduct, Italy

The Recco Viaduct, on the main railroad line from Genoa to Rome, was the first bridge attacked by the group as a primary target. Part of the bomb load for this mission was 2,000 pound general purpose bombs. This was the first time bombs this large had been used by the Group.

Crews were briefed to hit this target by flights. When they arrived at the target area, they found the viaduct obscured by a 9/10 undercast. No flak at the target permitted the flights to circle and make repeated bomb runs on the target. Lt. Colonel Hawes, who led the formation, made eight passes at the target, the last from 3,000 feet. some flights abandoned the target in search of targets of opportunity. No hits were scored on the bridge. Enemy fighters in northern Italy were still conspicuous by their absence.

Mission #29 (My 9th mission)

23 May 1944

Target: Subiaco Road Junction, Italy

The Group was assigned on a tactical mission in support of the ground forces in Italy who were pushing the enemy northward. The target was a highway junction at the foot of steep hill in a deep narrow valley. Ground

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maps had to be used instead of target charts. Crossing over a series of mountain ridges, the Group found its target despite an eight-tenths undercast. Sixty-seven percent of the bombs dropped on this target were within 1,000 feet of the center of impact.

Mission #30 (My 10th mission)

24 May 1944

Target: Wiener Neustadt Wollersdorf Airdrome, Austria

Another mission to Wiener Neustadt, this time with Colonel Glantzberg leading the wing. The possible success of this mission was ruined by excessive cloud coverage of the target plus the fact that oil, which had leaked from a line on the nose turret guns, froze and obscured the vision of Captain Leffler, lead bombardier. Overshooting the target on the first run, the Group made a 360° circle, lost the other groups in the formation and made another run. Because of crippled planes in the formation, the lead ship dropped its bombs rather than make a third run on the target.

Again, there was fighter opposition and intense flak. Thirty enemy planes were encountered and the following claims were scored: two destroyed, one probable and three damaged. Twenty-three of our planes were hit by flak, and two were lost. Flight Leader 1st Lt. Robert S. Bigelow, with the 766th Squadron Operations Officer Captain John W. Dickenson as co-pilot, was lost to flak over the target. 2nd Lt. William R. Diggs lost an engine over the target, dropped out of formation and was not seen again. The Wiener-Neustadt target was rough!

Mission #32

Mission #32 (My 11th mission)

26 May 1944

Target: Lyon-Vaise Marshalling Yard, France

Back again to France, this time to the Lyon-Vaise Marshalling Yard. Again the weather was CAVU, there was no flak, and only two enemy aircraft were seen. Major Burke turned in another excellent mission when the Group dropped 54 percent of its bombs within a 1,000 foot circle.

On this mission, Flight Leader 1st Lt. Marion C. Mixon furnished a splendid example of the determined aggressiveness with which this group was handing out damage to the enemy. Flying as co-pilot while checking out 2nd Lt. Robert G. Wester as a first pilot, Lt. Mixon was forced to turn back from the mission when he lost an engine over the Tyrrhenian Sea. Instead of dropping his bombs in the water or returning them to base, he went looking for a target of opportunity. After passing up two targets, the navigator, 2nd Lt. Paul Dietrick, saw a long convoy of enemy vehicles. The bombardier, 2nd Lt. James Colavito, Jr., threw a road block in front of the convoy which was then strafed by RAF Spitfires.

Mission #33 (My 12th mission)

27 May 1944

Target: Salon De Provence Airdrome, France

This mission to France was different from the previous two in that extremely accurate heavy flak greeted the group at landfall on the French Coast. This time the target was the airdrome at Salon de Provence, a nest of JU-88 aircraft had been raiding shipping in the Mediterranean.

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The score for the mission was 24 percent. 2nd Lt. Gerald Maroney's plane was damaged by flak and left the formation. When last seen, the plane was heading north over France.

Mission #35 (Mission on which we loaned our navigator, Whitey Kamps, and he went down.)

30 May 1944

Target: Wels Aircraft Factory, Austria

At Wels, Austria, the Group had the new and pleasant experience of attacking an aircraft factory at which there was no flak. Neither were fighters seen on this mission. The lead navigator, Lt. Dusenberry, carefully kept the Group out of range of the heavily defended areas close to the target. The lead bombardier, Lt. Murphy, completely sprayed the target with incendiaries to give the lead pilots, Major Applegate and Lt. Specht, a superior mission.

Mission #36 (My 13th mission)

31 May 1944

Target: Concordia Vega Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania

On the last day of the month the Group made its second trip of the month to Ploesti. In defense of the target, the enemy added smoke screens to his aggressive fighter resistance and flak concentration. Despite this resistance Captain Leffler got a score of 27 percent for the mission.

2nd Lt. Samuel N. Norris got his damaged plane back to the Island of Brac, where he and his crew were forced to bail out. 2nd Lt. George N. Ryder Jr. attempted to bail his crew out on the Island of Vis, but they missed

the Island. The crew members landed in the water and all of them are believed to be lost.

Mission #38 (My 14th mission)

4 June 1944

Target: Orelle RR. Bridge and Viaduct, Italy

The target for this mission was a pinpoint target in the Alps Mountains. A railroad bridge and viaduct at Orelle, Italy. The Group maintained its poor record against bridges by missing the target because of the failure of the formation leaders to properly identify the target.

Mission #39 (My 15th mission)

5 June 1944

Target: Fornovo di Taro R.R. Bridge, Italy

On this mission Lt. Colonel Hawes took his turn at missing a railroad bridge. The primary target was a railroad bridge at Borgo Val di Taro on the East side of the Apennines. This target was obscured by built-up cumulus clouds. After making three unsuccessful attempts to locate the target, the Group flew across to the west side of the Apennines to attack the First Alternate Target, the Fornovo di Taro Railroad Bridge. Here the weather was CAVU. The target was missed by a thousand feet.

Mission #41 (My 16th mission)

7 June 1944

Target: Antheor Railroad Viaduct, France

Major Dooley celebrated his promotion by leading the first successful Group mission ever flown by this Group against a railroad viaduct. The target was at Antheor, France. A

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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 \$15.00 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 \$15.00 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 reun-

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

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high overcast made it necessary to drop the bomb run to 18,000 feet. Using 1,000 pounders the bombardiers turned in a score of 49 percent in placing several hits directly on the viaduct. All planes returned from the mission, but eighteen of them were damaged by flak, and six combat crew members were wounded.

Mission #42 (My 17th mission)

9 June 1944

Target: Munich West Marshalling Yard, Germany

The 9th day of June was a big one for the 461st Group. During the day Colonel Glantzberg left for a trip to England. Lt. Colonel Hawes took over the duties of Commanding Officer and led the Wing on its first mission to Munich. Flight Leader Pilot Strong celebrated his promotion to Captaincy in the lead airplane.

The Primary Target was the Neuaubing Aircraft Factory at Munich. Because the primary target was obscured by complete cloud coverage, the Group swung to its first alternate target, the West Marshalling Yard. Although Radar Navigator Operators had been riding in the nose of pathfinder planes on the past several missions, this was the first time that the field order specified the bombing of the target by the pathfinder method. Radar Navigator Operator Gizelba, Captain Leffler, and Captain Pruitt did a splendid job in hitting the extreme end of the Marshalling Yard. In accordance with the Fifteenth Air Force policy, this mission was not scored, but the Group was fortunate in getting photo coverage of the bombing despite the undercast. Our gunners damaged one of three enemy

airplanes encountered. Fourteen bombers were hit by flak.

Mission #44 (My 18th mission)

11 June 1944

Target: Giurgiu Oil Storage, Romania

Again, this time on its forty-fourth mission, the Group got a score of 44 percent on an oil installation. This time the Giurgiu Oil Storage in Romania was the target. Not too much flak was encountered at the target, but the Group tangled with eighteen enemy fighters. The results of this encounter were six enemy planes destroyed, four probably destroyed, and one damaged. Two bombers were lost to the combination of flak and fighters, and one man was injured. The crews lost were those of 1st Lt. Hefling and 1st Lt. Heald.

Mission #46 (My 19th mission)

14 June 1944

Target: Szony Oil Storage, Hungary

The Air Force was still slaving away at German oil. The Group bombardiers were still hot. With CAVU weather, no enemy fighters, and only slight flak the 461st got 39 percent of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the center of impact on the oil storage installations at Szony, Hungary.

Mission #48 (My 20th mission)

23 June 1944

Target: Giurgiu Oil Storage, Roumania

This was the second mission of the month to the oil storage area at Giurgiu, Roumania. On the first mission the Group had used 250

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pound general purpose bombs. This time, with the intention of reaching underground installations, the Group used 1,000 pound general purpose bombs. The flak at the target, which was extremely intense and accurate, damaged twenty-nine of our planes but none were lost. Two men were injured. Fifteen enemy aircraft were seen, but there were no encounters. Lt. Colonel Hawes, Lt. Veiluva, Captain Leffler, Captain Pruitt, and Lt. Rhodes led the Group on the most successful mission it ever had. Sixty-eight percent of the big bombs were dropped within 1,000 feet of the center of impact.

Mission #50 (My 21st mission)

26 June 1944

Target: Korneuburg Refineries, Austria

For its fiftieth mission the Group was back again to an oil target. The target, a concentrated one, was a refinery in the open country near the small town of Korneuburg in Austria. Lt. Colonel Knapp led the formation. The pilot of the lead plane was a new one in the number one position of "A" Flight of the first attack unit, Lt. Alkire. The target was obscured by smoke from the explosions of the other two Groups in the Wing. Some bombs hit in the smoke, but most of them were scattered outside the target area.

The plane piloted by Lt. Zive left the formation at the initial point and disappeared.

Mission #54 (My 22nd mission)

3 July 1944

Target: Bucharest Mogasaia Oil Storage, Roumania

Bad weather continued to dog the 461st Group in its effort to find a clear day at Bucharest. The target for the day was the Mogasaia Oil Storage near the central part of the City. When the Group, led by Lt. Colonel Hawes, arrived at the target, it was partially obscured by cloud coverage. Some of the planes in the formation dropped their bombs with fair results. On the way to the primary target the route had been close to the first alternate target, the Iron Gate on the Roumanian side of the Danube River. As the formation passed over this target it was noted to be opened. As a result, some of the Bombardiers did not drop at Bucharest but returned to drop at the Iron Gate. F/O Mac L. Lucas, after fighting mechanical failures of his plane all the way across Yugoslavia on the return route from the target, was finally forced to bail out his crew near the Adriatic Coast.

Mission #57 (My 23rd mission)

7 July 1944

Target: Blechhammer North Synthetic Plant, Germany

Back again to Blechhammer, Germany; this time to the North Plant. Again Colonel Glantzberg led, again the weather was bad, again smoke pots and the anti-aircraft were at work. The bombs were dropped by pathfinder. Although the photographs are poor, not much damage is believed to have been done to the target. Thirty-two enemy planes were seen, five were destroyed and four probably destroyed. A total of twenty-one of our bombers were damaged on this mission. Two men were injured.

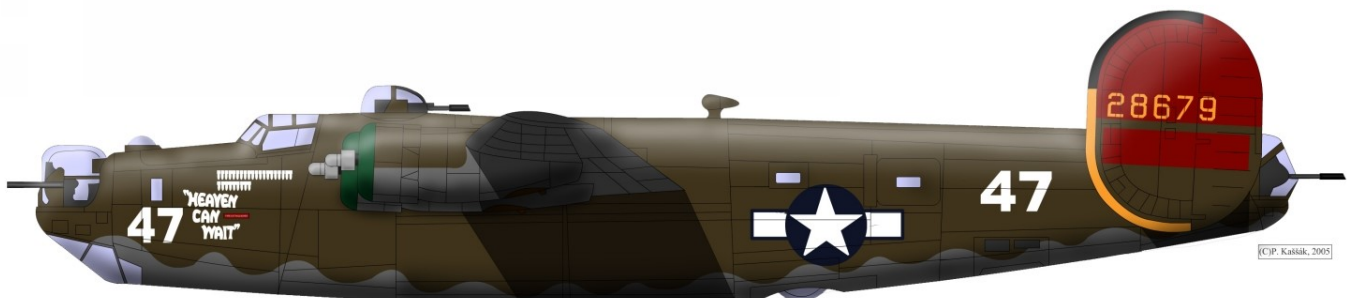
Mission #60 (My 24th mission)

12 July 1944

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461st BOMB GROUP
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2017

Cash Balances - November 1, 2016	
Checking account	<u>\$12,797</u>
Income	
Reunion income	57,846
Dues and memberships	<u>310</u>
Total Income	<u>58,156</u>
Expenses	
Reunion expenses	58,393
Liberaider expenses	<u>1,030</u>
Total expenses	<u>59,423</u>
Net loss for the year	<u>(1,267)</u>
Cash Balances - October 31, 2017	
Checking account	<u><u>\$11,530</u></u>



[C.P. Kaskak, 2005]

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Target: Nimes, Marshalling Yard, France

By the 12th of the month several of the crews had completed their fifty sorties. Upward of 100 combat crew members had been sent back to the United States on a rotation basis. Other crews were at rest camps. The number of crews available, consequently, was limited. For this mission it was decided to fly a formation of four flights instead of the customary six flights.

For the first time in its history the 461st Group was really hit on the bomb run by a formation-concentration of enemy fighters. Twenty-eight enemy fighters hit the last flight of six planes and knocked down four of them. Three of the planes went down over the target at Nimes, France, and the fourth apparently failed in an effort to ditch within the sight of Toulon. The planes lost over the target were those piloted by 1st Lt. Richard S. Fawcett, 2nd Lt. Frederick L. Dunn, and 2nd Lt. Chester A. Ray Jr. Lt. Fawcett's plane was in bad shape when last seen. From all three planes, never the less, chutes were seen to open. 2nd Lt. William J. Barnes, the youngest officer in the Group, was pilot of the plane which attempted to ditch in the Gulf of Lion.

The fighter attack split up the bomb run with the result that the mission was scored only 24 percent on the big Marshalling Yard. Seven enemy planes were shot down. It was apparent to all that evil days had at last caught up with the hitherto invincible 461st.

Mission #62 (Scotty Moore, our bombardier, was borrowed & lost on this mission.)

15 July 1944

Target: Creditul Minier Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania

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

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

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

Mission #67 (Interesting mission)

22 July 1944

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Target: Romana Americana Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania

Still rough. Despite the efforts of the Air Force on the 15th day of July to finish off Ploesti, the Romana Americana Oil Refinery was assigned to the Group as its target for 22 July. Colonel Glantzberg led the Wing. In the lead plane with him were Lt. Specht, Captain Leffler, Major Pruitt, Lt. Simeroth, and Lt. Gizelba. After the Group was on the bomb run, Colonel Glantzberg's plane had No. 4 engine knocked out by flak and the No. 3 engine set on fire. Captain Leffler salvoed the bombs as the plane went into a circle to the left. After losing 8,000 feet, Colonel Glantzberg and Lt. Specht were able to level off the plane. The fire in the engine was extinguished by feathering the prop. After the fire had been extinguished the prop was unfeathered and the crew came home on three engines.

All the planes dropped their bombs as briefed on the Group leader. All of them fell short of the target. Of the twenty-two planes on the bomb run seventeen were hard hit by flak and four others were lost. Two planes, one piloted by 2nd Lt. Clarence W. Bloxom and the other one by 2nd Lt. Elias R. Moses, both of whom were flying their second combat mission, left the formation after the target and disappeared. 1st Lt. Taylor bailed his crew out near the base when he had but one engine left. 1st Lt. Holmes also bailed his crew out near the base when leaks in his gas line caused him to run out of fuel. One man on Lt. Taylor's crew, F/O Irving Smithkin, was fatally injured in parachuting to earth. While the planes were away from the base on the mission, a fire, which had started in a wheat field west of the base, swept up to the fire barriers which had previously been burned around the edges of the field. No damage

was done to the installations or equipment on the field, but the bomb dump was set on fire. Smoke from the conflagration covered the field with the result that only five planes, including the one piloted by Colonel Glantzberg, were able to land. Captain Donovan, who had flown the mission as deputy group leader, took about half the planes in the formation to Pantanella. The remainder of the planes landed at various fields in the area of Torretta. The 280 heavy anti-aircraft guns at Ploesti had turned the trick for the first time of keeping the 461st from reaching its target.

Mission #69 (My 28th & final mission)

25 July 1944

Target: Herman Goering Tank Works, Linz, Austria

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

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

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King, Lt. Sullivan, and Lt. Gizelba, flying the Deputy Lead plane, salvoed their bombs and attempted to rally the formation. By this time, however, the single engine fighters, still attacking low but now from the rear, picked off planes in the struggling formation. Eleven bombers were knocked down as parachutes, tracers, rockets, enemy fighters, and exploding bombers filled the air with confusion. The nose gunner on one of the crews which returned from the mission counted thirty-two parachutes in the air at one time.

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

The last flight in the formation was led by 1st Lt. Robert E. Arbuthnot. As the enemy planes flew past his plane in attacking the bombers in the front of the formation his gunners had a field day. They claimed 14 enemy aircraft destroyed, 6 probably destroyed, and 3 damaged. The claim of the twelve crews which finally returned to the base were

31 destroyed, 19 probably destroyed, and 9 damaged. Of the 19 planes claimed as probably destroyed, but the gunners were too busy to follow the downward flight of crippled planes to the ground.

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

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

The pages that follow are taken from the story I wrote a while back, as an account of what I remembered about the last mission we flew which was to Linz, Austria on July 25, 1944.

Before I start the story of my last mission I would like to tell about a couple of incidents that took place on some of our earlier raids.

During the raid to Salon on May 27, we had an incident that was unusual. When the bomb bay doors were ordered open a flash-light fell from the plane directly ahead of us and it came through the nose turret of our plane just missing Kermit Harrison, our nose turret gunner. He got a bit cold as the air came in the opening.

Another incident I remembered was on one mission we had tin foil we were throwing out the waist windows to distract the anti-aircraft guns firing at us. As I reached into the box for the tin foil a piece of flak about 3" came through the side of the plane and the skin of the plane landed on my arm. Thank goodness the flak went on through.

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My Last Mission of the War

It was about 3:00 AM when our crew were awakened for what we thought would be just another mission. Although it turned out to be a much tougher one than any that we had ever flown before.

As soon as we were up and dressed we were on our way to the mess hall for our breakfast which would be our last meal for about 15 hours. We had one of our regular breakfasts which consisted of oat meal, milk, french toast, jam and some hot coffee. It isn't much of a meal, but in the near future we would have really delighted sitting down to such a meal. After we had our breakfast we were off to the supply room for our heated flying suits. Then at about 3:30 AM we were awaiting the call for what was to be our last briefing. When we were finally called into the briefing room we saw as before our course charted out on the map on the wall of our briefing room. From the looks of things at the time it looked like a fairly easy mission. The intelligence officer started to give us what ever information that he had on the mission. He told us the course that we would follow and the opposition that we might expect to run into, the altitude at which we were to fly the mission, the time we would arrive over the target, what the target was, and also the expected time of our arrival back at the base. He also told us just what our fighter escort was to be and also where we were to meet up with them.

Now that our briefing is over we go outside and gather up all of our flying clothes that we had outside the briefing room in our A4 bags. We then threw them on the army trucks that were to take us to our planes down on the field. Upon arrival we would get into our

flying clothes and start to check out the radio, bomb load, guns and ammunition while we were waiting for the officers of the crew to come from their briefing.

By this time it is about 5:00 AM and the officers are arriving at the plane to join us. Of course our first words are concerning the mission. We are also anxious to hear if they might have heard anything more than we had heard concerning the mission. So while they are getting into their flying clothes we are discussing the mission. The bombardier is soon showing us the photo of the target and its surroundings and the navigator is showing us the course that we are to follow. We also find out just where we are flying in the formation. We also find out just at what time we are to take off on the mission.

After we are all set and waiting to get the signal to get aboard for take off we sit around smoking a few cigarettes and having a bull session. But now it is about time to get on board and warm up the engines. It is now about 6:00 AM and we are awaiting our turn down the runway. We check out our head phones and throat mikes and soon hear our ship number called for take off from the communications tower on the field. So then we are all waving a grand goodbye to our ground crew and out we go to the head of the runway and get into position for take off.

Now we are at the end of the runway and are turning over the engines at full speed. They check out OK and as we get the signal from the traffic tower we start on our way down the runway. Half way down the runway we are doing about 75 miles an hour; at $\frac{3}{4}$ of the runway gone by we are starting to leave the ground at a speed of about 110 miles an hour.

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The pilot calls for the landing gear to be brought up into place and as he gets up speed and altitude the flaps are pulled up into place by the co-pilot. The engineer checks the instruments and the armorer pulls the pins on the bombs as everyone else is getting into his respective position.

Now we are up to about 5,000 feet and are looking around for the rest of the formation so that we can take our position in the formation. We quickly catch up with the formation and take our place. On the earlier missions we had been flying the lead or #1 spot. But on this mission we happen to be flying the #5 spot in box B. Now that we have our position in the formation the pilot is getting the necessary information of the course from the navigator over the intercommunication set. The pilot also is continually getting information from the gunners at their positions on anything that might develop in the formation such as another plane which might be having trouble or maybe that some plane has turned back or left the formation to take the place of another plane in another formation.

Now we are in the air about an hour and have started on our way up the coast a few miles. We are still in safe territory and are only on a joy ride thus far, but we are only at the beginning of the mission and the fun is just about over because from here on we will have to be on our toes.

We are now out over the water and are climbing up to about 10,000 feet. The weather is about as nice as it could be for flying and a clear sky is always a welcome sight to anyone who is flying especially when you are flying on a mission. The vapor trails made by the planes are really a nice sight to see also. You can get a good look at everything

above as well as below. While we are over the water we are always on the lookout for anything that might be moving on the water. If we ever should see anything moving on the water or on land we call in to the navigator and he will mark it down on his map and when we get back from our mission we will report it to the interrogation officer.

So far things are going along as smooth as any of the other missions except that now we are interrupted by the tail gunner and he is reporting that two of our planes have turned back.

Well now we are at about 15,000 feet and are starting to cross the European coast. The crew is now on the lookout for almost anything from flak to enemy fighter planes. So far we haven't run into any flak as sometimes we do when we are crossing the coast of Yugoslavia. We have now been in the air about 3 hours and have still about 2 more hours of flying before we get to our target.

The crew is now plenty alert and looking for anything to happen at any time. The nose gunner reports a railroad with a large freight train moving over it. As we get a little further inland we report that there is a string of barges moving down the river below us. Then we finally get a bit of good news for a change from the top turret gunner as he reports that he has sighted a group of our fighters which are our escort. That is always the kind of news we are eager to hear and are looking for it on almost every mission.

Now that we have our escort we are feeling a little more free and we are more relaxed than we have ever been since we have gotten into enemy territory. Now we are getting pretty close to our target. So far I haven't said just what our target was for this mission. Well, the target is the Herman Goering Tank Plant,

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located in Linz, Austria. This is our first raid on that factory and city so we don't know too much about the surroundings. We are now starting to climb to 22,500 feet which is the altitude that we are to do our bombing from and it is getting pretty cold. We are going about 165 miles an hour.

We are now nearing our target and the bombardier is checking his sights for the target. As we made the turn that will line us up for the run on the target and we start to make our bomb run, the fighter escort has gone out ahead of us and is throwing out some window chaff or tin foil which we use to help make the radar less accurate and also to do some strafing on the ground.

Now our escort has left us and we are starting to make the bomb run. The bomb bay doors have been opened and we are waiting for either some flak or enemy fighters to start hitting us any minute. Well we don't have to wait very long because the tail gunner just called the crew on the interphone and said enemy fighters attacking at six o'clock level. Now everyone is getting anxious to get a shot at one of the fighters. They started attacking in a group of about 5 or 6 planes. The rattle of our machine guns as the first wave or group of planes make their attack. The nose gunner calls in that one bomber is on its way down in flames. Then another wave came in and I reported that two more bombers are on their way out. About this time the bombardier calls bombs away. So now our bombs are out and away.

About this time I imagine that I can see smoke back near the bomb bay and so I decide to take a wiff of oxygen as my oxygen hose had been disconnected in the shuffle of firing the guns. But after getting some oxygen I decide that I am not seeing things and

so I go back again to see if I can locate any fire. But I don't see anything. Then as I start back to my position I see the left waist gunner opening the ball hatch and already has his parachute on. I also hear the final warning bell and see the ball gunner getting out of his turret. By this time I decide it is time to go get into my chute and bail out the same as the rest are doing. As I got back to my station I saw an ME-109 coming in at about 2 o'clock high with his belly up and since I didn't have a shot up till now I decided to stay and give him a blast before leaving. I used about 25 to 50 rounds of ammunition and saw the tracer bullets going into the nose of the plane and then a roll of smoke and he went down under our plane and out of sight. By this time the left waist gunner was already out of the plane and the ball gunner was on his way out. I started for the escape hatch and as I got there the tail gunner was putting on his chute and coming for the hatch. I left and he was right behind me. After I dropped about 5,000 feet I pulled my rip cord and when I looked around I saw only two other chutes besides my own. I noticed that when the ball gunner left he had rubbed his head on the floor of the plane and then I began to wonder if maybe he had struck it hard enough to knock himself out and then, of course, he could never have been able to open his chute. As I was falling in my chute I went over the Danube River. I was in the air a short time when a German ME-109 came in close to me and for a minute I thought that he was going to strafe me, but instead he tried to spill my chute.

It sure was a relief once I got the parachute on an even keel once again. As I was on my way down, I also saw a German soldier on a bicycle coming down the road just below me. As I was nearing the ground I saw that I was going to land between a few houses and on one side there was a clump of trees and bush-

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es so I decided that as soon as I had my parachute off I was going to head for that bit of cover until it became dark enough for me to start out for Italy. But as soon as I had my chute off a German soldier was there to greet me with his rifle.

He searched me and along with a few civilians he took me toward the few houses that were near by. As we got there he told me to sit down on a plank that was across two stumps. We sat there for a while and finally he started to ask me some questions in German and that is when I made my first mistake. I told him in German that I didn't understand German. But naturally since I had said something to him in German he thought that I knew the German language so he asked me a few more questions in German and when he found out that I wasn't answering him he gave up. About this time the German soldier that was on the bicycle came up and started to question me in German. But when he didn't get any answer from me he decided to take a swing at me. As he did I ducked under his swing and he didn't touch me. About this time the soldier that captured me stepped in between us and sent the other soldier on his way. Then we both smoked an American cigarette of mine.

It was about 11:30 AM when I was captured and by now it was about 2:00 o'clock and so the German guard got me some water and then he told me that he had a brother and that he and his father were both in Canada. Then he began to speak a little English to me. So we had quite a bull session between us while I was waiting to be taken to a prison camp.

Now it is about 4:30 PM and a group of German soldiers came by and I was put with them and loaded on a bus. We no sooner were loaded than we were told to go back to

a town about 3 miles down the road to pick up some more American prisoners. When we got there and stopped, the Germans in the bus got out and formed an isle between them and out of the house that we stopped at came 5 of my crew members who had also been captured. They were the pilot (Lt. Githens), the co-pilot (Lt. Gidez), the bombardier (Lt. Patterson), the navigator (Lt. Harp) who had a broken ankle, and the tail gunner (S/Sgt. Wendte). So we were all taken to a concentration camp for the night.

Upon our arrival at the concentration camp we were directed into a large courtyard with high concrete fences. It was getting dusk when we arrived and we still had not had any food or water since being taken prisoner. We saw fellow crew members from other planes also had been picked up after they had bailed out of their planes as we had done. So since we were now apparently all picked up by the German home guard army except for a few crew members unaccounted for, we were to spend the night here.

Some of the crews had some injured members among them in our immediate area of the camp and we tried best to tend their wounds and make the German guard nearest us understand that we wanted to have a doctor take a look at and treat the wounds. This, of course, was to no avail and so we decided to ask for water and food which was also useless. Finally after a few hours past and it drew near midnight, we were told by a German officer to get up and follow him and his guards. This, of course, we did hoping that we may be fed and possibly be put under roof for the night. We soon found ourselves going into a building that had about 10 foot ceilings with a long center hall running the length of the building and numerous doors leading off to each side of the center hall. As we entered

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the center hall we marched single file down the hall with guards along side of us. As we approached a door, the guard would unlock it and in would go five of us prisoners for the night.

Once inside these cells we found it a bit cramped as each room or cell was only about 3 ft. wide, 8 ft. long and about 10 ft. high. The only thing in the room was a 5 gallon can used for a latrine, if you could call it that. Since one member put in the cell I was in had been injured landing in his chute, we made him as comfortable as possible by letting him lay down on one side of the room. This, of course, took up almost half of the cell. So that meant that the other four of us had to sit one behind the other in the other half of the cell.

A short time after we were all secured in cells for the night a guard came around with a piece of brown bread equal to about three slices of bread served in the states and a piece of lard on it – at least that is what they called it. We also were given some water with this bread. We attempted to eat it but with little success since our stomachs were not used to this food. We didn't succeed in eating very much of this mixture. Some of us ate what we could force down and later some of us also threw it right back up. I guess we just weren't hungry enough.

The next morning we were marched from these cells and taken to a train and sent on to an interrogation camp. When we arrived at this camp we were put into barracks that had small rooms about six ft. wide and eight ft. long. Each room had a cot in it with a blanket over it, and a small window in the rear with steel bars over it. Each prisoner had a room to himself in this camp, and food, bread and water was brought around by a guard to

each room as had been done in the previous camp. After a few days there we were all sent into an office for interrogation by a German officer. He was very well educated apparently as he could speak our language very well. Before the interrogation started he offered me a cigarette which I turned down. Then he asked me for name, rank, serial number, group and other military info regards to our operation & mission on which we were shot down. Since I didn't give him any more information than my name, rank and serial number, he asked me to fill out a questionnaire which contained such questions as group, squadron, base, target, bomb load, type aircraft and also where we were shot down by what means aircraft was disabled, who picked us up and other such stuff. The only thing I filled in was the same information I had given to him previously such as name, rank and serial number. After he had it back we wanted to know if this was all that I knew and when I told him yes he said, "Surely you know who picked you up?" That I answered by telling him a German soldier. Since I would not give him any more information then he proceeded to show me a book he had made up with all the various squadron markings on the various bomber groups and told me that he had gotten the information from some of the other prisoners and that if I didn't fill out the form I failed to fill out the last time it was given to me that when it was turned over to his superiors that I was to be held for further questioning & treatment until I had supplied whatever information they wanted before I would be released and sent to a permanent prisoner of war camp with my fellow crew members for the duration of the war.

With him satisfied that I was not going to cooperate any more he had me taken back to my cell. I presumed that I would be later sent

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for more interrogation by other officers and maybe not be quite so fortunate next time. However, I was wrong because in a few hours I was taken with other prisoners to a railroad station and put on board for a trip to another camp. Enroute we had a night on board the train which we spent what we believed to be in Berlin. While in a railroad yard outside of Berlin, we had the opportunity of going through a bombing raid. It was quite an experience because some fellows got real curious and were peeking out of the window curtains which we pulled down once we heard the alert sirens go off. So naturally we jumped on those who let out any light from the train by pulling open window curtains or lighting cigarettes. However after about 10 or 20 minutes the all clear was sounded and we had survived without any casualties.

When we finally arrived at the next camp it was quite different from the previous ones we had encountered as it was run very much like our own army camps. We saw later that the reason for it was that lots of the supervision was carried on by American prisoners who were, you might say, permanent party in this camp by now. They directed us to barracks and we were issued clothing which came in suit cases issued by the Red Cross. The feeding system was run the same as our own camps in the States. One barracks was set aside for a mess hall and tables set up and the food was combined into the mess hall for those in charge to prepare and serve. So in this way we had fairly good meals. During one of the meals here we got to talking with a negro boy who had been a P-38 pilot and he gave us quite an interesting story of his interrogation. When he was being questioned the German officer asked him how come he was capable of being an American fighter pilot being that he was colored. The German people always chose only the most educated men

as material for air force personnel, and they were very surprised to see him as a pilot. They asked him "How did he know so much about flying." In reply he told the German officer who was interrogating him that he was not so bright, and didn't know very much about flying. He told him he was told that there were two lights in the cockpit of the plane. One was red and one was green, and that so long as the green light stayed lit he was OK, but the minute that he saw the red light come on, that he was told to return to base and have the mechanic service the ship. We all got a big laugh out of this little story and he said it seemed to satisfy the German officer questioning him as he was released for transfer to a permanent camp.

After a few days in this camp we were finally sent out by train again this time it was to be to our permanent prison camp. We were put into first only tents of about 10 persons to a tent. In about 3 months time enough room had been made to get us into barracks. The barracks were similar to ours except that it had a center hall with rooms off to each side. Each room was about 18 feet square with a coal stove (pot belly type) in it, a table, and four double decker bunks made of wood using 4 x 4s as posts and wood planks and with wood shaving filled burlap bags for mattresses. The bunks were built to sleep four persons, just as if it were double beds in double deck form. In here we had 16 people in a room.

When morning came, all barracks fell out for roll call in front of there respective barracks. Actually it was just a count of heads to be sure no one had escapes during the night. The same procedure took place each night at dusk just before we were locked up inside to determine that all were accounted for at the close of the day. At meal time a member of

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each room was designated to make a trip to the chow hall with a bucket to get our soup, stew, potato, or whatever was on the menu.

Every once in a while we would have the security team come to each barracks to pass on whatever information might have been put together regarding the latest situation on the war. This information was compiled by what information the latest prisoners could give us, some by radio (unknown to Germans) and some received by a few of the German guards that could be trusted. Each time a report was given by the security team, lookouts would be posted at doors and windows to watch for any approaching “goons” (German guards) as we called them. This was pretty much the routine day in and day out in our camp as we waited for the day of liberation to come. We had very little mail coming into our barracks as it took quite some time before the folks back home ever knew where we ended up as POWs. We were allowed to send two form letter blanks and 4 post cards out of the camp each month.

The big problem, of course, was killing time which seemed plentiful. During the day we spent our time visiting other fellow prisoners in other barracks of our compound. Some of us managed to make up a substitute football and played football in the center of the compound. Of course many other forms of sports were dug up to help us pass the time such as baseball, strong horses, leap frog, and most anything we could think up for amusement.

The nights we spent in the barracks, of course were the hardest periods for us to pass the time. Some fellows would play cards, smoke, read (if you were lucky enough to have any reading material), and some fellows even mended clothes, knitted caps and other

domestic deeds were performed during the night while inside the barracks.

We have been in the camp now for about 7 months and we are still hoping for news of the allied troops closing in and our being liberated.

On the morning of February 6, we are awakened and told to gather up whatever we wanted to take with us as we were to leave at 7:00 AM on a march to keep us away from the allied troops. The days ahead were to be unpredictable as to how far we marched or as to know where we would spend the nights. On some stops we managed to sleep in a barn, other nights out in an open field area. The food was short as it was in camp – even less plentiful now that we were on the move. Our length of marches varied each day – anywhere from 10 to 45 km per day. The total length of the march was about 700 miles before being liberated May 2nd near Buchen, Germany.

Day by day report of retreat march to stay out of reach of the Russian and English troops while prisoner of war in Germany from July 25, 1944 until liberated May 2, 1945 but the British troops. The day by day report covers the period of time during the retreat march starting February 6, 1945 until liberated May 2, 1945.

DATE CAMP SITE DISTANCE MARCHED

Feb. 6	Brassow	22 km
7	Leppon	25
8	Stoppberg	25
9	Rested	—
10	Grieffenberg	21

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			13 – 18	Rested	—
11	Cammin	21	19	Neese	14
12/13/10	Rested	—	20	Brefegard	22
14	Haggen	16	21	Domitz “Elbe”	24
15	Swinemunde	42	22	Dannesburg	20
16	Mulchin	22	23	Rested	—
17	Nerdin	28	24	Himbergen	17
18	Hermanstpel	21	25	Barum	14
19	Grifzaow	5	26 – 27	Rested	—
20	Rested	—	28	Abstorf	18
21	Luplow	15	29	Ebstorf (train)	7
22	Rested	—	30	Saltan	—
23	Luplow	15	31	Palcingbostel	—
24 – 28	Rested	—	Apr. 1 – 5	Rested in Lager	—
Mar. 1	Rested	—	6	Bleckmar	19
2	Gr. Dratold	19	7	Rested	—
3	Malchow	32	8	Wohlde	10
4	Werdem	28	9	Rested	—
5	?	14	10	Kretuzen	18
6	Lankin	15	11	Brockhofe	22
7	Rested	—	12	Rested	—
8	Parchin	15	13	Hansteat	7
9 – 10	Rested	—	14	Hanstedt	8
11	?	15			
12	Dambeck	20			

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		16	Met Lts. Githens and Gadiez
15	Solchstorf	18	17 Still loafing
16	Thomasburg	15	18 Moved to processing area
17	New Gutze "Elbe"	23	19 – 21 Started processing
18 – 19	Rested	–	22 Left for La Harve, France
20	Camin	17	Jun. 2 Left La Harve by boat 4:45 PM
21	Karft	16	3 Left S. Hampton, England
22 – 25	Rested	–	11 Docked in Boston at 2:30 PM and went to spend the night at Camp Miles Standish
26	T	3	
27 – 29	Rested	–	12 Left Camp Miles Standish for Ft. Dix, NJ
30	Gudow	20	
May 1	Rested	–	14 Left Ft. Dix, NJ on 60-day furlough
2	Buchen (liberated)	20	I would like to mention that while on this march February 14, which was Valentine's Day, will always be remembered as it rained all day while we marched about 20 km and ended up with us told to sleep in an open field and the rain kept coming down. By the morning we were not sure if we wanted to carry the wet blankets & our overcoats or not, but of course we did.
3	Lunneburg by truck		
4	Saltan by truck		
5 – 7	Awaited planes		
8	Flew to Brussels, Belgium		
9	Train to Namur, France		The next days following June 14, the first day home, was sure what I was looking forward to ever since being shot down. I spent time with the family and told them of my experiences while away from home. I spent time with Jane and we discussed getting married while I was home on this leave. It didn't take us long to decide on a date for the wedding. I suggested July 25. That was just one year from the day we were shot down. I kid-
10	Left by train for Camp Lucky Strike		
11	Arrived at Camp Lucky Strike		
12	Nothing gained		
13	Nothing gained		
14	Met crew member Lt. Patterson		
15	Loafed around		

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CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE A CHICAGO

FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR MEDAL: FRANCE EXPRESSES HER GRATITUDE TO WWII VETS

US veterans who helped in the liberation of France during World War II could be eligible to receive the French Legion of Honor Medal in the future. Created to celebrate extraordinary contributions to the country, this medal is France's highest distinction. *

To be eligible for this outstanding award, he/she has to fit strict criteria:

- Applying veterans of the Ground Forces, Air Forces, Navy, Coast Guard must have fought on French territory in one or more of the four main campaigns of the Liberation of France: Normandy, Southern France, Northern France and the Ardennes. Actions taking place in Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg or other border/European countries will not be taken into account.
- To provide written documentation, which is normally a copy of his/her military separation order, DD-214, will help verify their military history during combat.
- The veterans must provide citations for previous military awards such as Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal or higher distinctions. These awards will indicate meritorious actions during combat operations.
- To be considered, these citations must have been issued during WWII or the close aftermath and must relate to events (outstanding actions, wounds, having been taken prisoner of war, etc.) that took place on the French soil only.

Copies of these documents should be forwarded with the request for consideration for the French Legion of Honor to the closest French Consulate in the US. The French Consulate in Chicago serves the following 13 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin. The Legion of Honor Committee in Paris must approve these French medals after appropriate review. Please note this process can take several months.

* The Legion of Honor medal is not awarded posthumously.

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ded Jane about being released from one prison camp and going into another one year later. Of course that was only figuratively speaking. We had a fine wedding & Marriage and two fine sons later to make up the family.

Since most fellows were away in the service, I called on my former navigator, Whitey Kamps, on our crew who was home and lived in NY so he came down & was best man. Jane had Margaret Smith her cousin from Elysberg as her maid of honor.

I had to be back in Miami, Fla. And so I left Aug. 14 for there. I asked Jane to come along but she decided she didn't want to be hopping from camp to camp. Well, on my way back the train stopped in Washington, DC Union Station and that was where I was when I found out that the Japs had now surrendered ending the war. I continued on to Miami and spent about two weeks on the beach in a beach-front hotel. I didn't have much to do except make roll call, meal stops and attend lectures regarding our discharge process. Jane missed a free vacation in Miami on the beach.

I was finally sent back to Indiantown Gap, PA where I first started my service time. I only spent a day or two there and on Sept 5, 1945 I received my discharge papers. Following that I was on my way home, about 3 years and 25 days after I went to finish the event known as World War II. Happy days ahead. Amen & Amen.

Contents of the Red Cross Package

12 oz. Can of spam or corn beef

12 oz. Can of meat & vegetable stew

6 oz. Can of pate (chicken or liver)

8 oz. Can of salmon or tuna fish

6 oz. Can of jam (various flavors)

1 lb. Can of margarine

1 lb. Box of raisins or prunes

1 doz. Biscuits (size of a graham cracker)

2 oz. Can of soluble coffee

½ lb. Box of sugar (cube or rectangular shape)

½ lb. Box of cheese

8 oz. Bar of chocolate or a bag of M&M candies

5 packs of cigarettes

1 bar of soap

1 box of vitamin pills

Contents of Christmas Package

12 oz. Can of turkey

6 oz. Can of Vienna sausage

3 oz. Can of deviled ham

16 oz. Can of plum pudding

6 oz. Can of jam

8 oz. Can of honey spread

7 oz. Can of mixed salted nuts

12 oz. Can of assorted hard candies

9 oz. Can of cherries

2 oz. Package of tea

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14 oz. Package of dates

2 fig bars

3 packs of cigarettes

1 pack of smoking tobacco

1 smoking pipe

4 packages of gum

1 wash cloth

2 five by seven pictures (scenery of the US)

The items above were the contents of what was in the Red Cross parcels which we received from time to time while in the prison camp. At first each POW got a parcel to himself, but as time went by, as many as 3 or 4 would share 1 parcel. We knew the Germans were keeping some parcels as they were short of food.

TEN FORTUNATE MEN

by

Jim Sipple

This is the tale of our crew
Aboard a B-24, which we flew

We named her "Sleepy time Gal"
Each and every one a pal.

They all had jobs to do
When fate stepped in for two

Both were loaned to a needy crew
And each were lost from view.

Shortly after this sad loss
Operations office took our "Boss"

Happily our co-pilot was assigned as pilot
Leaving only seven of the original lot.

Completing many other missions
While flying in many positions

We met enemy flak and fighters, too
Had some close calls, but still we flew.

Then came the "One Way" flight
Enemy fighters came into sight

All guns began to shout
Our luck was about to run out.

Many planes and men were lost
Our crew was luckier than most

We all survived, by parachute
Only to become POWs to boot.

After many prison days and nights
The forced march provided many sights

Months and miles later, we were released
Our memories and friendships never ceased.

Daddy's Poem

Her hair was in a ponytail,
Her dress tied with a bow.
Today was "Daddy's Day" at school,
She couldn't wait to go.

But her mommy tried to tell her,
That she probably should stay home;
The kids just might not understand,
If she went to school alone.

But she was not afraid;
She knew just what to say,
What to tell her classmates
Why he wasn't there today.

But still her mother worried,
For her to face this day alone.
And that was why, once again,
She tried to keep her daughter home.

But the little girl went to school,
Eager to tell them all
About a dad she never sees, a dad
Who never calls.

There were daddies along the wall
for everyone to meet,
Children squirming impatiently,
Anxious in their seat.

One by one the teacher called
A student from the class.
To introduce their daddy,
As seconds slowly passed.

At last the teacher called her name,
As each child turned to stare.
Each of them was searching,
For a man who wasn't there.

"Where's her daddy at?"

She heard a boy call out.
"She probably doesn't have one,"
Another dared to shout.

And from somewhere near the back,
She heard a daddy say,
"Looks like another deadbeat dad,
Too busy to waste his day."

The words did not offend her,
As she smiled up at her Mom.
And looked back at her teacher, who
Told her to go on.

And with hands behind her back,
Slowly she began to speak.
And out from the mouth of a child,
Came words incredibly unique.

"My Daddy couldn't be here,
Because he lives so far away.
But I know he wishes he could be,
Since this is such a special day.

And though you cannot meet him,
I wanted you to know
All about my daddy,
And how much he loves me so.

He loved to tell me stories,
He taught me to ride my bike;
He surprised me with pink roses,
And taught me to fly a kite.

We used to share fudge sundaes,
And ice cream in a cone.
And though you cannot see him,
I'm not standing here alone.

'Cause my daddy's always with me,

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Even though we are apart;
I know because he told me,
He'll forever be in my heart"

With that, her little hand reached up,
And lay across her chest,
Feeling her own heartbeat
Beneath her favorite dress.

And from somewhere there in the crowd of
dads,
Her mother stood in tears.
Proudly watching her little girl,
Wise beyond her years.

For she stood up for the love
Of a man not in her life.
Doing what was best for her,
Doing what was a right.

And when she dropped her hand back
Down, staring straight into the crowd.
She finished with a voice so soft,
But its message clear and loud.

"I love my daddy very much,
He is my shining star.
And if he could, he'd be here,
But heaven's just too far.

You see he is a soldier
And he died just this past year,
When a roadside bomb hit his convoy
And taught the warriors fear.

But sometimes when I close my eyes,
It's like he never went away."
And then she closed her eyes,
And saw him clearly there that day.

And to her mother's amazement,
She witnessed with surprise,
A room full of daddies and children,
All starting to close their eyes.

Who knows what they saw before them;

Who knows what they felt inside,
Perhaps, for a mere second,
They saw him at her side.

"I know you're with me Daddy,"
To the silence she called out
And what happened next made believers,
Of those once filled with doubt.

Not one in that room could explain it,
For each of their eyes had been closed,
But there on the desk beside her
Was a fragrant, long-stemmed, pink rose

And a child was blessed, if only for
A moment, by the love of her shining star,
And given the gift of believing,
That heaven is never too far.

Parachute Lecture

(to be given to students prior to first flight as part of first airmanship lecture)

1. Inspect your Parachute Prior to Flight

- a. See that the ripcord pins are not bent and that the seal is not broken.
- b. See that the corners of the pack are neatly stowed so that none of the canopy is visible.
- c. See that the six or eight opening elastics are tight.
- d. See that there are no grease or dirt marks on pack and that it is dry.
- e. If any of the above defects are found, report it to the pilot so that chute may be exchanged for one in proper condition.

2. Care of Parachute in Plane

- a. Don't dump it on floor.
- b. Never kneel on pack or carry it jammed against your hips.
- c. Don't leave it in airplane where moisture may reach the pack.
- d. Be careful that ripcord handle does not catch on part of plane.

3. Adjustment of Parachute Prior to Flight

- a. Tighten leg straps as tight as sitting comfort permits.
- b. Breast strap should be about 10 to 12 inches below chin.

4. Wearing of Parachute during Flight

- a. Parachutes or the harness, in the case of detachable chutes, are to be worn by all occupants of the aircraft.
- b. Crewmembers, at the discretion of the pilot, may unbuckle straps and remove some temporarily for necessary movement within the plane.

5. Abandoning Ship and Pulling on Rip Cord

- a. Don't draw in your legs as you leave or you will somersault rapidly.
- b. Keep body relaxed and legs together.
- c. Try to be upright as you pull release.
- d. Never pull ripcord until free of the airplane. Wait a moment, then release chute with quick hand jerk.

6. Importance of Altitude

- a. With a two second delay the absolute minimum altitude for jumping in a 400 mph, vertical dive is 1200 feet.
- b. From level flight with a two second delay 250 feet is the absolute minimum.
- c. If you have the altitude, wait two to six seconds, according to your speed, before pulling ripcord. In six seconds you will slow from any speed to about 125 mph, and the opening shock won't be dangerous.

7. After Chute Opens

- a. Check risers for twists and clear them.
- b. Don't try to steer chute. Only experts can do this.
- c. Turn to face in direction of travel. To do this buck and twist vigorously.

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8. Landing on Land

- a. Don't land stiff legged, but break your fall with legs partly flexed.
- b. In a wind attempt to run forward and collapse chute. Pull on a single group of shroud lines – the lower ones are best.
- c. At night when you can't see where you are landing, play safe and cross legs to avoid straddling fences, etc.

9. Landing on Water without Life Vest

- a. Work your body back in the seat sling and unfasten the leg straps.
- b. Nearing the water, unfasten the breast strap and fold your arms over the risers.
- c. When three or four feet above water straighten your body and lift your arms straight above your head so as to drop out of harness.
- d. Swim upwind to avoid canopy.

10. Landing on Water with Life Vest

- a. Inflate life vest when descent is under control.
- b. Make preparations to get out of harness as explained in paragraph 9.
- c. Drop out of harness as your feet touch the water. Swim upwind to avoid canopy.

11. Landing in Trees or bushes

- a. Cross your legs beneath you to avoid straddling branches.
- b. Get a firm grip on branches and release harness at once.

President's Corner

I don't know about you, but I thought the reunion this year was one of the best ones we have had. We had a great turnout with eight bomb groups represented. The National WWII Museum was fantastic although there never seems to be enough time to see everything.

Next year it looks like we will be going back to Dayton, OH. We've been there before, but the National Museum of the United States Air Force seems to be constantly changing and adding new displays. I was not able to see everything the last time we were there. I hope to be able to cover a little more of the museum in 2018.

And now for a plea for help. The 461st Association has been run by a small group of dedicated people. At our reunion in Seattle, WA back in 2006, the veterans turned over the

management of the Association to the children. Since then the children have done a fantastic job of running things and continuing to honor out veterans. Changes? Yes, there have been many changes, but the focus of the organization is still on the veterans. The problem is that the same people who stepped forward in 2006 to take the reigns are still the same people running things today. **We need some fresh blood in the Association!** To our veterans, I ask that you talk with your children. Tell them about what went on during WWII and encourage them to get involved. There are many things that they can do to keep the Association alive and well. To those that are already involved, I ask that you spread the word. There's a lot of enjoyment that can be had by just helping to keep the history of the **GREATEST GENERATION** alive.

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We're on the web!
Visit
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Webmaster Comments

I thought that in this issue of the Liberaider I than on any of the other websites. I prefer to would share some thoughts on the number of think that the popularity of the 461st website visitors out website receives. During the past is because people are finding useful information about their veteran who served during month, the 461st website has received an average of 40 hits per day. By itself, this figure WWII. may not mean much to you, but let me give you some comparisons. The Fifteenth Air Force website, that I also maintain, has received an average of 50 hits per day over the past month. Yes, you would expect to see more hits on the Fifteenth Air Force website, but allow me to keep going. The next busiest website I maintain for WWII received an average of 30 hits per day. Now you can see that the 461st stands out. This could be the result of a number of things. First, the 461st website was the first one I started with back in 2001. It could be that the amount of information I've placed on the website is greater

Although the 461st website is receiving a decent number of hits compared to other websites, I'm sure there are things I could do to improve the website. When you visit the website, please think about how it could be improved to make it easier to find what you are looking for. I think the website is pretty well organized, but I'm a computer person. I may think it's organized correctly, but when you go to the website and can't find what you're looking for, I need to know about it. It doesn't matter how trivial it is, let me hear from you.