



2020 Bomb Group Reunion

Our 2020 Bomb Group Reunion didn't happen thanks to the Coronavirus. Albuquerque was under restrictions that prevented us from meeting as we had planned. Fortunately, all of the companies we dealt with still wanted us and have agreed with the same venue for 2021 so our reunion is just delayed one year.

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Service and Sacrifice

Part I- The Box of Letters

My Uncle, 2nd Lieutenant George Lenon Owens, Jr. was a co-pilot in the 15th Army Air Force, 461st Bomb Group, 766th Bomb Squadron during World War II. He was a member of Crew 49 flying a Ford built B-24 Liberator, RC#49, nicknamed the "Spirit of Hollywood/Gloria Jean". His plane went down near Budapest, Hungary during a bombing mission on April 13, 1944. When I

was young, I spent hours searching for photos and sifting through old papers for information about him. I questioned my parents and grandparents about his service and death, but they would quickly change the subject. I knew that his death had deeply affected them, but I didn't fully understand the depths of their grief until the day much later when I discovered the letters, wrinkled and brown, hidden for

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History of Crew 49

by
Robert M. Sanders
Bombardier
Crew 49
766th Squadron
461st Bomb Group

P R E F A C E

This is my version of the history of crew 49. These are the true facts and incidents of the crew from the time of its formation until it was dissolved.

It all began in September of 1943 when the individual members were ordered to the Army Air Base at Mountain Home, Idaho. At this base, the individual members were assigned to the 470th Bomb Group and to the 802nd Bomb Squadron.

Over a period of a couple of weeks, the men were gradually molded into what was to become known as Crew 49.

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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>
St. Yves, Albert L.	Raynham, MA	901	04/09/2020
Lettenmaier, James A.	Canby, OR	748	07/30/2019

765th Squadron

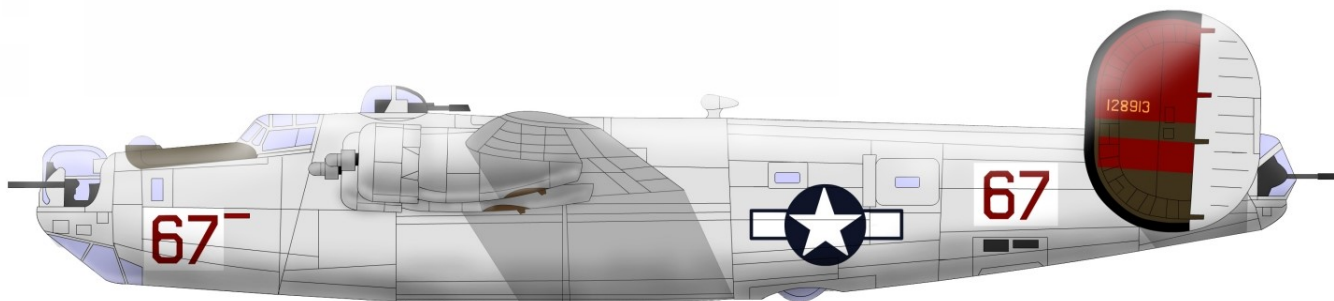
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Coate, William C.	Alamogordo, NM	678	01/16/2020
Jackson, Jay W.	Rogers AR	612	03/06/2020

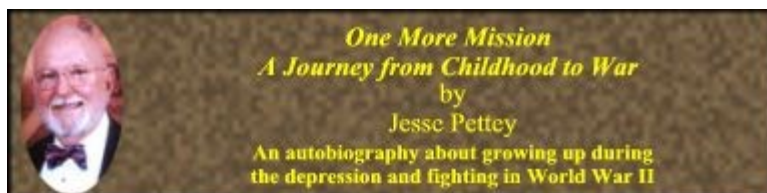
766th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Dooley, James C.	Garland, TX	1092-6	01/16/2020

766th Squadron

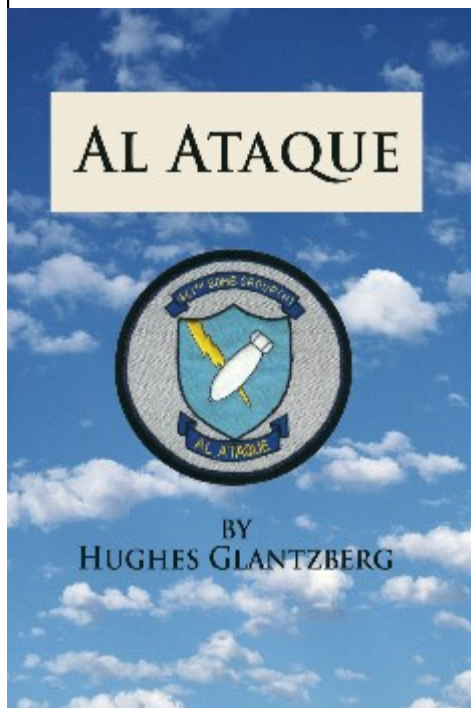
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Huggard, Harry G.	Largo, FL	1092	12/27/2019





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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years in a dusty, forgotten box. I took the letters home that day and read them one by one, and, for the first time, I understood.

The box included letters from my uncle to his parents during his training at various airfields around the country beginning in October, 1942, until he was deployed overseas in February of 1944. His individual flight records were also in the box, as well as pictures of the crew and the aircraft during a photo shoot with their sponsor, Miss Gloria Jean Schoonover, a Hollywood actress whose name was painted on the side of the airplane. There were also letters that described his time stationed in Northern Africa and Italy. His last letter was written April 9, 1944, four days before he was killed.

On April 14, 1944, Lt. Robert Sanders, bombardier of Crew 49, who was physically grounded at the time, wrote my grandparents to explain that my uncle, George Lenon Owens, Jr., and the other crew members were missing in action over enemy territory after their plane went down. The telegram from the Secretary of War confirming my uncle's status was sent May 5, 1944, and a formal letter from Brigadier General Robert H. Dunlop followed on May 8th.

The remaining letters were written from families of the other crew members expressing their concern and sorrow. There were also letters from friends of my uncle, young women he had met while stationed in the United States. As I read the letters, I was amazed at the support and love the families and friends showed one another during such a difficult time. They were all very hopeful and full of encouragement, but I could also sense their grief and the overwhelming anxiety of not knowing if their sons and husbands were alive or dead.

In late July of 1944, it was learned that several of the crew members had bailed out of the plane and were being held as Prisoners of War. There was no news of my uncle or the pilot, 2nd Lt. Paul S. Mowery, Jr.. Mrs. Mowery and my grandmother continued to write one another during those long months. It was not until February of 1945 when word was received that my uncle and the pilot had been killed when the plane went down. My uncle's remains were recovered and returned for burial in 1949, almost four years later.

Included in the box were many other interesting artifacts and papers related to my uncle, his service, and the ultimate sacrifice he made for his country. Lt. Robert Sanders wrote a history of Crew 49 which outlined their training in the United States and abroad with descriptions of their missions. I found a copy of this history in the box and enjoyed learning more about the crew, including their trip to Hollywood to meet Gloria Jean at Universal Studios. Lt. Sanders wrote, "Much could be said about all that happened that night, but that is another story and best not be written at this time." His anecdotes and descriptions provide a rich account of Crew 49, their time spent training together as well as their journey and service overseas.

On a sadder note, I also found the individual casualty reports which described what happened when the plane went down. The crew was on a bombing mission over Budapest, Hungary on April 13, 1944. The target was the ME-109 factory. According to 2nd Lt. Robert Edwards, Ship #44 (42-52366), piloted by 1st Lt. Charles William Bauman, was flying in #2 position and was struck with a direct hit by flak. The ship immediately peeled up to the left, did a 180 degree turn and crashed into ship #49 (42-52336) which was flying #4 position in the same flight.

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Sgt. Clayton Childs, Jr. reported that my uncle, the co-pilot, was killed instantly when the propeller of the right-wing plane chewed into the cockpit on the co-pilot's side. The pilot, 2nd Lt. Paul Mowery, was getting the plane back under control and gave the signal to bail out. The navigator and engineer bailed and the rest of the crew followed. The pilot bailed out at approximately 3,000 feet, but his chute never opened. He did not survive. His remains were seen near the plane.

I was thrilled to make such an exciting discovery and to learn about my uncle, the crew, and their families, but I was also saddened to realize the pain and anguish felt by the families when the crew went missing. I was touched by their ability to hold out hope in spite of not knowing what had happened. I could also feel the despair of my grandparents when all hope was gone and they were faced with the worst possible news. I know I will never fully comprehend the grief of losing a loved one in the time of war, but I am grateful to have some understanding of the heartache and sorrow my grandparents and the other families must have endured to learn that their loved ones had made the ultimate sacrifice.

You would think my discovery would have been enough. I found what I was looking for, a treasure trove of letters, photographs, and history of my uncle's life and service. But that is not the end of my story.

Part II- The Search

I'm not sure why, but I felt a strong need to visit the place where my uncle died. I began researching crash sites in Hungary and trying to find information about the location of his crash. I hit many dead ends until I found the E-Mail address for Chuck Parsonson, Histori-

an of the 461st Bombardment Group Association. I wrote him in August of 2017 explaining the situation and giving him the information I had collected on my uncle and the crash. He wrote back immediately and promised to help me find the site. Within an hour he sent me the links to two Hungarian articles about the recent recovery of one of the engines of a B-24 Liberator near Budapest, Hungary. He also mentioned that there might be a Fox news piece about the recovery of that engine. The articles were in Hungarian and difficult to translate, but I could read the serial number of the engine which linked it to my uncle's plane. I couldn't believe my luck! I then began searching Youtube for the Fox news piece and found a Hungarian video of the recovery of the engine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8LcAcYcHms>

This was amazing! I knew then that the team members who had recovered the engine would know the exact location of the site, and I was determined to find them.

My husband and I had plans to visit Normandy in late September. We decided to add a visit to Budapest to our travel plans. It was time to contact the team members. Chuck Parsonson gave me the contact information for the author of the Hungarian articles. I attempted to reach him several times with no luck. I began to translate the articles myself to see if more information could be found to locate the team, but Hungarian is a very difficult language. It took me days just to translate two paragraphs. I posted on Facebook to see if anyone knew someone who spoke Hungarian. No response. Then I thought of my son who was studying in Sweden in an international program. It worked! One of his classmates was Hungarian. He translated the

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articles for me and gave me the information I needed. But still no response from the team.

We left for Europe Friday, September 15, 2017, with a plan to arrive in Budapest Wednesday, September 20th. I was discouraged because I had not heard from the team members in Hungary and had no idea if we would have internet access during our travels in Normandy. I contacted Paul and Albert, owners of the Kapital Inn, Budapest where we would be staying while in Hungary (an exceptional place to stay, by the way). They agreed to help and tried to locate someone from the team, to no avail. I was disappointed, but not ready to give up. I checked my E-Mail one more time during a layover after our first flight. There it was! an E-Mail from Nandor Mohos (Nandi), an amateur aviation historian who focuses on US losses in Hungary during World War II. He explained that he works in cooperation with the Hungarian Aviation Archaeology Association whose team leader is Károly Magó, the author of the articles. Again, I could not believe my luck! Nandi wrote that they were looking forward to our visit to Hungary and would be happy to guide us to the site of the excavation of the engine and the museum at Szolnok where the engine is on display.

I continued to stay in contact with Nandi while we traveled through Normandy. I realized I had misread the serial number of the engine. It was not the engine from my uncle's plane (42-52336), but was the engine from Lt. Bauman's aircraft (42-52366) which collided with my uncle's plane. Nandi explained that my uncle's plane went down farther away from where the engine was found because the pilot, Lt. Mowery, leveled out the plane to allow the other crew members to bail out. He also said that team leader, Károly Magó, would be traveling to the area in ad-

vance of our visit to locate possible eyewitnesses and study police reports to determine the exact location of the crash site. I couldn't believe these men, who really didn't know me, were taking so much of their time to help me find the site of the my uncle's crash.

Part III- Hungary

We arrived in Budapest Wednesday afternoon, September 20th. We were excited to be in such a beautiful city, but more excited about our plans for the following day. Nandi had arranged to meet us the next morning to visit the site. I could hardly sleep that night. At 9:00 AM an army van pulled up in front of our hotel with Nandi, Károly Magó, Ákos Rozsos, who was another member of the team, and a driver. We left Budapest to drive to Kiskunlachaza where the engine was recovered. Along the way, the men told us the history of Hungary during World War II and explained their roles in conducting research on aviation crashes. Károly Magó is a War-rant Officer with the 86th Helicopter Base. As a civilian he is the highly regarded leader of the Hungarian Aviation Archeology Association. He gets full support in these endeavors from his superiors in the army. The Association has had 29 large excavations including four of American aircraft, as well as several smaller researches. Ákos Rozsos is a former member of the team and interpreter. He is the team member who saw my original E-Mail and forwarded it to Károly. Nandi Mohos is also a former member of the Association who focuses on American losses in Hungary during World War II, especially the fate of the crews who went down in his country. He now works in cooperation with Károly and the Association.

We felt very honored to be guided by these highly respected researchers who were taking

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the day off from their regular jobs to drive us around the Hungarian countryside. They drove us by the industrial area where the ME-109 factory, the target of the bombing, was located. They reported that many families lived and worked in that area during the war. Ákos showed us old photographs taken from the air above the industrial site to show us what my uncle would have seen as he flew over on his mission. They then drove us to Kiskunlachaza where the engine was recovered. According to translations of the Gendarmerie (police) reports from the time, on the 13th of April between 12:00 and 13:00 on the area between the Danube and the village, enemy aircraft dropped 17 bombs. One person was killed. In the vicinity of the village a four engine enemy aircraft crashed and totally wrecked. None of the crew was found. This would have been the aircraft of Lt. Bauman, Ship #44 (42-52366). We walked into the field where the engine was recovered and stood near that spot. I knew that I was standing on sacred ground and felt incredibly humbled, but very proud to be able to pay my respects to the servicemen who died there.

We left the field in Kiskunlachaza and drove to the railway station at Delegyhaza. The Gendarmerie reported that between 12:00 and 13:00 on the 13th of April near the railway station a four-engine enemy plane crashed. Three of the crew bailed out, two of the three were captured near the station of Kiskunlachaza while the rest were captured near the station of Dunaharaszti. Two people were found dead. This would have been my uncle's plane. My uncle and the pilot were the two deceased crew members.

Károly and the other men had studied the Gendarmerie reports and the records in the Register of Deaths of Bugyi, a village east of Delegyhaza. These reports led them to the location where they believe my uncle's plane went down. As we rode to that site, I tried to imagine what it would have been like that day. The pilot was trying desperately to keep his plane level so his crew could bail out, his copilot dead beside him. Bombs were going off all around him, and he knew there were German soldiers and local Gendarmerie waiting to capture them on the ground. He jumped from the plane as it was going down hoping to open his chute and land safely, but probably knowing he was already too close to the ground. He was a hero who lost his life while saving the members of his crew.

We stopped at the site, a wide field planted with sunflowers, dried and ready to be harvested. It was a rainy day, a steady drizzle soaking my clothes. As I stood in the field, I was overpowered with emotion, tears streaming down my face. I was happy to have reached this

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

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

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place, to be able to stand near the spot where my uncle's plane went down, but saddened by the thought of his death. I felt so sorry that I never knew him when he was alive. I was also overwhelmed by the kindness and compassion of these Hungarian researchers who on that day in 1944 would have been my enemies. Their country had been devastated by war and yet, they were willing to offer me this gift, a chance to visit the place where my uncle died so many years before.

As I stood by the field, I felt an unusual presence, as if my uncle, my grandmother and grandfather, my father, and his twin brother were all standing together with me, thankful that I had made this journey. I sensed my uncle turn to me, smile, and walk away leaving me with a sense of peace and satisfaction that is difficult to describe.

From the field, we were driven to Szolnok, home of the Reptár-Szolnoki Repülőmúzeum, the aviation museum where the engine is on display. We were met there by a journalist, cameraman, and reporter from a Hungarian newspaper and television station. They interviewed me to document our visit and our connection to the engine.

We were treated to lunch and a private tour of the museum where we learned more about the work of Károly Magó and the Hungarian Aviation Archaeology Association. Again we were impressed by the dedication of Károly, Nandi, and others who work diligently to locate crash sites and make sure that remains of missing soldiers are found.

Driving back to Budapest, we discussed the war and the different ways our countries had been affected. We all agreed we must never forget the sacrifices made by so many to bring freedom to people around the world. As Ákos explained, "When we take the politics out of things, we realize our shared humanity. Even though our language and customs are different, the hopes and dreams for our families are very much the same." Ákos is right, we must be forever mindful of the sacrifices our soldiers made to ensure that the principles for which we stand as a nation are protected and maintained. I know I will be forever grateful to those who have helped me complete this incredible journey and I pray that I will never forget those who have sacrificed for me, my family, my country, and the world.



Standing L-R: Reed, George E. (N); Mowery, Paul S. (P) [KIA]; Gloria Jean; Owens, George L. Jr. (CP) [KIA]; Sanders, Robert M. (B)

Kneeling L-R: Dean, Harry E. (TG); Johnson, Lenard S. (WG); Zippilli, Joseph S. (E/TT); Moreno, John V. 'Bob' (NG); Hoch, Daniel R. (BG)

Not Pictured - Childs, Cayton (RO/WG)

Why I like Retirement!

Question: How many days are there in a week?

Answer: 6 Saturdays and 1 Sunday.

Question: When is a retiree's bedtime?

Answer: Two hours after falling asleep on the couch.

Question: How many retirees does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: Only one, but it might take all day.

Question: What is the biggest gripe of retirees?

Answer: There is not enough time to get everything done.

Question: Why don't retirees mind being called seniors?

Answer: The term comes with a 10% discount.

Question: Among retirees, what is considered formal attire?

Answer: Tied Shoes.

Question: Why do retirees count pennies?

Answer: They are the only ones who have the time.

Question: What is the common term for someone who enjoys work and refuses to retire?

Answer: NUTS!

Question: Why are retirees so slow to clean out the basement, attic or garage?

Answer: They know that as soon as they do, one of their adult kids will want to store stuff there.

Question: What do retirees call a long lunch?

Answer: Normal .

Question: What is the best way to describe retirement?

Answer: The never ending Coffee Break.

Question: What's the biggest advantage of going back to school as a retiree?

Answer: If you cut classes, no one calls your parents.

Question: Why does a retiree often say he doesn't miss work, but misses the people he used to work with?

Answer: He is too polite to tell the whole truth.

And, my very favorite....

Question: What do you do all week?

Answer: Monday through Friday, NOTHING..... Saturday & Sunday, I rest.

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The original crew consisted of the following men:

Pilot Paul S. Mowery, F/O
Co-Pilot Peter Mourtsen, 2nd Lt.
Navigator George E. Reed, 2nd Lt.
Bombardier Robert M. Sanders, 2nd Lt.
Engineer Joseph S. Zippilli, Sgt.
Radio Operator Clayton Childs, Sgt.
Tail Gunner Harry Dean, Sgt.
Waist Gunner Lenard Johnson, Sgt.
Ball Turret Gunner Charles Pugh, Sgt.
Nose Gunner Theodore Pippit, Sgt.

The Crew was stationed at Mountain Home, Idaho, until the middle of October, 1943.

While at Mountain Home, the crew entered and finished the first phase of their combat training. This training consisted of local flights around Mountain Home area which was used to “check the pilots out” in different kinds of flying, and to give them general practice in flying the B-24s. There were 50 bombs dropped by the bombardier using the Sperry Bombsight. Each man on the crew began to get new and hard training in each of his respective jobs.

Around the first of October, 1943, however, all of the gunners were sent to a special gunnery school at Wendover Field, Utah, thereby leaving the crew shorthanded. The remaining crew members made the best of it, however, and finished their first phase of training.

Upon completion of their “first phase”, the crew was ordered to report to Wendover Field, Utah, where they were assigned to a new group which was being activated. This was the 461st Bomb Group commanded by Col. Frederic Glantzberg.

Upon reaching Wendover Field, the crew was told that the group was, as yet, not ready for

them and that they might receive a 10-day leave. Thanks to Captain William Darden, the squadron commander, and to several other facts involved, this prophecy came true. On October 20, 1943, the crew left Wendover Field on a 10-day leave, knowing that when the leave was terminated, the crew would report to some other field due to the fact that the group was being ordered a change of station.

During the leave, the men received orders as to where to report back to the group and on November 1, 1943, they reported back to duty - this time at Hammer Field, Fresno, California. It was here at Hammer Field that the real training began.

Upon beginning training at Hammer Field, there was one change in the crew personnel. F/O Douglas L. Robertson was assigned as Co-Pilot instead of Peter Mourtsen. This change was due to a Second Air Force regulation which stated, in brief, that a Second Lieutenant could not be assigned to duty as a co-pilot with a crew which had a first pilot with the rank of Flight Officer. Hence, the change in our crew personnel at this time.

For the first week or two after arrival at Hammer Field, there was not much training, as far as flying was concerned. This was due to the lack of airplanes and also to the “infancy” of this new group. However, as time went by, the men got into the swing of things and did a lot of flying. They flew mornings, afternoons, and nights - in fact, at times there was so much flying that the men missed a lot of sleep and a good many meals. But on the other hand, a lot was accomplished by the “continuous” flying.

The pilots and co-pilots received lots of training in “straight and level” flying, in making instrument let-downs and take-offs, making

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formation take-offs and landings, formation flying both at low and high altitudes, flying radio ranges, and in general, just getting practice and "feeling out" in the B-24.

The Navigator received training and practice in navigation by flying short cross-country flights. These flights were accomplished more or less up and down the San Joaquin Valley. However, there were a few flights made to Tonopah, Nevada, and Tucson, Arizona. Also, one long cross-country flight to Guadalupe Island which is situated in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of lower California. On these flights, the navigator received practice in celestial navigation, dead reckoning and pilotage.

During the training at Hammer Field, the bombardiers had the practice of dropping more bombs. All of the bombs dropped were 100-pound sand practice bombs with the exception of five demolition bombs which were dropped at Tonopah, Nevada bomb range. Most of the bombing was done by each ship singularly, although some of the missions were completed by formation bombing.

The rest of the crew received their training and practice in air-gunnery, and in learning as much as possible about their jobs, and, in general, getting the "feel" of the airplane.

Not long after arriving at Hammer Field, California, the squadron commander, Capt. William Darden, was lost. Capt. Darden was killed in an airplane crash near Huntington Lake in the mountains east of Fresno, California. His command was taken over by Capt. James C. Dooley.

While at Hammer Field, there were three more changes in the crew. The first change occurred when Sgt. Charles Pugh was de-

clared physically disabled to continue his duties. He was replaced as ball turret gunner by Sgt. Daniel Hoch. The second change occurred when Sgt. Theodore Pippit took the examination for aviation cadet. He was proving more and more troublesome to the crew as a whole as time went on and so was replaced as nose turret gunner by Sgt. John Moreno. The third change was in co-pilots, when Flight Officer Robertson was made first pilot of another crew, thereby leaving the crew without a co-pilot. Soon a new co-pilot was assigned, however, Lt. George L. Owens. Lt. Owens came under somewhat of a handicap. He only got in on the tail end of the crew training and yet proved to be a very competent flyer. In fact, he was one of the best co-pilots in the squadron.

While the crew was stationed at Hammer Field, it made a fairly good record for itself. It was the first crew to gain enough of Capt. Darden's confidence to be sent out on a night mission when it was known the field would be closed by weather upon returning. The crew was sent on a cross-country flight to Sacramento, Calif. However, upon returning to Hammer Field, the field was closed due to weather and the crew proceeded to the air field at Muroc, Calif. to land. That was a night that none of the men would ever forget.

The crew also has the distinction of being the first (and so far as the writer knows) and only crew to successfully lead a group bombing mission.

Somewhere around the middle of December, 1943, the crew received another distinction. The crew was the second combat crew of the squadron to be awarded its own airplane to take into combat. This ship was a brand-new B-24 H officially known by number 2336.

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However, at that time the men already had a name picked out for the ship .

The crew named the new airplane "Spirit of Hollywood" and wanted as an unofficial sponsor, Miss Gloria Jean Schoonover - known on stage and screen as simply, Gloria Jean. So arrangements were begun by Lt. Sanders. S/Sgt. Clayton Childs, our radio operator, set about printing and painting the new name of the ship on the side of the nose section. He painted the words: - "The Spirit of Hollywood"- on the side and beneath this he copied the autograph of Gloria Jean. So far, our venture was progressing okay.

Lt. Sanders then contacted Gloria Jean to find out her reactions to the idea and, if her reactions was favorable, whether she would be willing to have some pictures made of the airplane, the crew and herself. Gloria Jean and Universal Pictures Co. approved the idea wholeheartedly. Our next step was to get permission from the proper military authorities to make the idea into a reality. F/O Paul Mowery and Lt. Sanders took their idea to Capt. MacFarlane, the squadron intelligence officer, and to Capt. James Dooley, the squadron CO. They both approved the idea and promised to help us obtain permission of the group. Capt. MacFarlane obtained permission from Major Lett, the group intelligence officer, provided that all pictures were taken by an air force photographer. Capt. Dooley obtained permission from the group officials enabling us to fly our airplane to the Los Angeles area to have the pictures taken. On Monday, January 3, 1944, the crew of the "Spirit of Hollywood" took the airplane and four passengers and flew to Los Angeles - landing at Van Nuys airport. The passengers were as follows:

Capt. A. E. Sproul, Squadron Medical

Officer

Lt. Wn. Franklin, Asst. Operations Officer

Lt. Phillip Caroselli, Asst. Intelligence Officer

Sgt. Michlmann, Air Force Photographer

S/Sgt. Childs, the radio operator, was in the hospital and unable to make the trip.

Upon landing at Van Nuys airport, we obtained an army staff car and F/O Mowery, Lt. Sanders, and Lt. Caroselli proceeded into North Hollywood to pick up Gloria Jean and take her to the airplane where the pictures would be taken. Accompanying Gloria Jean was Mr. Fred Selig, a Universal Studio publicity agent.

After taking the pictures, the crew of the "Spirit of Hollywood" and the four passengers were the guests of Gloria Jean and Universal Pictures for a tour around the lot of Universal. The tour proved to be more or less of a quiet tour because the studio was in the process of making only one picture. This picture was "The Merry Monahans" starring Jack Oakie, Donald O'Connor, and Peggy Ryan. However, the men watched the shooting of a couple of scenes and were shown other points of interest around the studio lot. The men were fortunate enough to meet several other stars, which included Jack Oakie, the Andrew Sisters, Suzanne Foster, and others.

After the tour, the crew was taken to the "still" picture studio where more pictures were taken of the crew and Gloria Jean. All in all, the crew enjoyed themselves very much.

The crew spent the night of that eventful day in Los Angeles and Hollywood. Much could

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be said about all that happened that night, but that is another story and best not be written at this time.

As the story goes, it seems as if crew 49 set another example for the group. On the day the crew was supposed to leave Los Angeles and report back to Hammer Field, the group as a whole landed at Van Nuys airport to have their ships christened and pictures made with movie stars. However, the group was unable to obtain any prominent movie stars, so once again crew 49 came through with flying colors.

Upon returning to Hammer Field, there was very little to be done in the line of duty until that eventful day of January 15, 1944, when our squadron began its long journey to an overseas destination.

January 15, 1944

The squadron left Hammer Field, Fresno, Calif. on the first leg of the overseas movement. The destination was Hamilton Field, San Francisco, Calif. Purpose of going there was to be processed for overseas movement. Arrived there on same day of take-off, January 15, 1944.

January 16, 1944

Processing consisted of taking abbreviated examinations, such as medical examinations, showdown inspection, drawing equipment, etc. The airplane also had work done on it to meet certain technical orders, etc.

January 17, 1944

Continued and finished processing of crew and airplane begun on January 16, 1944. Crew of airplane was as follows:

Pilot: Paul S. Mowery, Jr.
Co-Pilot: George L. Owens, Jr.
Navigator: George E. Reed
Bombardier: Robert M. Sanders
Engineer: Joseph S. Zippilli
Radio Operator: Clayton Childs
Nose Gunner: John Moreno
Tail Gunner: Harry Dean
Ball Turret Gunner: Daniel Hoch
Waist Gunner: Lenard Johnson
Crew Chief: Joseph Hammer
Passenger & Sqdn CO: James Dooley

January 18, 1944

Left Hamilton Field, San Francisco, California, on the second leg of the long journey. The destination was Palm Springs, California. Nothing out of the ordinary occurred during this flight.

January 19, 1944

Left Palm Springs, California, on third leg of the journey. The destination this day was Midland, Texas. Still nothing occurred while in flight.

January 20, 1944

Left Midland, Texas on fourth day of the journey. The destination was Memphis, Tennessee. Lt. R. S. Fawcett had engine trouble and had to feather #3 engine and leave the formation. He landed at Dallas, Texas safely. The remainder of the flight was uneventful.

January 21, 1944

Left Memphis, Tenn. on fifth leg of the journey. The destination was Morrison Field, Palm Beach, Florida. Morrison Field was our Port of Embarkation. While there, the crew and airplane had their final inspections and drew some final equipment. The squadron

(Continued on page 18)

2021 Annual Reunion Albuquerque, New Mexico “The Land of Enchantment”



September 9-12, 2021

Again this next year the 461st Bomb Group Association will gather with a number of like minded groups to participate in a joint reunion. While maintaining our own organization, as do the other groups, the combined group will allow us all to still have the requisite number of individuals necessary to make it financially feasible to hold a reunion. What we have with a joint reunion is a good sized, vibrant group that is great to be a part of. All groups were assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy and many flew missions in the same formations as our beloved 461st Bomb Group. Groups from all five Bomb Wings of the Fifteenth are represented.

While planning is in the early stages at this time, a few things are becoming clear that are “must see” activities.



The New Mexico Veterans Memorial is a “must see” venue.

It is a wonderful outdoor memorial with sections for all conflicts since New Mexico first came into existence and is very well done. The Visitor’s Center building is more like a small museum and is packed with interesting things to see. In a part of the Visitor’s Center is a large room that is begging to be used for a luncheon while we are there. Immediately out the back door of this dining room is a small, intimate amphitheater that would be a perfect venue for our traditional Military Memorial Ceremony where homage is paid to those who didn't make it home from Italy and those lost in the previous year.

(Continued on page 15)

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The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History is another “must see” venue.

This museum cannot be adequately described in a short space. It includes displays of scientific equipment of the day used to design and produce the bombs that led the end of the war. Also on display are various delivery methods including a B-29 along with other aircraft, missiles and an actual conning tower from a nuclear submarine.

Before the postponement of the reunion this past fall, members of the current 512th Squadron based at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, were planning an event for us on the base. This squadron traces their history back to one of our groups and for the past few years has sent a delegation to our reunions. They were excited to host us for an event on Kirtland AFB. We will soon be working to re-establish contact with the 512th Squadron to determine what events can take place next year, but if what is hoped for materializes, it will be a special event.

The host hotel will be the Sheraton Uptown Hotel. Please see complete information on the following page. There will be a 24 hour airport shuttle service but unfortunately there will be a modest cost involved. The upside of using this service as opposed to a shuttle provided by the hotel will be much shorter wait times and a much more efficient way to get your folks to the hotel and back to the airport. We have had trouble with long waits and infrequent airport runs with hotel shuttles in the past and are anxious to avoid that again next year. By using a professional shuttle service, the result will be the best possible service.

Please visit YOUR website, **www.461st.org** for current information as it becomes available.

Additionally, there are many things to see and do in the Albuquerque area. Information will become available on these attractions and I would encourage you to not only come fellowship with us at the reunion but plan to spend some extra time in the area and take advantage of all there is to see. Please consider joining us when we meet again in Albuquerque.

The scenery in Albuquerque will take your breath away. So will the 5,000 foot altitude; to have the best experience, please remember to adjust heart and blood pressure meds if necessary and drink plenty of water.

Dave Blake

Reunion Committee Chair



Hotel Information

The Sheraton Uptown Hotel 2600 Louisiana Blvd., Albuquerque, NM 87110

Room rates are \$118 per night plus tax. Room includes a full, hot breakfast buffet for 2 per room.

Eleven ADA accessible rooms are available. If you need to make your reservation by phone, please ask for the hotel SALES OFFICE directly Monday - Friday 8 AM—5 PM at (505) 830-5781 MST; you may leave a message outside of business hours and Nichole will return your call. Please mention Bomb Group Reunion to receive the group rate. Room rates are good from September 8 - September 16, 2021. There is much to see and do in Albuquerque. You might want to consider extending your stay to explore.

- If you need a handicap accessible room or have ANY other special needs or requests, please tell them when reserving your room. This is important so they know how to plan.
- Free parking
- Rooms are large at 400 SF. Many updates have been recently completed.
- Each room has a mini refrigerator.
- This hotel is ranked #8 of ALL Sheratons nationwide for customer service.
- Airport shuttle service is available by calling Tour New Mexico anytime at (505) 321-4864 to give them your travel itinerary. Also if you have any questions about travel or anything related to Albuquerque, Tour New Mexico can help with whatever your questions or needs are.

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 reunion.

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

(Continued from page 13)

was under the jurisdiction of the Air Transport Command from the time we left Hamilton Field until arriving at our final destination in North Africa. Also, at Morrison Field Sgt. Hoch and Sgt. Johnson were taken off the plane and transported to the final destination by other ATC means. They were pretty disgusted at the whole affair, too.

January 22, 1944 to January 24, 1944

Continued processing and inspections at Morrison Field.

January 25, 1944

Left Morrison Field on our next leg of the journey. This leg took the squadron out of the continental limits of the United States with a destination of Waller Field, Trinidad. Take off was at 0200 with arrival at Waller Field at about noon. Nothing of importance happened in route.

January 26, 1944

Left Waller Field, Trinidad on the next leg which was to Belem, Brazil. This was also a quiet flight until landing at Belem. Upon approaching the field, we encountered a rain storm. Visibility was none too good resulting in nearly over-shooting the field. The runway was very wet and slippery and the brakes of the airplane could not take hold, which resulted in going off the side of the runway. Luckily, however, no damage was done to the crew or the ship. The plane got stuck in the mud, but was pulled back on the runway by Caterpillar tractors manned by the United States Engineers stationed at Belem. This resulted in a lot of mud and water all over the bombsight and navigation instruments on the inside of the nose of the airplane.

January 27, 1944

Left Belem, Brazil, on the next leg which was next door to Fortaleza, Brazil. While at Fortaleza, Brazil the airplane had a 50-hour inspection. This was done under the direction of Crew Chief, T/Sgt. Joseph Hammer. The crew enjoyed a fair USO show at Fortaleza.

January 28, 1944

Completed the 50-hour inspection and made ready for the longest and hardest leg of the whole journey—the flight over the South Atlantic Ocean. Leaving Fortaleza, Brazil, about 2100 on January 28, 1944, the destination was Rufisque, French West Africa, which is located just southeast of Dakar.

January 29, 1944

Arrived at Rufisque about noon after a fairly uneventful flight due to the wonderful job of navigation done by our navigator, Lt. George E. Reed. Lt. Reed hit our destination on the head and missed his ETA by only a few seconds. At Rufisque, we had our first experience with the steel matted runways.

January 30, 1944

Left Rufisque on the next leg of the journey, which was to Marrakech, French Morocco. We were late in taking off because of another ship crashing at the end of the runway and burning up. Quite a saddening sight, but that is the chance every flyer takes. So on to Marrakech.

We arrived at Marrakech in the late afternoon, obtained our quarters, and went into town to look it over. It was the first time the boys had officially been to a town since leav-

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ing Hammer Field, California. There proved not to be much in town except a lot of filthy Arabs.

January 31, 1944

Left Marrakech on the next leg which was to Teleghma, Algeria. We arrived there in mid-afternoon and found our home to be in tents. We had slept in tents before, but none like these. It was so cold that we had to sleep in our heavy flying clothes. We attended another USO show, which turned out to be another fair show. The labor at our camp was done by Italian prisoners of war. They also cooked and served our food - not bad either. Those prisoners were taken by the English but turned over to the American Army.

February 1, 1944

Still at Teleghma and learning a little more about the Italians, because we felt that we would end up in Italy instead of Africa. This feeling became true as we saw later. There proved to be a lot of filthy Arabs around this sector also. We stayed at Teleghma long enough to allow us to visit a nearby city called Constantino. This proved to be a better city, inhabited by both Arabs and French. Many incidents happened there which are better to remain untold as Lt. Owens and myself will verify.

February 2, 1944

We awoke with the startling news that we were moving on to a place called Oudna, near Tunis, Tunisia. We took off in formation with the "Spirit of Hollywood" flying in #4 position. Lt. C. W. Bauman was leading our flight and he could not find the airport at Oudna - hence, under orders from Capt. James Dooley, our ship took the lead

and due to Lt. Reed, we led the flight to the airport. This proved to be Oudna Field #2.

February 3, 1944

We again had to move; this time to Oudna Field #1. However, we were unable to go with the rest of the squadron due to T/Sgt. Hammer finding water in the gasoline. It took about four hours to remedy this, allowing us to arrive at Oudna Field #1 in mid-afternoon.

February 4 to 21, 1944

The days we spent at Oudna Field #1 were, for the most part, uneventful. A few incidents occurred; however, they can be written up later. We spent the most of our time improving our living quarters, and participating in recreation. Although there were training missions planned, there was not much flying due to the weather. It was at Oudna #1 that the bombsight in the ship was inspected, cleaned, rebalanced, and recalibrated for the first time since the minor accident at Belem. This time spent at Oudna #1 was also used to allow the rest of the group to catch up with our squadron. What flights were made at Oudna were all local flights made by skeleton crews.

February 22, 1944

On this date, the group was ordered to leave Africa and move into Italy to our permanent base of operation. We flew from Oudna over the Mediterranean Sea to Sicily and up into Italy on the east side to our field which was called Torretta, which was located about eight miles from Cerignola. There, we met again our ground personnel who had come overseas by boat. We arrived in midafternoon and set about setting quarters temporary.

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ily for the night.

February 23, 1944 to March 5, 1944

During this period, the crew spent most of their time making their living quarters as decent as possible. The four officers were assigned to one tent known as "Tent #18", while the enlisted men were assigned to another tent in the enlisted personnel area. Our first improvement was the installation of a stove. Our stove was a half of a fifty-gallon oil drum with a can welded in the bottom for use as a grate. Our stove pipe was five 75 mm shell cases welded together. We obtained an oxygen bottle from a wrecked plane to hold our gasoline and a piece of oxygen tubing through which the gasoline flowed from the bottle to the stove. We found that this sort of stove was extremely satisfactory. Next, we obtained flat 10" x 5" bricks which we laid on the ground for a tent floor. Besides keeping the tent cleaner, these bricks held the heat better.

Then, to create a homelike atmosphere, we strung wiring into the tents for electric lights. Heretofore the lighting system had consisted of either candles or homemade gasoline lamps. Therefore, the electric lights were a great improvement.

With the installation of electricity, the four officers made another improvement. F/O Mowery had bought a radio while at Boise, Idaho, and we had been carrying it around with us in the plane. We brought this into the tent and wired it up to the electricity. Lo and behold, the darn thing played. The most enjoyable program which we could receive, and I think everyone will agree on this, was an English-German propaganda program. The main two characters were a couple called "Sally and George". They broadcasted prop-

aganda which no one, of course, believed but their main feature, as far as we were concerned, was the playing of musical records by American dance bands.

During this time, the tent improvements were about all that was really accomplished. Due to rain, cloudiness, and general bad weather, there was little or practically no flying.

March 5, 1944

On this day, one of our members, F/O Paul Mowery, became a very happy boy. Effective on this date, he received his commission as a 2nd Lt. in the Air Corps with a rating as Pilot. Lt. Mowery is an exceptionally good pilot; in fact, his crew thinks he is one of the best. However, due to the "red tape" involved and a little hard luck, his commission was a long time coming through. At any rate, there was great rejoicing and "fumar mucho del cigar".

March 6, 1944 to March 31, 1944

Not very much happened to the crew during this time. We spent a lot of our time making more improvements to our tent. Of course, even with all of our improvements, we were not living in any "suite at the Ambassador", but we did have a better than average tent.

We were scheduled to fly several training missions during this period, but due to the weather most of these missions were cancelled. However, we did fly a few missions around the local area to our field and around the "heel of the boot" of Italy.

During the time when we were not flying, we made frequent trips to nearby towns. Those were such towns as Foggia, Cerignola, Barletta, Canosa, Bari, and others. Cerignola

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was the nearest town to our camp and consequently we visited there more often. The town did not offer much for us. There was a fairly nice Red Cross service club there for the enlisted men. The town had lots of wine shops, but they were nothing out of the ordinary. All in all, the town was not any too good from a soldier's point of view.

Foggia was a much larger town and offered one feature to American Officers which was worth the trip there. In the town was an American Red Cross Officers Club, which had as a main feature a snack bar. The trip was well worth while if for no other reason than to eat the sandwiches, coffee, pastry, etc. in the snack bar.

April 1, 1944

It was on this day that we were really supposed to start our operations. Our target was a railroad bridge and highway bridge at a town in northern Italy called Senigallia. We were called at 0315 and immediately arose and ate breakfast in order to be at Group Headquarters by 0445 for a mission briefing. At this briefing, we were told the known facts of the mission. The mission plan was to take-off at 0730 and climb to 5,000 feet over the field and assemble in formation. We were then to climb to an altitude of 15,000 feet, which was to be our bombing altitude for the target. We were to climb on course over the Adriatic Sea, drop our bombs on our target, which was on the coast and head back to sea and back to the field. However, due to the weather the mission was cancelled.

Due to cancellation of the mission, Col. Glantzberg called for volunteers for a six ship formation to carry out the mission at a low level bombing attack of 75 feet. Naturally, the "Spirit of Hollywood" was one of the six

ships. Our bomb load was three 500-pound bombs per ship. However, due to the fact that ordnance could not obtain the proper bomb fuses, the mission was not run.

April 2, 1944

This was the day that we actually flew and completed our first combat mission. Our target was the marshaling yards at Bihac, Yugoslavia. Our bomb load was thirty clusters of fragmentation bombs.

We were called and arose at 0315, ate breakfast, got our equipment together and went to Group Headquarters for a briefing at 0530.

Our primary target was Bihac, Yugoslavia. Our secondary target was Knin, and the third alternate was Drnis, both in Yugoslavia.

Our take-off time was 0730 and we climbed to 15,000 feet over Nolfi; then proceeded on course, continually climbing until the altitude of 20,000 feet was reached. We crossed the Adriatic Sea and entered Yugoslavia with no opposition of any kind. Everything seemed so peaceful there that it was a shame to drop bombs there but nevertheless we dropped them. At Bihac, there were the marshaling yards, but also there were troop concentrations and other military installations.

We reached our IP which was near a little town, Martin Brod, and turned on our bombing run. Our bomb run was about seven minutes at the end of which we dropped our load of bombs and knocked out our target. We saw no fighters over the target and were not bothered by flak. However, some of the ships which were behind us said there was considerable flak coming up.

We turned from the target and proceeded

(Continued on page 23)

461ST BOMB GROUP
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2020

Cash Balance - November 1, 2019

Checking account	<u>\$9,875</u>
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Income

Reunion income	0
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Dues and memberships	<u>95</u>
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Total Income	<u>95</u>
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Expenses

Reunion expenses	1,524
------------------	-------

Liberaider expenses	825
---------------------	-----

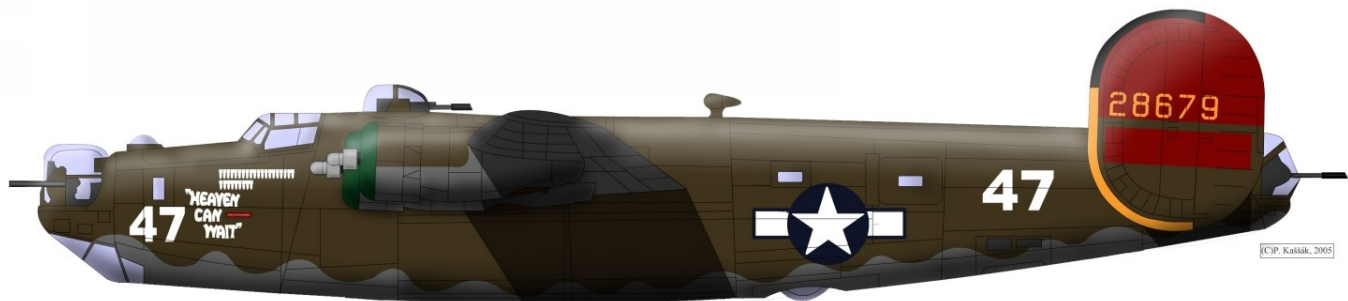
Other expenses	<u>400</u>
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Total expenses	<u>2,749</u>
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Net income for the year	<u>(2,654)</u>
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Cash Balances - October 31, 2020

Checking account	<u><u>\$7,221</u></u>
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(Continued from page 21)

west to the coast once more. Shortly after leaving the target, there was an accident in the formation which resulted in the loss of two airplanes and their crews. Lt. Wilson and crew of our squadron was one crew and the other was Lt. Zumsted from another squadron.

We saw three fighters shortly after leaving the target. They were Focke-Wulf 190s, but only looked us over and left, much to the disgust of our gunners, who seem to be getting a little "bloodthirsty".

Upon reaching the coastline of Yugoslavia, we turned and returned to our base, losing altitude as we returned. We arrived at Cerignola about 1300.

Summary of the mission goes something like this:

No fighters encountered.

No or little flak.

Target completely covered with bombs.

Two airplanes lost.

Total flight time: 5 hours and 50

minutes

So ended the first successful combat mission for the "Spirit of Hollywood" and her crew.

The crew completed six missions before being reported "Missing" over Budapest, Hungary.

The reports of the last five missions are unobtainable due to the fact the writer lost contact with the crew. The reason for loss of contact was due to the writer being physically grounded for two months during which time the crew was reported "Missing".

After being returned to flying status, the writer, Lt. Robert M. Sanders, continued flying combat missions until he, himself, was shot down.

By luck he was returned to Allied territory and in due time returned to the United States, thus temporarily completing the history of Crew 49.

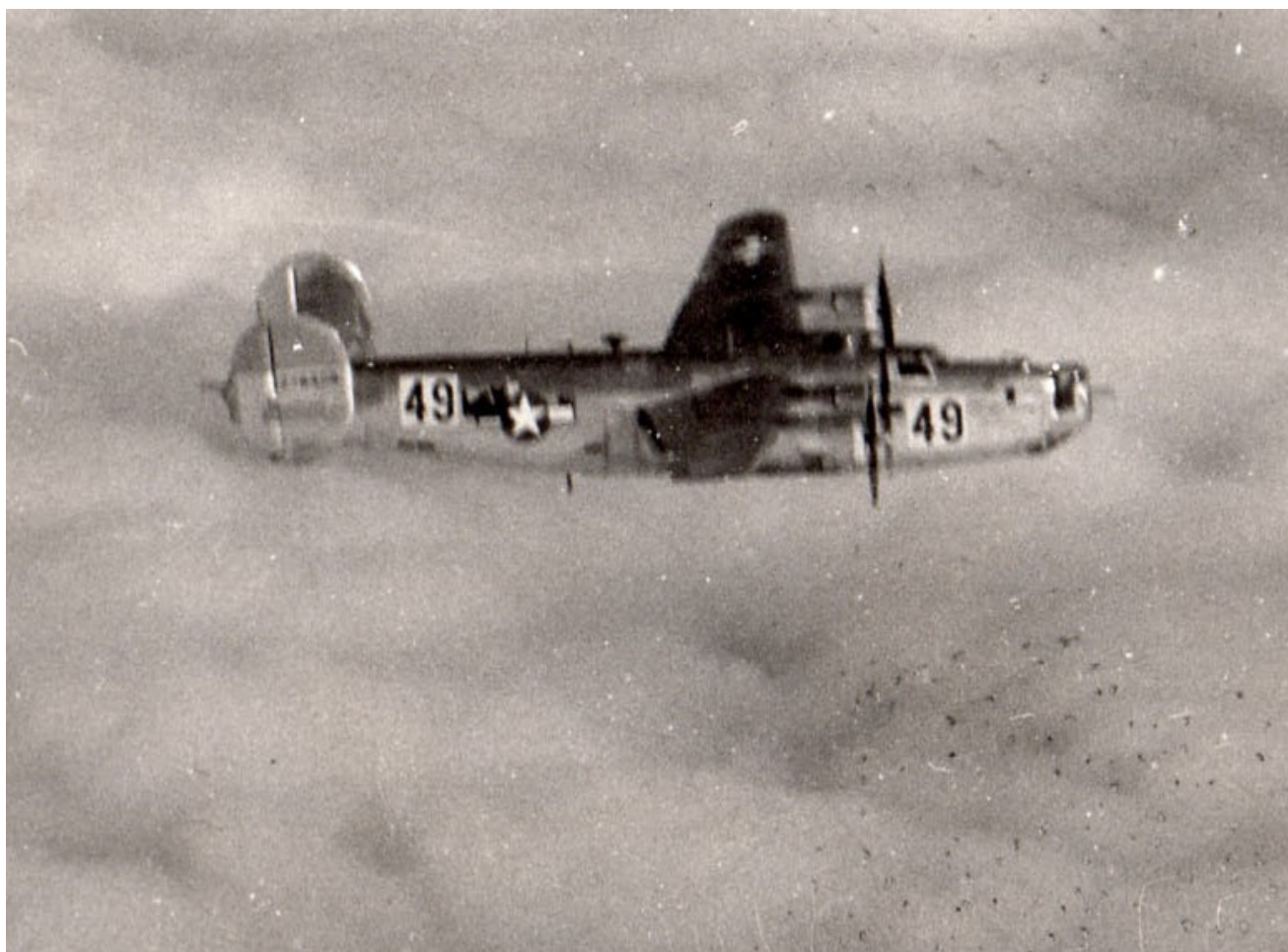
Sincerely,
Robert M. Sanders



Standing L-R: Reed, George E. (N); Mowery, Paul S. (P) [KIA]; Gloria Jean; Owens, George L. Jr. (CP) [KIA]; Sanders, Robert M. (B)

Kneeling L-R: Dean, Harry E. (TG); Johnson, Lenard S. (WG); Zippilli, Joseph S. (E/TT); Moreno, John V. 'Bob' (NG); Hoch, Daniel R. (BG)

Not Pictured - Childs, Cayton (RO/WG)



Ship No. 49
B-24G-16-NT
Serial No. 42-78408



Lt. George L. Owens, Jr.

Mission #7

Mission #07

13 April 1944

Target: Duna Tokol Aircraft Components Factory, Budapest, Hungary

For the seventh mission, which was against the Duna Tokol Aircraft Components Factory at Budapest, RDX bombs were used for the first time by this Group. Major Burke flew as Group leader for the first time. On this mission a total of 58 enemy aircraft were seen. Several encounters were experienced, three enemy planes were destroyed and three more claimed as probable. Twin-engine enemy airplanes fired rockets at the formation. Single engine enemy airplanes flew parallel with the Group at a safe distance and radioed headings, altitude, and air speed to their ground installations. Flak over the target was intense, accurate, and heavy. Two bombers were lost over the target. 1st Lt. Charles W. Bauman, flying the deputy lead position in "A" Flight of the second Section, had part of a wing shot off by flak. His plane fell into the plane in the number 4 position of the same flight, which was piloted by 2nd Lt. Paul S. Mowery. A third plane flown by 2nd Lt. Kay B. Steele, which had come off the target with the formation, failed to return to the base. Colonel Glantzberg, who was flying as co-pilot in a plane in the second Section, led a small formation of planes in chasing attacking JU-88s away from this damaged plane. He was unable, however, to stay with the plane because of an undercast. Fifteen planes were damaged over this target.

Again the Group turned in an excellent mission by dropping 45 percent of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point on a comparatively rectangular building well hidden in woods.



Bomb strike photo
Mission #7
Duna Tokol Aircraft Components Factory, Budapest, Hungary

461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

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