



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 4, No. 2

JULY 1987

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

ALL ROADS, AIRWAYS, AND WATERWAYS LEAD TO THE 1987 461st BOMB GROUP REUNION AT TARRYTOWN, NY!!!!

Hang in there fellows, there's only TWO more months to go until we have our reunion! We know of four hundred bodies that will be milling around the lobby of the Marriott Hotel in Tarrytown looking for that old buddy that said he was coming to this reunion. "Now did he say to meet him under the potted palm—or was it near the darn thing—has anybody seen Joe?" "No Lady, you did NOT belong to this outfit". "We were Fighters—not Lovers." "Now who threw that size 18 shoe?" "Don't you know its against regulations to destroy Government property?" What do you mean that your Father hasn't stopped talking for two days and he never talks at home?"

For those of you that have misplaced your registration form we are including one for your use in this issue of the LIBERAIDER. A detailed schedule will be available at the Hotel upon your arrival.

Last month the Reunion Committee met at Tarrytown and West Point to look over the final plans and goals for the 1987 Reunion. The reception was wonderful!



1987 REUNION COMMITTEE

L/R Robert Hayes (766), Fred Hill (764), Tom Javaruski (764) and Frank O'Bannon

Two changes were made at the Hotel. The first change will be the presentation of the West Point briefing, by their staff, at the Marriott Hotel at 8 P.M. on Thursday night, October 1st. This change will reduce the number of times that we have to unload and load the buses during our tour. The other change that will be welcomed by many, is that we have obtained a room for each Squadron

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"Miss Lace" No. 15, B-24L-11-FO 44-49511

Last A/C lost in combat by the 461st Bomb Group. A/C was assigned to the 764th BS.

LAST WAR TIME CASUALTY IS SUFFERED BY THE 764th BOMB SQUADRON

"Mission No. 222, 25 April 1945—Linz Main Marshalling Tard, Austria

With the offensive in Italy progressing successfully, the Air Force suddenly turned to bombing in support of the Russian armies on the Southeastern front. The mission on 25 April 1945 was to Linz, Austria, with the Main Marshalling Yard as the primary target. Maj. Phillips led the mission with Lt. Col. Gregory leading the second attack unit. In view of the extremely heavy anti-aircraft fire encountered, which damaged 11 of the 26 planes over target, the bombing was exceptionally good. Of the bombs dropped, 55 percent were plotted within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point.

The plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Lawrence R. Toothman was lost to flak over the target. The plane piloted by 1st Lt. Richard F. Reiland had a brief encounter with a FW-190 which opened fire from 600 yards. When the alert gunners fired back, the Fock Wolf turned away and headed north to Germany".

From the Official Group History

The 461st LIBERAIDER
461st Bombardment Group (H)
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Inactivated: 27 August 1945
Incorporated: 25 November 1985

CORPORATE HDQRS: Broadway at Pearl & Main, Box 838, Council Bluffs, IA 51502

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LIBERAIDER

Frank C. O'Bannon—Editor
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Permission is granted to use articles provided source is mentioned.



767th ENGINEERING SECTION—ITALY 1944
Wayne E. Pifer "Only 2699 more gallons to go!"

REUNION ATTENDEES

The State of New York has issued a coupon book to aid its visitors. It is recommended that all Reunion Attendees call Toll Free 1-800-637-8800 to receive the book before you leave home! It is entitled "I Love NY".

You can obtain a similar kit from the Vermont Travel Division, Dept R801, 134 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602.

CBers HEADING FOR TARRYTOWN, NY

461st Members heading for Tarrytown should check in on Channel 7 at 0900-0915 hrs. and 1300-1315 hrs. each day you are on the road. Your best friend may be a few miles ahead of you! Your call sign for this mission is: "LIBERAIDER (plus your Sqdn Color)".

POW MEDAL DELAYED

Production problems have delayed distribution of the new prisoner-of-war medal. This medal should be ready by December.

99th BOMB GROUP RECOGNITION

Hugh Hanley (765) has received recognition from the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society in their May Newsletter. Hugh's article covering the Odertal Mission was excerpted and their Editor concluded that Hugh "generally had a hard day at the office".

The Editor concluded with "So now you know where Odertal is (or was)." Thanks George!

* * * * *

1987 DUES

If you have not paid your 1987 dues, Glenn Stempel, Box 638, Oakland, IA 51560, is looking for you!



767th OFFICERS CLUB

L/R Lts. T.C. Douglas, M.G. Morgan, J.W. Coles, F.N. Rawis, and Maj. M.M. Pruitt (461)



Crew #13—764th Bomb Sqdn—Last crew to be lost in combat—25 April 1945—Linz, Austria
 Standing L/R—L.R. Toothman (P), W. Jones KIA (CP), V. Edmonds (B), P. Ashworth (N)
 Kneeling L/R—O.L. Scogins (E), J.L. LaZier (G), J.H. Hoskins (G), H.E. Acheson (G), R.C. Baker (RO), D.A. Morrison (G)

(Continued from page 1)

OUR LAST MISSION, April 25, 1945

By John L. LaZier
 Replacement Crew #13
 764th Bomb Squadron

"As the war was coming to an end we felt we had it made. Most of our missions were milk runs. Large concentrations of planes, one mission with 10,400 planes in the air. After a few missions I began to feel that the flak could not hit our plane and they became boring, much like a training flight in the States. Then word came through the grapevine that we were going on a rough mission. The target was to be Linz, Austria. I remember as I looked at the map that it would be a long mission but my biggest worry was air sickness because I always got sick on a long run. We did encounter some fighters but the big problem was the long bomb run. As we approached our target the flak was heavier than usual and as the toggler released the bombs we were hit by 88mm flak.

I later learned that co-pilot Jones was killed and the pilot, Lt. Toothman, was badly injured. Our plane went into a slipping dive but with the help of engineer Scogins they were able to level off long enough so that we were all able to bail out. Everyone but the co-pilot got out and made it through the war. The pilot and navigator, F/O Ashworth, were badly injured with broken arms and legs and in much pain.

The crew was split up as we parachuted in the mountains. I landed in a valley near a small stream. I ditched my para-

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REGISTRATION, DESIGNATED BANQUET SEATING AND BUS ASSIGNMENT

When you arrive at the Marriott Hotel you will find the Hotel registration desk to the right and the 461st Registration Area will be located on the balcony of the main lobby, starting at 9 A.M., October 1st. At our registration desks you will be given your packet that will include your name tags, squadron pins, bus tickets, meal tickets for the Bear Mtn Inn lunch, color coded as to selection, and the Saturday night Banquet. Please identify yourself, and squadron, as the volunteers manning the tables do not know all of you. A schedule of events will also be included in the handout.

The name badges will be color coded indicating to which squadron you belong. Colors, as might be expected, are those that Axis Sally referred to when she welcomed us to Italy as the "Rainbow Group" - blue—Hqtrs, green—764th, White—765th, yellow—766th, and red—767th.

Tables will be in this area for banquet seating selection, West Point tour bus number assignment, and a PX of 461st items. Lists of attendees, by squadrons, will be displayed in this area, and each person is requested to check that they are in the hotel and what room they can be found in—maybe. We will also have a bulletin board for your messages.

Assigned squadron rooms will be located on the second floor of the hotel. The attendees list will also be on display in these rooms.

Early arrivals check in O'Bannon's suite for your packet.



767th BOMB SQUADRON—GOWEN FLD—AUGUST 1943

PX MANAGER

We have a new manager of the PX supplies. Wally Robinson (767) has agreed to lighten the load of your President by taking over responsibility for this part of our organization. Effective immediately you can mail your request for PX items to Wally Robinson, 3 E. Cardot, Ridgeway, PA 15853.

WHEN YOU MISS A REUNION

By Dr. Eric V. Hawkinson, Editor, 7th Photo Recon Group Association, Inc.

What interest could one have in someone you hardly knew forty-three years ago? When you were thrust together with a bunch of guys with dissimilar interests? Except for two interests, maybe! "Where are the girls?" "How soon can I get out of this man's army and get on with my life?"

I've heard more than one man say, "Why should I go to a reunion when I hardly know anybody?" Sure, people change! Priorities change!

Forty years ago we were the teenagers, and mostly 20 year olds, with a few ancient 30 year olds sprinkled about, who had a job to do and we did it. Some of our gang, enlisted men as well as officers, opted to "stay in" and emerged upon retirement as master sergeants, colonels and generals. Some went on to fight in other wars. Most of us didn't.

In the intervening time, most of us faced tough times, challenges, maybe even families, and good times and maybe even some excitement.

The majority of us went back to work or back to school. A lot of us had to join the 52-20 club and search high and low for housing, clothing, food and survival. Now a lot of that is behind us and we are bordering, maybe even have reached retirement.

There is probably no better feeling you can now get in retirement than to share a meal, swap stories, share a tourist-oriented trip and close the forty year gap to tell of your joys and sorrows in a reunion atmosphere. You will be surprised as to how many will recognize you! Even tell you some things you said or did back in 1943-44-45. If you want this forgotten, they will even discretely not bring up those events.

Even if you come to a reunion thinking you will know no one, when you leave you will find you gained several dozen new friends!

—EVH

ED: Dr. Hawkinson has granted permission to forward on to you the above editorial on the why's of reunions.

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Italy—1944—765th Sqdn Area
C. Priest, R. McLemore, J. Toney

(Continued from page 1)

to have for their entire time at the Reunion. These rooms will be secured while you are not there which will enable you to leave your photo albums there, along with any other items that you wish to share with all. It is requested that all personnel leave their TOOL BOXES at home. **YOU MUST REMOVE YOUR PROPERTY FROM THESE ROOMS BY 4PM ON OCTOBER 3RD!**

A big PLUS for our tour at West Point is that during our Memorial Service, at the Cadet Chapel, the world's largest pipe organ will play as part of this service.

It is recommended that walking shoes be worn. Most of the tour will be by bus, but we will disembark at the Cadet Chapel, Ft. Putman, the Parade Ground, and at Bear Mtn Inn for lunch. From the Parade Ground stop we hope that you will have time to visit Inspiration Point, the Museum, and reassemble in the stands to view the formation of the Cadets for the Noon Mess Formation (12:05). Handicapped facilities at Ft. Putman are non-existent and not the best at the Chapel. I am certain that some of this will be overcome by our men.

SEE YOU AT TARRYTOWN!!!!



767th TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT—ITALY 10-21-1944

FR: H.G. Sampson; R.A. Woodson. 2nd Row: Hudson, C.A.; Safe, Lane; R.P. Estrada; E.J. Davo; R.R. Kuchinski; Devlin; G.A. Bouffard. 3rd Row: H.E. Martin; L.L. Williams; H.B. Belcher; P.W. Clark; G.A. Thuemier; F.M. Couch; E.B. White; C.D. Fann; Moran; and Lt. S. Ozanich.

GERMAN AND ITALIAN TRANSLATORS NEEDED

Milton Radovsky has requested the aid of any and all persons that can translate to and from German or Italian to contact him. Milton is gathering facts from all sides for his book on the Linz Raid. Please contact him at 10710 Lockridge Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20901. This is the raid that we lost our shirts on.



765th BOMB SQDN—ENGINEERING SECTION—1944
J. Walunas, E.G. Rice, V.C. Thomas, F.H. Norcross, K.E. Hunt

Mail Call

Dear Frank,

I was sure glad to find that the 461st was looking for former members. Pete Tompas and Bob Basiliere are the only two I have kept in contact with. Bob may know some of the men in the New England area. I know he can get in touch with "Muff" Bryer, the Line Chief of the 765th. They both live in Seekonk, MA. I called Bob and he said he would get in touch with you.

I'm sorry I missed the reunion in Albuquerque, NM, and I was there about the time of your meeting.

Maybe I can make the one in New York as my youngest daughter lives in Warrenton—just four hours away....

Here are copies of the few orders I have. I hope they can be of some use in your search for former members.

Sincerely, R. E. Fox—765th

* * * * *

Dear Mr. O'Bannon,

Many thanks for your letter explaining the details of our former association. Was unaware such an organization existed.

Eight members of my crew were killed on October 4, 1944. The only other survivor is Emory Clippert. He was our ball gunner and had to leave his position because of an electrical failure in the turret. I was unaware of what had happened to him until he discovered my name in the POW magazine and we met last October for the first time since our final mission.

Again thanks, I'm forwarding my application to Glenn Stempel and look forward to a happy tenure in the group.

Sincerely, James P. Walsh—766th

(Ed: Oran Fulton (765) sent Jim's name in.)

* * * * *

Dear Sir:

Please remove this address for Everett C. Kamps, you definitely got the wrong party, as I am (A) female, (B) happened to be on the wrong side of the war, growing up in Germany ducking British bombers, and © do not have any blood relatives in the U.S., so I can't be of any help to you.

Wishing you continued success in 1987.

Elke C. Kamps

(ED: We are still looking for Everett!)



767th BOMB SQUADRON—GOWEN FLD—AUGUST 1943

ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION BOMBARDIERS, INC
Lee Highway P.O. Box 254
Arlington, VA 2209-9963 Eagle Harbor, MI 49951

15th AF ASSOCIATION LIBERATOR CLUB
P.O. Box 6325 P.O. Box 841
March AFB, CA 92518 San Diego, CA 92112

B-24 UNIT CLEARINGHOUSE ALUMNI OF STALAG LUFT 3
P.O. Box 4738 David C. Connor
Hollywood, FL 33083 7050 W. Hoodview Pl
Beaverton, OR 97005

AF ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY 50th ANNIVERSARY B-24
Clayton C. David Bob Vickers
215 Dennis Lane 6424 Torreon Dr. NE
St Clairville, OH 43950 Albuquerque, NM 87109

AVIATION CADET ALUMNI ASSOC EX-POWS, STALAG LUFT 4&6
Robert C. White Leonard Rose
54 Seton Trail 8103 E. 50th St.
Oarmond Beach, FL 32074 Indianapolis, IN 46226

THE MARCH FIELD MUSEUM FOUNDATION
March AFB, CA 92518

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chute in the overhanging bank of the stream and headed for the woods about 300 years away. As you can guess, parachutes are highly visible at high noon on a sunny day. Also, the natives were trained to hunt down the survivors of air crews. I could see civilian farmers with rifles looking for me and I only had a side arm. I didn't think I had too much of a chance of getting away. I had injured my right wrist on impact and the gun wasn't much good to me. Consequently I was captured by an Austrian farmer with a rifle about an hour after landing. He only spoke German but I understood "comrades" were captured. As he walked me toward a farm house he had not taken my pistol but I kept it in my shoulder holster. I learned he had someone at the farm house that could speak English. It turned out to be his daughter, about 15 years old, and she told me two of my comrades, Baker and Hoskins, were being held in another farm house down the road. She also said they were injured. I agreed to go to them and see who it was and how badly they were injured. It turned out Baker had a broken leg but Hoskins was O.K. The farm woman gave us food, warm milk and warm beer. They seemed friendly and treated us well. There was a German soldier home on medical leave at this farm. Through an interpreter he said it would be best for us to hang our guns on the outside of the door. The German soldiers saw us come down so they were on their way to capture us. As we looked out the windows we saw about 30 soldiers surrounding the farm house so out on the doorknob went our guns. An officer and two sgts came in and captured us with little fanfare.

They had a small car so they loaded Baker in with the three soldiers and took him away. He eventually had his leg set and a cast applied. Hoskins and I were given a military escort and we walked 23 km to the town of Amstetten. We were then held in a hotel where we met with the rest of our crew and learned of the death of Lt. Jones. There were also some Russian prisoners in the hotel that we never saw after that night. The next day we were interrogated by an English speaking lady at what was probably the courthouse. Lt. Toothman, F/O Ashworth and Baker were eventually taken to a hospital in Amstetten and treated for their wounds. The rest of the crew was taken to a small artillery camp outside of town and housed in their brig. This was the most interesting part of our internment.

We were treated very well and a German Cpl Fritz Preibisch took us under his wing and saw to it that we were as comfortable as possible. As this was near the end of the war the Germans were short of everything, but they gave us what they had in food. The guards were young soldiers who had learned some English in school so we could communicate. Some guards had older brothers in American POW camps in the States so they were good to us. They would bring us picture magazines, some cigarettes and some food. They also took us out for walks in the countryside and even

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PHILADELPHIA MINI REUNION

Following the meeting at Tarrytown, on to Philadelphia for Millie's 50th High School Reunion. This time things were a little better organized, and I contacted the men that lived in this area early! When you put the above bunch in one room there just isn't time to get all of the stories told. At the table I was honored to have two of our better shots sitting on each side of me—Vito Parisi and Joe Boblasky. During the talking it was determined that I had flown my 50th mission with Joe and was one of the men that certified to his victory. Both men are credited with FW-190's. The meeting was broken up with further discussions to take place at Tarrytown. You just can't beat those men of the 461st.



Philadelphia, PA May 30, 1987

Mini-reunion of the 461st Bomb Group

Standing L/R Vito Parisi (764), John McGrath (765), Joe Boblasky (764), Dave McQuillan (767), Bob Fisher (767), Frank O'Bannon (764).

Sitting L/R Millie O'Bannon, Louis Bell (764) Joe Mullahey (461), Mrs Mullahey, Sally McQuillan.



Crew #7 764th Bomb Sqdn, Italy—1944

Front row: E. Zimmerman (G), H. Baldauf (RO), C. McAfee (G), B. Thomas (AE), H. Kursawe (G)

Back row: L. Delameter (B), L. Britton (CP), W. Pusso (E), V. A. "Dusty" Rhodes (N), E. Veiluva (P)

765th SQUADRON INSIGNIA

765th members have requested clarification regarding the squadron insignia used by us and the "Donald Duck" insignia that was used in Italy.

During our stay at Hammer Field a contest was held, within each squadron, to determine a design to be selected as that squadron's insignia. Final selection was made and the drawings of the insignias were approved and filed. We have color slides of these insignias for our use.

Just when the "Donald Duck" insignia came into being is not known. There is no record that this insignia was ever approved by the Army. We would like to know more about the procurement of this insignia if anyone knows.



Munich, Germany, October 4, 1944

"Landsberg Tower—This is No. 39 requesting landing instructions. I have two burning, one so-so, and one working. Yes, I consider this an emergency!"

1st Lt. W. E. Waggoner leaving the formation with two engines on fire.

From Dave Nelson—765th

Here's a small story that might help justify all the good work the 461st is doing.

"Dear Mr. Waggoner, I was a radio operator on John Moore's crew in the 765th and have recently come in contact with the group now organizing an assembly of men from those times. The reason I am writing you is that I just received a Directory (461st) which listed your name. This was surprising because I thought you had been lost on one of the raids. In fact, I have a photograph of a plane going down which I've always believed was yours, with engines #2 and #4 on fire. I watched as long as I could (it was a little heavy going just then), and didn't see any chutes, hence my belief that you were all lost".

I got a call from Bill who said it was he and would be delighted to get the photo which I sent off right away".

THE SAGA OF AIRCRAFT NUMBER 39 CONTINUES:

31st July 1986

Re: Captured B-24 461st GP

Dear Mr. O'Bannon,

Found your address in the SORTIE Roster. I am a member of the 15th Air Force for about two years and I always find the magazine most interesting. For several time I am working on a book on American aircraft which landed or crashed in Germany or German occupied territory in WWII.

One of the aircraft which subsequently flew for the Luftwaffe was a ship from the 461st BG, 765th Squadron, SN 42-78247, Individual Aircraft Number 39. I am enclosing a fact sheet and also a sheet showing the aircraft with German markings. (Ed: A/C is silver in color with what appears to be white cowls. It is equipped with radar. Pics are very poor—have asked for good one). For my research work I would be very interested in getting some information, also the names of the crew, which brought No. 39 down in Germany, Landsberg-Penzing Field, (Mission was to Munich-Bahnhofe (RR) on October 4, 1944), or better their current addresses, so that I can get in touch with them. Further I would be interested in getting a picture of that aircraft if ever possible. Would you please give me the address of the 461st Bomb Group Historian, so that I can get in touch with him, too. Additional information is highly appreciated. I thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and am looking forward to hearing from you soon. I am 24 years old and living just outside of Zurich, the largest city in Switzerland. I really enjoyed a stay in your country four years ago.

Sincerely, Heiri (Hans-Heiri Stapfer)

ED: The crew on this flight were: W.E. WAGGONER (P), N. G. SCHLARP (CP) (KIA), R. R. BRINA (N), P.D. SHAFFER (B), R. D. VINSON (RW), F. C. HAWTHORNE (LW), A. R. TURGEON (TT), J. A. PEEBLES (BT), W. W. SMITH (NT), E. J. KLEPPER (TT). Need a picture of this A/C while it was at Torretta. A/C number was one that came in as a replacement. Who was the crew chief that has been wondering all these years just what happened to his A/C? This A/C with German markings appeared in the Spring 1987 issue of the B-24 Liberator Club's newsletter, "Briefing".

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(Continued from page 6)

took us to an artillery range and showed us some of their armament and anti-tank weapons. We had a Sgt, who spoke good English, tell us he was the artillery gunner that probably shot us down. He said he fired 36 artillery guns with one sight making it almost like shooting a big shotgun. We also had visits from fighter pilots and other German officers. One Col. Brought us a pack of cigarettes.

As the war progressed we could see the artillery light up the sky at night so we knew that the Americans or Russians were getting closer to Amstetten. As the American line advanced the Germans decided to move us back. They took a couple of us each day to visit our crew members in the hospital and we were glad to see the care the Catholic Nuns were giving our buddies. On these trips to the hospital they kept us from being seen by the town's people, they were unhappy about the destruction of their homes and businesses and they were hostile. It was sad to see the small children being placed on trains to be evacuated for safety sake. They did not want to be separated from their families and most of the young cried.

One night the guards brought us German coats and hats and told us to put them on because we were being moved through Nazi lines. We were given guns and grenades and placed in the back of a panel truck. We were told not to say anything as we passed through the roadblocks. Fritz and two other German soldiers did all the talking as we stopped at roadblocks. If they opened the rear doors of the panel truck we were to open fire and try to run the roadblock. Much to the relief of all of us we were let through all night. We then arrived at the Chateau of the camp commandant and put in an upstairs bedroom with many beds. We were told we were free and we all fell asleep. When we woke up there was a Nazi guard at our door and we were once again prisoners. We were then taken to a hotel in Hollenstein-On-The-Ybbs, and held in a room with bars on the windows. We were on the third floor of a hotel that was converted into a German barracks. We would hear the soldiers coming and going with their hob nail boots. Then one morning all was quiet and our door was unlocked. The night before a young German of about 17 years of age said he could get one of us through the lines to the Americans. We agreed to try and Achison was chosen to go. When we opened the door that morning the halls were deserted. We then went into the rooms of the soldiers and found American bayonets and other articles of U.S. soldiers. The Germans were probably going to try to surrender to the Americans. We then went downstairs to the kitchen and the civilians told us the war was over.

They then cooked us a meal of meat, potatoes and cheese and bread. I will always remember that meal. We then started to walk to where we thought the American lines

were. A German truck came by and picked us up. There were soldiers in the back and they had bottles of wine of which they shared. As we rode down the road I stood up in the back of the truck and looked over the canopy. What I saw was five American jeeps, American flag flying and Achison in the lead jeep, he had made it back! We celebrated then and later that night with a newly promoted Col. Of the 71st Infantry. After that we traveled around German for a month and eventually landed at Camp Lucky Strike in LeHarve, France. Then on home!

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DELTA AIR LINES DISCOUNT

Delta Air Lines, in cooperation with the 461st Bomb Group, is offering a special discount which affords a 40%-70% discount to New York City for attendees traveling on Delta round trip to its 1987 Reunion.

Call 1-800-241-6760 for your reservation 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time daily. REFER TO FILE NUMBER: U0390. This special discount is available ONLY through this number. If you normally use the services of a travel agent, have them place your reservations through the above toll-free number to obtain the same advantages for you. Remember some fares have restrictions, and seats may be limited. Check with Delta for the best discount applicable to your itinerary! Originating travel will be allowed Sept 28 to Oct 3. Seven days advance ticketing is required and a maximum stay of 21 days will be permitted.

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FOOTBALL TICKETS—WEST POINT

Bob Hayes has offered to obtain tickets for the West Point football game on Saturday 3 October. Cost of a ticket is \$13. Request at this late date will be handled as best he can. Those interested should call him at (914) 638-0694, or write to 31 Grand St., New York City, NY 10956. At present there are thirty members going.



PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN (764) PR's OUR GROUP
Bill Harrison's new car license tags

April, 1945.

THE 461st LIBERAIDER

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765th Scribe Recalls Busy Year

By S/Sgt. Edward A. Zelsler, Jr.

DO YOU REMEMBER the day we arrived at our field in Italy... that ambulance train at that certain railway station which almost inflicted casualties on the squadron before it even reached its overseas destination... how we felt when we first glanced at what was to be our home in Italy... those first few weeks of converting barren farm buildings into our headquarters, sleeping on the ground, eating in the open, and utilizing straddle-trench type latrines.

Those first trips to town to observe native life and imbibe the products of the local vineyards... the big deal it was to teach there the more descriptive expressions of Army slang... whistling at the signorinas with their king size accessories... The opening of the officer's "Club Amazon."

Our first mission against the enemy... how we "sweated out" the return of the crews... the colorful pictures on our original combat ships: "Leading Lady", "Invicta", "Rhode Island Red", "Big Stinky", "The Unstoppable", and others... the feeling of pride in being a part of our giant war machine crushing the Axis... the realization of the cost of war not in money but in human lives and suffering as buddies failed to return from combat flights and others came back having shed their blood to preserve our American way of life.

The initiation of malaria control and discipline... our use of nets to keep "Ann" from sharing our "sacks"... the repellent that kept even our best friends at a distance... The opening of the EM's "Skunk Hollow"... the swell first night party which put us all in good spirits... The construction of the squadron shower and how it was the envy of the entire Group.

THEN THERE WAS Colonel Glanberg's clever way of scolding us because we were only "only first in the entire 15th Air Force". The relieved expressions on the faces of the men as they finished... their radiant smiles as they gave one last glance over the area as they left for the USA and home... The arrival of our replacement crews... the delight the veterans took in telling them manufactured red stories about the rigors of combat... almost enough to make them flak happy.

AND REMEMBER... The signs on the supply bulletin board telling the newmen to pick up their flak repellent... The day a certain pilot gave the area a buzz-job that never will be forgotten... causing a certain staff officer to lose his footing and hit the ground on a tender spot... The ground defense, during which we defended our area against a simulated attack by enemy paratroopers... the slit trenches we dug after the Nazis had been pushed north of Rome.

The welcome project of lining up the tents into company streets... The Yankee ingenuity we used in preparing the squadron area to withstand a second winter in Italy... the installation of lights in the ground echelon tent area... the "Rubio Goldberg" generator created from an old motor-cycle engine by several members of the engineering section who were tired of being kept in the dark... Our first

Thanksgiving on foreign soil... mutton turkey for all... the luxury of plates and tablecloths... The large scale construction projects... the new cinderly room, supply building, garage, dispensary, mail room, barber shop... all springing up in true Henry Kaiser fashion to give the area the appearance of a thriving community... our first meal in the new EM chow palace, with its marble-topped tables and tiled floor... it didn't improve the flavor of O rations but made eating more of a pleasure.

Christmas 1944... a very ordinary day... combat as usual... packed from home... parties in the clubs on the Eve to create some of the right atmosphere... How we rediscovered what we already knew... that these holidays mean nothing deprived of the company and affection of our family and friends... The opening of the new EM day room and then later the cocktail lounge... How we watched the battle lines in the West creep ever closer toward a junction with Red Army units inside Germany...

ever hoping that the "master race" would realize the futility of continuing to struggle against inevitable doom.

Those Old Familiar Faces

Wild Bill "Bring 'Em Alive" White, cotten, complete with sun helmet, dark glasses and cane... no doubt looking for a tropical Hershey... Joe Kuczycki... proud to become a citizen of the land for which he has been fighting "Bright Eyes" Kapote... the squadron Sinatra and harmonica virtuoso.

"Rub A Dub" Frank... authority on Guatemala and coffee... best customer of the Skunk Hollow bar... holder of the world's non-stop gum-chewing record... Jim "The Head" Koval... his popularity varies with the amount of incoming mail... Jim "The Seal" Greenberg... combination Henry Morgan and Harry James.

Major Baker's radiant smile as he visited each department upon his return to the squadron after his month's absence... "Chop-Chop" Young... battles the Axis with Chinese letters painted on his B-24... Alfred "Bill" Henry... knuckleknocker from Powder River.

Jake "The Voice" Geonardi and Muff "The Body" Fryer taking their daily weight-lifting workout... it is rumored that they have completed the course and have sent for the muscles Jack "Colonel" Kramer's "Guinea" laborers caught working a la WPA... "Haystack Hattie"... volunteer tail gunner who laid down on the job... "Pappy" Curries... needed a rat trap in his supercharger... Julius Cherry... a tree that didn't grow in Brooklyn... Howard "You've Never Eaten Better In Your Life" Peterson... the "C" nation king... greeting his clientele of chowhounds at the opening of the new mess hall.

M. A. "Rebel" Hunt and Joe "The" Potter... still betting on the South to win the Civil war... Hear, Hear... You all... Sherd! the Walder... always carrying the torch for an old flame.

COMBAT STORY... "Long John" Tamborino struggling with "Short Stuff" Johnson... one can't reach above the belt and the other can't get below it... Two word portrait... "What Fer?"

Downs 14 Fighters



Downing 14 fighters in a furious battle over Linz, Austria, gunners on the 765th "All American" made history July 25, 1944.

Piloted by 1st Lt. Robert E. Arbuthnot, the ship came through the battle almost unscathed, despite the repeated attacks of the hordes of Nazi fighters. Two of the gunners, Sgt. Robert L. Molyneux, and T/Sgt. Hugh G. Baker, were credited with three each, while Sgt. Warren E. Moss, S/Sgt. Elza S. Massey, T/Sgt. Eric C. English, and S/Sgt. Roy M. Walkama all destroyed two apiece.

In the picture above the gunners and the ground crew pose in front of their ship the day after battle.

Bridge busting gets commendation

"An excellent job of bridge busting" said Maj. Gen. Nathan F. Twining, 15th AAF commander, commending the 461st for its job on the railroad bridge at Avignon, France, August 2.

From over 20,000 feet the Liberator's pin-pointed the 900 foot long, 15 feet wide steel and masonry bridge, destroying two of the six spans and damaging a third.

Lead bombardier was 1st Lt. Jack H. King, of Okaloosa, Iowa, 765th.

Baker Returns From MIA To Resume 765th Command

The latest in the 765th Bomb Squadron's line of nine commanders is Major Robert N. Baker of Albany, N.Y., who entered on his present duties December 22. Listed as missing following the February 21 mission to Vienna, he recently returned through the Russian lines to resume his command.

Prior to his arrival in this theater in August, Major Baker was an instructor in basic flying at Minter Field, Bakersfield, Calif. for two years. He has flown 22 missions, and wears the Purple Heart and also the DFC, which he received for the February 16 mission to Roennheim, Germany.

Former 765th commanders have been Capt. James E. Thackston, Lt. Col. Oltha H. Hardy, Jr., Major, Francis J. Hockmann, Lt. Col. Robert E. Applegate, Captain William J. Sock, Major Paul R. Yurkenis, Capt. Lester E. Briggs, Jr., and 1st John C. Sandall.



766th Man Recalls Year's Highspots

By Sgt. Ira L. Fethroth

We've gone a long way since the original cadre days of such men as Tenery, Hawkinson, Remy, Lautieri, St. H. Johnson, O. H. Campbell, Ellsberry, Hayce, Dietrich, Bishop, Tidwell, Ruble, and Zacek — to mention a few.

Everyone will always remember Captain Darden, our first CO, with the greatest respect. Do you recall the weekly beer parties in California? Along with the notable absence of mess kits, the parties featured on occasion Long John Tenery at the drums, Butch Maloof on the square-box and Boogie-Woogie Halverson on the ivory. Now Halverson is directing the grooviest band in these parts, while Butch is king of all that the officers survey — and eat — in the mess hall.

Do you remember S/Sgt. Leroy B. Duke leading us in song as we marched to the train on our way to POE?



The only one singing was our boy Duke. Then the long train ride — we recall with relish a verbal scrap between one Anzalone and Lane Riddie — Billy Newsome and his swell guitar — the pointed discussions Jim Campbell, Jr., and Bob Dunn continually had, aided and abetted by Jud (Georgia Peach) Moore. Then there was Jim Beaul, Jim McIntyre and Chuck Percival baiting the breccia across a card table, and Whitley Parbacher in charge of B flight, picking up after the guys and doing a great job of keeping them in line.

Sub Alert

None of us will ever forget our second night at sea and our first submarine alert. Or our first air raid, either — and how Joe Griffith, Bill Walls, Bill Tims and Jimmy Willis distinguished themselves by volunteering to help the gun crews by serving in the turret magazines during the attack.

Remember Max Genser, «the 1500 dollar kid»; «Father» Goss, the angel of the gaming tables (old Mitchell was in there pitching, too); and then there were those two ladies, Davidson and Liebmans, with their play-producing ambitions.

Finally debarkation, when we were whisked onto trucks and off to our first night in Italy. For those who didn't have to dream they dwell in marble halls it will be most easy to recall the cold marble floors. And did you see the Senator from Texas, the Hon. John Briley, cradling a bottle of vino, crooning as if it were an infant in his arms? From there we moved on to a three night stand via the 40 and 48, spending our first night sleeping in the mud (hardened combat troops that we were) and walking miles and miles for food. Last stop, you know where, and quarters in stables until the tents were set up. What a chow line — out in the open in all kinds of weather, mostly rain, and the trouble of keeping order in the line which fell to George Panagopoulos and the rest of his crew: Joe Maloney, George Nix, Bertie Valdes, Herb Bellmer, Eddie Ropewski, Johnny Bilinski, Chuck and Murphy.

Enlaid, Mens Club Notes: The opening in March, '44, with John Walcott the first president. He had the able assistance of Ray Valencia, Eddy Alaker, Milt Burrell, all back home now; Billy Borne with his flair for painting and sketching beautiful women on the walls; Ray Rivers and Teddy De Welles, barnum — Ray, too, had a flair for sketching. Did you ever get on the highly educational discussions between Dave Mullner and Bob Patterson, way back in the corner — and quiet little Wally Stewart. And a bow to Fred Lautieri, Sam Lipsitz, Larry Earnhart and Billy Glover who in recent months have done more than their share for the club.

John Tenery, the best first sergeant an outfit ever had, basks in the sunlight of fame just because he happens to come from the same state which has furnished our squadron with four commanders — Texas.

In the sports world you can't overlook that outstanding first baseman, George (Rabbit) Waldner; King Pin Jones, a scrappy shortstop; Joe (Ripper) Collins, a ball player's ball player; Jim Wharham, a top-notch key stone sack guard.

Personalities: Wild Bill Foley racing through the area on his beam; General Bodian carrying on the orderly room; Hawk Hawkinson with his favorite "You can't jump me for that one"; Beau Brummel Ruble, a very natty crew chief; the three Campbells — O.H., J.S., K.U. — all working in one Engineering office; Harry (PX) McGuire, who can't help it if he comes from Virginia; Gens (Always Dapper on Sunday) Fox, our hard-working mailman; Al (Outside Man) Tokar, labor administrator; Bob Remy, who was out for spring training a little early, threw an autograph which nicked the coach and bounced himself from the varsity; Del Cowley, who was the first in the group to win the Legion of Merit; our Bronze Star recipients, Buex Hastings, Elmo Niccolai, Ruble, Joe Hammer, Will Avery, Frank Kosac and Ray Johnson, who is always being bullied by Ralph (Prag) Griggs; Bob (I Love That Man) Reiter; Jack Bailey, the boy who knows all the answers when it comes to fixing a telephone — he has an able assistant in Bill Unger, the Allentown Squire.

Other Impressions

And Long George Cooper of Birmingham, Ala., the boy with a ready smile; Rip Davidson, now there's a character; Flat Top Dietrich, who sets the style with his hair-do; James J. Peeler and his good old Irish brogue; Jake Payma, a solid citizen of Sandstone, Minn.; the Gold Dust Twins, Fortuna and Pundino; Earl Fraser, a man who's happy when spirits are gay; Stu Gauthier, a gay young blade; J. J. Hains, who receives apples from his pupils; Lee Henry, who met a young lady from his home town in a USO show at our theater.

And of course there are the inseparable pals, Chester Higginbotham and Vinny Ruder; Russ MacEabern who always seems to be going out on patrol; Sid Margoka, worrying about the "wheels"; good old MacAdams, Pete Weigel's chief assistant in the dispensary; remember Johnny Molin and his cute little daughter at the California Christmas party?

Odd observations: Otis has been showing a lot of

Preview of CBI?



The Kim-Loo sisters appeared with one of the many USO shows that have entertained the Liberaiders overseas.

class lately; Lee Ostheimers' latest move is to apply for Infantry OCS; Shorty Picerno, who comes from Bridgeton, N.J., always talks about Philly. Shorty's better half, Artie Dampman, has taken himself down to Group these days Joe Quattrochi, lives every moment to the hilt in movie love scenes. That devil-may-care personality, John C. Reath, keeps a truck on the road with the beat of them Johnny Hengulis is everybody's friend on payday.

More personalities

George Ribeiro yearns to be in Idaho. Lou Riccardi, who turned cock with a vengeance; Bernie Saleman, an armorer who gives freely of his time to help Hairbreadth Harry in the PX; Wes Sammons, the genial overseer of the EM Club; Eddie Schmidt, a right smart operator in the medics; Joe Schwing bet the war would end when?; Harry Smoos, so young and beautiful; Johnny Speranza, small, dark and willing; Willis Turner, proud as hell of his home town, New Orleans; Frank Ulseny, the Longbrook, L.I., gent, who earned his pla-

ce in the theater as assistant to some magic spirit; Fred Warner, a very useful member of Transportation; Teddy Wise, sharp as a tack; Heaven help the working girl, as Flynn would say, when he gets back home; and to wind up, a salute to Grady Weeks, who volunteered for a second tour.

And this is close to the end of the trail. We couldn't mention everyone. Space does not allow that. To those who have been skipped, no offense. The lapse was not intentional. And let's all hope that soon we will all be where our dreams and thoughts have been for so many months.

200th a "Milk Run"

The double century mark in the bombing missions flown by the 461st bomb group was reached March 25 with the bombing of the Nagran oil refinery in the Vienna area.

The mission was characterized by neither flak nor fighters.

Major Phillips is 766th's Fourth Texan Commander

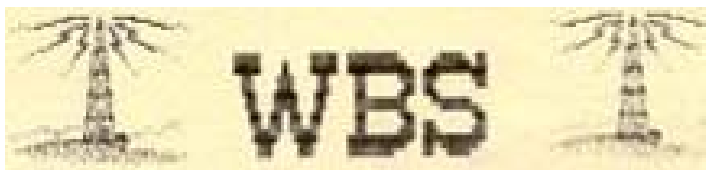


The fourth Texan in the line of five commanders of the 766th is Major Charles R. Phillips, San Angelo, Tex., who assumed command December 2.

Before joining the group in September, Major Phillips spent five months as an interceptor fighter controller in an anti-sub wing. He was also an instructor in B-24s at Mountain Home, Idaho.

In his 21 combat missions, Phillips has earned the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the OFC for the February 8 mission to Vienna. His promotion to Major followed his appointment as C.O.

Command of the 766th was formerly held by Major Harrison G. Word, Major William Burke, Major James C. Dooley, and Capt. William H. Darden.



EXTRA! EXTRA! DICKEY AND O'BANNON GO BACK TO COLLEGE!

As many of you will recall, in the last LIBERAIDER we included a form and requested that you contact your local newspaper editor and have the notice of our reunion published for those that are not presently on our roster. George Dickey (767) went one step beyond and enrolled us in Glick University, Larry Glick, Chancellor, Radio Station WBZ in Boston.

Larry Glick, who has the largest Talk Show in New England, felt that George's idea to air the information concerning our forthcoming Reunion as one that the radio audience would like to hear about.

All connections were made on Friday, April 24th, and with a three way phone connection we were on the AIR! Larry was an excellent host, and was aware of what we faced in going against the targets. As he has a private pilot's license, he also knew how to lead you to information of public interest. We settled on reviewing the May 5, 1944, Ploesti raid that the Group participated in. From some long unused part of the gray matter, I was able to give a first hand report on that mission. I can still see the k*@\$*&*#! Black cloud that hung over the target (Never did take a liking to those 88's!). Think it was a good interview, but then who knows!

No new men for the roster, but we certainly are known in the New England area now!

The Group's thanks to Larry Glick and Station WBZ!!!



Replacement Crew #29—765th Bomb Sqdn
L/R R. W. Gosness (RO), N. J. Chahulski (G), R. J. Bruning (P), J. B. Steil (CP), E. E. Oberholtzer (N), A. A. Rickert (g), and J. S. Hakavy (G).



Glenn Stempel, Treasurer, at Torrance, CA airport for one of his many stops on a month long flying trip around the country. Glenn was looking up members of the 461st and from his Armament Section in the 766th Squadron. Glenn predicts a great turn-out of his men for the reunion.

AF LOCATOR WORLDWIDE

The Manpower and Personnel Center will forward letters to the last known addresses of retired members. However, the Privacy Act prevents the release of home addresses. Active duty, retired, National Guard, Reserve and family members may use the service without the \$2.85-per-name search fee charged most other people. In general, the information required for tracking an individual includes name, grade, service number, date of birth, place of birth, organizations and dates of assignments. As much information as is available should be sent to: HQ AFMPC/MPCD003, Randolph AFB, TX 78150.

To reach a retired member, a person should place his letter in a sealed, stamped envelope with return address and the name of the individual to be contacted on the outside. This and all available information on the retiree should be put into another envelope, and sent to the worldwide locator. The letter will be forwarded.

* * * * *

FOUNDER OF EVADEES AIRLIFT DIES

Lt. Col. George S. Musulin, USAF Ret, died at the age of 72. Operating out of the OSS, Musulin parachuted into Yugoslavia on August 2, 1944, and, with the help of the Serb resistance leader, General Draja Mikhailovich, leveled an emergency airstrip that 16 C-47 planes used to carry 240 airmen out of enemy territory. Some of the men were members of the 461st Bomb Group. Crew #10 of the 764th came out of Vis on one of these flights that had just picked up two fighter pilots deep inside of Yugoslavia.

TAPS

NAME	SQD	DATE	HOMETOWN	MOS	NAME	SQD	DATE	HOMETOWN	MOS
Albertson, Fred R.	766	Unknown	Boise, ID	685	Machaelson, Herbert E.	765	9/10/86	Fowley, MN	555
Arnold, Chester M	766	1966ca	New Salem, IL	345	Martin, Gordon A.	764	5/31/79	Willsboro, KY	747
Carpenter, Maywood	767	Unknown	Woodsfield, OH	748	Martin, John P.	764	12/1944	Sheboygan, WI	757
Connolly, Thomas M. Jr.	766	11/7/85	Canton, CT	748	McCaslin, Virgil I.	765	7/25/81		748
Dantonio, Clarence	767	Unknown	Buffalo, NY	612	Melton, Kenneth F.	766	1962ca	Bremerton, WA	612
Davignon, Norman L.	767	Unknown	Williamansett, MA	748	Morse, Robert T.	765	4/14/79		1092
Drobeck, Morris J.	766	1977ca	Wheeling, WV	2020	Mudge, Warren R.	767	1981ca	E. Norwalk, CT	1035
Ewing, Melvin C.	767	Unknown	Nelson, NE	612	Osmond, Murry F.	764	8/17/84	Mastic, NY	813
Golden, Paul A.	767	1970ca	Archibald, PA	1034	Parr, Lenard W.	767	Unknown	Wendell, ID	612
Houck, Roy V.	767	Unknown	Napoleon, OH	748	Pass, Theodore E.	765	5/13/60		612
Hume, Lester C.	461	6/28/87	Valley Stream, NY	0224	Poole, Frank M	767	7/4/85	Tampa, FL	1092
Kerr, James A.	765	4/11/87		757	Scott, R. Foster	461	2/16/87	Angleton, TX	2120
Kuhar, Mike G.	767	4/1987	Warren, OH	612	Stein, Jack E.	766	7/3/87	Okemos, MI	1038
Kulcxyxki, Joseph S.	767	Unknown	Warren, MI	748	Tukey, Spaulding M.	765	8/22/83		757
Lawrence, Winston J.	767	1947	Wellesley, MA	1092	Veon, Leroy L.	765	5/21/87	New Waterford, OH	612
Lown, Russell W.	765	Unknown	Scranton, PA	747	Zaharchuk, Walter D.	765	9/3/84	Philadelphia, PA	590

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