



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 24, No. 1

JUNE 2007

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

President's Corner

Hopefully we will see the majority of you at the St. Louis reunion with the wives and children. We antiques are also allowed friends.

Let this be a great year

(Continued on page 12)

**461st
Bombardment
Group (H)
Association
2007 Reunion
See page 18 for
details and sign-up
information.**

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A Memorable Ocean Cruise

On the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, during World War II

by

Robert Kelliher
765th Squadron

It was in October of 1944, on the Liberty Ship, hull 330, "John Stevens." It was fitted as a troop ship, and was conveying Army Air Corps crews to the European Theater of Operation (ETO) as replacements for combat losses and tour completions. It was

also carrying equipment replacements such as belly tanks and engines, some of it as deck cargo. It was one of about fifty-six vessels, mostly Liberty Ships, that were arranged in an initial convoy formation of fourteen files, four deep and spaced approximately a third of a mile apart. P-47 and P-51 fighter planes were part of the deck cargo on other ships. Protection against the submarine menace was provided by a naval escort of DDs, DEs, and at times a light cruiser, and

(Continued on page 4)

Before, During and After

by

Raymond Grew
764th Squadron

Enlistment and Training

In 1942 a person was faced with the draft or enlisting. Many men from the midwest who enlisted joined the Navy. In the latter part of that year the Army and Navy started a program where a college student could enlist in the reserves and be on inactive service while continuing in college. The

Navy had its V 12 program. The Air Force at that time was part of the Army. My Father took my college roommate and me to Detroit (using rationed gas) on 14 November 1942 to enlist for the duration plus six months.

You stayed in the reserves until they needed you or more accurately had room for you except that the Navy allowed the V 12 reserves to complete college. In February 1943 the Army called up the college Air Force reserves for active service. When I

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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>Date of Death</u>
Gress, Raymond A.	Sparta, MI	1092	02/07/07
Hanson, Elmer L.	Wichita, KS	612	09/12/06
Hoffman, Joseph P.	Madison, WI	748	04/22/07
Slanika, Raymond A.	South Richfield, MN	612	02/25/03

765th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Alexander, Odie C. Jr.	Brownsboro, TX	612	10/04/06
Bell, Alexander G. Jr.	Sidney, OH	612	01/23/06
Currier, Arthur D.	Bandon, SD	405	03/25/05
Dunlap, Jack M.	Exton, PA	1092	02/06/06
Franks, Walter L.	Indiana, PA	612	1993
Goodnick, Duane S.	Green Valley, AZ	612	03/01/07
Lemanczyk, Clarence R.	Oconomowoc, WI	1034	2002
McCord, Rodney G.	Dallas, TX	612	
Rosdal, Joseph	Miami, FL	1034	08/00/06
Shordt, Clement R.	Toledo, OH	256	02/09/07
Smith, Woodrow W.	Alum Creek, WV	612	09/04/06
Thiel, Kenneth A.	Northbrook, IL	612	01/27/07

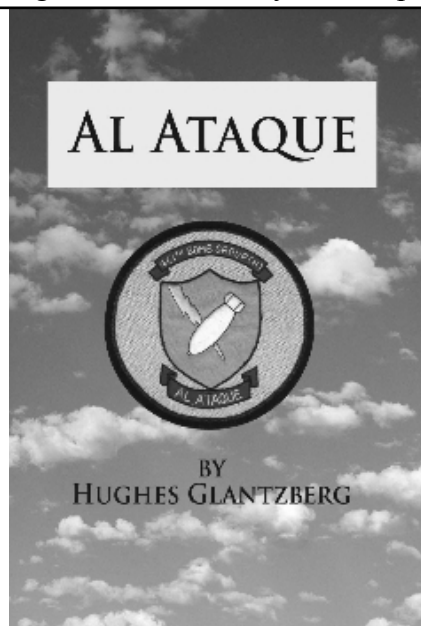
TAPS (Cont.)

766th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Davis, Jerome J.	Tinton Falls, NJ	1035	12/15/06
Fish, Joel	Englishtown, NJ	1034	04/18/07
Johnson, Raymond H.	Wakefield, KS	911	01/25/06
Krippel, Joseph F.	Dayton, OH	612	
Lambert, Richard N.	Portland, OR	757	09/23/01
Mulliner, David K.	San Diego, CA	940	01/24/07
Nixon, Roger	Bay City, MI	1092	07/31/06
Reithoffer, Patrick E. Jr.	Royal Palm Beach, FL	1092	02/23/07
Yetter, Jack N.	Racine, WI	1092	07/03/04

767th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Seagrave-Smith, Henry	Templeton, CA	612	11/08/06



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**

Trade **Hardcopy**
 Publication Date: Nov-2006
 Price: \$36.95
 Size: 6 x 9
 Author: Hughes Glantzberg
 ISBN: **0-595-86486-4**

413 Pages
 On Demand Printing
 Available from Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc. or
 call 1-800-AUTHORS

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.

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eventually, even a submarine, and air cover.

The cruise took most of the month. It started on October 1st with boarding at the Norfolk, VA, naval base docks, after a short ride from Camp Patrick Henry to Newport News for a ferry ride across Hampton Roads. Launch started at 0630 on October 2nd, and debarkation from our ship was on October 26th at Bari, Italy.

It was a fascinatingly adventurous voyage for me, and probably most of the other lads aboard were like me. Two years before, at the start of service, I had been only three years out of high school, working at a sedentary, but interesting, job as an architectural draftsman, attending evening school, still living in my parents' house, and had never been very far from that modest home in Chicago's south end. I had had a challenging twenty-one months of training, and now, "all of a sudden", here I was, a qualified military airplane driver, entrusted to chauffeur for a small crew of youthful "warriors" (really "jolly boys")! And now I was going on an ocean cruise that I would never have dreamed of being able to afford, in our plain folks life! And all for free, courtesy of fellow citizens' monetary donations!

Initial speculation about our destination had assumed that it would be either the Eighth Air Force in England or the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. There was never any formal announcement, but it became evident on the third day with the distribution of pamphlets entitled, "Mediterranean Diseases". It was further confirmed, a few days later, by the distribution of anti-malaria pills, and of pamphlets on the Italian language, soon followed by classes taught by bi-lingual airmen.

There were many interesting sights, events, and activities, so, for most of us, there was never a dull moment.

For starters, there was the Norfolk naval base, an awesome sight humming with activity, in time of war. There were many vessels, naval and other, big and small, at the docks, at anchor, and/or on the

move. The naval vessels included destroyers, destroyer escorts, baby aircraft carriers, and even an old battleship with a tripod after mast. The hornet swarm of aircraft overhead, in the short time we were there, included the TBF, FCF, SBD, SB2C, SNJ, PBV, PBM, P-47 and B-24. (My diary note was, "How come nobody bumps into anybody else?")

Our plain old Liberty Ship itself was an interesting tourist sight, especially for those of us who had never been on any watercraft bigger than a canoe or rowboat. A week or so at sea, we were led on a tour of it, starting with a scramble aft, over the deck cargo, to see the defensive armament – one 5" and two 3" guns. The tour also got us up onto the bridge, into the navigation and radio rooms, and down into the boiler and engine room. Diesel oil was the fuel, and there were ten boilers, so it was very hot. They couldn't have all been directly under our hyper-heated "stateroom" above, but the effect made it seem so. Three steam engines turned a 10" diameter solid steel propeller shaft at a slow 60 RPM. The prop shaft tunnel, 200 feet long, was the coolest place in town, on account of the cold sea water used to cool bearings.

The most interesting of the traditional tourist mecca type of sights were in the last week or so of the cruise. They started with the mystique of Africa. On October 18th, at 0600, someone roused us with word that it was in sight, and there was an excited rush to get out on deck. Sure enough, off to the east, in a purple haze against the golden glow of imminent sunrise, the Atlas Mountains loomed beyond the coast of Morocco. That mystique didn't last very long, though, and soon all hands were back in the sack.

We passed the Rock of Gibraltar later in the morning, and the barrage of anti-aircraft fire atop it may have been a salute, rather than just morning practice.

Once through the Strait, and into the Mediterranean

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Sea, the convoy stayed fairly close to the south coast, so there may have still been some potential for attack by aircraft from France or Italy.

Part of the convoy had split off to go to Casablanca, and the main body had reformed into a narrower file to pass through the Strait. It then regrouped into a wider formation, and surface escort was seemingly reduced to a small British submarine in the lead. Aircrew navigators had a field day with their sextants, verifying Oran, Algiers, and Bizerte as we passed. Our ship anchored overnight at the netted harbor of Augusta, Sicily, and there was a great view of Mount Etna in the morning as we pulled away. Passage around the toe and heel of Italy was close enough for viewing of the scenery during the day. Passage up the Adriatic Sea was mostly during the night, and at 0700 on October 26th we found ourselves at anchor outside Bari, Italy.

There were plenty of natural wonders of creation for the enjoyment of all, with the exception of the most addicted card-playing gamblers and crap-shooters, who rarely left their games. Scenic sights ranged from the darkly ominous to the serenely tranquil to the dazzlingly spectacular.

The ominous ones were several periods of heavy seas, under dark skies, with great waves crashing over the bow as the ship dove into the troughs of huge swells, giving a faint hint of what seafarers have to face in major storms.

The serenely tranquil ones were in periods of calm seas. One of them was at night, and the wake of the bow wave was aglow with a vivid fluorescence. Another was at night when full moon was illuminating a silvery track on the surface of the sea, "making everybody poetic, especially submarine captains."

One of the spectacular ones was on an evening of passing through an area of rain showers from scattered cumulus clouds, producing dazzling rainbows.

One of the most dramatic was a dazzling meteor shower display against a background of zillions of

stars on a very dark night. It was midnight, and after that, crowds of us watched in awe from the foredeck. The awe, I suppose was because the vastness of it sort of emphasized our smallness. I learned later in life that it was the regular annual Orionids shower, and I don't recall ever seeing it so brilliantly again, in the course of my long life.

Wildlife sightings were minimal, especially as to birds, but the few observations we had were very interesting.

Flying fish, 8" to 10" long, gave us a show during the first few days. They didn't get much altitude, but did achieve high air speeds, in shooting splash-and-go landings alongside the ship. Some of them used the bow wave for a jet-assisted take-off to get tossed into the air for long-range, multiple splash flights of what seemed like 200 feet or so. They seemed to be playing, rather than just eluding predators. However, could they have been saluting fellow flyers?

Portuguese Men O'War jellyfish, in great numbers, became visible in the calmer and more translucent waters as we entered the Strait of Gibraltar.

Porpoises, too, appeared and gave us a welcoming show when we entered the Strait. I quote myself:

"Four, coming in at 11:00 o'clock. What a circus!"

"A group would come in low and fast, do a sharp chandelle under the bow, and lead us playfully for a while – to make us take their prop wash. They'd cruise a neat element, diving and zooming in perfect harmony. Then the leader would waggle a wing and they would shift to echelon for a peel-off and rat-race. Occasionally, one would rocket clear out of the water; do a rudder-exercise stall, and pancake back in with a mighty splash."

"Slow roll seemed to be the favorite acrobatic maneuver, with one of them doing

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quarter-rolls to scratch his belly on his wingman's fin.

"One of the groups that joined us included a fat little bambino about two feet long barreling along in fast cruise at mama's side in no danger of being left behind.

"The groups would eventually fall back to do their stuff with the ships behind us."

In memory now, at this much later date, I don't recall noticing any wildlife at all during the nine months I was in Italy, with the exception of one 3 foot long brown snake in an olive orchard near camp. No rabbits, squirrels, mice, rats, or birds, including when we were at surface levels at the sea shores. I didn't even notice any 'tame life' either, in the form of dogs, cats or chickens, even in the towns. Could the war-starved people have eaten most of them?

The few animals I did notice were small donkeys pulling big carts.

The sober reality of war was called to mind often by other events and activities, in addition to the initial buzz at the Norfolk naval base POE, and to the presence of our escort vessels.

One of them was a submarine attack scare on the 13th day out.

Another was on the 15th day out. A fast moving naval battle group came over the horizon from the northeast. It approached close enough for us to see that it consisted of one aircraft carrier, one battleship, and several lesser craft before it veered away. One of the DEs peeled off at high speed to follow after it.

Later that day, a C-54 flew over, and soon after that a B-24 buzzed the convoy, obviously by arrangement with command. Regular air patrol by a B-24 started the next day.

On the 17th day, in the Strait of Gibraltar, there was

much air activity, not necessarily connected with our convoy. Four F4U Corsairs were rolling and buzzing. A PBY Catalina wave-hopping, off the port. A B-17 and an A-29 flew over. Perhaps an aerial gapers block?

In the Mediterranean, there were several deafening sessions of anti-aircraft firing practice. Most of the aerial shell bursts were wide misses from the red target balloons. That gave us a comforting feeling, thinking of our role as future targets, until ... what if JU-88 bombers attacked; as they had on other convoys in the recent past?

On October 22nd at 1000, we were opposite Bizerte. The shore area was still littered with sunken and beached watercraft and other wreckage; evoking solemn thoughts about the human sacrifice there in the North African campaign. For some of us, it also evoked thoughts of the irony of our being on our way to risking our lives in aerial warfare, while so many German soldiers who had gone through their own harrowing experiences there, at the behest of their egomaniac dictators, were now snug and safe as POWs on labor details at such U.S.A. bases as Douglas, GA, primary and Camp Patrick Henry POE.

Finally, at the Bari port, there was the sobering scene of "Little Pearl Harbor", which most of us had heard no word of. The harbor was still littered with protruding parts of the 17 vessels that had been sunk there by the Luftwaffe in a daring bombing raid, not very long after the Allies had captured it.

I was quartered in a 'stateroom' at officers' level, below the bridge. The room was 10' x 12', with four three-tier bunks, typical of others. Enlisted men were quartered separately, at a lower level.

There were three meals a day for the first week, and then it was two, at 1000 and 1600. The food was good, at least to me, until it dropped in quality to salt pork in the final week.

The latrine, or 'head' facilities were Grand Central Station in scale, but very basic-to austere. Salt wa-

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Change of Command

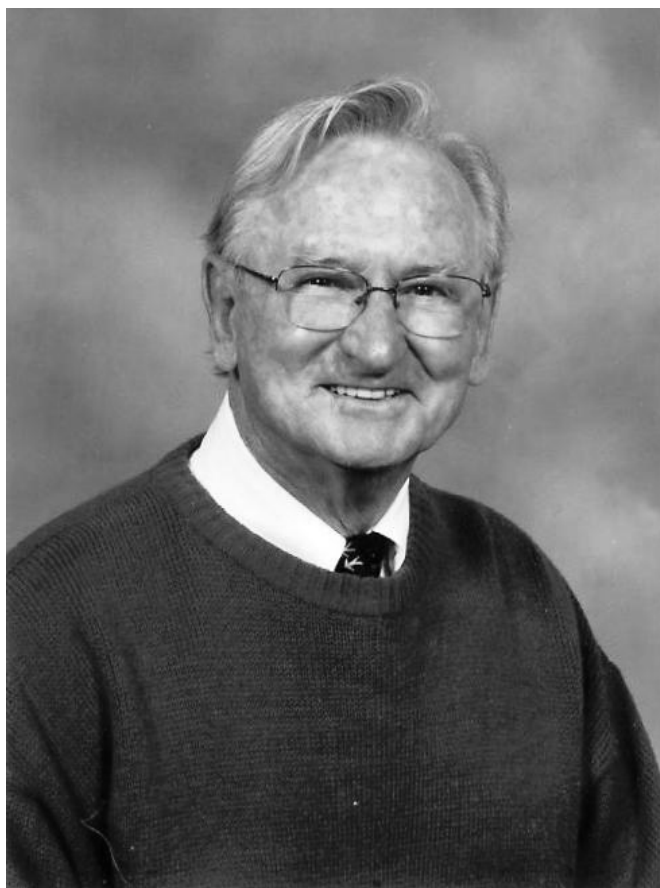
Alfred L. St. Yves
President

Al was a member of the ground echelon in the 764th Squadron. After the war, he married Claire on 17 November 1945 - over 61 years ago. They had four Sons - Robert, Paul, David and Steven. All total they have ten grandchildren and six great grandsons a total of eighteen boys and two girls. Al became a home builder and land developer. He served on the Taunton Savings Bank Board of Directors for over twelve years. He is a past President of the Singer Island Rotary Club of Singer Island, Florida and is currently President of Palm Lake Estates, a Community of nearly 2,000 people.



Leonard H. Bathurst, Jr.
Vice-President

Len was with the 765th Ordnance Section. After leaving his military service Len enrolled at Pennsylvania State University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and his teaching credentials, and a Master of Education degree. He taught in the public schools of Pennsylvania. While earning a Doctor of Education degree, Len taught at Penn State. He later accepted a faculty position at the California State University, Fresno, CA. After teaching for forty-one years at CSU, he retired and began a new career in the financial industry. On 30 November 2006 he decided to sell his business and finally retire. Len and Lynn have been married since 2 March 1946 and have had two children - daughter Karen Wilcox and son Stephen. Although Stephen is deceased, his widow, Dawn, is still a very precious member of the



Leonard Bathurst
Vice President

family. They have three grandsons - Brandon Leong, Brayden Leong and Skye Bathurst.



David St. Yves
Treasurer

Dave is one of the sons of our President, Al St. Yves and is living in East Taunton, MA.

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

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Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

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ter showers, icy toilet seats. No loitering!

The military regimen was minimal and relaxed.

“Dinghy-dinghy” alarm and procedures for ‘abandon ship’ and life belt use were taught, and there were several practice drills at random times.

Officers were supposed to conduct physical fitness sessions for their crews, and some did so, at least when a senior officer was on deck.

Pilots were issued atabrine tablets to dispense to their crews along with a sip of canteen water, at the head of the mess line. The tablets were rather bitter and so after that ritual the canteen usually rattled a lot.

There were no chaplains on board, but on Sundays, prayer services were conducted in the No. 3 hold by volunteer ministers.

Aside from those limited duties, and the few language classes, we were free to lounge in our quarters, and to go up onto the main deck, but with a strict taboo on smoking or lighting matches there at night.

Seasickness didn’t seem to bother airmen, with very few exceptions. That disappointed ship’s crew men on the days of the heavy seas.

Human weakness and abiding curiosity impelled some of us pilots into a lapse of discipline on the 14th day out. We were carrying portfolios containing 201 files and Form 5, “Ratings and Recommendations”, to be delivered, sealed, to the COs of our next duty stations. Curiosity about what our flight instructors had thought of us made us break out razors and nail files to investigate. I and others, puzzled as to why we had been allowed to get so far at all, when we read some of the gloomy and derogatory appraisals. Some in mine were, “below average”, “indecisive”, “slow to learn”, “forgets much”, “suitable for transport pilot”, etc. My instructor in basic, an Air Corps Lieutenant, was a more charita-

ble exception. He zoomed me all the way up to, “average” and “suitable for fighter pilot”! That was understandable to me. I had saved both our lives during an aerobatics practice session. In the front cockpit of our BT-13 Vultee, he was demonstrating a chandelle, and almost pulled us up into the belly of another BT-13 before I overpowered him, ramming my control stick full force toward the firewall.

Nothing “indecisive” about that incident!

One of the routine pastimes was card-playing, mostly for fun, some for money. In our room, it settled into a pattern of pinochle by day, poker by night. Some days, when weather permitted, it was on deck, at the fore hatch.

Reading became another routine pastime after a consignment of paperbacks provided by the Red Cross was distributed on the 10th day out. They were mostly ‘light literature’ – escapist story books.

I, and some others, had hobbies of keeping diaries. I augmented mine with sketches, utilizing architectural training skills, and some were fairly good pen and ink depictions of memorable scenes, events, and personalities. Diaries were forbidden, but worth risking, for some of us. We were all well aware that we were having experiences of a lifetime, but maybe only us diarists were optimistic enough to expect much of a lifetime in which to refer to them.

Singing, close harmony, barbershop quartet style, became a favorite routine pastime for some of us. It began early on the third day out, when another pilot, Chester Lalewicz, and I started it. Some of my crew – co-pilot Jack Dunlap, bombardier, Leroy Naves, and tail gunner, Al Bradford, and another pilot, Harold Watson, joined in. We sang with gusto and fervor, and sounded pretty good to ourselves, if not to anyone else. We sang standard old favorites of the era, such as “You Are My Sunshine”, “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”, “Amen”, “Silent Night”, “My Old Kentucky Home”, “Springtime in the Rockies”, and, as heartfelt finale, “Carry Me Back to Old Vir-

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We're down in the stateroom when the alarm bell goes off again. Kaiser declares, "We're supposed to stand by down here tonight. Don't bother to dress," so everybody falls back on the sacks to gripe until it becomes apparent there isn't a noise in the hold. Then there was a rat race up the companionway into the black moonless night, and we find they weren't just ringing those bells for music appreciation. The sky to starboard is lit up with a lurid glow - and the tanker that had been flying our right wing was burning to beat hell. Flames hundreds of feet high, and a poll of black smoke even darker than the sky. Further beyond it was another tower of flame, and far to the rear was a third. We couldn't see ships under those other fires, but they looked too spread out to be burning oil from the tanker, so the immediate conclusion was that we had been hit by a thundering herd of submarines.

Pilots were scurrying around to round up crews for bail-out, but it's hopeless, as the deck is piled solid with sightseers. By 2045, the tanker was dropping pretty well astern, and the glow far to the rear was subsiding, and the navy gunners at the gun ports were relaxing, so it looked like no immediate danger for us, and the speculations started by the numbers.

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ginny", from where we'd just left! It became routine to gather at 2130 for a session, on deck when weather permitted.

On the 13th day, a surprise announcement was made that at 2100, in Hold No. 3, a spectacular variety show would be presented, with hidden talent found via top secret efforts of impresarios among our number. The opening act was a bit before curtain time, and almost eclipsed the show. At 2035, a "dinghy-dinghy" alarm had us all strapping on life belts as we scrambled topside. Several big fires, off to starboard, lit up the otherwise very dark night. Naturally, we all immediately assumed that the convoy had been attacked by a wolfpack of submarines. That seemed to be confirmed when several of the naval escorts raced toward the rear, as though in

counter-attack mode. It was an ominous scene for a while and I later 'captured' it, a bit, in a drawing. We all watched in silent empathy for all hands on those stricken ships.

However, the fires began to subside as the convoy proceeded and the fire scene fell behind, not having disrupted the formation.

Then, to our great surprise, and greater relief, we were given an "all clear" signal and permission to go back below deck.

After the U-boat scare died down, the second special event of the day, the variety show, went on as scheduled at 2100 hours.

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The M.C., Sherwin Levine, staggered onto the stage, wearing 6 life vests, and proclaimed, "Subs don't scare me! Glad you could all be here tonight!"

The series of performances opened on a note of higher culture with elegant airs on the sweet potato, by Lydecker and Main, my waist gunner, but after that it declined steadily, except for a brief interlude of a duo on harmonicas, playing, "Stormy Weather", and such likes.

One act was a presentation on cartooning and trick drawing by Sgt. Wood, Lalewicz's radio man. There were loud requests, "Draw a woman! Any woman!" The drawing was passed around the audience, and there was great indignation about the unsatisfactory bosom.

Latrine Guild Players presented "The Great Train Robbery", the story in which the passenger's suitcase, with son inside, is tossed out the window.



Romeo and Juliet balcony scene.

In another skit, Blackjack Klein escorted his bride into the honeymoon suite. A devilish bellboy hung a "Men" sign on the door, and a fellow came along, tried it, pounded impatiently, shouted, "Hurry the hell up!", etc.

A Romeo and Juliet balcony scene was the featured act of the show. Romeo was a fellow in G.I. long johns adorned with a colorful sash, a blazing foulard, etc. and flourishing a big wooden sword. Juliet was a fellow made up into a gruesome sight: million freckles, mop wig, big red lips, huge stuffed bra. The lowlight of their dialogue was about missing something last month more important than the Readers Digest.

The grand finale featured Levine as a power-mad shave-tail lieutenant supervising a latrine detail. Wearing huge gold bars, a huger good conduct medal, and with a .45 pistol in one hand, while flourishing a blacksake whip in the other, he led



Levine is the power-mad shave-tail supervising a latrine detail. Blacksake whip, .45, huge gold bars, and huger good conduct ribbon. They gave the grand finale.

the detail in singing "Begin the Latrine" to the tune of "Begin the Beguine" A few of the verses were:

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“When we begin ... to clean the latrine, we clean the commodes ... with such tender feeling, We clean the floors, the walls and the ceiling, when we begin ... the latrine.

To clean it again ... is past all endeavors ... ‘til Jesus Leatherwood mentions K.P. ...

So here we go mopping again forever ... and promising never ... to cease ...

So we’ll clean that damn latrine, make it gleam ...

We will scrub those urinals until they glisten ...

So there will be a clean place for the major to piss in ...

... So let us begin ... to clean the latrine ...”

The show went over big in mid-ocean with its all male audience.

As I think about that variety show at this much later date, it only now occurs to me that nobody had asked our close harmony singing group to audition for it. Perhaps it was because we weren’t as beautifully harmonious as we thought we were. But even if we weren’t, we would have raised the level of culture a notch or two higher than it was.

It also occurs to me that there was another part of that show, preliminary and entertaining, as the fellows gathered for it in No. 3 hold. It was in the form of remarks about the “submarine attack” possibly being the result of a “sabotage” incident during the night before. The deck-mount searchlights had been turned on briefly by three men not observed long enough from the bridge for identification. It probably was done – would you believe? – as a prank, “for fun”. But speculation was that U-boats had spotted us by those lights and trailed us. So, with thoughts that such was the case, there were a lot of wisecracks like this: “Guess who’s sleeping in his life vest tonight.”, “Guess who’s sleeping on deck tonight.”, “Guess who isn’t sleeping tonight.” And above it all, a fervent voice singing “Rock of Ages ...”.

The extent of U-boat danger remained uncertain, even after the ship’s first mate came down to see the show, and told us what he knew. It was that two ships, one a tanker, had been involved. After the

fires broke out, the tanker has flashed two red lights by blinker to signal “breakdown”, but immediately afterward had sent three red lights, the signal for “submarines”! You pick.

Long-abiding curiosity about that incident led me to research it in 2000. My brother, Gene, a WWII submariner in the Pacific theater, steered me to sources in Washington from which I obtained a report on the event plus a full roster of the convoy, which was UGS-56. It had 71 ships listed, not the 54 we counted, 9 of them tankers. There were 16 units in the TF63 naval escort.

The incident actually was a collision between two ships. One cargo ship struck a tanker, both caught fire, and an oil slick fire had given us the impression that three ships were involved. The master of the cargo ship claimed he had to veer to avoid collision with a ship ahead that had suddenly veered across his bow, but the master of that ship denied the charge.

Happily, there were no casualties, the fires were all extinguished, and all the ships made it safely to their destinations.

There was another interesting diversion near the start of the Mediterranean Sea phase of the cruise. It occurred on, or about, the 18th day, in or near the Strait of Gibraltar. Someone came down and told us to sneak up onto the main deck and watch the fun. We did so, and from a distance we watched unobtrusively as a curious ritual was performed several times up forward near a vent shaft. Several sailors were gathered around a big pail, some kneeling and lifting a coverlet to peer into it, and a few standing peering over their shoulders. When a landlubber air crewman came along, on an exercise walk, he would be asked if he would like to take a peek at a rare “sea bat”. After the excited response, “Sure!”, they would make way, and he would move in and bend over to view the amazing oceanic creature. At that point, one of the conspirator sailors would produce a big wooden paddle – a “sea bat” – and whack him sharply on the hinder. The victim might see

(Continued on page 16)

461st BOMB GROUP
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED APRIL 30, 2007

Cash Balances - October 31, 2006	
Checking account	\$2,178
Vanguard investments	<u>21,588</u>
	<u>23,766</u>
Income	
Investment income	603
Refund of 2006 reunion deposit	500
Dues and memberships	<u>279</u>
	1,382
Expenses	
Reunion expense	
Hats and pouches	1,185
Postage	509
Other	98
Seminar registration fee	40
Bank charges and other	<u>14</u>
	1,846
Transfer to Liberaider account	<u>1,000</u>
Net expense for period	(1,464)
Cash Balances - April 30, 2007	
Checking account	1,112
Vanguard investments	<u>21,190</u>
	<u>\$22,302</u>

(Continued from page 1)

for attendance. Everyone who can should try to join us.

We plan on some minor changes for Board Meetings, recording procedures, and additional information in the Liberaider such as this regular report in each issue, posting of all minutes and other items in the planning stages.

So remember all we antiques should try to be at the St. Louis reunion. Let's give it a go.

See you in St. Louis!

Al St. Yves

Mail Call

Hi Hughes,

I saw #19 on the website under Dad's photo; thanks very much. Do you think there might be a chance of including the photo in the next Liberator to see if anyone might have the tail number or other information they could share? It would be great if we could

include the plane in the listing of replacement aircraft for the 764th.

Thanks very much for all you do,

Chuck Parsonson

(Continued on page 14)



Here is the picture of #19, taken at Dakar on 3 June 1945 while on the way back to the USA. The people in the photo include Perry Brockman sitting against the wheel, Clyde Bowsby standing in front, and Dan Levin (the navigator) sitting in the pilot's seat. If you take a close look at the 19, you will see a number of patches as a result of flak hits. This is also the same plane mentioned in Mission #163 to the Brod Railroad Bridge that caught fire. Dad put out the fire and Maj. Mixon told him that he has been watching him because, if he went out the bomb bay, Mixon was going to be right behind him.

#19 had joined the squadron shortly after Dad (Oct, 1944) and was originally designed as a night intruder and Mickey ship. The props had been coated with a black tar, which was supposed to aid in de-icing. After a pilot complained that he couldn't stay in formation with all the tar on the props, they were immediately cleaned off. Dad had also been told he could expect to take the plane out on night missions because he had so much more flight time than other pilots when he joined the squadron, but they stopped flying night missions shortly thereafter.

(Continued from page 13)



The following is in reference to the flight to ferry aircraft from the 461st to the 451st on 29 February 1944.

Mr. O'Bannon:

Thanks so much for the help you have given me with regards to the crash of my dad's plane. It certainly expands on the information provided in the accident report and helps to clarify in my mind what happened. To summarize my understanding:

The flight of 12 planes took off with a favorable weather forecast. My father was the co-pilot in the lead plane. The flight was routine until the formation entered clouds. Realizing that they were in a dangerous situation, and absent any radio contact from the lead aircraft, the aircraft in the formation broke formation and climbed to a higher altitude to regain visibility. Meanwhile, the lead plane upon seeing or entering the cloud formation tried in vain to contact the other aircraft but the radios weren't working. In a split second, before the lead aircraft, my dad's plane, could attain additional altitude they slammed into the mountain top. The accident report states that the plane hit a slight rise at a flat angle as the pilot attempted to stay in contact under instrument conditions. Perhaps if they had attained another one foot in altitude the plane and all aboard would have survived. We'll never know the answer to that one.

With regards to careless operation contributing to the accident it is understandable that an analyst who was not present on the plane could conclude that the pilot of the lead plane did not react quickly enough to a dangerous situation since none of the other 11 aircraft crashed. Perhaps the analyst concluded that it was careless of the pilot to attempt to carry on under instrument conditions. Again, we'll never know why the analyst came to the conclusion of careless operation contributing to 60% of the cause.

With regards to the weather, I was a professional sailor for some 20 years. I have sailed twice across

the Atlantic in a small sailboat. I have experienced all kinds of weather, and I know how quickly it can change. You quote one of the other pilots in that formation as saying it was the worst weather he had ever experienced. It is certainly possible that the lead plane in the formation encountered a severe downdraft from a microburst that slammed the plane straight down onto its belly. This could happen without affecting any of the other planes in the formation.

I had a wonderful phone conversation with Ralph Merrow. Just before the formation left, he had asked my dad to go along for the ride since Ignatz was his plane. My dad said no because he needed space for carrying another crew on the trip back. Mr. Merrow told me that my dad and Harold Blanchard, the pilot of Ignatz, were the best of pals, often flying together. I find this fact tremendously comforting.

The accident occurred more than 62 years ago. Thankfully there are diaries that exist to tell the tale of what happened that day and the conditions that existed because memory certainly doesn't serve in helping to get a clear understanding. I can barely remember what I experienced in the service and that's twenty years more recent! So I really appreciate what you and others have done to help me understand what happened the fateful day in 1944. I hope to be able to thank you and others at the next 461st Reunion, wherever that may be.

Ken Carter



Let me answer some of your questions. The photo shows the staff of each of the squadrons plus the Group without the Group Commander. All this took place in August of 1943 at Gowen Field, Boise, ID. In September (without a Group Commander, only a Deputy), we went to AFSAT (Air Force School of Applied Tactics). After a month at the school we went to Wendover, UT. A few days after our arrival we met our Group Commander, Lt. Col. Carter. A few days later a full bird Col. shows up, your father.

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Capt. Glenn was replaced with Maj. Knapp. Capt. I have a photo of your father shaking hands with the Darden and 1st Lt. Witte were kept. You are aware man he succeeded and that is at Wendover. The of the deaths of both men, I think. Group left there and several changes were made. Maj. Smith was replaced with Lt. Col. Hawes. 1st Lt. John Iconis Sandlin of the 765th was replaced with Capt Dooley,



Squadron and Group Officers w/o Group Commander at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho 1943.

Seated L-R: Murphy, Benjamin S. (765th Bomb); Darden, William H. (766th); Sandall, John C. (765th CO); Grogen, Edwin W. (Grp Exec); Smith, Robert E. (Deputy Grp CO); Scott, R Foster (Grp Adj); Burke, William (Grp Oper); Leffler, George V. (Grp Bomb); Glenn, Royce B. (767th CO); Witte, Albert O. (764th CO); Joyce, John P. (764th Exec)

Second Row L-R: Stiles, Richard H. (766th Bomb); ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; Dubal, Robert (765th Bomb); ?????; Iconis, John D. (764th Bomb); ?????; ?????; ?????; Wagener, John A. (Grp Comm)

Back Row L-R: ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????; ?????

During training exercises, the lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another jeep stuck in the mud with a red-faced colonel at the wheel.

“Your jeep stuck, sir?” asked the lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

“Nope,” replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys, “Yours is.”

(Continued from page 11)

stars instead of the legendary “sea bat”.

No hard feelings, though. The victims we saw took it so well that they gladly joined the fun and helped to lure the next victim.

There was some speculation among us that the trickery was part of a sailor tradition about crossing the equator during a voyage. In later years, with more knowledge of geography, I know that it could only have had something to do with crossing the Greenwich meridian, which would have happened during our cruise. But with or without such imaginary lines, it was a fun interlude of seemly levity.

An interesting diversion for some of us in the early days of the cruise was the baseball World Series. Participants were the St. Louis Cardinals, perhaps with pitcher Dizzy Dean and slugger Stan Musial, and the St. Louis Browns, perhaps with fabled Bobo Newsome, who pitched double headers. The Cardinals won four games to two, in a low scoring series marked by great pitching. I don’t remember how it was that we were kept apprised of it, but can’t recall a play-by-play broadcast.

Also, I don’t remember much grumbling at the time about us schoolboys and pencil pushers and theater ushers, etc., going off to war as “fighter-warriors”, while men who were much more athletically fit – and “macho” – were back home playing games.

I thought about that and skewed values in our social system, a little later in the war. That was when I heard about the “greatest fighter in the world”, the heavyweight boxing champion, Joe Louis, being in the theater of war, not to help “fight the (alleged) enemy”, but to “entertain the troops” ... in the form of exhibition boxing matches!

Another boxing match, a more personal one, was for me one of the most memorable of the many interesting events on that ocean cruise. It occurred early in the cruise on 7 October, with the weather having settled down after two days of heavy seas. After lunch, we got some 14 ounce “pillow” gloves from ship’s stores, to “spar around a little” on the foredeck, for

some sport and entertainment. There were several interesting matches, putting on a good show for the many spectators. The enlisted men among them seemed to enjoy seeing the officers knock each others’ heads around. One of the bouts was between my bombardier, Leroy Naves, who was a good finesse boxer, and a fellow who was a slugger type. They were having a great match until it was stopped when Leroy’s leg was cut when he brushed against a jagged metal plate on a deck mount.

My match was a prelim for that one. It was with another pilot, Chester Lalewicz, known commonly as “Lolly” or “Lobbo”. We had known each other for a large part of our flight instruction period, and had adventured together in sightseeing, dating local girls, etc., on days off, especially during phase training at Mountain Home, Idaho. He had challenged me, and although I had never boxed in my life, I took up the challenge, to have another interesting adventure. We had an agreement to not target each others head, but it was short-lived. A stray jab to a nose drew blood, tempers flared, and the “sparring” match became an artless flat-footed slugfest, and we were soon both bloody messes. Lobbo was stockily and powerfully built, and had a powerful punch, so I lasted only partly into the fourth round. Weakened by his punches, my own efforts, and loss of blood, I collapsed into a clinch with him, loser on a TKO, but enjoying hearing canaries singing, an unusual sound out near the mid-Atlantic. Lobbo, though, was pretty well spent, and didn’t mind calling it a day.

That was the last time I “hugged” my pal, Lobbo. Aside from our shipboard activities, I never saw him again after we got to Italy. Our crews were both assigned to the 461st Group of the Fifteenth Air Force, but his was in the 766th Squadron and mine was in the 765th Squadron, with encampments far apart.

On 11 March 1945, I received word that Lobbo and his entire crew were dead. En route home from his 18th mission, Lobbo had moved his B-24 forward from the No. 7 “tail-end Charlie” position to fill the

(Continued on page 25)

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 dstyves@pmn.com.

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

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

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

461st Bomb Group
Annual Reunion
September 27 – 30, 2007
Crowne Plaza St. Louis Airport Hotel
11228 Lone Eagle Drive, Bridgeton, Missouri 63044

ITINERARY

Thursday, September 27, 2007

Arrival & Check In Day – Registration desk and Hospitality Suite will be open all day. Snacks and beverages are available in the hospitality suite. An all Group informational meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. No other Group functions are planned for today.

Friday, September 28, 2007

We will depart the hotel at 9:30 a.m. and take a bus tour of beautiful Forest Park, site of the 1904 Olympics on the way to the St. Louis riverfront. At 11:00 a.m. we will arrive at the Gateway Arch Riverboats and board the Becky Thatcher, a replica paddlewheel riverboat and enjoy a buffet luncheon during a 1 ½ hour Mississippi river cruise. ***The 461st will be the only passengers aboard this cruise.*** When we return to the boat dock at 1:00 p.m., we will board the bus for a short ride up the hill to the St. Louis Arch and Museum of Westward Expansion where you can explore the Arch, museum and grounds at your leisure. Those who have purchased tickets for the ride to the top of the Arch will do so at this time. **Please note: The ride to the top of the Arch is NOT fully accessible for those with mobility or claustrophobia issues. The tram cars are small and not easy to get in and out of.** We will board the bus at 3:15 p.m. for the return trip to the hotel and will arrive by 3:30 p.m. We will have our Squadron Dinner in the hotel ballroom at 7:00 p.m. with “Social Hour” beginning at 6:00 p.m. A cash bar will be available.

Saturday, September 29, 2007

We will depart the hotel at 8:45 a.m. for a bus tour of downtown St. Louis and arrive at the Anheuser Busch Brewery and historic area for a tour at 10:00 a.m. We will take this tour in two groups, one beginning at 10:15 and the second beginning at 10:30. Each tour and a stop at the gift shop & refreshment area will last 1 ½ hours. We will then board the bus for a short trip to Union Station for lunch on your own and shopping arriving there by 12:15 p.m. We will then board the bus again at 2:45 p.m. for the return trip to the hotel, arriving there by about 3:00 p.m. We will have the Group Dinner & Dance this evening at 7:00 p.m. with “Social Hour” beginning at 6:00 p.m. A cash bar will be available.

Sunday, September 30, 2007

Our traditional Memorial Breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m. There will be a presentation of the Colors by members of the Scott Air Force Base color guard unit and. At the close of the Memorial Breakfast we will adjourn our reunion for this year.

This will be one of the most affordable reunions in recent memory.

461st Bomb Group-Reunion 2007

HOTEL INFORMATION

DATE:	September 27-30, 2007
LOCATION:	Crowne Plaza St. Louis Airport Hotel 11228 Lone Eagle Drive Bridgeton, Missouri 63044
ROOM RATES:	\$69.00 per room, per night plus tax This rate will be good for three days prior to and three days after the reunion.
RESERVATIONS:	(314) 291-6700 Ask for "In-house Reservations" Tell them you are with the 461st Bomb Group, booking code BG4. Major credit card required for guarantee.
PARKING:	Free

Lambert International Airport Shuttle:
Free shuttle operates 4:30AM to midnight

461st Bomb Group Reunion

September 27th – 30th, 2007

St. Louis, Missouri

Please complete and return this form by September 10, 2007. Late registrations, however, will be accepted.

NAME _____ SQUADRON _____
 SPOUSE _____
 CHILDREN/GUEST NAMES _____

(Note: Please enter names as you would like them to appear on name tags.)

MEMBER'S FULL NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Registration Fee _____ @ \$10.00 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

September 28th

Forest Park Tour, Mississippi Riverboat Luncheon Cruise & Gateway Arch Tour

_____ @ \$47.00 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

Optional ride to the top of the Arch. Please note: This ride is not for those with mobility issues.

_____ @ \$10.00 subtotal _____
 # of persons

September 28th

Squadron Dinner – Buffet Dinner

Ham, Chicken Parmesan, Broccoli, Lyonnais Potatoes and assorted salads

_____ @ \$26.00 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

September 29th

Anheuser Busch Historic Brewery Tour, Lunch & Shopping (on your own) at Historic Union Station

_____ @ \$17.00 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

September 29th

Dinner and Dance

Your choice of Prime Rib _____ @ \$31.50 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

or
 Boneless Chicken Breast _____ @ \$26.50 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

September 30th

Memorial Breakfast _____ @ \$18.00 per person subtotal _____
 # of persons

GRAND TOTAL: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND MAIL ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

461ST Bomb Group
 Attn: Dave Blake
 648 Lakewood Rd.
 Bonner Springs, KS 66012-1804

In accordance with current By-Laws, we are submitting to members in good standing a ballot to vote on the below revised By-Laws.



BY-LAWS OF THE 461ST BOMB GROUP (H) 1943-1945, INC

Article I -Name

The name of the organization shall be: 461st Bomb Group (H) 1943-1945, Inc., a non-profit corporation.

Article II - Purpose

To perpetuate the history of the 461st Bomb Group (H) and the memory of lost comrades. To arrange reunions and provide social and recreational activities for its members, as often as the membership warrants.

Article III - Membership

Membership in this organization shall be open to all who were veterans of or attached to the 461st Bomb Group (H) during WWII. Spouses, widows and immediate children and grandchildren of those who served in the 461st Bomb Group (H) are eligible for membership. All other persons interested in the goals of this organization may become associate members. Associate members may attend meetings and other activities and will receive the organization's mailings. Associate members may not vote. The membership year shall be the calendar year for all members.

Article IV - Meetings

A quorum should be present at all meetings to conduct the business of the 461st Bomb Group. As a general rule, a general membership business meeting is held during the reunions of the organization. All members in good standing may participate in all meetings. Any additional meetings shall be posted so all members may know whether it will be a board of director or a general membership meeting. Notice shall announce time and place of said meeting. Members who have not paid their dues for the current year may not vote. A quorum shall be defined as a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, be present at such meetings.

Order of Business to conduct the (461st Bomb Group (H)) meetings will be as follows:

1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
2. Roll call of the Board of Directors.
3. Reading of minutes of the last meeting and any special meetings.
4. Report of officers.
5. Reading of Communications.
6. Reports of Committees.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Good of the Group.
10. Election – Results of Ballots:
 - a) Even years, four (4) officers (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary\Treasurer)
 - b) Odd years, each squadron and headquarter to elect their representative.
11. Adjournment.

Article V - Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall constitute the governing body of this organization and shall have general supervision and management of all its affairs, including control and management of its property and all financial matter, subject, however, to such direction as membership at large may offer from time to time. The Board shall have the authority to do all matters submitted by law and these By-Laws.

The business of this organization shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of thirteen (13) members, including:

- a) Four officers (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary\Treasurer); and
- b) The immediate Past President; Historian, Editor and Director at Large;

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)

- c) One representative from each of the Combat Squadrons of the 461st Bomb Group, i.e. Headquarters, the 764th, 765th, 766th and 767th.

Officers (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Financial Secretary\Treasurer) shall be elected at a biannual meeting by a simple majority vote of the members in good standing represented in person or by proxy on even years.

Headquarter and Squadron Director, along with Alternates, shall be elected in caucus by the members of each Squadron prior to or during the biannual meeting on odd years.

Any vacancies in the Board of Directors between meetings may be filled by appointment of the President with the approval of the elected officers by mail ballot.

The Headquarters and Squadron Representatives shall serve a term of office of two years. At the expiration of the two year term, the alternate may succeed the previous Squadron Representative, the present Squadron Director may be re-elected if selected by the members of their Squadron.

The Squadron Alternate may sit in all Board meetings, without any voting power. However, should a Director of his or her squadron be absent, the Alternate may take his or her place with voting rights for that meeting.

Four representatives filled by appointment. (1) Past President (2) Historian (3) Editor and (4) Director at large.

These representatives shall be filled by appointment of the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Article VI - Officers

The four (4) officers of the Board of Directors shall be elected by ballots on even years (every two (2) years) at a biannual meeting by a simple vote of the members in good standing, represented in person or by proxy. The elected officers shall be the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary\Treasurer. Elected officers will serve a term of office of two (2) years or until their successor shall be duly elected. Elected officers may serve consecutive terms if re-elected by a majority of the members at a biennial meeting. The duties of the officers are as follows:

1. The President shall be the titular head of the organization and, subject to control of the Board of Directors, shall exercise general supervision over the affairs of the organization with the authority to delegate such responsibility.
2. The Vice President shall exercise the office of the President, in his absence, or upon the inability of the President to act, with rights and responsibilities as if he had been duly elected President.
3. The Recording Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings and file such records as are kept or delivered to his/her possession. The Recording Secretary will also attend to regular correspondence of the organization. Copies of all minutes and financial statements received will be duplicated and mailed to all members of the Board of Directors. The Minutes of the meeting will be published in the "Liberaider". Should the Recording Secretary be unable to attend a meeting, a tape recorder may be used and the recording given to the Recording Secretary to record.
4. The Financial Secretary/Treasurer shall have the care and custody for the billing, collecting, and recording of dues belonging to the organization and shall be solely responsible for such monies or securities of the organization. The Financial Secretary/Treasurer shall pay all routine bills and make such other expenditures as are authorized by the Board of Directors; shall render at stated periods, as the Board of Directors shall determine, a written account of all the finances of the organization with such reports to be physically affixed to the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings. He/She shall also exercise all other duties incidental to the office of Treasurer.

The four (4) elected officers (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Financial Secretary\Treasurer) shall be bonded, as deem necessary.

Article VII – Nominating

Every two (2) years a nominating committee shall be appointed by the President, for the election of the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary and Financial Secretary/Treasurer. This committee is to consist of one (1) representative from each squadron and headquarter. The President shall select a chairman from the members of the committee to be formed at least three (3) months prior to the election at the reunion. Any member in good standing wishing to run for an elective office should submit their name to the nominating committee via the past president at least three (3) months prior to the election and if qualified, the candidate's name shall be placed on the ballot.

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

The election for each of the headquarters and squadron representative (to be held every two (2) years (odd year) may be chaired by the past president or vice president. Thereby assisting in the selection of representatives along with alternates. They shall be selected in caucus by the members of each squadron or headquarter prior to or during the biannual meeting (odd year.)

Article VIII - Salaries

The Board of Directors may hire and fix compensation of any and all employees which in their discretion may determine to be necessary in the conduct of the business of the organization providing that this is in concurrence with the tax exempt status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service and the approval of the Board of Directors.

Article IX – Appointments and Committees

Committees of this organization may be established by the President. Committee members shall be appointed by the President for terms of office for a period of one year, or less if sooner terminated with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Standing committees may be established by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors and appointments to standing committees may be for indefinite terms. Standing committees may be changed or eliminated by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

The President shall appoint a member of the Board of Directors to serve as registered agent for the 461st Bomb Group, Inc., a non-profit corporation in accordance with that state's laws covering non-profit organizations.

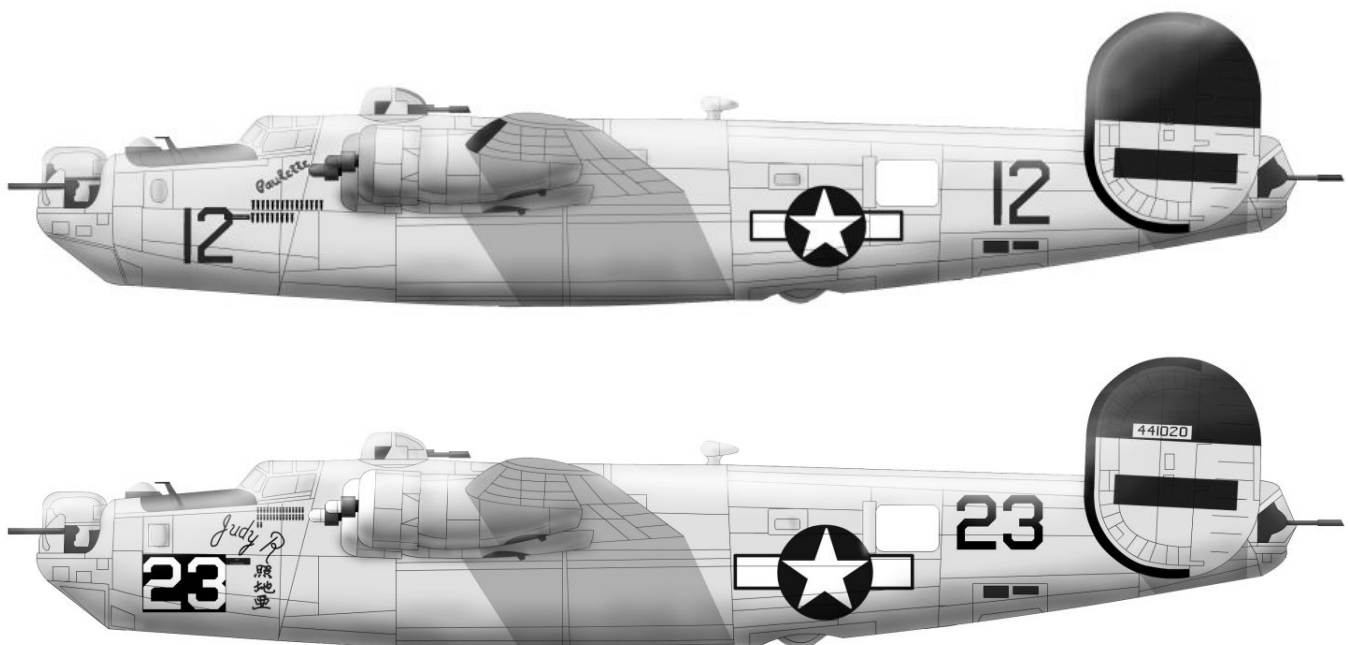
Article X - Dues

Life Membership is available to all veterans of the 461st Bomb Group and their spouses for \$25.00. The dues for all other members (Children and Associate) shall be \$10.00 per year. The dues may be changed by a majority vote of the members in good standing represented in person or by proxy at any meeting.

Article XI - Amendments

The By-Laws may be altered, amended, repealed or added to by an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the members in good standing, represented in person or by proxy, at a general membership meeting or mail in ballot.

APPROVED: _____ (Date)



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Notice to All Members of 461st Bomb Group:

We are proposing a change in the current By-Laws. These changes will allow our children to have a say in the functioning of our Group, so they can carry on the organization. These changes will also give us a better understanding of what the officers are trying to accomplish. The Minutes of the Meetings are to be published in the Liberaider, along with the financial statement. Should you have any questions, the name and address of your Squadron representative is listed in the Liberaider. Only those members in good standing (Life Members and Dues Paying Members) under the current By-Laws (not including children and associate members), can complete the below ballot. Only these ballots will be valid in the voting of the proposed revised By-Laws. All ballots must be received no later than August 31, 2007. Ballots not received by August 31, 2007, will be counted as a "yes" vote for approving the proposed revised By-Laws. The results of the voting regarding the proposed revised By-Laws, will be announced at the 2007 Reunion in St. Louis, Missouri. For the good of the Group, it would be very much appreciated that all members in good standing take the opportunity to vote regarding the changes proposed for the By-Laws. We would like to see this Group continue and to grow through our children, and their children, and their associates.

I want to thank all the members in good standing for voting on the future of our Group.

John Taphorn
By-Laws Committee Chairman

Ballots should be mailed to: John Taphorn
4311 School Section Road
Cincinnati, OH 45211-2415

Ballot for proposed Revised By-Laws

☐ **YES, I approve the Proposed Revised By-Laws**

☐ **NO, I do not approve the Proposed Revised By-Laws**

Name: _____ **Group No.** _____

Address: _____

SPOUSE:

☐ **YES, I approve the Proposed Revised By-Laws**

☐ **NO, I do not approve the Proposed Revised By-Laws**

Name: _____ **Group No.** _____

Address: _____

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gap left by No. 4, which had had to fall out. No. 5, which probably should have done it sooner, belatedly moved sideways at the same time. His port side propellers sliced across the mid-fuselage of Lobbo's plane. It broke in half, the two waist gunners were ejected without chutes, and they and the plane's halves fell several miles to smash into the Adriatic Sea, with no parachutes having been observed.

During my long life since that "ocean cruise of a lifetime", I've occasionally recalled its many fascinations and events, and my shipmates, with great fondness, the old war diary's notes and drawings being a great aid to such recollections. Knowing that many of the airmen soon died in the war, I've wondered what became of all the other men, and the ships, that comprised that historic cruise. Some of the airmen killed in action (KIA) that I know of were in the crews of the 765th Squadron: pilots Smith, Crossman, West and Ford, shot down in the 17 December 1944 mission to Odertal; my navigator, Dan Williams, in our 13 February 1945 crash and burn; 766th pilot Lalewicz and his entire crew (Hank Ivyson, Blackjack Klein, gunner Smith, waist gunners Gray, et al) in the 11 March 1945 collision; and the entire crews of several B-24s that I saw take direct hits and spin in on the banks of the Danube on the mission to bomb railroad yards at Linz, Austria on 25 April 1945. That mission, ironically, was the last combat mission of the Fifteenth Air Force in the war.

I also relive, in a feebly vicarious way, the appalling experience of pal Lalewicz and his crew in that mid-air collision and a few minutes of free-fall to smashing death on impact with the ocean surface. And, in addition, I find myself imagining the mounting feelings of tension and anxiety of the pilots and crews of both aircraft in the brief period that preceded the fatal collision. The report from the survivors had been that, due to radio failure on one of the aircraft, they had been unable to communicate and decide which one would move into the vacated position. They, like me, had probably never been briefed on S.O.P. for filling such gaps in formation. Hence they both may have made several scary false starts toward filling it before impatiently making the final fatal move.

From my own experience with the tense crisis minutes before the impact of a flak-caused crash landing, my hope is that shock sets in and palliates the feelings of fear and pain during those last moments.

Empathy is also very much in order for the pilots and crew of the surviving aircraft. They were first hand witnesses of a horrible scene, and had to live with the picture, and perhaps a 'perpetrator' guilt feeling.

The Creator must have a compensation system in place that makes up for the losses, sufferings and injustices in such tragic earthly human affairs. I have to believe that to continue to function in daily life with some degree of operational faith, hope and charity.

Remember?

I received the following from a gentleman in Cerignola, Italy. Does anyone remember the "**Drink**"?

My father told me about the American presence in Cerignola during WWII. He had a little bar, named "**Drink**", in which he served wine and others liquor to the American military personnel and he became friends with a lot of soldiers. He also told me about these man, strong and friendly, and they very much appreciated his friendship and his wine too. I have some photos of my father together with some Americans. My father told me it was a fantastic period. In spite of the war he really enjoyed those years specially the food—like chocolate, butter, tinned meat and sugar. I accidentally found your website and I had to write about my father, when he was young. He is no longer with me. Thanks for your kindly attention and good luck! Antonello Specchio, Antonello.Specchio@trw.com

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came back from Italy I met a fellow with whom I had classes in college but he was in the Navy V 12 program and stayed in college and in 1945 had his engineering degree and was commissioned as an Ensign. But I out-ranked him and he had Navy service coming up when I could get out in a few months and go back to college.

They found room for us and called us up on 14 February 1943. I reported to an Army Base in Kentucky across from Cincinnati for a train trip to Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi for regular Army basic training as a Private. Marching and PT made up most of the training. The Army camp where they put us was still under construction but the barracks were completed. Being in a southern climate, there were no windows, just shutters. The weather on the Gulf Coast in the early spring was very damp. The latrines, under construction, had just a concrete slab with the toilet fixtures and everything out in the open. This made a primitive scene when the lady PX employees passed by on their way to work. We never got into town during basic training.

Standard procedure as you are standing in line to get your shots is to get descriptions of the equipment used; somehow everyone gives the same old description - large round needles or a special Army large square one. As usually happens many were ill with colds, so many needed a fever of 102 to get out of marching and into the hospital. This happened and the main thing I remember of the hospital is the Texas cowboy music played.

From basic training those who had signed up for flying were sent to a college training unit for schooling until there was space at an Aviation Cadet Center (San Antonio). We took a train to St. Louis, Missouri; no Pullman. The standard kitchen for a troop train was a box car where a large kettle was used to make stew that was served with bread and butter and dill pickles. Bread and butter with pickle sandwiches were good. It was said that US beef was sent to England and Australian lamb was delivered to the US to save shipping.

At St. Louis, a local person surely with political con-

nections had started a college called Jefferson College on Jefferson Avenue using an office building with an open parking garage. The open garage was used for sleeping and the office space for classes. Courses such as history were taught but the operation was really a holding station until the next station was open. The Army is good at warehousing people. PT was held on a church yard. We marched down Jefferson Street from the college to the church yard.

St. Louis was a great town for people in the military as it was not saturated with soldiers like other southern areas. On Saturday nights the churches would have a dance for us and do everything they could for us. The city was also busy, our sleeping area in the open garage looked out on an area of the town where things never quieted down until early morning.

The location was also convenient but not in the downtown area. We took advantage of Sunday morning breakfast at a hotel. Jefferson Avenue ran north and south with the main east and west street car system a short walk away. The street cars were modern with an air suspension that made them quiet and comfortable. Going west you could go to the old St. Louis World's Fair site.

One time they took us to an airport for rides in small Piper Cubs. On that day there was such a strong head wind they could just about land one of the Cubs by coming straight down. Since this was spring the Missouri River next to the airport flooded the runway making taxiing through water necessary. You could see the flooded river from the road to the airport.

The next base was in San Antonio and the Air Cadet Center where we were selected for pilot, navigator or bombardier training along with PT and a few long runs in the back country that if I remember was an old artillery target area. The center was on a flat area overlooking Kelly Field. The ground was so hot gloves were necessary to touch the ground and standing without moving was impossible. You served on KP since a Cadet was still a Private; they did have potato peeling machines so that duty was not part of it. In order to prepare the tables for a meal all salt

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and pepper shakers were lined up along a stretched string. But making cool aid was more interesting. A fat, stripped to the waist, cook would carry a large block of ice under his arm and sweating belly side to dump the ice block into a large kettle.

You had to pass 25 words a minute in morse code and were taught to use the morse code with flashing lights but there was no test to pass for this.

A chamber was used to lower the pressure to simulate high altitude to demonstrate the effect of the lack of oxygen. The tank held several students; one was selected to remove his mask to show the effect on a person. That person acted as though he were drunk. Chemical Warfare would show a film on the use of gas masks. We were supposed to wear a mask during the films but since it was hard to breathe with the mask on, we would remove the carbon filter on the front.

Going into San Antonio was interesting with the San Antonio River and its walks along the banks. The river was far from clean. The Gunner Hotel with its porches over the sidewalks reminder me of old western movies and was a central point for activity. We also visited the Alamo.

From there we went to flight training. My Navigation School was in San Marcos, a short distance north of San Antonio. There we spent from early morning to late evening in school.

A Navigation Manual that I still have was made up of your notes from lectures along with printed sheets such as star charts and data on equipment. The manual has an instruction sheet from a parachute lecture, some good advice and some answers to questions. There is a fire lecture organized in good military form. There is a definition of rain in the weather lectures - "Falling of water particles in the form of drops that are larger and more scattered than droplets of drizzle". Also - "Weather is the condition of the atmosphere at a given time and place". There are instructions on how to write a military letter, paper size, and instructions on the time limit on answering. There must be carbon copies, must be typewritten or in black or blue ink, proper folding, 1 1/4" boarder on

left, file number with 2 spaces to the subject. All of this sounds very detailed but it is important for the military to do things their way to get a job done when it takes on the responsibility it sometimes is called on to do and where failure can have horrible consequences.

We formed and marched everywhere we went. Since everyone had to be dressed the same there were some arguments about wearing warm jackets or not.

San Marcos is dry but there is some rain and light snow in the winter. This would bring out frogs from small ponds that were never seen at other times.

With the schedule we did not go into town. We were Aviation Cadets, but regular cadet uniforms were not issued. The pay was increased to \$75 a month which included an additional 50% for flight pay.

Navigation Flight Training was in twin engine Beech AT-7s. The pilot flew without a co-pilot but with an instructor in the co-pilot's seat. There were three student navigator positions along the right side of the cabin. One student would be lead navigator and the other two would follow the course. With my navigation manual I have a magazine article with pictures and a description of navigation training and flying.

The weather was usually good and dead reckoning was used. Here we used the compass and a drift meter to determine the wind direction in order to give the pilot the compass heading. Air speed and all navigation information were recorded on a flight log for inspection by an instructor. There were night flights for celestial navigation.

One time the weather was so bad we took a trip to northern Texas, Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico to get in flying training (Sherman, Texas; Independence, Kansas; Denver, Colorado and Roswell, New Mexico). We normally flew at about 5,000 feet above the ground. You could fly for a very long time towards the mountains near Denver. The mountains seemed like a large wall. Lowery Field at Denver would not allow us to stay over night but they did give us dinner in the Officers Club. We flew south at night toward Roswell, one of the planes all at once

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was sliding across a flat mountain area like making a belly landing. No one was injured and I never asked one of the students how they got out of there. We stayed overnight at Roswell and then flew back to San Marcos. At the Roswell Airbase I had my only barber shop shave ever.

When flying over Austin, Texas the pilot liked to show you the great blue lights of the City.

Just before graduation we got \$250 for officer uniforms, a tailor from town came out for measuring and making the uniforms. There was a graduation ceremony on 6 April 1944 when you got your wings. My father and brother, Bob, came down from Michigan for the graduation by train, standing up most of the way.

From Navigation School we were sent to Lincoln, Nebraska, and from there to Biggs Field at El Paso, Texas, where we were assigned to a flight crew for training in B-24s. The main thing I remember about the Lincoln Base is the heating was a small coal burning stove and there was smoke in the room.

At Biggs Field the pilot and co-pilot of our crew had a room in the BOQ and the bombardier and navigator were in another. There were several days of flying with one day off, usually the flying before the day off was night flying. A large part of the flying was on the bombing range for the bombardier to practice on the bomb range near Alamogordo, NM. One time a bombardier dropped a practice bomb on the local barber shop. One time they tried to use less than 100 octane gasoline in a B-24 and the plane ended up on a Franklin Mountain a short distance from the end of the runway. A turn was required for a take off to the west to miss the mountains. The pilot would practice instrument flying. There was gunnery practice in the Guadalupe or Sacramento Mountains east of El Paso. There must be a lot of ammunition in the mountains that was thrown out of the waist windows of B-24s.

The field had a navigation trainer. You went there with your pilot and flew a night mission shooting the stars. The pilot would make the plane course corrections. The ceiling was a model of the sky with all the stars.

We could go into town on our officer identification card without a pass. There was an occasional trip to Ciudad Juarez but most of the time was spent in El Paso. There was the Hilton Hotel (the only other Hilton Hotel was in Albuquerque). Texas was dry so the procedure was to buy mostly Gin in a bottle and deposit it at the Officer Club bar for use. If you could get some scotch you had to buy a bottle of gin along with it. The thing about dry towns or states is that people buy a bottle and end up drinking more since nobody would throw the remainder in the bottle away.

One pastime in town was to watch our pilot, Steve Sklansky, bounce an edge-damaged silver dollar on the sidewalk like a ball.

From Biggs Field we took a troop train to Topeka, Kansas on a railroad that went north through northern New Mexico. You could stand outside on a platform and watch the country side but you got showered with soot from the steam locomotive.

At Topeka you either picked up a B-24 for flying to Europe or went east, like we did, to go by boat. Topeka again was dry and liquor could be gotten by going to an address given to us where we were greeted by a small slot in the door.

It is possible to do crazy things when you are young; a group of us including our co-pilot Ray Gress decided that there ought to be a good last night in the US. We took a trip by streamliner train to Kansas City, Kansas and then went to Kansas City, Missouri where there was action. Then to get back to Topeka we hired a taxi for \$50 to drive us the 60 miles back to make the troop train out the next day.

Trip to Italy

We took a troop train from Topeka to Newport News, Virginia to board a ship. The main thing I remember was going through Northern Ohio on the New York Central RR and through the country where I grew up. Also we went by the RR station in Toledo where I had, about 17 months before, boarded a train to go the Kentucky to report to the

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Army. Newport News was not a great place but we were only there until we boarded a ship. We were in a convoy of many ships with Navy destroyers as an escort. The ship in this case was the Grace Liner Santa Rosa; its sister ship was the Santa Maria. But there were no vacation conditions on the ship. Officers were 6 to a room with cots 3 high where two persons would be normally there. But the enlisted men really had it bad in the lower areas of the ship. They spent most of their time on deck with a lot of them playing cards. There were many British Soldiers on the ship who had boarded at an island in the Caribbean before coming to Newport News.

There was a small porthole in the room for ventilation (no A/C), but it was supposed to be closed at night for blackout protection. I remember seeing some lights on the decks of other ships in the convoy. There was salt water in the shower. In order to sleep I went onto the upper deck and slept on a large life preserver storage box. A benefit of this was I saw Gibraltar when we passed through the Strait.

The gunners got themselves jobs on blackout watch, this gave them access to a sandwich bar and they would invite us down for a snack. Two meals a day of lamb stew was not a great feast when eaten from a mess kit. We had bought boxes of candy bars before getting on the ship, but you can get too much of Mars Bars. We could go down an outside stairs next to the ship crew's bakery and smell baking bread odors coming through a window. The South Atlantic weather was very good with nice sunny days.

We docked at Naples; to get to land we crossed a Red Cross Hospital Ship. We walked to the Naples train station with its completely broken glass ceiling. I remember Jose Salas saying that he could understand the Italians but could not speak Italian. We took a train to a replacement depot, Repodepo, in an area west along the Bay of Naples, the site and buildings were built by Mussolini for a future World's Fair. Everybody slept on the concrete floor with two Army blankets. The olive drab wool Army blankets must have been soiled after eight months of sleeping in them without such a thing as a sheet. Actually they might have matched us since we did not get to

take a bath very often.

The Red Cross ran clubs where you could read and they served ice cream. I do not remember the food but anything served in a mess kit was not too great. The latrines, though fairly open to the outside air, were the kind where wearing a gas mask would help.

With nothing else to do, we would take trips into Naples and could go to the opera. The most interesting thing was the Allied officers club called the Orange Club on a mountain overlooking Naples Bay with Mt. Vesuvius in the background. It was run by the British. Liquor served at the bar was mostly sweet vermouth. An Italian band tried to play American swing music. To get to the club someone stole a jeep; jeeps did not have an ignition key and even though a chain with a padlock could be put on the steering wheel, they were easy to steal.

To get to eastern Italy and the air bases we took a train with wood seats around the boot. It took two days, a trip that we later flew in 20 minutes. For food we were given cans of C-ration hash, one fellow knowing what the hash would taste like started a fire in the camp and cooked his before leaving. But the trip did give us a chance to see Italy up close since the train was a commuter RR and you got a great view of the people and what was on the side of the tracks. After arriving at an air field we were flown in B-24s to our group field, this is the only time I ever flew in the Army without a parachute.

From the 461st Bomb Group airfield we were trucked to the 764th Squadron site. It was on a farm; the farm buildings were used for Headquarters and Mess. Housing was in tents. The first night we again slept on the concrete floor of a farm building that I believe was a stable but was used as a theater and for church services. Because there was little wood, all buildings had masonry arches for roof supports like a church. We started flying a few days later except three of our crew members flew two days after we arrived and were shot down.

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Trip Back to US

After you completed your missions you were given an impressive letter from the Flight Surgeon, Mine was dated 5 February 1945, stating you were "*Incapacitated for Regular and Frequent Aerial Flights Due to Exhaustion Resulting from Prolonged Combat Flying*". You also got a recommendation letter from the Squadron Commanding Officer saying you were qualified to be an instructor. I was the first of the original crew to complete my missions and I came back with people from all Groups.

I took a flight to Naples and to the same replacement depot where I stayed when first arriving in Italy. This time there was an army cot and a sleeping bag. Italy, like many places in the south, never admitted that it gets cold and the sleeping bag was not enough. There were windows to the south of the large room that allowed us to sit in the sun during the day to warm up. The room was a hall type of room with an estimated 30-foot ceiling.

I do not remember much of the stay there or the trip to the harbor to board the ship to bring us to the States. The ship was actually built as a troop ship, it was run by the Coast Guard and was many times more suitable than the Grace Liner run by the Merchant Marine on the trip over. We were put in a large room in the bow which was good with no crowding. The beds were the standard stack of stretched canvas from the floor to whatever height someone could climb to. I do not remember what we did to occupy the time but we could roam the deck.

The ship was fast enough that we did not go in a convoy. The trip was via the north Atlantic to New York. We did run into a north Atlantic storm where some unusual things happened. The bow of the ship would rise out of the water and then plop down into the water making a lot of noise and drama to say the least. While lying on your bunk you would be air born against the bunk above you. The same thing happened at the drinking fountain where you would head for the ceiling.

We passed the Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor and docked on the New Jersey side for a trip to Camp Kilmore for more processing which really was a wait for

a troop train. There was no complaint about getting the first American food in months. For some reason a fried egg with tomatoes seemed to be awfully good.

We then took a troop train to Fort Sheridan north of Chicago for more processing before a leave and home. Another fellow and I stayed at the Palmer House where we went to the show of Hildegard who was a top entertainer of that time. Actually this was the start of living it up in the Army, we did have a few ribbons above your wings but what was really important for at least the immediate future is we could enjoy being in America.

On the train to Toledo I met Carl Gebbie a fellow I went to High School with and was also returning home. My Father picked us up and I drove Carl to his home north of Blissfield. Carl and I used to go to Toledo to learn to dance. He had a Model A Ford and, like other farm boys, he had a car to get to high school. We spent time with the family and meeting people. We went to Toledo to go out with friends one of whom had just gotten home after escaping in the Battle of the Bulge.

We then took another train trip through Chicago to Los Angeles. I believe the railroads were the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe and the actual Santa Fe Railroad. Of course since Texas was dry the train had to be pulled off to a siding to remove the bar car. The Rio Grande at El Paso was practically dry. We went through San Diego to the Los Angeles train station and to the Santa Anna AAF Redistribution Center. Santa Anna was rural with orange groves.

Here we were supposed to live it up with food we had never seen before and everything done the best for you. There had been a program where we were invited to famous people's homes but this was cancelled when FDR died. But since there was nothing to do we spent our time in Los Angeles and Hollywood. Buses ran to downtown LA; you could also take the Pacific Electric RR but I do not remember how a line that I believe ran on the coast got you to Santa Anna. It was a really fast railroad except when the conductor parked the train and went in to a restaurant for a meal. I would usually stay at the Biltmore and come back the next day. If I remember there was a trolley from near the Biltmore to Hollywood. One night we experienced California fog which I had not ever seen in the East. One fellow got out of the

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bus to find the edge of the road.

One thing to do in Hollywood was to go to a Radio Broadcasting studio that was a theater. One show was the Fibber McGee and Molly show with their closet where everything came flying out when the closet door was opened. They actually used a filled closet for this. Abbot and Costello was interesting, Costello who was from Patterson, N J found out that a soldier in the audience was from Paterson and I was just a short way from the soldier as Costello came out of a side door to invite him to his home. One time walking along Sunset Blvd Jack Benny's Rochester just about ran me down as he was hurrying from his car to a restaurant. It was a famous restaurant for stars.

Bing Crosby drove by in his blue with white top Cadillac convertible. The Palladium was the place to go to meet young ladies, and as things worked out you'd meet a nice lady the night before you had to ship out. We visited the Roosevelt Hotel and the Brown Derby and all within a short walking distance. There was the famous drug store near the Roosevelt Hotel where stars were supposed to have been discovered. I believe Lana Turner was discovered here. One of the interesting things was to see young ladies in fur coats walking on the street on a warm day, not like the humid climate of the East.

Then there was a trip to Houston and not on a troop train. The station was Ellington Field south of Houston on the road to Galveston. This was another holding and processing center where there was nothing to do except stay in the room during the Chemical Warfare people's gas warfare training. Nobody checked to see if we were wearing our gas masks. We did get one navigation training flight in a Douglas C-47. It was amazing how stable a plane it was for shooting the stars.

There was easy access to Houston - actually many permanent party people at the base were former important Houston people who must have had connections. The bus into town was owned by one of them at the base. One sergeant at the base was a cousin of Vernon Grew; he had enlisted because there were no jobs in Ohio in the 1930s.

The climate at Houston is very hot and damp and to the south of the city there were smells of the oil industry but

it was a great city for service people.

Ladies of Houston would put on parties for servicemen. They would rent the ballroom of the Rice Hotel for dances and parties. I went to the local Wellesley College group parties. Young ladies would circle the Rice Hotel in autos; they were ladies out to pass the time with men.

The Rice Hotel was a great place to take a lady for Dinner. I met a nice lady who looked like Laura Bush and was from the same Texas country. A common term was, "I don't guess" rather than "I do not believe". Oyster bars were popular. The Rice Hotel had no air conditioning but ventilation was by louvered entrance doors and ceiling fans. One time I was in the lobby and everything was unusually quiet. Everyone was waiting for Gene Autry to register. On a trip to Houston in the 70s the only safe way to see the Rice Hotel was to go there in a taxi since the whole area looked like a war torn area. The business area was now to the south of the hotel.

The next station was Hondo Air Field in Hondo, Texas west of San Antonio. Before going there I was offered the opportunity to join the Air Transport Command, but I felt like I had had enough flying. But it would have been a chance to see a lot of the world delivering airplanes. I should have gone since the war was over a short time later and Long Beach would have been a good station.

At Hondo I took the B-29 Cruise Control Course to become an instructor. I never actually instructed and it became just another people storage place. It would have been easy, of course, to end up in the Pacific but the school had hundreds of cadets and there were plenty of people who had not been on active duty in a combat area. To get in flight time a few of us used a B-24 to fly to Willow Run Airport outside of Detroit for a weekend with our families. There was no place to go near the base so most of the time was spent at the Officers Club. I spent a lot of time playing pool.

I was there from July 1945 until Sept 1945 when I went to Fort Sheridan north of Chicago for processing out of active service. With a lot of points in the point system I was one of the first out. We were put on reserve status and I resigned a few years later when a family would not make active service good. There was an offer to come back to active service during the Korean War with Continued Engineering School at the University of Michigan.

From the Desk of Assemblyman Charles Lavine

One of the most rewarding aspects of my work is all. It took the efforts of first lady Eleanor Roosevelt helping to bring people together with services they need or with others with whom they share some important experience. Overcome the prejudice that was bent on keeping them grounded.

I was able to help bring about one such significant reunion on Friday, August 18 when Colonel and Mrs. Spann Watson welcomed David Feldman, my Chief-of-Staff, Carol Hammond and me into their beautiful Westbury home. David Feldman is a retired businessman and lawyer living in Woodbury. He served as director of purchasing for Nassau County when Eugene Nickerson was county executive. David is a volunteer in my office, now using his considerable skills to help our constituents.

Colonel Watson, age 90, is a Tuskegee Airman. David Feldman, age 82, was a navigator on B-24 Liberator bombers. As youngsters, these old warriors flew over the dangerous skies of war-torn Europe, with the Tuskegee Airmen protecting David's unit, the 461st Bomb Group. Spann Watson went on to a distinguished career in aviation. After many years service with the Air Force, he worked with the Federal Aviation Administration. Colonel Watson helped integrate the airline industry.

Then Second Lieutenant Watson was one of a storied group of pilots whose heroism shines as brightly today as it did more than 60 years ago. The all-black 332nd Fighter Group never lost a single bomber to enemy fire in more than 200 combat missions, a record unmatched by any other fighter group. Spann, David and Mrs. Watson recalled the events of more than half a century ago as if they had occurred yesterday. Thankfully, each of them fully realizes the significance of their contribution to our nation.

That achievement is all the more remarkable because As we left and the old troopers warmly embraced, the Tuskegee Airmen were never supposed to fly at where, Mrs. Roosevelt was smiling.



An elderly American gentleman arrived in Paris by plane. At French Customs, he fumbled for his passport. "You 'ave been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked sarcastically. The old gent admitted that he had been to France previously.

"Zen, you should know enough to 'ave your passport ready for inspection."

The American said, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it."

"Impossible. You Americans always 'ave to show your passports on arrival in France!"

The American senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look. Then he quietly explained, "Well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach in '44 I couldn't find any Frenchmen to show it to."

Ploesti's Oil

by
Joseph Quigley
August 1, 1944

God's bright stars have not yet faded
Desert morn is dark and still.
Sleepy youths in flying raiment
Stumble in the early chill.

We wash the sand and dust away
From bodies sunburned red.
With salty tasting water
In basin from the head.

Through the moonless darkness watching
For the rope and peg of tent.
Till at last we reach the mess hall
Thatched with tin, half circled bent.

Many a muttered groan is heard
At the breakfast we behold.
Bused alike are science and hen
For their powdered product cold.

Breakfast o'er equipment gathered
In the light now golden bright.
To the flight line now repairing
Ready for the well planned flight.

We have been briefed by men of note
And experts by the score.
Quote they "That if we'd do our job,
Six full months we'd save from war".

Incentived thus we strove to go
Our purpose firm to do the work
With stakes so great the risk seemed so small
What man could the danger shirk.

Why, because of us the brother
With more tender age might live!
Or other men who to the world
A greater gift of peace might give.

There silent on the concrete waiting
Stand our ships of desert hue.
Stands our wondrous ship of thunder
Made at home by comrades true.

Those unsung men who labor long
With truth to question grim reply
Into their hands go all our lives
When they speak the words "She'll Fly"

At our stations midst the load
Of fire and fuel and lead
Pulse quickened, eager men to guide
This propelled shell of dread

One by one four engines starting
Boil red dust behind the tail
One by one our squadron comrades
Falling in line increase the gale

In the order of the take off
Nose to tail we twist and churn
To the downwind end of runway
Where we squat and wait our turn.

Now the strip is clear before us
Path of thunder straight and true
Wide opened are the throttle's throats
And din and dust aroused anew.

Faster and faster on the concrete
With the wheels upraising sand
Too slow for heaven, too swift for earth.
Between the two like soul of men.

Faster yet! And now the moment
When our nose is upward turned
And the earth's uneven contour
Retreats as does a lover spurned.

Roaring through the early morning
Skyward pulled by whirling team
Thirty tons of men and metal
Held aloft by strength unseen

Rendezvous among the cloudlets
Far above the desert floor

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(Continued from page 33)

Where we met our flying comrades
Now arriving by the score

See below the naked trailing
German Army road of war
Burnt out tanks and lost equipment
Mutely type the load it bore

Skillfully, brave and full of flight
Our worthy foe of strength
He advanced and then retreated
'Lone its entire length.

Perhaps someday when all the war
Is from war's cancer cured
When all men shall true brothers be
And not from truths way lured

Then shall the millions of the world
With peace and honor deal
More noble men should be our aim
Along with harder steel.

Now our great fleet all assembled
Proudly bores into the sky
Heading northward toward the target
Many hundreds miles away

Soon we see the glistening shoreline
Of the worlds great inland sea
Stretching to each side horizon
Being blue waves endlessly

Far below in azure setting
Shines a city in the sun
In such a clime the works of man
Are shaded white, the heat to shun

Tragic wrecks along the seashore
Tell of best and cursed in man
Finely fashioned ships grotesquely
Blown by war upon the sand

As we fly out o'er the water
Sparsely flecked with silver crest
Once again each man among us
Pledges silently his best

See the shadows on the surface
Of the sea of ancient love
Silhouettes upon the water
Formed by wings two miles above

Suddenly our eyes are focused
On arising pall of smoke
Vainly do we try to smother
Poignant facts and thoughts that choke

Well we know the fiery reason
Why the black upward coils
At its base a flaming coffin
Sinks beneath the sea it soils

Two hours flight across the currents
Homers hero sailed for years
Then dimly through the summer mist
The rugged coast of Greece appears.

What thoughts and words might we provoke
If with some magic way
The ancient teachers could be made
To upward gaze today

They'd see us tunnel through the clouds
That o'er their homeland swell
And shake the very mountains
Where the favored Gods did dwell.

The spin of earth has moved the sun
Until it splits the day
The spin of steel has pulled our flat
On its northward course midway

Over valleys filled with summer
Where the shade shows cool and green
Over glistening lakes and rivers
Smoothest water ever seen

When at last we leave the mountains
Then we see great Danube's plain
And we glide o'er golden meadows
Filled with gently waving grain

Relentlessly our engines send
With never a moments break
A droning message to men below
Who live in a tyrants wake

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Broad is the plain where the Danube flows
On its way down to the sea
Broad are the hopes of all mankind
When the truth shall make us free.

See the waving crowds of people
In the towns and hamlets small
Simple folk out Sunday walking
Far from where the bombs will fall

Bow we pray that no civilian
Has to work this Sabbath Day
And we almost wish that soldiers
Did not try to bar the way

Despite opposing planes and guns
The enemy may employ
No earthly force can keep us
From the goal we must destroy

Time to buckle steel helmets on
And forget our pounding hearts
Recheck the bullets and the guns
Before the bomb run starts

A decoy turn into the east
The ground defense to foil
A second southward turn we make
And there in front – Ploesti's Oil!

Searching sharply for each landmark
Flying close to the ground
How engines roar and crash of guns
Compete in race of sound

The flaming tracks of tracer fire
Form a wall of white hot bars
The bursting anti-aircraft shells
Fill the air with their dark scars

Till it seems that nothing human
Can survive this deadly storm
Except when Heaven desires to send
Protection to our living form

Skimming lower, dodging smokestacks
Clipping trees in our mad haste
On the grimmest, wildest mission
Flying man has even faced

Exploding tanks of blazing oil
Shoot their tops into the blue
Smoking towers of orange fame
Hotly burn as we fly through

Left and right and all around us
Buddies reel, go plunging down
Searing deeply this strange earth
There to sleep in mute renown

Far from homeland and far from loved ones
Whom their hearts did cry to see
They turned life's pockets inside out
To pay war's ghastly fee

Sixty killing, breathless seconds
Flying through the ground gun zone
At its edge the hunting fighters
Awaits their prey to turn for home

Diving, shooting, they attack us
Once they try and then they zoom
To a vantage point above us
Far below there is no room

Weaving through this screaming madness
Missing friend and shooting foe
Chasing blindly running cattle
Frightened by our flying low

Unsolved the problems in my mind
That no one has solved before
Why some are killed and some are hurt
And others live while waging war.

Regardless what the answer be
We all for life do strive
And when the Danube is re-crossed
Our valiant crew is still alive

Climbing now to clear the mountains
Headed toward our distant base
Free from all the low fueled fighters
Who have given up the chase

We've done what we were sent to do
A single, further thing remains
We must get back to our far field
Despite fatigue and weary brains

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How innocent are the summer clouds
Each with a different charm
Sailing serenely across the blue
Without a hint of harm

But clouds keep hidden friend and foe
Determined by who enters first
And flying into one of them
We're welcomed with a fighters burst

With super skill or mere good luck
Two engines die with his first blast
Crippled, we must fall behind
While the fighters thunder past

Our comrades in another ship
Without a pause or selfish thought
To guard our tail drop to the rear
And in a deadly hail are caught

They tried to help us and they died
For us they gave their all
I wonder how my honor would
Resound to such a call

Self-centered men will call them fools
To give their lives away
They can't conceive that finer souls
Do live in self-same clay

Because there is a balance struck
With them and the myriad kind
Maybe the reason why its so
That noble men are hard to find

Back came the fighters, shooting fire
Diving on their wounded prize
Our guns still firing get the range
And plunging down one dies

Four of our crew have bleeding wounds
From gun and cannon shells
And dust and oil and leaking gas
Of many crippling bullets tell

Those men across the sea
Will wait in vain today
The bird which they keep in repair
Is dying far away

Some of the crew have time to jump
And parachute to the ground
The rest of us all ride her down
And crash with sickening sound

But all we suffer are bruises
As over the wheat we slip
So daftly have the pilots true
Landed our stricken ship

From the quiet summer shadows
Growing in sun's long light
Come our captors, down the hillside
With their weapons shining bright

Behind steel door and barbed wire
Guarded night and day
We now await deliverance
Or a chance to get away

Time is all that we are rich in
Time to think and ponder all
Why have war with all its headaches
There's tears enough on this mad ball

Some men say God sends war
To teach his way of life
Could it not be self-seeking men
That causes endless strife?

For war and truth are far apart
As is earth from brilliant sun
And who are we that God should force
His way with point of gun.

Yes, we need him and he not us
Has man smothered such a truth!
Must we always wait for war
To teach the lessons of our youth.

"Well," snarled the tough old Navy chief to the bewildered seaman, "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and pee on my grave."

"Not me, Chief!" the seaman replied. "Once I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in line again!"

461st Bomb Group Reminiscences

by

Walter H. Stewart

766th Squadron

Reminiscences are often good, sometimes bad. We can dredge up those bad experiences, yet more commonly our memories prefer to settle on the good ones. So that's what I've chosen to remember. Oh, sure, war is hell and war-time life is frustrating if not hellish. Yet there's the good side to war: the friends you make; the knowledge you suck in as well as impart; the understanding that you gain about events as well as people; the maturing of a naïve young adult to a sensitive, experienced veteran.

Here is one story turning around the good side of war – the good side of a heavy bombing unit which had as its purpose the destruction of places, equipment, processes, communication and, though incidentally, key people. It's a story of action and achievement and honors. It's the story of the 461st Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force of World War II. This is the way my story goes, in brief:

June 1942 – graduate of journalism training at Missouri University, Columbia, Missouri

June 1942 - Enlistment into the Army Air Corps with an interest in photography because of such study at Missouri University

June – October 1942 - Training in aerial photography at Lowry Field, Denver, Colorado

October 1942 – December 1943 – Experience in photo lab and aerial photo work for intelligence at Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado

January 1944 – August 1945 – Aerial and public relations photo work from the 461st Bomb Group's headquarters photo lab at

Torretta Field, Cerignola, Italy, near the Adriatic Sea in southern Italy

What we notice first are the varied experiences at various places. Learning and instructing in portrait, copy, news and aerial photography – variety. Entering at historic Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri; troop train rides from the Midwest to the west coast then 3,000 miles back from Fresno, California to Hampton Rhodes, Virginia; seeing Pikes Peak, the Garden of the Gods, the tremendous ship-building yards at Newport News, Virginia, seeing Naples and Rome, and sight after sight; 34 days aboard a Victory ship carrying Air Corps units to the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy – eye-opening learning. Train rides; troop ships that bobbed and rolled; flight in the “hottest” bomber of the war called a B-25 to learn aerial camera methods; flight in the fat-bellied, four-engine B-24 to learn aerial camera installation and problems; zips out to the airstrip and back in the remarkable yet rough Jeep to load and unload aerial cameras; lengthy rides from air base to town which almost left us with a perpetual bump in the rump – unmatched experience in transportation. New issue khakis here, old ones there and, in between, both new and old fatigues and duffle-bags – who cares how we looked when we went into war action? A 35mm single-lens camera at one place; a 4x5-inch speed graphic used for all purposes from portraits to “shots” of an honored plane crew, to copies made of an intelligence chart; a single-lens at one place and a twin-lens reflex in the next and, with all, the filters, shades, front-lens shutter, focal-plane shutter, regular as well as sports-view for framing your pictures and, not to be slighted, learning to repair cameras – camera experience with the best of 'em! Training, experience, expertise, professional-quality skills –

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all made possible by Air Corps aerial and ground photography during World War II.

Nor can a reminiscence overlook the “higher experiences”. The worship services in churches at Fresno and Colorado Springs; the kindly, interest-in-you attitude of Air Corps chaplains; an Easter sunrise service at Colorado Springs’ world-famous Garden of the Gods; the visit home on leave in 1943 from central California to southeast Missouri and its lead capitol of the world (Flat River town); the short leave from Torretta Field near Cerignola, Italy, to fly across the peninsula to Rome, “the eternal city”, and there to see magnificent St. Peter’s square and hear the Pope address 100,000 people there and, inside, majestic St. Peter’s Cathedral and, inside that, the immortal religious paintings of artist Michelangelo around the cathedral dome and his just-as-spiritually heightening sculpture of David. Never would all of these “highs” have been possible in any other 3 ½ years for me, a shy, ready-to-be-led but not-mature-enough-to-dare 21-year-old, small-town fellow.

These training, traveling, doing and “lifting” experiences of a war were augmented by the men I met and served with. General harmony prevailed in the lab, on the line, with the camera, aboard ship, walking downtown, and even in the tent - especially in our tent at Torretta Field, Cerignola, Italy. We were mighty fortunate to have a congenial “photo tent”. All six of us were assigned from each of the four squadrons to the 461st Bomb Group headquarters photo lab where 17 of us worked. Perhaps our common interest in photography was a key factor. However, it was more than that. We respected each other; we knew one another well enough to know what to expect; we could talk about numerous subjects and ideas; we all could “take it” when joshed and jabbed by the others; we usually avoided the irritating practices which grated on others; we paired off so that no one was isolated.

While overseas in Italy, our tent included: Herman Muhlmann, the Ohioan who, being well educated, wanted the reputation of man of the world but whom we liked to puncture as “Herman the German”; Thomas Flaherty, a small, wiry gem out of Manchester, New Hampshire who, for all-around congeniality, must be called “the best” and who was a never-failing friend during and after the war; Patrick Faharty – he of the “Bahston” accent and quick smile and even quicker quip of the Massachusetts Irishman; “Pat” Patterson, a lanky, freckled, staid, somewhat silent son of the Midwest whose sincerity made for good relations with the other five; “Red” Mulliner, another smallish kid – our youngest – who volunteered to fly as cameraman, logging some 20 or so missions as B-24 photographer, and so was our versatile man of the lab, on the line where he loaded and unloaded cameras from planes, in the bomb group headquarters building, and in the photo lab; this writer, Wally Stewart, whom I’ll characterize as a timid, small-town Missourian who was willing to talk and kid and fit in with the others and, at 5-feet-6, was small enough to be called the “Shortstop” by pal Flaherty.

The 461st Bomb Group flew 223 missions (with 20 to 30 B-24s per mission) during its 19 months in Italy with the Fifteenth Air Force. Its efforts rated ribbons for participation in the battles of the near east, Mediterranean, Europe and southern France. Two Presidential Unit Citations top the group’s honors. And, for each of these citations, our lab provided the photo proof of our 461st’s effective work. Aerial pictures taken by our cameras and processed by our lab were a big part of our 461st Bomb Group’s presentation and helped it to the two citations.

Citations, ribbons, travel, visiting world-famous sites, standing and worshipping in holy places, unparalleled photo experience and, above all, cementing good relationships with other young men – about 60 years ago!

Coincidence

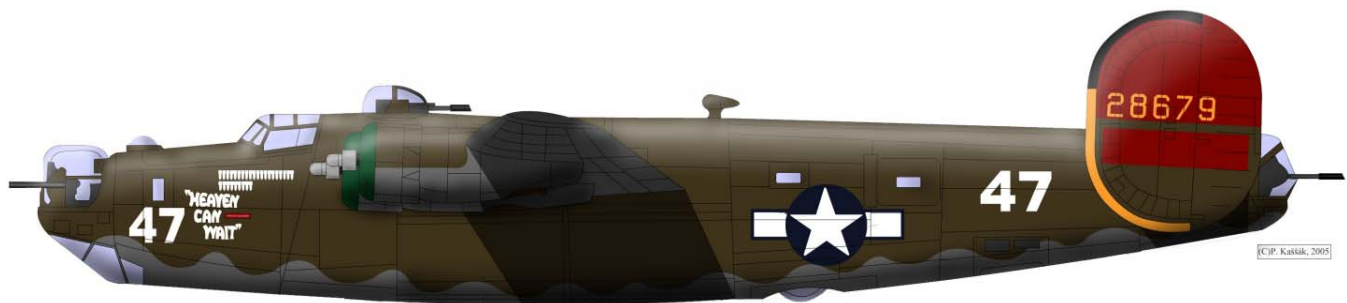
by
David Feldman
766th Squadron

On 7 October 2006, we had our dinner/dance in Seattle. Before the meal was served pictures were shown on a screen of Cerignola and Bari, Italy.

Two of the waitresses screamed. They were from Italy and knew the area well.

I spoke with one of them. I had been back to Italy on business. We talked about how it was then and how this area has changed now. Bari has become a large, modern city.

Before the evening ended, this waitress called me over to say how nice it was to reminisce and asked me to give her a real Italian hug and kiss which I was glad to do. You never know what to expect.



Fear

by
David Feldman
766th Squadron

Every time we flew, and I flew thirty missions, I was frightened by the rendezvous to get into formation for the mission.

When we had a very heavy bomb load I had to sweat out the take off at Torretta's runway, which was too short. The plane would drop off at the end of the runway and gain air speed as it fell into the valley and then begin to fly up. The ground crew would watch each take off with crossed fingers until the plane climbed above the runway.

Once the plane was airborne it had to get into formation with all the other planes that were flying around. On a clear day this was scary, but on a cloudy day this was pure horror.

30 x fright = gray hair and nightmares.

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We're on the web!
Visit
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Webmaster Comments

I did it! I just hope I haven't bitten off more than I can chew. What have I done? Well, let me give a little explanation first. One of the things that has bothered me for some time is the lack of information about the overall Fifteenth Air Force. Yes, there's been some information on our website, but the main focus of our website has been the 461st, not the other organizations making up the Fifteenth Air Force. And yes, some of the other organizations do have their own websites, but getting the overall picture of the Fifteenth Air Force and access to the individual organizations within it has been difficult. To solve this problem, I created a new website (www.15thaf.org) that brings the whole organization together in one place. Where appropriate, I've put in links to the websites already done. I'm offering space to any of the organizations that don't have their own website. The cost is minimal, but if someone wants to contribute to the maintenance of this new website, I would welcome donations.

With 10-gig of space for our website, the only constraint is the CDs I offer. A CD holds approximately 700-meg of data so I would like to hold the website to this limit. We are a long way from filling even this right now so send in your suggestions.

I would like to remind everyone that the 461st Website CD contains everything that was on the website at the time the CD was created plus some extra things such as some history files, MAC Reports and some of the Liberaiders. The CD costs \$25.00 for the first copy and \$15.00 for subsequent copies. If you already have a CD, you might consider a replacement CD in order to have everything that's been added to the website since you received your copy. I will once again have copies at the reunion.

I want to maintain an accurate E-Mail list for members of the 461st. If you have Internet access, please take a few minutes to drop me a note to make sure I have your address.