



*The 461st*

# Liberaider



Vol. 28, No. 1

JUNE 2011

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

## Reunion Information

The 2011 reunion of the 461st/484th Bombardment Group (H) will be held in Bloomington, MN. This promises to be another exceptional reunion with exciting tours and activities. See page 18 for details and sign-up information.

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## The Tulsamerican

A Story About an Airplane and  
her Crews during WWII

By  
Gerald L. Landry



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### **Acknowledgements:**

My appreciation and love to all that helped with this work. Without their assistance, patience, and caring, this story may have never seen the light of day.

This is my family: Margaret Landry, Anthony Landry, John Landry, Polly

*(Continued on page 4)*

## It's a Small World After All

by  
Gasper Perry  
Radio Operator/Waist Gunner  
Stephens Crew #14  
764<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group

Over the years I have often thought of those three years, over sixty years ago. After graduating from High School and realizing that getting a job in 1938 was nearly impossible. I knew with the war coming that I would shortly be in the service, but for the time being, I felt I had to assist in my family needs and went to work in Republic Aircraft Corp. at

fifty cents an hour. A short time later I received my draft notice which we were told to turn in to personnel and they, in turn, notified the draft board that we were then 2B, defense employment. After receiving the draft notice twice and getting deferred, I decided to not turn it in to personnel and took a train to Whitehall Street in New York to enlist. There was confronted by Marine Guards at the entrance and told to return to our place of employment an order. My only choice now was to not turn my next notice in and get drafted. The

*(Continued on page 15)*

# *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

## **764<sup>th</sup> Squadron**

<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Hometown</b></u>	<u><b>MOS</b></u>	<u><b>Date of Death</b></u>
Burkhardt, Edwin A.	Silver Spring, MD	612	04/04/11
Hurley, Edward A. Jr.	Excelsior, MN	1035	11/30/10
Leifer, Charles E.	Louisville, KY	1034	11/02/10
Oliver, John G.L.	Naples, FL	1092	01/02/11

## **765<sup>th</sup> Squadron**

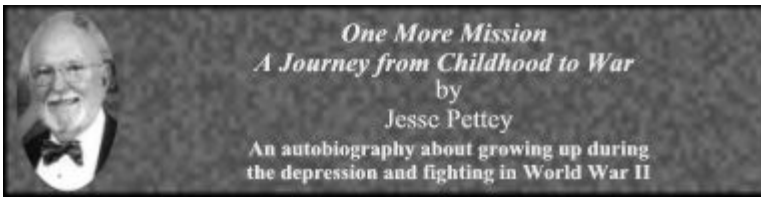
<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Hometown</b></u>	<u><b>MOS</b></u>	<u><b>Date of Death</b></u>
Krause, Charles R.	Cassville, MO	612	12/16/10
Purisch, Irwin	Valley Stream, NY	747	07/07/10
Qualman, Thomas W.	Winter Haven, FL	1034	11/05/10
Sparber, Paul H.	Great Neck, NY	1035	11/22/10
Stanko, John J. Jr.	Danville, PA	1092	11/15/10

## **766<sup>th</sup> Squadron**

<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Hometown</b></u>	<u><b>MOS</b></u>	<u><b>Date of Death</b></u>
Behrens, Richard	St. Paul, MN	1092	11/11/10
Cline, Charles E.	Birmingham, AL	757	11/12/10
Cogswell, Norman H.	Center Ossipee, NH	1092	10/25/10
Griffin, William D.	Morristown, NJ	748	03/18/10
Zippilli, Joseph S.	Mount Laurel, NJ	748	06/13/10

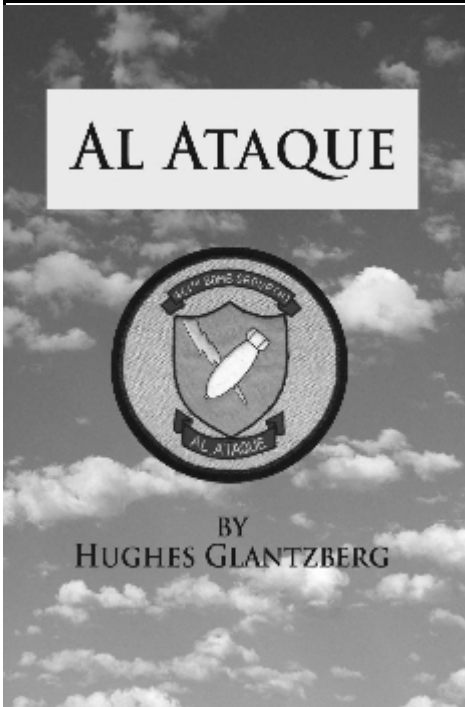
## **767<sup>th</sup> Squadron**

<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Hometown</b></u>	<u><b>MOS</b></u>	<u><b>Date of Death</b></u>
Glasson, James A. Jr.	Taft, TX	612	02/16/09
Maggard, Oliver Jr.	Carmel, IN	1092	03/00/10
McGarr, John G.	San Antonio, TX	612	12/13/10
Snively, Dale	Olney, IL	1092	03/25/11



With a special interest in World War II and the 461st Bombardment Group in particular, I found this book excellent. Most of the men who fought during WWII were in their late teens and early 20s. It's amazing to be able to read about their activities. Liberaider Editor

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and Xlibris (at a 15% discount) (<http://www2.xlibris.com/bookstore/bookdisplay.asp?bookid=11013>).



## Al Ataque

History / General

Trade **Paperback**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$26.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-41572-5**

413 Pages

On Demand Printing

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc

To order call 1-800-AUTHORS

Trade **Hardcopy**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$36.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-86486-4**

Al Ataque is an excellent book that describes the preparation a bomb group goes through before being deployed overseas as well as the problems of shipping over five thousand men and supplies along with some eighty B-24 aircraft from a stateside base to a foreign country. The book details the establishment of Torretta Field which was used by the 461st for the duration of the war in Europe. The 461st Bomb Group flew two hundred and twenty-three combat missions between April 1944 and April 1945. Each of these is described in the book. Personal experiences of veterans who were actually part of the 461st are also included.



## Music Bravely Ringing

by

Martin A. Rush

767th Squadron

This is the story of a small town boy who, during WWII, wandered onto the conveyor belt that turned civilians into bomber pilots. Initially awed and intimidated at the world outside his home town, he began to realize that this was an opportunity to have a hand in stimulating and challenging dealings larger than he had expected. He had a few near-misses, but gradually began to get the hang of it. His story is that like the thousands of young men who were tossed into the maelstrom of war in the skies. He was one of the ones who was lucky enough to live through it.

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc.

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Crossin, Robert Landry, my mother Martha Landry, my wife, Carol and stepdaughter, Rebecca Irwin. These good people allowed me the time to put many long hours into my research and were invaluable in supporting me throughout this effort.



Russell, Martha, Frank & Gerald Landry at home in South Gate, CA 1942

The incredible people I would never have had the pleasure to meet or interact with if it were not for this story. They are: Norma and Paul Beard, John Bybee, Kevin Gray, Mrs. John Toney, Val Miller, Vernon Miller, William Donald, Sherrie Donald, Rick Donald, Michal Mucha in Poland, Jerry Whiting, Hughes Glantzberg, and members of the 461st Bomb Group, U.S. and Foreign Archivists, and last but not least, the divers from Croatia and Slovenia. My friend's Zeljko Bocek and the dive team of Danijel Frka, Igor Miholjek, Vlado Onofri, Marino Brzac, Vesna Zmaic, Mijenko Marukic, Zoran Milosavljevic, Kardi Zupanic, Gabrijel Hrovat, and Darko Bojanic who did the first dive on "The Tulsamerican".

During the days of WWII, the Ford plant at Willow Run produced B-24 Bombers under license of Consolidated Aircraft. There were times when Henry Ford had a better idea of how to do things when it came to assembling cars, trucks, or airplanes.

The Ford plant produced finished airplanes, as well as building kits of various airplane parts that would be sent to other locations for assembly. One of these kits ended up being the B-24J, Tulsamerican.

The Tulsamerican was the last B-24J assembled at the Douglas Tulsa Plant. This airplane was designated with the number 952, and was purchased by the workers and people of Tulsa. The airplane rolled out the hanger door in July 1944. Those that built her signed their names on the fuselage and the special nose art was applied by Mr. Floyd Bridges, one of the maintenance painters. The employee's put together special items for the crew that would fly this airplane and placed them at each crew member station aboard the Tulsamerican. Only one of those handmade items exists today thanks to Lt. William Donald who managed to carry it throughout his service time and passed it on to his family. That item is a dedication scroll with all the employees' signatures, as well as a drawing of the nose art and a wish for peace. The scroll is currently housed at the Tulsa Air & Space Museum for all to view.



The Tulsamerican Scroll

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According to John Toney, the nose gunner aboard the Tulsamerican, *"the airplane was flown to the modification plant in Birmingham, Alabama and arrived there August 2, 1944. This was also the day the Lt. Leo Cooper crew flew their first mission with the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron. This mission took them to Avignon, France.*

*"From Birmingham, the airplane was sent to Topeka, Kansas where Lt. William Donald's crew accepted the airplane and flew it to Italy where she was assigned to the Fifteenth Army Air Force, B-24 Liberator Group, Commanded by Col. Phillip R. Hawes."*

While at Topeka, Kansas the William Donald crew checked the airplane out prior to leaving for Italy. William Donald's Flight Log contains the following information of their time in Topeka, and their flight to Giola, Italy.

- September 9, 1944; calibration of the Tulsamerican instrumentation.
- Pre-flight of the airplane
- September 16, 1944; Flew from Topeka to Grenier, New Hampshire
- September 17, 1944; To Gander, Newfoundland
- September 20, 1944; To Lagens, Azores
- September 22, 1944; To Marrakech, Africa
- September 25, 1944; To Tunis, Africa
- September 27, 1944; To Giola, Italy and turned in the Tulsamerican



The William Donald Crew consisted of: Lt. William Donald, Pilot; Lt. Smith, Co-Pilot; Lt. Stuart Lefkowitz, Navigator; Lt. Everett Lorenzo, Bombardier; Sgt. Russell Walling, Flight Engineer; Sgt. Cleo West, Gunner; Sgt. Vernon Miller, Tail gunner; Ernest Balent, Gunner; Sgt. Lick; and Sgt. Marino.

According to the records of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, the Tulsamerican was assigned to the 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, October 1944.



Standing L-R: John Toney; Wallace McLemore; Charles Priest; Spaulding Tukey; Jon Wroclowski; Jame Hazel  
Sitting L-R: Vincent Ecklund; Leo Cooper; Russell Landry

The Tulsamerican flew 18 missions while assigned to the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, and was considered war weary prior to mission 151, 17 December 1944. The missions' objective was to attack the Odertal Oil Refineries. The Tulsamerican was brought back on the ready line to fly this important and risky mission. Her crew was made up of some of the original Cooper crew, and others were added as necessary to fill in due to crew member losses. Lt. Eugene Ford was assigned to fly in place of now Lt. Cooper who had been promoted to a Squadron Operations Officer position. Lt. Ford had just returned to Italy after some R&R at home with his wife and family after flying the required missions in the MTO during his first tour.

Flight crews are always a bit concerned when their regular pilot is not flying with them; however, this crew was aware of the experience of Lt. Ford and felt easy about flying with him. The crew that day was made up of a few new men, but mostly of a crew that had flown together for many missions.

The crew consisted of, Lt. Eugene Ford, Pilot, filling

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in for Lt. Leo Cooper, Lt. Vincent Ecklund, Co-Pilot; Lt. Russell C. Landry, Navigator; Lt. Val Miller was filling in for Lt. J.B. Winstead as Bombardier, Tech Sergeant Charles E. Priest, Flight Engineer; S/Sgt Wallace H. McLemore, Ball Gunner; S/Sgt John F. Toney, Nose Gunner. The other two replacements were S/Sgt Casimir Walenga, and S/Sgt Edward F. Steelandt. Out of this crew on this fateful day only seven would return.



Lt. Eugene Ford



Lt. Val Miller

Mission 151 for the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group had some unusual circumstances right from the start. The Fifteenth Air Force ordered every airworthy plane for a massive assault on the oil refineries of Blechhammer North, Blechhammer South, and Odertal. In all, the Fifteenth Air Force launched 527 B-17 and B-24 bombers, along with 300 P-38 and P-51 fighter escorts. There was one critical item the Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters did not know while planning this mission. The Luftwaffe had placed some of its best fighter groups within striking distance of the oil refineries and the Ardennes to support the German army at the Battle of the Bulge.

This mission would take the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group to near the limit of their range. It was decided at Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force that it would be important that the 461<sup>st</sup> conserve fuel. In an article prepared by Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, a weekly summary of bombing, there appeared the following article entitled: GUNS OR GAS. *"On 17 December the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group was on its way to Odertal. To minimize drag and conserve fuel for the long mission the ball turrets had not been lowered, but gunners were instructed to stand by to lower them when an attack was sighted or when the IP (Zuckmantel) was reached. Near Muglitz (49 degrees 47 minutes N., 16 degrees 56 minutes E) just south of the IP, the group was attacked from the south by 40 to 50 Me-109s and Fw-190s. 30 E/A were credited to the group and ten bombers were lost, 5 more were damaged, and 1 was forced to jettison, later ditching. On the way home, between Blechhammer and Vienna, the group leader was checking planes over the radio when a German voice, seemingly familiar with our call signs, broke in to ask "Where are the rest of your planes?" He laughed, and signed off.*

*"The attack lasted 15 minutes with the aggressive and apparently experienced pilots using both rockets and 20mm cannon. Passes were mostly made in pairs, from 5 to 7 o'clock low, with breakaways also low.*

*"It is easy to see that the ball turrets were unable to get into action quickly enough to contribute their full share of the fire power. They had advantage of com-*

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*puting sights and the most favorable position of this type of attack, yet every other position which could bring guns to bear toward the rear outscored them, and even the single guns in the waist position fired more rounds than the twin guns of the ball turrets. It may also be significant that other formations traveling the same route that day, with ball turrets lowered and ready, were not hit. Low attacks and break-aways were apparently exploiting an observed weakness.*

While the 18 Missions flown by the crews of "The Tulsamerican" over France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland and the oil fields of Ploesti, Romania, this day would be the last for the Tulsamerican.

German radar, code named Freya, detected large bomber formations approaching the area of the oil refineries, and Luftwaffe fighters were scrambled from four different air drones to fend off the attack. There were 100 fighters launched at 10:45 AM to confront the bomber formations. As the battle joined, Liberators from the 49th Bomb Wing were the first to fall. The Luftwaffe claimed 22 B-24s within the first 10 minutes of the battle.

What really happened to the Tulsamerican?

Other flight crews were up that day who witnessed the fighter attack and its aftermath. From information pieced together from these and the surviving crewmembers, the story unfolds.

The 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron was flying high trail in the formation 17 December 1944, and the weather was poor with heavy clouds and snow. The formations entered the clouds and flew on instruments towards the Initial Point (IP). Instrumentation in those days

was not sophisticated, and detection of other nearby airplanes in the clouds was only possible if they could be seen. In the cloudy conditions visual contact of the formation was lost. Because they had to maintain radio silence, the various groups were unable to talk to one another to define each other's positions.

"The Tulsamerican," piloted by Lt. Eugene Ford, was lead in a box of six B-24s. Apparently, there was a near mid-air collision when another box was encountered in the heavy clouds. In an effort to avoid this collision, Lt. Ford took his flight high and a mile to the right of the now disoriented and scattered formation. Lt. Gerald Smith witnessed this tactic and later said, *"I would have made the same maneuver if I had been flying in the same position as Lt. Ford."* Lt. Ford's box somehow ended up leading the formation at this time and broke out of the clouds somewhere near the town of Muglitz, Germany. But only disaster awaited the box.

Unknown to the airplanes in the formation, they had been shadowed in the clouds by the fighter pilots of the Luftwaffe from JG300 and JG301 Squadrons who saw that some of the airplanes did not have their lower ball turrets extended. It is almost certain they believed these airplanes would be easy prey if they came in low and fired at their bellies. As it happened, the airplanes of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group were the only ones in the formation that had been ordered to fly with their lower ball turrets retracted on this day. The purpose was to minimize drag and conserve fuel for the long mission to Odertal, Germany.

As the formation lead by Lt. Ford in "The Tulsamerican" broke out of the clouds, fighters of the Luftwaffe were awaiting them. The engagement began at

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

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The 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider  
Hughes Glantzberg, Editor, P.O. Box 926, Gunnison, CO 81230  
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11:53 AM and lasted until 12:20 PM with the Germans claiming 10 bombers. In Lt. Ford's box, four of the six airplanes were shot down, the remaining two received battle damage and were forced to abort the bomb run. "The Tulsamerican" sustained heavy damage, losing one engine, the hydraulic system, and taking a hit in a fuel tank which began to stream fuel. Though damaged, the other airplane was able to return to base safely.

After the attack Lt. Ford had Lt. Val Miller released the bomb load and then pointed the nose of "The Tulsamerican" towards home base. His airplane was in bad condition and because of the loss of an engine and the hydraulic system, he was required to fly slower and at a lower altitude on the return leg. The bomb bay doors were jammed open, and there was no way to transfer fuel from the damaged tank because the hydraulic system was no longer functional. While on the return leg and over Hungary, they encountered flak batteries and sustained more damage. At this time the B-24 and her crew were on their last two engines and losing fuel, air speed and altitude, and it became evident to Lt. Ford that they could not get the wounded airplane back to Italy. Sgt. John Toney later wrote, *"I don't know how Lt. Ford and Lt. Ecklund managed to keep the plane in the air, but when we reached the coast of Yugoslavia, Ford decided we couldn't make it any further, so decided to try and crash land on the Isle of Vis."*

### **The Isle of Vis**

There was an emergency airfield situated on the Isle of Vis for returning allied airplanes that were badly damaged and could not make it back to their home bases in Italy. This emergency landing strip was in a low valley, and it was a very difficult place to land even for an undamaged bomber. Lt. Ford chose to attempt an emergency landing on Vis; however, there were complications due to the battle damage to "The Tulsamerican." The landing gear required to be manually extended because of the loss of the hydraulic system. It was the Flight Engineer's responsibility to extend the landing gear, so T/Sgt. Charles Priest tended to his duties in an effort to get the wheels down. Priest managed to extend the main

gear, and then began work to extend the nose gear. At this time, Lt. Ford opted to do an orbit off the Isle of Vis in order to give Priest some time to extend the nose gear. During this first orbit the nose gear would not budge. Lt. Ford decided to give it one more orbit and then land even if the nose gear was not down and locked. About half way through the second orbit the remaining two engines quit. They had apparently run out of fuel while attempting to get into the traffic pattern for a landing at Vis, and were forced to crash the airplane into the Adriatic just off the Isle of Vis.

In a letter written to Norma Ford Beard, daughter of Lt. Eugene Ford, from Lt. Val Miller, Val wrote his recollections of that day, *"I arrived in Italy and was assigned to the 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron on approximately Jun 1, 1944. I was the Bombardier for a crew that was broken up in July 1944 by reason of the death of several of my crew members. After that, I flew with several different pilots."*

*"On December 17th, I was assigned to Lt. Ford's crew for this particular mission. I had not flown with any of these crew members before. Most of them I knew little about, except for having a nodding acquaintance. In those days, you really did not get well acquainted with anyone except your regular crew and the people with whom you shared a tent."*

*"Early on the morning of December 17th, while it was still dark, we rode in trucks to our regular briefing room. We were told that we were going to bomb an oil refinery in southern Germany, at a town known as Odertal. It was known this would be a long, hard mission. You may recall this was the time when the Battle of the Bulge started and the Germans commenced their last great offensive of the war."*

*"Your father was flying the lead plane in a box of six B-24s, all from the 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron. We were a part of a large group of planes made up by the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group."*

*"At some point in the mission, as we were approaching our target area, the formation went through a bank of clouds. To avoid the possibility of collision,*

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our box of six planes had veered slightly to the right, and when we came out of the cloud bank, we could see that we were some distance from the rest of the planes. We had started to turn to catch up with them, when suddenly we were attacked by a large number of German fighter planes. Four of our B-24s were shot down in the initial attack. I was instructed by your father to release our bomb load, which I did, so that we could have greater maneuverability. The two remaining planes stuck together for better fire power and we had a running fight with the German fighter planes for some time. Our plane had one engine shot out and one of our gas tanks was punctured and leaking. There was a great fear of fire. The other B-24, which I could see, had a large hole in its fuselage, apparently the result of a 20mm shell. Our gunners were able to shoot down two or three of the planes, and eventually they abandoned the fight, probably because of fuel problems. As all of this was happening, your father had turned our plane back to the south, with the idea in mind that we could try to return to our base, or at least do as well as we could. He was very steady and calm under fire, and our entire crew performed very well. As we got back in the area of Yugoslavia, there was a discussion as to whether or not we should bail out or attempt to reach a small emergency landing strip, which was located on the Isle of Vis, which is off the coast of Yugoslavia. Finally, it was determined that we would attempt to make a landing on this little island. We were approaching the island, and it appeared we might be successful. I was on the flight deck, seated immediately behind Lt. Ford. The co-pilot, Vincent O. Ecklund, and Russell C. Landry, Navigator, and Charles E. Priest, engineer, were with me on the flight deck. This is a small area and I could have reached out and touched any one of them. We were flying at approximately 100 feet above the water, when suddenly two more of the planes engines cut out. Lt. Ford said "We're going in". Because of the loss of power, the plane fell over on its side and crashed into the sea. It was a tremendous impact. Somehow, I did not lose consciousness and was able to inflate my Mae West and somehow shot out through the wreckage and was able to come up out of the water. As noted, it was December and the water was cold. The waves were high, and while I

could see land at times, I could not see anyone else. In some reports, it has been stated that we ditched. This is not so. We had no time to try to ditch the plane after we lost power.

"Since I could see land in the distance, I tried to swim, but was unable to do so because my right leg had been broken in half between the ankle and the knee and was simply hanging by the skin and muscles. At this point, I still had not seen any other crew member. I am not sure how long I was in the water, but it must have been at least two hours. The sun had gone down and it starting to get dark, and then suddenly a small boat appeared and two men pulled me out of the water into the boat. I was aware that they were searching in the area and that other men were pulled into the boat. At that time, I was not aware of who survived. Later, I learned that they were unable to find Lt. Ford, Lt. Landry, and Sgt. Priest. I, of course, do not know exactly what happened to these three, but I speculated that they must have lost consciousness by reason of the crash. Your father, as first pilot, was strapped in a seat which had a backing of heavy metal, for flak protection.

"We were taken to a little island and received emergency medical attention from a British doctor. Subsequently, after a day or two, we were picked up by an airplane and flown back to Italy. I spent sixteen months in Army hospitals, before I was ultimately released."

Another crew member related his experience to his sons. Staff Sgt. Edward F. Steelandt was the radio operator/waist gunner on "The Tulsamerican's" last flight. His son Steve said it took a long time to get the story out of him. Edward died in 1984.

Here is Edward's story: "Military Intelligence had told them that there were very few enemy fighters in the target area that day. However, they were hit by a lot of enemy fighters before they even got to the target, and their fuselage was shot up so had to leave the group and head back to base. We had to fly over the Alps and the pilots thought that they had to get ready for a crash landing. So, over the Alps we got rid of the bombs, windows, and jammed open the

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bomb bay doors. They were then ready for a tough landing ON LAND; however, we ran out of fuel over the Adriatic Sea. There were 10 foot white caps and we were probably doing 150 MPH when we hit the water.” (Steve) I think that dad said that the pilots tried to land between the waves, not head on.

“Before impact I had a death grip on the 50 caliber and mount that was welded to the side window. After impact I picked myself up off the floor and saw that the 50 cal was no longer there. I felt lucky that the gun had fallen out, and not on me. I stepped out onto the wing (where it normally wasn’t) and thought that I was the first one out, then I saw several crew members already in the water swimming away from the plane, I realized that I must have been knocked out for a few minutes.

During the battle I had given first aid to the tail gunner, S/Sgt. James Hazel, who had caught a bullet through the cheek (his posterior), and I now wondered whether or not that wounded tail gunner had gotten jammed in on impact. I went back into the plane, and saw that the pilot and navigator had died on impact, then found the tail gunner and pulled him out of the plane. We then pulled the cord on our Mae West and swam away from the sinking airplane. We treaded water for about 45 minutes until being rescued.” Edward had told his son Dan, “at one point I was just too exhausted and began to let myself go under the waves. I then saw my wife’s face and found the strength to fight harder and keep swimming”. Edward was awarded the Soldiers Medal for saving his crew members life.

Sgt. John Toney wrote: “As we circled the second time, Ford saw we couldn’t make it and ordered us to bail out, but before we could get out, the other two engines quit and he yelled “ditch”. With the bomb bay doors open, gear down and no power we really hit the water hard. The plane broke up and I was under water when I came to. We were always instructed not to open our Mae West inside the plane, but since I couldn’t swim a lick and I was still in the plane underwater, the first thing I did was to inflate that Mae West. I don’t know how I got out. I was knocked unconscious when we hit, but do remember

coming out a hole in the plane. Lt. Ford, our flight Pilot, Lt. Russell Landry, our Navigator, and Tech Sergeant Charles Priest our Engineer were killed in the crash. I don’t know how many hours we were in the water, but much longer than we wanted. The rest of us were picked up by Yugoslavian fishermen and a British Rescue Team. We were taken to a large building of some kind on the Isle of Vis, where they striped us and wrapped us in blankets and administered first aid. They poured down us what I think was Vodka. We were then taken by a C-47 to the hospital at Bari, Italy. Some of us were returned state side for further medical treatment and recovery.”

As “The Tulsamerican” slipped beneath the waves of the Adriatic, carrying three of her crew with her, one might think this would be the end of the story; however, this is not the case.

Further research and contacts opened up other avenues of information regarding the fate and possible position of “The Tulsamerican.” I read an article written by Lt. Robert Reichard who was a Navigator in the 456<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. Lt. Reichard wrote, “A day or so later we cleared the air strip at Vis and started across the Adriatic at a lower than usual altitude. We had been in the air for some time when I looked out of my observation window and noticed a bright colored object on the water. I asked the pilot what the altitude was and then I realized it must have been an emergency raft. About that time I noticed a rescue craft and I told the pilot to turn back on course to spot the object again. We never spotted the raft, but the rescue craft might have located it.”

Robert’s story intrigued me, so I wrote him to tell him about the fate of my cousin’s airplane, and mentioned that if the date they finally were able to take off from Vis was 17 December 1944, he may have been the last to see “The Tulsamerican.”

During the 1990s I began to make contact with a number of like interested people. I received a note from Norma Ford Beard asking for assistance for John Toney. He was asked to provide documentation on whether he was on mission 151 in order to

*(Continued on page 11)*

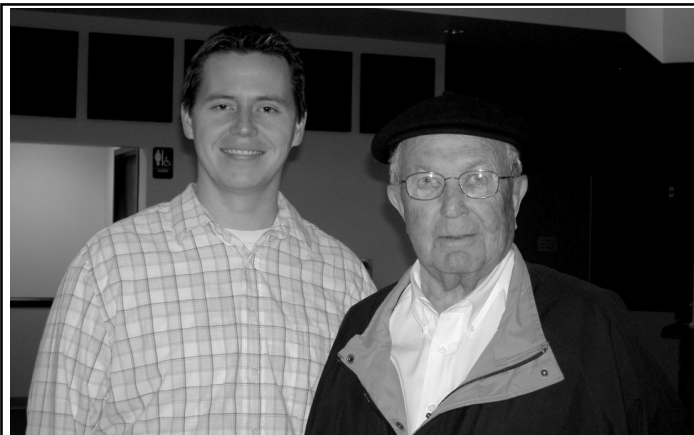
*(Continued from page 10)*

receive a medal due him. As luck would have it, I had recently located the MACR for 17 December 1944, and it had John's name on it as one of the crew of "The Tulsamerican". Sadly, John died shortly after that contact in April 1998.

I also made contact with Mr. John Bybee about that time. He had been deep in researching all that had taken place 17 December 1944. This was a lucky day for me. John and I freely shared information and we worked together (John in Illinois and I in California) to discover more and more information regarding that day in time, as well as what really happened to "The Tulsamerican". We worked very well together and we finally met face to face while at a 461<sup>st</sup> reunion in 2004. We have become fast friends.

In 2002 I received an E-Mail from Kevin Gray in Tulsa, Oklahoma telling me he had found me after reading Robert Reichards article on the 456<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group web site. Kevin was in his 20s at the time, and I was curious about how he had known of "The Tulsamerican". It became apparent, that he had heard about this airplane since he lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and it had struck a note with him. His interest deepened and he began his own research on the matter. I'm sure we all think at one time or another that WE are the only ones that have any interest in such things. We have been in contact ever since and finally met at the 461<sup>st</sup> reunion in Tulsa, OK, October 2009.

Kevin had made contact with Danijel Frka and Zel-



Kevin Gray and Val Miller at the 461st reunion in Tulsa, OK in 2009.

jko Bocek, two divers in Croatia. Their interest had been peaked, and then there began an on going contact for me, with Zeljko. Without his unrelenting assistance, and those of his diver friends, this story could have ended much differently.

With the help and friendship of the divers in Croatia, strides were made in locating information about the possible crash site of "The Tulsamerican".

We gathered information that appeared to be accurate at the time, however, we ran into some stone walls. Two dives were made by the Croatian dive team on a possible site off the Island of Hvar after receiving information from a family who recalled their parents rescuing seven crew members from a B-24 that had crashed in the Adriatic between Hvar Island and the Isle of Vis. The divers, though anxious to find this airplane, were hampered by poor visibility in deep, muddy water, and the lack of some high tech equipment to find the illusive airplane.

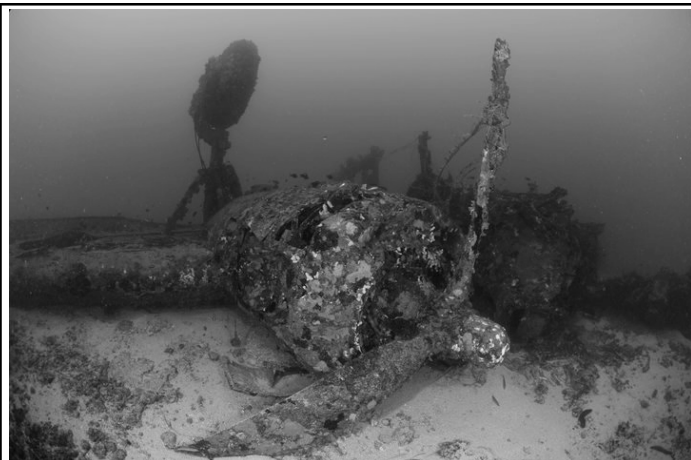
Time passed and the search continued. The dive team spent their time and money doing this without ever asking for any remuneration. How does one repay people who give so freely?

In December 2009, while diving off the southeast coast of the Isle of Vis, Darko Bojanic, a diver from Korcula Island, discovered an airplane in about 40 meters of water, about 1.75 miles off the Isle of Vis. He contacted the Croatian Conservation Institute, and on March 18, 2010 they set out to dive on this airplane to see if they could identify it. The divers on this expedition were: Danijel Frka, Vlado Onofri, Zeljko Bocek, Igor Mihojek, and Miljenko Marukic. They photographed the airplane, but were unable to identify it other than finding American national markings. March 19, 2010 another diving expedition was made and the divers on this expedition were: Zoran Milosavljevic, Kardi Zupanic, Miljenko Marukic, Danijel Frka, Zeljko Bocek, Igor Miholjek, and Vlado Onofri. They were still unable to identify the airplane, but had a strong sense this could be "The Tulsamerican."

May 31, 2010 (our Memorial Day) brought yet an-

*(Continued on page 12)*

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B-24 right outboard engine

other dive on this airplane, and they were going to identify it this time for sure.

The data plate was found, and removed, and the S/N checked against the S/N of "The Tulsamerican". The numbers MATCHED. "THE TULSAMERICAN" had been found after 66 years hidden from view in the depths of the Adriatic Sea.



Tulsamerican ID Plate

The U.S. Army Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Group have been informed that "The Tulsamerican" has been located. They have opened a case based on this information and have contacted JPAC, our governments recovery team based in Hawaii. I have also shared this information with all parties concerned with this airplane and her crew members.

Prior to our visit to Croatia, I was in contact with the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb. Lt. Commander Robert Wood assisted us in setting up a meeting with Ambassador James Foley.



Gabrijel Hrovat, Zeljko Bocek, Danijel Frka and Marino Brac

During our visit to Croatia in September 2010 some of the Croatian divers, a documentary production crew, and my wife, Carol and I met with the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. James Foley at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb. Ambassador Foley showed great interest in how the story came to be, as well as all that had occurred during the effort by those of us in America and those friends in Croatia and Slovenia. I believe it was a fruitful meeting.

We met with a number of the divers who have worked so hard for us in locating the airplane, and with their help and their boat, we went to the site of "The Tulsamerican" where we held as close to a military ceremony as possible. Hopefully, one day these three men will get the service they deserve.

The seas were running at about 5 to 6 feet on September 17, 2010 and it was decided amongst the dive crew that only one diver would carry the wreath,

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flag, and sleeve with the Fifteenth Air Force patch and a set of wings attached down to the airplane. Diver Gabrijel Hrovat had the honor of placing the articles on one of the "Tulsamerican" propellers. Another diver followed to film the ceremony under water, while another film crew filmed the ceremony on deck.



Tulsamerican Memorial Ceremony on 17 September 2010

The final step in the finding of "The Tulsamerican," is to have our Government Military recovery teams of JPAC or DPMO dive on the airplane to search for remains or artifacts of those still aboard. Only then will this story have an end and closure for those who lost someone dear to them.

Russell Landry left behind a sister and brother, Polly Crossin and Robert Landry who live in Tucson, Arizona. Sadly, Polly died August 8, 2010. Her wish was to have her brother home again so she could put flowers on his grave. I believe she is now with her brother and does not have to wait to see if his remains will be found.



Pauline, Russell and Robert Landry in 1944

Eugene Ford left behind a wife, daughter, and son.

Sadly, we have not been able to locate the family of Charles Priest after many years of trying. It is our hope that a family member hears of the find and contacts us.

This story would not be complete if I didn't mention the other brave crews and fighter escort pilots that died or were taken prisoner that day – 17 December 1944.

The Fifteenth Air Force launched 527 B-17 and B-24 bombers, along with 300 P-38 and P-51 fighter escorts that day. In all, there were 5,571 men aloft who were putting their lives on the line. They should not be forgotten.

The losses that day were as follows: Two B-17s, eighteen B-24s, four P-38s, and two P-51s.

The B-17s were piloted by Leonard Waldman of the 2<sup>nd</sup> BG/429<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 44-6350, and landing in Isbiste, Yugoslavia, and Michael J. Kearns Jr. of the 301<sup>st</sup> BG/419<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-32104. Kearns and his crew went down in Jawiszowice, Poland with 1 of the crew KIA and 8 crewmembers POW.

The B-24s were piloted by:

Charles F. McKenna III of the 464<sup>th</sup> BG/776<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 44-49073, flying "Ritz". They went down southwest of Lake Balaton, Hungary, with the Navigator and radio operator KIA, and 8 crew members POW.

James T. Creekmore of the 464<sup>th</sup> BG/779<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-78671, flying "Black Jiggs". This crew went down in Rokytnice, CZ, with 2 KIA, 8 POW.

Alfred W. Mullan of the 465<sup>th</sup> BG/781<sup>st</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-52494, flying "Angel of the Sky". This crew went down in Marko, Hungary near Lake Balaton. These 10 men escaped capture.

William Richards of the 455<sup>th</sup> BG/743<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, S/N 41-28982, flying "The Peace Maker". This crew went down at Adony, Hungary with the Co-Pilot

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KIA and nine escaping capture.

Theodore C. King of the 451<sup>st</sup> BG/726<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-51941, #47, flying "Midair". These men went down in Korfantow, Poland with 10 KIA and one POW.

William T. Shelton of the 451<sup>st</sup> BG/726<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-52045, flying "Midair". This crew went down in Plavje, Yugoslavia with 7 survivors, 3 POW, and 1 KIA.

Charles A. Himmler of the 484<sup>th</sup> BG/824<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-50934, flying "Little Joe". These men went down in Vaclovov Hill, CZ with 8 KIA and 3 POW.

Roger A. Martin of the 484<sup>th</sup> BG/825<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-51835, flying "Easy 22". All were lost in Northeast Libiny, CZ

Kenneth B. Smith of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/764<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-52324, flying "Ten Men Bak". This crew bailed out near Omsenie, Slovakia with 8 POW, 1 KIA, and 1 escaping.

Eugene P. Ford of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/765<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-51430, flying the "Tulsamerican". These men crashed into the Adriatic Sea near the Isle of Vis, about 1.75 miles off shore. Seven were rescued, and 3 were KIA.

Gerald R. Smith of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/765<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-52025, flying "Arsenic & Lace". They went in at Neredin Cemetery, Olomouc, CZ. There were 5 KIA, and 5 POW.

Phillip J. Crossman of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/765<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-50953, flying the "Flying Finger". This crew went down at Paaov, Velka Bystrice, CZ with 4 KIA, and 7 POW.

Thomas K. West of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/765<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 44-41016. These men went down at Troubky, CZ with 6 KIA and 4 POW.

Nicholas Sidovar of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/766<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-95304. This crew went in at Karlovac, Yugoslavia with 10 captured as POWs.

Frederick B. Capalbo of the 461<sup>st</sup> BG/767<sup>th</sup> Squadron, S/N 42-51319, flying ship #69. These men went in at Kokory-Prerov, CZ with 3 KIA and 7 POW.

We salute and hold dear all those who gave their all in the face of known dangers.

One day in the not to distant future there will be a documentary available based on the story of "The Tulsamerican."

For further information regarding the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, please visit the web site at: <http://www.461st.org/>.





*(Continued from page 1)*

notice came and three of us from home boarded a train and we were off. What went on there is common knowledge to anyone reading this article.

After training, I was assigned to communications and not to a flight crew. I was being sent overseas to the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group of the Fifteenth Air Force. I went overseas in a 100-ship convoy first to North Africa and then on to Naples and eventually to Torretta Field about nine miles southwest of Cerignola, Italy where we were setting up an airfield. After settling in and getting things set up at our radio shack I was asked if I would train someone for a flight crew operator. My response was that rather than spend all that time to train someone I would fill the spot on the crew as radio operator and waist gunner. Captain Tallant, our Operation Officer, came and spoke to me, wanting me to be sure of my decision. I said yes and was directed to get fitted for a parachute harness. There was no turning back now.

My buddies and coworkers in the radio shack thought I was nuts. I did as well after thinking about it for a while, but, as I said, there was no turning back now. I said I would be going home after my tour and they said, rightly so, but maybe feet first. It was not a very sobering thought, but what was said, now had to be done. I then had to report to Capt. Stephens. I had not flown in a B-24 or any aircraft except on a radio check flight in the states. My concern was using the cal. 50 machine gun and no parachute training. The response was to go out in the field and fire a fixed cal. 50 and as far as the parachute problem, his response was, "You don't have to practice anything that you have to do right the first time". A message I've carried with me for over sixty years and counting.

After being grounded for ten days because of weather we finally took off. My stomach was broiling after that long wait for our first mission to Zagreb.

Now the story gets a little weird. In 1947 I was employed at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, part of the DOE at the time. We often had visiting scien-

tists from Europe and Asia and after a short period they returned to their home country. In one case one of the visitors returned after a short stay at home, Zagreb, and was part of the department I was in. In a conversation one day he informed me that he was a young man in Zagreb when I flew my first mission. I confirmed after looking at my flight record. That was quite a coincidence. It got more interesting as a few years later he became our Department Head, my boss. The irony of it is, he was the best boss I had in 39 1/2 years and we had a great relationship.

This past summer there was a group called Honor Flight Southeast Florida, honoring WWII veterans. I inquired and was told they flew a group of Veterans twice a year to visit the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. I was invited and they flew about 90 of us from the West Palm Beach Airport to Washington free of charge. The entire plane consisted of veterans and with every veteran there was a guardian. Those of us who were mobile shared a guardian while those that needed assistance walking or were in wheel chairs had a dedicated guardian. All guardians paid their own way and never left our side. That's something I will never forget. My particular guardian was a young girl who had relative who served in WWII and this was her way of saying thank you.

The flight was sponsored by the local firemen and the entire event was breathtaking. We were bused to the West Palm Beach Airport and the way was lined with people - firemen, boy scouts, police, veteran groups and the general public, and mind you this was 4:30 in the morning. On our way down they stopped off at the Veteran's Hospital in West Palm Beach where we were served breakfast before boarding the bus again and continuing on to the Airport. On the plane we were treated royally with snacks and beverages. We Arrived at the Airport and boarded the plane and we were taxiing out to the runway. They had fire trucks with water cannons and we went under for the start of our flight. Again we were served food and beverages supplied by local vendors. We landed at the airport in Washington and were greeted by more people who were aware

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of the flight. Unbelievable! We then boarded a bus and were off to visit the Memorial. This is a sight every veteran should attempt to visit. I can't even start to explain the complexity of it. All 50 states are represented along with all branches of the service. It is a sight I will never forget. Back on the bus, we were given a sightseeing tour of the capitol. After the tour we were off to the airport and the flight home. There were 90 tired souls and a few tears but thankful to the wonderful people and volunteers responsible for this unforgettable event.

I write this as a thank you, realizing that we are losing nearly 1,000 WWII veterans every day and this won't go on much longer, but I am told that they plan on continuing for the vets that follow us and as things are going this is a never ending operation. For Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq, Afghanistan

and Iraq again, and on the horizon more trouble looms.

Sixty-eight years seems like a long time ago and some days it seems like only yesterday and at other times it seems like only a dream. My only hope is that one day - but I won't be around - world leaders will realize how useless wars are, and even as I write we are in two and a half wars. However if some of these leaders had experienced what war is like they might have second thoughts. There I go dreaming again.

I am now 90 years old and the only living member of crew #14 of the 764th Squadron, 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group. Now when I talk to my old buddies I remind them that I came home on my feet and not feet first and thank God every day.



**Standing L-R:** Grossberg, Milton (B); Danford, Harold Q. (CP); White, Robert W. (N), Stephens, Farrold F. (P)

**Kneeling L-R:** Charlie Chambers (BG); Perry, Gasper R. (RO/RWG); Martin Bruel (LWG); Meredith, Norman R. (TG); Howenstine, Richard A. (E/TT); Gnoit, Norbert N. [KLOD] (NG)

## In the Company of Friends

from the Torretta Flyer No. 11, Winter 1984

by  
Milton Radovsky  
767th Squadron

A howling wind flattened the marsh grass fringing the small finger of land that jutted northward into the Baltic. Icy rain blew in gusts against the sides and low, sloping roofs of the long wooden barracks. The eight-foot high double fences and huge rolls of barbed wire between them reflected with a million sudden twinkles the searchlights sweeping back and forth in the unpredictable patterns that the German tower guards predictably used during bad weather.

The fourteen inmates of Room 3 of the northernmost barracks settled down to their usual after-supper routine of fun and games. Chappel spread his tools and sheets of tin on the long table in the center of the room. Fenner sat down opposite Chappel and opened his German grammar to the chapter on irregular verbs, and Davidson and Deene rehashed their last mission. The bridge players took their usual places at one end of the table, and the hearts players spread out on the lower level of one of the bunks ranged round the room against the walls.

Davidson went over to the stove in one corner, picked up two coal briquettes, and yanked open the firebox door. He threw the briquettes inside, hastily pulling his hand back from the searing heat, and slammed the door shut.

"I guess we can take this thing down," he said, eyeing the faded sheet of paper thumb-tacked to the wall over the stove. "'Through the Door in Forty-Four' doesn't make sense now."

"It didn't make much sense when we put it up a year ago," said Chappel.

"It made no sense at all in August, when Dave and I got here," said Keene.

"We better get out of here this year," said Chappel, tapping a lip along the longer edge of one of his sheets of tin. His voice rose. "This is the eighteenth frying

pan I've made here. All I dream about is frying pans. All night I see these goddamn sheets of tin, and I tap-tap-tap miles of seams and cut thousands of ends off thousands of powered milk cans. It's not right I should be dreaming of breads not frying pans!"

He stood up, pushing the backs of his knees against the bench, and his voice rose to a mock scream.

"I think I'll go mad, I tell you. MAD!"

"Okay, Chappie, Ohhhhhkayyy," said Davidson. "Save it for Broadway, or at least for the next play we put on here. Try something new and different next time."

Fenner slammed his book down on the table. He stood up, stepped back over the bench, picked up his book and without a word retreated tight-lipped to the confines of his lower bunk. "Home alive in forty-five?" said Keene.

"What do your German buddies think, Fenner?" said Chappie. Fenner spoke some German, and thus had official sanction from Captain Johnson to trade with the guards for the barracks. He turned away from Chappie, studying his grammar, yet not studying it at all.

"Fenner?" said Keene.

"When do the Germans think the war will be over?"

"They don't confide in me!"

Fenner's roommates never openly expressed to each other the vague feeling of distrust he aroused in them.

The bridge players erupted into a noisy argument over a questionable three-no-trump bid, and Davidson moved over to a vantage-point for kibitzing. After watching a few hands, he came back and sat down next to Chappie. The wind rattled the outside shutters, which had long since been closed from the outside by a guard.

"Hey, Fenner, what do you and the Germans talk

*(Continued on page 21)*

# 461<sup>st</sup>/484<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group

## *Annual Reunion*

September 22-25, 2011

### ITINERARY

#### **Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Arrival and check in day. The registration table and Hospitality Suite will be open all day. 461st Board Meeting at 4:00 PM in Executive Suite 310. Welcome, general information and 461st business meeting at 7:00 PM in the Cortland Ballroom. All 484th members are welcome to stay for the 461st business meeting, but, of course, may not vote on 461st issues. Both groups will vote on a destination for the 2012 reunion. Hospitality room will be open for a while after the meeting.

#### **Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Twin Cities tour from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM with lunch at the Minnesota Wing of the Commemorative Air Force hanger and museum. Social hour at 6:00 PM in Cortland Ballroom with cash bar. Dinner in Cortland Ballroom at 7:00 PM. Hospitality room open whenever we are not on tour or at dinner.

#### **Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>**

Stillwater, Minnesota tour from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM with lunch at St. Croix River. Social hour at 6:00 PM in Cortland Ballroom with cash bar. Group Banquet at 7:00 PM with Jonna Hoppes (granddaughter of Gen James "Jimmy" Doolittle) as guest speaker in the Cortland Ballroom. Hospitality room open whenever we are not on tour or at dinner.

#### **Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>**

We will have our traditional Memorial Breakfast beginning at 8:30 AM following which will sadly be the conclusion of our gathering this year.

**NOTE:** The tours mentioned above for Friday and Saturday are **MUCH** more extensive than is described here. There will be no shortage of interesting things to see and experience. For a detailed description of the tours, please visit your website, [www.461st.org](http://www.461st.org) and click on the Reunion button at the top left. As you scroll down, you'll see the reunion itinerary and a line that says "For a detailed description of the Friday and Saturday tours, click HERE!"

For those who are interested, the Mall Of America is one mile from our hotel and is a destination in itself. It's a shopping and dining Mecca and even has a very interesting walk through aquarium. You might want to plan to spend an extra day just to see the largest shopping mall in the country.

**NOTE:** As reported in the December 2010 issue of this publication, the Association voted unanimously to pay for the cost of 461<sup>st</sup> veterans to participate in this reunion. These costs include: Registration Fee, Group Meal Costs and Tour Costs. When you fill out your registration page, please **DO** include the veteran in the "# of persons" section but **DO NOT** include the veteran in the "Sub Total" section.

# ***461<sup>st</sup>/484<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group-Reunion 2011***

## ***HOTEL INFORMATION***

- DATE:** September 22-25, 2010
- LOCATION:** **Crowne Plaza Minneapolis International  
Airport Hotel & Suites**  
3 Appletree Square  
Bloomington, MN 55425
- ROOM RATES:** \$89.00 per room, per night plus tax and includes a full breakfast buffet for up to two people per room. Suites are available for \$109.00 per night. This rate will be good for three days prior to and three days after the reunion. Each room has a small refrigerator and microwave.
- RESERVATIONS:** (952) 854-9000  
Tell them you are with the 461st/484th Bomb Group, booking code **BOM**.  
Major credit card required for guarantee.  
If you have any special needs for your room, want to reserve days before or after the reunion or have any problem making a reservation to call our sales rep, Nancy Solinger direct at 952-876-8650 or E-Mail at [nsolinger@cpsuitesmsp.com](mailto:nsolinger@cpsuitesmsp.com).
- PARKING:** Free

**Free hotel shuttle to and from the airport every half hour.**

**The shuttle runs to the Mall of America every hour During Mall hours.**



**461<sup>st</sup> & 484<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Reunion**September 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Bloomington (Minneapolis/St. Paul), Minnesota



Please complete and return this form by September 1, 2011. Cancellations CAN be made with a full refund if you find later that you cannot attend so please, get this form in soon. Late registrations, however, will be accepted.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Group \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Family/Guest Names \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$12.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

**September 23<sup>rd</sup>****Twin Cities Tour Highlights Tour including lunch at the Minnesota Wing of the CAF**

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$52.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

**Friday Evening Dinner**

Herb Crusted Pork Tenderloin \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$31.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

Chicken Dijon \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$31.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

Ravioli Duet \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$31.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

**September 24<sup>th</sup>****Stillwater, Minnesota Tour including lunch on the St. Croix river**

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$56.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

**Group Banquet**

Sliced Sirloin of Roast Beef \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$31.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

Herbed Breast of Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$31.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

Portobello Wellington \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$31.00 per person Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of persons including Veteran (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)

**September 25<sup>th</sup>**

Memorial Breakfast Buffet - No charge. \_\_\_\_\_ # of persons attending

GRAND TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

461st/484th Reunion, Attn: Dave Blake, 648 Lakewood Road, Bonner Springs, KS 66012-1804



*(Continued from page 17)*

about,” he said. “I mean, besides the price of onions? Do they know what’s going on? Do they know anything about the concentration camps?”

“They’ve never heard about concentration camps. That’s a lot of propaganda, anyway.”

“Propaganda, my butt!” said Davidson. He leaned forward, peered into the deep shadow of Fenner’s bunk. “Is that what they say?”

“That’s what I say.”

“Christ! Don’t talk to that idiot,” said Keene.

“Who’s an idiot?” Fenner burst out of his bunk suddenly. Before the war Keene had been a bookie’s helper on the East Side of Chicago and was built like a toy bull.

“I’m sorry, Fenner,” said Keene. “You’re not an idiot. Go lie down.”

Fenner stood there for a moment, glaring at Keene who was calmly inspecting Chappel’s work. Then, feeling that he had defended his honor sufficiently, he sat down on the bench next to his bunk and reached for his book. Davidson climbed up to his bunk, over Fenner’s, by stepping first on the edge of the lower bunk, then heaving himself up with an obvious grunt. Fenner glared up at him. Fenner spent a lot of time glaring.

“I’ve told you a thousand times, keep the hell off my bunk!”

“Fenner, just how am I supposed to get up here without using your bunk?”

“I don’t care how you do it, just stay off!”

“Sure, Fenner sure. Say, Chappie, what are you going to do after the War? Maybe you could go into the tin-smith business.”

“Very funny, Dave. Very funny.”

“How about you, Dave?” said Kenne. “You had a bakeshop in New York, didn’t you?”

“Yeah. I had a good business, a good, steady neighborhood-type trade.” He could almost smell the fragrance of the pastries, and the bagels.

Fenner snorted, as though questioning the size of Dave’s trade, the quality of his cakes, even the weight of his one-pound loaves of bread. There was a lot in that snort, Dave felt, and not having an answer for it troubled him.

The door opened slowly and Parsons walked in. He held the door open.

“Dave, Captain Johnson wants to see you. In his room.”

“He wants to see me?” Johnson did not talk much to lowly second Lieutenants, especially if they weren’t pilots. “What about?”

“Maybe he’s lonesome for you,” said Chappie.

“He wants to see you right away,” said Parsons, not looking at him.

“I’ll try to crowd him into my busy schedule,” Dave said from his perch. He landed on the floor beside

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## **HELP WANTED**

As a part of the last two reunions we have had a member of our group speak briefly during the Sunday morning Memorial Breakfast and everyone has really enjoyed that. Your reunion committee is searching for a 461<sup>st</sup> veteran who would be willing to give a short (ten minutes or so) talk about his time with the 461<sup>st</sup>. You could talk about ground or air memories or about the people assigned to the group.

If you would be willing to help out with this please contact Dave Blake either by email at [reunion@461st.org](mailto:reunion@461st.org) or by phone 913-523-4044 or by mail at 648 Lakewood Rd., Bonner Springs, KS 66012-1804.

## **461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Association Membership**

For membership in the 461<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:dstyves@pmn.com).

The 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Association offers three types of membership:

- **Life Membership** – Men who served in the 461<sup>st</sup> 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 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.
- **Associate Membership** – Anyone wishing to be involved in the 461<sup>st</sup> 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 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider. You are not a voting member of the Association.
- **Child Membership** – Children of men who served in the 461<sup>st</sup> 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 461<sup>st</sup> 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:		

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Fenner with a room-shaking crash, just missing Fenner's left foot. Fenner jerked back, almost falling off the bench, Dave felt much better about not having replied to Fenner's snort.

He walked out of the room and closed the door, and started down the long, drafty hall toward Captain Johnson's room at the front of the barracks. He almost bumped into Feldman coming out of his room. It occurred to him that Feldman was heading for the latrine, but he turned and walked with him.

"What's up?" Feldman asked.

"Does Johnson want to see you, too?"

"Yeah. What's up?"

"I have no idea," Davidson said. He wondered why Parsons had avoided looking at him.

Inside, Captain Johnson stood looking out of the window. Rather, he would have been looking out of the window if the shutters had been open. Davidson and Feldman stood just inside the door, waiting for him to turn around. Finally he did, and took a sheet of paper out of his back pocket, and slowly unfolded it. With the bare overhead bulb lighting the front, Davidson could see through the back of the paper that it contained what appeared to be two columns of names. Johnson looked up from the paper, first at Feldman, then at Davidson. His face had lost its ruddy color. It seemed to Davidson that he had difficulty speaking.

"I've just come back from a meeting with Colonel Riley," he said at last, rushing his words out. "The Germans have ordered that all Jewish prisoners are to be moved into South Compound." He looked away quickly, the paper shaking in his hand.

A star burst inside Davidson's brain, causing him to lose sight of the captain momentarily, and almost lose his balance. Feldman stared at Johnson as though not understanding what he had said. When Davidson had parachuted into the foothills of Austria he was prepared for the same kind of treatment the Germans had used on European Jews unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. Five months as an American prisoner-of-war in the company of men who were his friends had

not prepared him for this. He had forgotten.

"When are we supposed to move?" asked Davidson.

"Tomorrow morning, right after roll-call."

"I'll miss the bread distribution?" Davidson thought "What if they try to move us out of the camp completely?" Johnson just shook his head.

Feldman finally found his voice. "They can't do it," he said. "It's against the rules of the Geneva Convention."

Johnson looked at the floor. "They can do anything they want."

Davidson turned and opened the door. Feldman followed him out into the hall, and closed the door. They stood there for a moment, looking at each other, seeing each other perhaps for the first time as a fellow Jew, not as fellow Americans. Without a word, they walked slowly toward their rooms, side by side. The hall seemed much colder, darker. They stopped in front of Feldman's room. Davidson had never felt particularly friendly toward Feldman, but he was reluctant to leave. Then Feldman turned and opened the door to his room.

They know. Parsons must have told them. They know. What do they think of this? How do they feel about it? Are they going to let the Germans do this to me? I've read about the concentration camps. Have they? Do they know about the death camps?

There was not a sound in the room. Even Chappie's everlasting hammering was silent. Everyone looked at the floor, or the wall, or out the shuttered windows. No one said a word as Davidson walked, wearily, over to his bunk. I wonder how the Germans found out, he thought. He climbed with an effort up to his bunk.

"I've told you a thousand times, Davidson," said Fenner. "Keep the hell off my bunk!"

"Goddamn you, Fenner, you son-of-a-bitch!" Keene hurdled the table and smashed his ham-hock fist against the side of Fenner's head.

Davidson heard nothing of the scuffle. I wonder how they found out, he thought.

## Master Switch

Master Switch  
by  
Louis F. Duchinsky  
765th Squadron

Let me start by giving you a little background. I was the radio operator on the Grimm crew #35. My position was in the aft section of the plane at a waist window. Although I wasn't trained as a flight engineer, I was assisting on the flight deck on this particular mission. I was right behind the co-pilot. Otherwise I would have been in the back of the plane in the waist area, where we got behind a structure of some kind and held onto it while we were taking off in case the plane crashed. Then I would be protected.

As the radio operator, there were two operators on a mission. The 1st was in the lead plane. He would get info from the CO or whoever is flying in the lead plane, Colonel Glantzberg or a major in the group or whatever. The 2nd operator is me and I had to monitor the 1st operator. I had the receiver on and was listening to his broadcast/statements prior to our takeoff and had to make sure that he made it through. If he didn't get to his target, got shot down or something, I had to make sure we could complete the mission. That was my job.

The 4-engine ignition systems had to be fed by the alternator and battery, but whenever you load a battery up, the voltage drops down. In cold weather, you try to start an engine, you're dropping 400-500 amperes on that battery really quick. That's quite a strain. If you had a 12V battery it might drop down to 6 volts. So everything's in proportion. You get 20,000 volts on an engine ignition system on a car and it drops down to 10,000 volts while trying to start a car at zero degrees.

The same thing happens on a B-24 where you have four 1200 hp engines. There's a portable generator connected directly to the battery, which is connected to the alternator system.

We were sitting at the end of the runway and when the brakes were released and you're going down the

runway to take off, you know you're heading on a mission. And when we got down to the end of the runway and a few feet off the ground, Lt. Grimm, our pilot, yells out, "I can't get it up! I can't get it up!"

I jumped up (because I was sitting right behind the pilot and co-pilot) and got between them to see if anything was wrong. Since I was the radio operator and not the engineer, I didn't know what I was looking at anyway! I looked over and saw the master switch was off. I yelled, "Master switch!" And Lieutenant Wester, who was the co-pilot, reached over and, boom, flipped the master switch on, which was a 3 pull circuit breaker. This switched the power to the engines from the battery to the alternator. The plane had been running on the battery and the #3 engine carried an alternator that gave voltage to all 4 engines sparkplugs.

When Lt. Grimm was trying to get enough power to get liftoff, he was running off the batteries. The batteries just couldn't supply enough power to the engines. When I yelled, "Master switch!" and he turned that on, all of a sudden the alternator cut in and the voltage jumped right back up. It might have been above normal. The reason is that because an alternator on a car might charge at 35 volts initially – well above the 12 volt battery just for a second until the regulator takes over and it comes down. So, the engines revved up and instead of 1000 RPM it went up to 2000 rpm real quick.

As a result, the plane jumped 200 or 300 feet real quick. Well, that saved us. If it wouldn't have been for that, our wheels were still down and they'd a gotten caught on the trees at the end of the runway. No one knew how close we were to the trees when we cleared them!

Our plane was loaded with a crew of 10 men, 5,000-6,000 pounds of bombs and 2700 gallons of fuel. If we had not made it, there would not have been a pretty sight at the end of the runway.

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I was surprised that nothing was said to me by Lieutenant Grimm or Lieutenant Wester after this happened. No one said a word. And I always wondered what they thought. They were probably afraid of getting into deep trouble. Well, not Lieutenant Grimm as much as Wester. The reason is that there's a checklist. When you get the plane all loaded up and you're ready to go, you taxi down the airstrip to the end of the runway. When it's your turn, you get to the end of the runway, and then you go through your checklist. You crank the engines up to take off speed. Then check all the instruments and that kind of stuff, and then they turn the emergency generator off. When they rev the engines, they're supposed to flip the master switch which engages the alternator and keeps the voltage up on the battery. It takes over, and you take off. I thought about it a lot of

times, how these pilots who'd flown 25-30 missions, couldn't tell something was wrong someplace when they cranked the engines up! But there are so many people driving cars that can't sense or observe something wrong unless they are really into mechanics or really pay attention. For example, engine noise as equating to current speed, or if there's a strange sound in the engine that you might use to describe a problem to a mechanic in order to help him fix a problem with the car. There are just a lot of tiny things that happen that many people aren't capable of noticing or detecting unless they pay attention or have a mechanical aptitude like in this story. How could they not know something was wrong after checking everything out? They must not have looked at all the gauges because if the engines weren't going fast enough to take off, it would've shown on the gauges!



**Standing L-R:** Small, Joseph W. 'Joe'(NG); Duchinsky, Louis F. 'Dutch' (RO/RWG); Williams, Melborn D. 'Mel' (E/TT); Jones, Jack B. 'Jonesie' (LWG); Amory, Clement G. 'Clem' [KLOD] (TG); Stevenson, Edward E. 'Ed' (BG)

**Kneeling L-R:** Wester, Robert G. 'Bob'(CP); Grimm, Walter J. (P); Abadi, Abe (B)

## Getting the Liberaider to Your Mailbox

by  
Dave Blake

If you look forward to receiving your copy of The Liberaider in the mail each time, there are people you should thank. As most of you know, Hughes Glantzberg is the editor and prepares the articles and page layouts for me to print and mail the booklet. You can start by thanking him. However, most of you are unaware of what happens after Hughes hands off the project to me. There is a lot more involved than you probably realize and I have lots of great help in taking his page layouts and turning them into a booklet and mailing it to you.

- It starts with Gina Pope, owner of SignLady Graphix. She graciously allows me to use her printing press and shop at no charge to print the booklet pages before they are assembled in booklet form. Her address is 609 S. Fir St., Olathe, KS. 66061.
- After the pages are printed, I take them to Ron at 123 Printing & Supplies for the flat pages to be assembled into booklet format. Ron offers us a deep discount on his work as a "thank you" to

our veterans. His address is 7911 Bond St., Lenexa, KS. 66214.

After the booklets are completed I take them to Robert Burdiss, owner of Burdiss Lettershop Services. Robert and his staff take our mailing list and print each individual address on the booklet in such a way that affords us the best possible postage rate which saves a lot of money in mailing costs. Robert refuses to take anything for their efforts other than the cost of postage. He tells me that he's happy to donate their labor because "it's because of these men that I have the freedom to operate my business as I see fit today". Robert also offers this same help for other 461st mailing projects. His address is 9765 Widmer Rd., Lenexa, KS. 66215.

If you enjoy reading each issue of The Liberaider, why don't you drop a simple thank you card in the mail to these folks if you feel compelled to do so. It would mean the world to them. There's no need to thank me. I already know what it means to the veterans of the 461st and their families and always look forward to doing my part in getting them ready to deliver.





## Mission No. One!

From Torretta Flyer No. 10, Spring 1984

by

Emil Larsen

Bombardier, 766th Squadron

That first morning — we were living in a barn with about 25 other fellows. Little me - well I went to bed at eight o'clock the previous evening so I would be really sharp - this was it! But I woke early around two o'clock and just could not sleep anymore. Was it butterflies in my stomach or thoughts in my mind, or tenseness - perhaps a bit of it all? Soon after hours of restless waiting, the officer of the day came to wake us—but not me. I was a veteran. The boys told me not to get up right away because you only stood around and waited. So I stayed in the warm sack, and then hurried like the devil at the last minute to get chow.

We piled into trucks in the darkness of the early morning, and bounced along the road to briefing. What emotions filled my body! Yet I wanted to sing. Several fellows aired morbid thoughts. And I was so mixed up; I didn't know what to think. We stopped and men hurriedly jumped off the trucks and jammed a doorway to see the briefing board. I was quick to find out their motive and adopt their crude technique. Get a glimpse of "target for today".

Vienna - it meant so little to me. Many were the comments but none apparently registered. I was all nervous. Excitement of combat, jolly voices. No one showed what was deep in his heart though there were many and varied expressions on the groups of fellows. In the movies, I had seen pictures like this - but I never was a part of it.

Then came the briefing, target, weather, code words, time tick, and special briefing for the Bombardier. We were again jammed into trucks and headed for personnel supply. So many things had to be drawn - chutes, harness, muffs, mae vests, earphones, electric heated suits, gloves, shoes, etc.

Then we were at the plane, number 56 Cherokee. The sweetest ship on the field, because this was our

first mission and so our pilot flew as co-pilot. Lt. Garner flew as pilot.

We checked bombs, equipment, and loaded chaff and flak suits. I was busy checking the turrets and oxygen equipment. Then once again those old reliable Pratt & Whitneys were fed the fuel and our aluminum home became a living animal. We taxied out to the strip and soon were "in the Blue". About that time, I piled into the combat equipment, into a heated electric suit, then came the heavy flying suit, the Mae West, my gun, heavy boots over electric heated shoes, and a parachute harness on top—Wow. I was like a little round ball (but later I put on more - a flak suit and a flak helmet).

About that time we were at 10,000 feet and I armed those twin fifties that wreak destruction on the Krauts! I worked and worked and so did the engineer. I checked the bomb bay doors and "No Buona". One side would open but the other refused to budge. We decided to wait till the I.P. (Initial Point of bomb run) and tackle them thru. If it wouldn't open, we'd kick it open. But the one we had open would not go shut, and we were up to 23,000 feet and it was cold with the doors open. The engineer resorted to tricks practiced by his ancestors, and banging like a monkey risked his life to enable me to close the doors. Little did we realize what dumb sad apples we were.

About that time I was called on the interphone. The Ball Turret operator's electric heated suit had failed. He was so cold that when he got out of the turret he was unable to switch oxygen lines and had passed out. Larsen to the rescue. The pilot told me to go back and see what I could do. We installed a new fuse, engaged some heated muff and got him warmed up and quieted down. Later he went out again due to oxygen deficiency as did the engineer. Oh what a day! Fifteen minutes before I.P. I called the navigator and with him at the middle, the engineer at the far end and me at the handle, and foot on the front end, we jarred the doors open. Then the flak came, and it

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was plenty heavy. I was really scared but mostly about doing a good job. I was eager to see everything but saw very little except the flak. Then "Bombs away" and they went okay except a couple seconds late. They did not hit the target, but landed in the town. So maybe we got several hundred krauts. We peeled off and headed for home. Somehow our squadron lost the wing formation and so six planes flew alone toward Italy. When the excitement and tension wore off I called the navigator and asked where we were. He said, "Just passed Gioia!" Bang. Bang - flak - accurate. The whole plane shook. "Wow", yelled the navigator, "they got our hydraulic system. I'm all full of oil!"

"Waist to crew - flak holes. I've got a piece - darn thing nearly hit me!" We continued on our way, a little worse for wear - little did we realize how bad off.

On arrival in our area the pilot called the engineer and told him to lower the landing gear manually. We worked and worked but no buona. We decided to try and fix the hydraulics and get the gear down. The engineer and I went forward with tape and rags. A gasoline check showed us that we had about one hundred and fifty gallons. That was enough for an hour's flying. The sight gage was correct. So we worked against time at an impossible task, but then we are airmen, cream of the crop. I worked and sweated and it began to get dark. Oh, my mind and body were so tired. Our efforts were futile as we could not hold the 500 lbs. pressure. I went back to the flight deck and the pilot realized that it was either crash landing or bail out. He said, "I'll ride her in, Nix. What about you?" Nix agreed to fly her in and the engineer decided to ride her in. So I said, "I'll get the crew ready for bailing out." At that moment, the controls stiffened and there was a crashing noise and the radio gave out!

Now we had about 120 gallons of gas and I was not for finding out how correct those sight gages were. I got my parachute all tightened up, slipped the first aid kit into my jacket, then my flashlight and finally my 50 mission cap. I found my way thru the catwalk and to the waist. There I was greeted by a group of

very quiet serious enlisted men. I gave them a few last minute instructions, "Jump out, straighten out, count three, then pull." No sooner was I finished talking then the ball turret gunner went out. Every three seconds a body plunged out and into darkness! They seemed to slide right out and disappear into the black. I was the last to go. I was so tired I just wanted to get out of that plane. No scared feeling, no emotions, this was a necessity for which I had been emotionally begging for the last two hours. I sat down on the camera hatch opening and dangled my feet outside. Then a lunge and I was outside. Sure I knew what I was supposed to do, but I do not recall if I did just that. My hand was on the rip cord handle and I was scooting along in the air in a sitting position, I remember slowing down and a lovely rocking feeling, and that there was no sensation of falling. It was a wonderful feeling. "Let's keep this handle for a souvenir" and into my pocket it went. "Gee, is that parachute open?" Then I got my hand on my hat so I put it on - next I got a hold of the flashlight and I turned it on and looked up. What a wonderful sight that open canopy was. I saw lights below and realized it was an airplane on the ground and someone was working on it. I started flashing my light in that direction, in a semi-code fashion. Another plane was parked below me and I was worried unless I hit it, but fortunately the wind blew me away. By this time, I stopped swinging like a pendulum on an old stairway clock. I was drifting and the wind was against my face. I tried to get turned around but no luck so I flashed my light toward the ground and bent my knees ready for a soft landing. It seemed I was coming down so slow and smooth. Wow! I hit hard! My feet buckled and I landed on my rump. In a dazed manner, I picked myself up, gathered in my chute and looked around. Golly, was I a thankful kid. Even old Italy looked very, very sweet. I landed in the middle of a revetment - a strip for parking planes - all steel - but so is my head. The men from the adjacent plane came running over; they just couldn't understand the blinking light! They laughed when they saw me. We stopped a passing truck and the driver on seeing me, asked if anyone else had bailed out. I informed him in the affirmative and he said he thought he had heard some calls of help back the road a way. I hurried over to per-

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sonnel supply and called the squadron and told them about the situation. Then we piled into a truck and looked for the distress call. Soon we found our tail gunner lying in an open field. He said calmly, "I think my leg is broken." We called for the doctor and put crude splints on after giving him a shot of morphine. He was bundled into an ambulance, the meat wagon, and taken to the hospital. I asked to be taken to the Squadron. I was tired, hungry, and emotionally upset. Those three men were still up there and five boys still to be accounted for. But the Doc. (Capt. Sproul) piled me into a jeep and buzzed me over to the control tower. Many men were there; the Colonel, Group Operation Officers, and they plied me with questions. The plane was still circling the field and tower was sending them the blinker "Bail out" - "Bail out", but the boys evidently were not able to decipher it. The Group Op. Officer, Capt. Roberts, said, "Give them the red light!" to the group. "God damn - save their lives, to hell with the plane." The Colonel in a quiet commanding voice said, "Give them the green light." So the tower complied with the higher orders. The plane circled the field and started its approach to land. Millions of thoughts ran through my mind. "Roger's wife soon to have a baby - our first mission. Cpl. Baum's married too - darn good pilot, never another guy like Rog. Gee, I'm down already. Poor Irma."

Then the plane was coming into the runway - down - down on came the landing light like two fingers searching for a soft spot to land on that cold steel mat. Like a bird it swooped lower and lower - now so close - then all the lights went out - complete darkness - not a sound - not a stir, just the whisper of the wind talking to me. "They'll be ok, they are going to be all right." Then a loud screeching, scraping sound filled the air. The sparks flew and a lifetime passed in those brief seconds. Again quiet - waiting - expecting an explosion or flame. Then rudely, I was grabbed and someone pushed me into a jeep and many cars and people roared to that runway to that wounded iron bird. There she lay in a circle of light. Eager automobile lights eating up the sight, when out popped three scared but happy lads. Capt. Roberts (Group Ops. Officer) walked up and grabbed the pilot's hand, shook it, and said, "My boy that was the

most beautiful landing I ever saw. Congratulation!" Salutations over, four happy boys hopped into a jeep and regardless of equipment, questions, or inspection, headed for chow.

Next morning we went out and saw a demolished B-two dozen. The service squadron had really wrecked our iron bird in hauling it off the runway. Flak holes were found in all spots, in our mortally wounded airplane. A big hole in the wing had demolished the auxiliary landing gear and one hole thru Cherokee's head had ruptured our hydraulic lines. We learned that the rift in our wing had been released and had torn away the radio antenna. All the boys were okay except Bill. In the town hospital his leg was set and later he had it reset and steel braces put in to brace the severed bones. He got the Purple Heart and a free ticket back to the States. He told us his parachute did not open and clawed it into action. Then at a low altitude he thought he was going to land on a plane so he dumped his chute a bit and consequently he hit the ground plenty hard. We all wanted to keep our chutes as souvenirs but a shortage made that impossible. Souvenir for the Bombardier was a rip cord handle and memories.

Conclusions: Our first mission, first plane wreck, first wheels up landing, two months flying pay (\$150) and a world of experience. Veteran!

So the Bombardier does no work on a mission, well. I like that!

EDITORS NOTE: Emil Larsen, Bombardier 766th Squadron, received a rude introduction to combat operations but was lucky to survive this, his first mission. For many crews the normal trepidations are heightened because, as in this case a combat-experienced pilot takes over the left seat displacing the first pilot to the co-pilot's side. Most likely the new pilot's flying abilities are unknown to them breaking the trust that a combat crew has in each other. This trust is built up slowly during the long months of training, as each learns from experience to depend on each other. It happened so often that nine lives depended on each other. Jay Garner flew as first pilot while Roger Nixon flew as co-pilot.

## History of a Successful Mission

May 7, 1944

From Torretta Flyer No. 18, page 39

by

Ed Goree

764th Squadron

Plan Able

Plan Able arrived from Wing headquarters about midnight. The target was the Bucharest Chitilia Marshalling yards. The staff looked it over and began planning the mission. The lead crew which could picture the entire trip from memory was to have another chance, the fourth group effort to put the marshalling yards on the dead list.

Lt. Elmore had the late weather report in hand. His prediction for the trip was bad enough to cancel the mission. But it looked like the big planners meant business concluding that the Fifteenth would have to take weather losses if there was still a chance of destroying the vital target.

Not much time lapsed between planning and crew awakening hour. It was wet and dark when the trucks rolled out of the squadron area filled with crews bound for the briefing shack. The mission was still on as the long black ribbon indicating the mission route still stretched across Albania, Yugoslavia thru Rumania almost to the Russian front lines. Two hours remained before take off and most of the crews hoped that the bad weather would cause the mission to be cancelled.

However, two hours later, we took off. The low clouds covering the base prevented a normal group assembly. The crews were improving quickly with each mission so the assembly above the stratus overcast was affected on schedule. But looking out trouble could be seen out toward the Adriatic Sea as we started for the Wing rendezvous area. The high cloud build up at cruise altitude and the low cirrus below predicted a rough journey.

The lead crew had been to Bucharest twice before under extremely poor weather conditions so this mission did not pose any great problem.

Lt. Veiluva, the Lead Pilot and Capt. Goree the Group Commander for the mission traded off on the controls at frequent intervals because instrument flying was more tiring in this haze which eliminated the horizon and presented a poor view of the surface. There was one mile visibility that allowed the Wing men to hold position. Lt. De Witt did a superb job of navigating us through the flak areas enroute. The overcast below was still solid.

As we reached the Danube, the undercast began to climb to 20,000 feet. The lead group of the Wing was too low to make it, so they turned the lead over to us and left for an alternate target and home base. About the same time the radio was jammed by other groups advising they were abandoning the mission too. Someone in our group called up and asked if we were going to give it up. When they received our negative reply, he answered, "I don't go for this hero ----."

We went on feeling very lonely. Like the break of a cloudless day, the weather cleared about the middle of Rumania. We were to have a clear shot at the target, the reward for hanging on a little bit longer.

A few fighters began to appear but they weren't aggressive. After their first pass we assured them that we could defend our formation as we didn't have the aid of friendly fighter cover. The target was coming into range and we still had 30 miles to go.

Rotten luck hit the lead ship. The target was almost discernible, 12 minutes to and the nose section oxygen supply failed. Sgt. Puss rushed two large walk around bottles up through the bomb bays to the nose section. This gave new life for Lt. Iconis and Lt. De Witt. It was the zero hour on the bomb run, when Lt. Iconis discovered that the pilot's direction indicator wasn't working. He gave Lt. Veiluva, who was flying the ship at the time, several oaths over the intercom that sounded like, "Left, God Dammit, Left." What looked like dark clouds ahead turned out to be barrage flak.

*(Continued on page 31)*

*(Continued from page 30)*

### “Bombs Away”

The sweetest words ever spoken, “Bombs Away” followed the last course correction from little Ike. Then we started a gentle roll or the maneuver called, “Let’s get the Hell out of here.”

The flak was near now and the familiar sound of hail was in our ears as the spent shrapnel bounced off the skin of our plane, but it seemed we were successfully evading the worst part by our horseshoe turn. (Or was it luck?)

Sgt. Kurawe called in from the tail to advise us to slow down for cripples. Sgt. Zimmerman began reporting that the bombs were knocking hell out of the yards. He could see our first pattern, then the second which filled in all spare openings. With these words of encouragement, the dark trip home seemed unimportant for a minute. There was a solid feeling that comes from being under attack with the target well hit and the cripples all successfully covered.

As we approached the Danube, thunderheads began to take shape once again. This time the problem was in reverse. The group had to get down through the

weather and back to the base. Mc Quillan dropped behind the second section. I could see Koska take B flight out wide as soon as he was called. The flight loosened up and about one hour later we were over the Adriatic in the clear. Everyone was accounted for and it looked as though the work was done for the day.

When we checked the ditching channel on the radio the May Day calls came in all too clearly, and the long count for the radio fix and then another May Day call. We contacted Big Fence and they gave us a heading from our position in the middle of the Adriatic to a point due south and 30 minutes away. We told them we could stretch our fuel and take up the search, we turned 180 degrees and started for the indicated spot. We had a hunch it could be no more than an oil slick on the smooth rolling sea. Within one minute of our ETA we spotted something. As we circled low we could make out two rafts with ten men. That was the most successful hunt we had ever been on. A spitfire came out to relieve us and mark the location before heading back to lead the rescue launch. One hour after first spotting the rafts, the launch pulled along side and took the men aboard. With our fuel low, we headed straight for the field to end a most successful day for all of us.



Mission #20 - Bombing photo of Chitila Marshalling Yard, Bucharest, Romania

Back to the familiar target area of the Chitila Marshalling Yard of Bucharest, the Group employed practically the same procedure in attacking this target as had been used the previous visit at Pitesti. The briefed aiming point was in front of a plot of rectangular buildings located near the round house near the northwest end of the marshalling yard. The mission was well led by Captain Goree but the bombs of the first section were somewhat scattered and many of them were to the right of the target. Lt. Faherty, lead bombardier of the second Section, however, rang the bell with a beautiful pattern on the briefed aiming point. Reconnaissance pictures showed the target was hard hit by concentration of 39 percent of our bombs within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point. Only a few enemy airplanes were seen and only three of our bombers were damaged by flak.

## Ploesti Raiders Reunion

by

Bill Seals

President, 98<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group/Wing

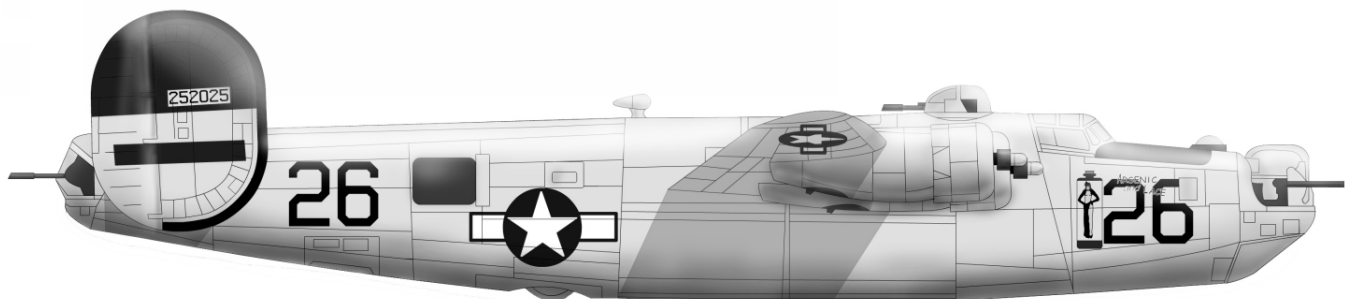
I am pleased to announce that the 98<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group/Bomb Wing Veterans Association will host the Ploesti Raiders at our reunion to be held in Shreveport, Louisiana from October 17 to 21. The reunion will be dedicated to those men who participated in the Ploesti raids – both low and high. To be considered a Ploesti Raider, one only has to have been a member of one of the bomb groups on the date the group flew one of the missions. It matters not whether one was a crewmember, or was on KP on the date of the mission to be a Ploesti Raider.

I know that some of you have group reunions planned for this fall, and I certainly have no desire to infringe on your reunion. I'm simply asking that you make your members aware of our reunion in the event that they would like to come and share their memories of the raids with their fellow raiders from other bomb groups.

We have planned some special programs to highlight the Ploesti missions and are working on others. For example, Robert Sternfels, who was the pilot of “The Sandman” on the Tidal Wave low level raid, will present one of them. Robert has written a book entitled “Burning Hitler's Black Gold” and is an authority on the mission. The director of the Army Air Corp Museum, Bob Coalter, will present a program that includes some original combat film footage. All of the programs will be done as seminars to help insure inputs from all attendees.

I again request your help in letting your members know about the reunion. If you have any one who is interested in attending, they may contact me at 2526 Plumfield Lane, Katy, TX 77450, (281) 395-3005, colbillyseals@hotmail.com.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me at any time.





# **Scandal in the Air Corps Pre-flight School**

by  
Robert M. Kelliher  
765th Squadron

True gentlemen do not “kiss and tell”, of course, and therefore my lips have been sealed in this matter for over half a century. But now that I am a very old man, and getting dangerously close to meeting my Maker, I have come to believe that it is incumbent on me to set forth a sort of a confession that might be of interest and benefit to future generations. Hence, I now take pen in hand to render an account of certain events that took place when I was a cadet in the then U.S. Army Air Corps back in 1943.

Those events took place at Maxwell Field, Alabama, and I was in a class of air cadets which had just started pre-flight training there. I was quartered with some friends with whom I had progressed through an intensive several months of “college training”, and then through specialty classification. The quarters were a rather up-scale barracks, in which cadets were assigned some four to eight to a room, in double bunk beds.

Eventually we were given weekends off the base, a little more than a month after arrival, and I went along with roommates Fred, Calvin, and Pinky to visit Montgomery, and “do the town.” After touring the state capital building, we wandered about its grounds for a while, discussing what to do next, and stopped to bandy words with a small shoe-shine boy. A young woman came along, turned out to be the boy's sister, and engaged in conversation with us. The upshot of that was a parting of the ways. I left my comrades and went off with her to spend the afternoon taking in a movie and having dinner. Louise was a nice looking blonde, quite vivacious, and a more pleasant companion for the afternoon than my pals would have been. I had several scheduled dates with her later, before being shipped off to primary flying school, although that is just a sidebar to the present story.

When I arrived back at the base in early evening, and settled down in our room to get at my studies, as assigned for the weekend, I was soon put under a barrage of flak from my roommates, who had all returned earlier.

The light-gauge flak was about their swimming trunks, which were in the bag I was carrying when I wandered off with my new-found female acquaintance. That was because we had planned a brief escape from the oppressive Alabama mid-summer heat by means of a dip in a town pool.

Heavier gauge flak soon started, however, in the form of what nowadays might be called “sexual harassment”, of a sort. There was a tendency for young air cadets – and probably for other young military men – to fantasize somewhat about how their “gallant warrior” roles would make it difficult for even the most chaste or frigid young woman to resist their lustful amorous advances. So – disregarding that they well knew that I was a shy and backward, but relatively pious and faithful, Roman Catholic lad of Irish descent from Chicago's south end – my comrades started in on me with questions and innuendos of the most reprehensible type, in spite of my efforts to focus on my homework. It went something like this:

“Well, Bob, let's hear all about it.”

“You must have 'made' her for sure, eh?”

“It sure looked like she was hot to go.”

“It was pretty obvious what she had in mind.”

“She sure looked like she was warm for your form.”

“Come on, you can tell us, we're your pals.”

“Was she hard to get?”

“Did she put up much of a fight?”

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*(Continued from page 33)*

“Or did you put up much of a fight?! Haw! Haw!

“Did you do it in her house, or in a hotel?”

Etc. Etc. Etc.

That sort of thing went on sporadically for quite a while, with occasional lulls when I could focus on my studying. The lulls were semi-necessary, because the others had to do some studying too. As was the custom, cadets from other rooms on the floor would wander in to socialize and discuss the latest war news and poop from the group, and when they found out what was going on, they, too, happily joined in the hazing.

Finally, seeing as how I wasn't being able to study anyway, I decided that I'd better do something to either get them off my case or to just have a little fun. I slammed my book down, shoved my chair back, and blurted out,

“Oh, all right, you disgusting lechers! I give up!

“You finally nagged me into it! I confess!

“I did do it! When I was leaving her house I lost control!

“I... I... I PINCHED HER FANNY! Left cheek, I think it was.

“I know she would hate me for telling on her like this!

“You all ought to be ashamed of yourselves for making me do it!

“Have you had enough of the lurid details?

“I hope you're satisfied.

“Now shut up and leave me alone!

“Try and remember there is a horrible war going on!”

Then, as I slumped down with my head bowed in sorrow, as appropriate for a major confession of dishonor, a remarkable phenomenon took place. It was a major chameleon-like color change. One moment the fellows had been a horde of lecherous voyeurs, drooling in anticipation of a juicy scandal. A few moments later, after some feigned stunned silence, they became transmogrified into a group of horrified puritanical choir boy inquisitors! They all looked appalled, and some of them, aghast, staggered backward. Then the hue and cry began:

“You what?!

“You devil, you! Scoundrel! Scalawag! Rogue!

“Disgusting cad! Filthy sex maniac!

“Stop! Say no more! I fear that I shall swoon!

“Kelliher! You are supposed to be learning to be an officer and gentleman!

“What would your mother think if she knew?!

“What would your colonel think?

“What would your enlisted men think?

“You are supposed to be setting them a good example!

Etc. Etc. Etc.

One fellow, sitting on the edge of a bunk, slammed his forehead with the heel of his hand, and fell backwards in collapse.

Another fellow jumped up and ran out and up and down the hall of the barracks as a Paul Revere – like scandal monger, popping his head into other rooms to announce the hot news. Soon a parade of scowling cadets began to come and glare in at the door of our room with malevolent looks, and mutter words of condemnation and contempt.

*(Continued on page 35)*

*(Continued from page 34)*

The turmoil of the evening eventually subsided, but the next morning at assembly formation it became evident that the incident was far from over. A voice from somewhere in the ranks behind me said, sotto voce, and in a tone of loathing,

“That's him! The pincher! Up there standing next to Fred! Trying to look innocent and inconspicuous!”

Low mutterings and sibilant hisses rippled up and down the ranks, with frequent repetitions of the word, “pincher”, until the lieutenant called the formation to order.

At mealtimes in the mess hall, this 'cause celebre' began to take the place of the “zoom!” game, which had been a popular one since the trappist-like silence & solemnity of the class system, upper and lower, had been discontinued. In the “zoom!” game, a cadet at one end of the long table would swing his head sharply to one side, saying, “zoom!”, the cadet next to him would swing his head sharply in the same direction, also saying, “zoom!”, and the relay would be continued from one end of the table to the other. The “zoom!” was marking the passage of an invisible high speed aircraft. This would be taking place at many tables in the large mess hall at the same time, with perhaps some races being held between one side of a table and the other. It created the air of a festive rave meeting.

At the table where my barracks sat, and soon spreading to others, the “zoom!” game began to be replaced by a variant. One cadet would lean toward a neighbor, point in my direction, “whisper” loudly, wag his head, as in shocked disbelief, and sit back and scowl, while that cadet would repeat with the next one. Soon it was “pincher”, not “zoom!” that was being relayed along the tables.

The next step might have been the appearance in the cadet newspaper of some scandal innuendos of this type:

“Rumor has it that a certain loathsome cadet from Flight G-8 Room 204, has been prowling around

Montgomery pinching the bottoms of decent, respectable southern belles. How much of such behavior can our great corps of cadets tolerate?”

Even though that had not happened yet, and even though I was pretty sure my fun-loving fellow cadets were having a high old time with the jollies of the episode, I was beginning to have a very small inkling of a sense of what it must be like to be really ostracized, condemned, exiled, excommunicated, cast forth into that outer darkness. I was soon to get an even stronger sense of it, and the “pincher” episode, which might have gone on for who knows how long, was soon to be eclipsed.

A few nights later, the entire corps of cadets was routed out of bed and marched out onto the drill field for a midnite formation. It was called an “honor board convention”, its purpose being to announce a verdict in the case of a violation of the honor code which stated, “An aviation cadet will not cheat, lie, steal, or allow any aviation cadet to remain in the cadet corps who is guilty of same.” A cadet was “drummed out of the corps” for cheating on a physics exam! I don't recall if there were any drums, or if the nasty rite of snipping buttons off the cadet's tunic was performed, but do recall the grim words, “His name will nevermore be heard on this field.”

Most of the cadets in the corps were shocked and angered. Not at the “offending” cadet, but at the high command which authorized the humiliating ritual. The anger grew to extreme bitterness when the ritual was repeated several more times in the following weeks.

High command may well have been right, and a character flaw, and weakness in academics, may have made the offending cadets unsuitable to become pilot officers. But they could have been shown the courtesy of being dismissed in a way showing appreciation for their good intentions.

After all, they were “cheating” in order to risk their lives in the thick of battle, at the front, not in order to flee to the rear like cowards!

# MISSION TO **BERLIN**

The American Airmen  
Who Struck the Heart  
of Hitler's Reich



**ROBERT F. DORR**

Author of *Hell Hawks!*

by  
Walter J. Boyne

Mission to Berlin is an amazing account of American heroism in the last months of World War II, when American airpower reigned supreme. Germany was beaten but still capable of a vicious defense of its capital, Berlin. The very scale of the attack defies belief, with more than 1,000 bombers and several hundred fighters launching from Allied bases to attempt to crush the life from the heart of Nazi Germany. Each of the bombers carried a crew of ten (later nine) young men, each one hoping to survive enough missions to be returned, alive and unwounded, to the United States. Not all would be so lucky.

This mission, famous for its target, size, results and losses, took place on Feb. 3, 1945, and author Bob Dorr gives a minute-by-minute account of its progress, from pre-takeoff drills to the final landing. This well paced, gripping narrative, provides the skeleton of the book, a gripping portrait of many of the fliers participating. In his customary style, Dorr uses first person interviews and letters to lend immediacy to his tale. Then he fleshes the absorbing human story out with a comprehensive worldview of the mission, placing it in context with the progress of the war and with the great personalities involved.

In many ways this is a technical order on the operations of a B-17 crew, as Dorr intersperses his human tales with detailed descriptions of how each man functioned at his particular job. There are some surprises here, as we learn that contrary to most accounts, the belly gunner's position did not suffer the most casualties in combat. More important, we gain a clear concept of what the duties and the techniques were of each man's crew position on the aircraft. This is done in a fascinating narrative style, one that puts you in the left seat for take-off, in the rotating belly turret in flight, handling the Norden bomb sight on the run in, and man-handling the big .50-caliber machine guns to ward off the still tenacious German fighters. One fact that struck me as something I should have realized before, but had not, was that on board every aircraft the navigators were going through the same tedious drill with their maps, drift-meters, manual computers and other elements to chart the course of their particular aircraft. They were doing it even though they were part of a huge procession of aircraft, formed up over England and led by the top navigators in the units. And it was not busy work. Each navigator had to be prepared to take the B-17 home on its own if it suffered damage and was forced to drop out of the formation.

Dorr's fascinating tale will be read at different levels, depending upon the knowledge of the reader. For someone just beginning to have an interest in World War II bombing operations, the author's overall picture of the powerful event will lure the reader into reading more, and the author provides an excellent bibliography for that purpose. The knowledgeable reader will savor Mission to Berlin for its intimate detail and the rarely seen level of information about aerial warfare in both large and small scale. And for the expert, the person every author dreads, sitting there reading, waiting to pounce on each and every error, Dorr will offer a genuine challenge – he makes no mistakes.

Author Robert F. Dorr



A B-17G-20-VE of the 457th Bomb Group on its way to Berlin. Robert F. Dorr's Mission to Berlin documents one of many such missions to bomb the capital of Nazi Germany, and tells the stories of the men who flew on it. Robert F. Dorr collection.

(Continued on page 38)



But for everyone, Dorr's method of bringing the reader into the life of the crews is the best reason to read the book. The author brings you inside the courageously painted aircraft, with their sometimes patriotic ("Hitler's Hoe-Doe") or sometimes romantic ("Maude and Maria") names, and makes you understand the feeling of family and unity that binds the crews together. But be warned – there is a cost to this, as sometimes the very crew with whom you feel the greatest sympathy is taken from you, as it was in the skies over Germany, by a burst of flak that leaves nothing but flaming debris in its wake.

As I devoured the book, I recognized that Dorr had crafted four books into one unique package. The first of these recognizes that it is the last year of the war, that if the crew survives just a few months, it will have lived, and not died, in World War II, but that combat is just as dangerous as it ever was. The second book tells us how the air war affected the very young (late teens and early twenties) men who had been tending cows or driving trucks the year before and were now flying four-engine aircraft and shooting huge machine guns. The third book, and the one that experts will avidly dissect, takes the reader back in time to discuss the technical development of the aircraft, flying techniques, defensive measures and other details of both the American and the German forces. The final book will be seen only by the philosophical reader, who will be forced to wonder how it was that in 1945 the United States, just emerging from a depression, could afford to send perhaps sixteen hundred aircraft with thousands of young airmen into combat on a single mission, when today, after decades of sumptuary wealth, we have trouble funding our forces.

The late Stephen Ambrose popularized the technique of using accounts of personal experiences to tell the story of combat. He has been imitated by many since, often with mixed results. Dorr's book is a model of how to use these personal recollections in an expert manner, integrating them into a broader and more purposeful narrative. He can do this only because of the broad base of his knowledge and the depth of his research.

This is a memorable book, one that you will want to have in your library, and one that you can give as a gift with pride. Copies are available from the author at [robert.f.dorr@cox.net](mailto:robert.f.dorr@cox.net).

The book "MISSION TO BERLIN" is a general-interest, Stephen Ambrose-style World War II history that focuses on the B-17 Flying Fortress crews who attacked Berlin on February 3, 1945, in the largest mission ever flown against a single target. The book also includes a new look at the entire bombing campaign in Europe.

The young men who flew and maintained the B-17 are at the center of the story but "MISSION TO BERLIN" also has lengthy passages about Americans who flew and maintained the B-24 Liberator, P-47 Thunderbolt and P-51 Mustang. There is a huge segment about the P-47 Thunderbolt in this book.

The book can be ordered from Amazon (unsigned) at a slightly lower price.

If you would like to get a first-edition signed copy directly from me, the author, send me a check for \$35.00 to cover book, signature, packaging and shipping. Remember that I need a message from you confirming (1) whom to sign the book for, and (2) the address to which to send it. Very important: be sure that any communication includes your ADDRESS.

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Author Robert F. Dorr



## President's Corner

by  
Hughes Glantzberg  
President, 461st Bomb Group Association

I've spent the last couple of weeks pulling information together for this issue of the Liberaider. I managed to fill all but this page. In trying to find something to fill out this issue, I suddenly realized that I'm not only the Editor of your newsletter, but I'm also the President of this elite group of veterans and relatives. Yesterday I received a copy of the Cerignola Connection published by Craig Ward of the 455th Bomb Group. Right there on the front page was an article by the 455th President, Carl Barr. I then realized what needed to go in this space.

As most of you are aware by now, the 461st Association made the decision to turn over the administration of the Association to the children. This was accomplished at the reunion last September when I was given the dubious honor of leading this organization into the future. This was just one more responsibility I've been given with the group. The others include group Historian, Webmaster and, of course, Editor of the Liberaider. Would anyone like to take over one of these? I would tell you they don't entail much work, but I'm sure you would know I'm lying. Actually I do get a lot of enjoyment out of everything I do for the group.

Let me shift hats for a second and talk to you as your Webmaster. The website is settling down at this point with only a few changes being made per month. It still ranks up there with the best of the WWII websites. Since I don't have to make many changes to the 461st website, I've branched out looking for other opportunities. I didn't have to look far as the 484th was right across Torretta Field from the 461st. The 484th folded several years ago, but I've kept in touch with that organization and now we're going to have a joint reunion once again. I've also been in touch with the 451st BG Association that was the third element of the 49th Bomb Wing. I'm doing a website for both of these organizations now. From here, I moved up to do a website for the Fif-

teenth Air Force as I couldn't find a website dedicated to that entire organization. Check out [www.15thaf.org](http://www.15thaf.org) and [www.484th.org](http://www.484th.org) in addition to our website at [www.461st.org](http://www.461st.org).

By the time you get to this column, you may have noticed that some of the articles in this issue of the Liberaider are a little different from the normal ones run. Why? Well, as you know, I've tried to make the Liberaider your newsletter filled with your stories. Unfortunately, I'm running out of new material to include. I've actually had to go back and find some old articles that were in the Torretta Flyer to fill this issue. In other words, I need material! You have been very generous in the past in submitting good articles. I really appreciate what you've given me. But I need more. Please take time to write something down. Don't worry about it being perfect. I can always polish what you send me to make it into a nice article. But I can't create the article from scratch. I need your input.

Advice given to RAF pilots during WWII:  
When a prang (crash) seems inevitable, endeavor to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity as slowly and gently as possible.

The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world; it can just barely kill you.

If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash as possible.

If the airplane is still in one piece, don't cheat on it; ride the sucker down.

Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you.

Just remember, if you crash because of weather, your funeral will be held on a sunny day.

## 461<sup>ST</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

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We're on the web!  
Visit  
[www.461st.org](http://www.461st.org)

## Webmaster Comments

As most of you know by now, we have been attempting to adjust our mailing list for the Liberaider. We have mailed out in the neighborhood of 700 copies of the Liberaider twice a year. Even by using bulk mail rate, this costs roughly \$700 per issue. That's \$1,400 per year than comes out of our budget. In an attempt to reduce this expense, we recently mailed out postcards asking you to let us know how you'd like to receive the Liberaider. We gave you four options:

1. Receive the Liberaider by E-Mail. We realize that not everyone has a computer or an E-Mail address so this would only work for some of you.
2. Pick the Liberaider up from our website ([www.461st.org](http://www.461st.org)). Again this would only work for those of you who have computers, but is an option since I always post the Liberaider on the website.

3. Continue to have the Liberaider mailed to you. This works if we have your current mailing address. We received a number of updates to addresses as a result of the postcards, but I ask you to please keep us informed if your address changes.
4. Remove from our mailing list. This is the least desirable option as we really don't want to remove anyone from our mailing list if you enjoy reading the Liberaider.

As I write this, I'm happy to report that a number of you have opted to receive the Liberaider either by E-Mail or from the website; a number have asked that we continue to mail copies and we're happy to do this. We did have a number of people who we have removed from our mailing list either because you requested it or we got the postcard back as undeliverable. Obviously we're sorry to see you go, but appreciate you letting us know.